

Final reflective paper

Family



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David W. Ebert James Tabor English 1302 09 May The English Reflections in One's Self Literature is a rich source of ideas, stories, themes and forms of expression, spanning societies, cultures and history. This class has greatly helped me to develop an appreciation of the major categories of literature that exist. The ability to recognize the different literary works and their structure, cultural setting and underlying theme is important in understanding and learning about them. Being exposed to the different styles, illustrations of meaning, and interpretations has allowed me to build on my critical thinking and writing skills. This course has helped me to not only analyze writings and correctly document works but also to appreciate the different forms and cultural influences of literature. The analyzing of short stories led me to consider interpretations of symbols and how they are integral to the context of the story. For example, in Shirley Jackson's, "The Lottery", the use of everyday materials, such as the box and the three footed stool, symbolize significance even though they can also be considered normal objects. The ritualistic nature to the drawing of names holds significant meaning in terms of the old, sparingly used generational heirlooms which the beginning of "The Lottery" illustrated. Choosing this short story and developing it as my research project, gave me a greater sense of connection and development of the diverse use of symbols and their meanings in literary works. It has also allowed me to be a more engaged reader, analyzing in depth the deeper meaning an author is trying to convey. I am surprised to learn how insightful and fun it can actually be rather than just being a casual reader. The research project in this class, regarding the web evaluation component and essay, helped foster a sense of an author's work, their point of view and the need for proper documentation.

Remarkably, most of the critical research is now being conducted and maintained in digital media. This realm must be used with caution and have its own check and balance in the evaluation process. The research project used an academic database and the World Wide Web. Since I'm more a personal consumer of digital media, the documentation and referencing of the literary works by the critics which was maintained on the academic database was a different and challenging experience. Also, the attention to the actual source and using it within the project evoked a better understanding of the author's point of view. The reliable and trusted academic critical reviews have given me, as a researcher, more insight and direction to further develop my essays. The ability to replicate such ideas and conclusions between multiple critics is the ultimate goal in trying to develop sound viable review of the work. My project and two critical essays' on "The Lottery" had many similarities even though they were written by two different authors and at different times. The reading and discussion of Beowulf as an example of Old English Literature was the most enjoyable new form of literature in the class. I was reading Beowulf for the first time and it was remarkable to know that it was only discovered in manuscript form in the late 1700's. Though the story and poem itself were noted to be over 1,000 years old, the poem has grown to a prevalent place in literature even though the writer is not known. Even though this masterpiece wasn't widely disseminated and discussed until early 1900's, many contemporary stories have used its style as the basis for their stories. The recent translation from Old English to modern English was easier to comprehend and understand, especially when using the techniques discussed earlier in the class. Though poetry is not something that is comfortable for me, this epic poem was both

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entertaining and informative, allowing me to visualize what life and culture was like during that period of history. It truly made me appreciate the diverse styles of writing and prose and how they are ingrained in culture. The completion of this literature class, though not the first attempt to do so, has helped me to develop a greater sense of ability and confidence in understanding literary works. I have realized that the challenging nature of MLA formatting and the foreign nature of the stories, should not overshadow the reading itself. Confidence in developing a connection within the story greatly helped me to organize and place ideas in a coherent and meaningful way to easily write each assignment. Understanding what stories are about and also being able to explain and analyze them throughout the class gave me more confidence in my writing and interpretation of literature. The lecture on the research project really helped me to explain my point of view. Reading and understanding of literature was always difficult and really challenging and it is still something I have to significantly work on and improve. However, the various writing exercises and assignments have helped me to enhance my reading, writing, and interpreting skills. This course has given me the ability to know that it is possible to read and understand literature, without wanting to give up, close the book and just drop the class.