English 101

Professor James Gentile

Assignment #1

Text Titles and Authors:

Lens: "The Childhood Origins of Natural Writing," Gabriele Lusser Rico

Artifact (please select only one of these artifacts):

"Somebody done Hoodoo'd the Hoodoo Man," Al Young

"Coming into Language," Jimmy Santiago Baca.

Length: 1500 words (you may go up to 100 words more, but make certain that these words add important material to the analysis of the text)

Due Date: See Syllabus

Summary of Assignment:

Write an essay in which you apply Rico's conclusions about "natural writing" to one of the other texts we read in this unit: "Somebody done Hoodoo'd the Hoodoo Man" by Al Young or "Coming into Language" by Jimmy Santiago Baca. The Rico text will function as a "lens" through which you will interpret the other text which will function as an "artifact." Every part of the "lens" may not apply perfectly to the "artifact." Thus, you want to consider the extent to which the "lens" is useful in analyzing the "artifact" you choose. Do the author's experiences reflect the ideas of "aesthetic/creative development" which Rico traces? Consider in particular whether the author passes through the innocent , conventional, and cultivated stages she describes, remembering the role wonder and storying play in each stage. As we discussed in class, when you consider the cultivated stage, you will also want to consider the author's writing itself and/or the author's ideas about writing.

Audience: You should write the essay as though your reader is academic and educated but may not be as familiar as you are with either the lens or the artifact. This means that you may, for instance, need to briefly explain scenes or introduce characters.

Organization of Assignment: The paper should be organized into three sections: the introduction, body, and conclusion.

> Introduction: The introduction should include the names of both readings' authors and should end with a clear thesis statement that indicates what you will assert/prove about how the lens plays out in the artifact.
>
> Body of the essay: Early in your essay, you will need to summarize the lens. Do not provide a summary of the entire text, but instead focus on the text's key points that will be analyzed in body paragraphs. While you may use direct quotes in the summary, use them sparingly: this is your chance to show your reader how well you understand the lens.

In the body of the paper, each supporting paragraph should cover one main idea that supports your thesis. Summarize the artifact only to the extent needed to provide context for analysis within the body paragraph. Transitions should be used as a way to bridge one paragraph point to the next.

Here are some specific guidelines on the body:

- The body should open with a paragraph-long (approximately 300 words long) explanation of the lens which provides a critical perspective for your analysis. Cite Rico's essay where appropriate.
- Next, apply the "lens" to the "artifact." Thus, apply Rico's theory to either Young's or Baca's experiences or ideas. Do not simply summarize Young's or Baca's essay.
- All evidence must be from Rico and either Young or Baca. You can only write on one of the authors--Young or Baca. Do not include personal references or experiences. Do not do any research or additional reading on the authors—do not even go to the internet to read about the authors or their works. To do so will break the classroom policy on academic integrity and honesty. See the syllabus for the consequences of such actions.
- Explain each separate point in its own chunk or paragraph. Refer to and quote from the artifact throughout the essay; passages quoted from the play should constitute about 20-25% of the essay. Each of the main points you make should be substantiated with reference to the text (a summary of an important idea or detail or a quotation from the text). Support each point with at least two references from the artifact. (For example, when you are writing about the innocent stage, quote form the artifact at least twice.)
- Cite all quoted or paraphrased material using MLA in-text parenthetical references.

Conclusion: The final paragraph should wrap up your essay and make some final statement about the paper's topic.

Use of Evidence in the Essay: Each body paragraph should use appropriate amounts of properly formatted and cited quotations or paraphrases. Overall, the paper should use at least several properly formatted and cited quotations and paraphrases. Direct quotes should be carefully selected, properly contextualized and introduced beforehand, and commented upon afterwards.

Each of the main points you make should be substantiated with reference to the text (a summary of an important idea or detail or a quotation from the text). Support each point with at least two references from the artifact. (For example, when you are writing about the innocent stage, quote form the artifact at least twice.)

Use of MLA in the Essay: Essays should be formatted according to MLA style rules. In addition, all quotations and paraphrases should be properly cited according to MLA rules. You are not required to create a Works Cited page for this first essay. Please see the English 101 MLA Checklist for specific suggestions.

Grammar / Correctness: Your writing should be formal and clear and your essay should contain few errors. You should strive for fewer than one error per page. Please write in an "academic voice" as

described in class, avoiding the first and second person (unless such a pronoun is in a quoted passage), abbreviations (especially contractions), and colloquialisms.

Please see my syllabus for guidelines on how to prepare the manuscript of your essay.

Plagiarism: My syllabus defines plagiarism and indicates the consequences for plagiarizing the works of others. The College handbook offers a full definition of plagiarism:

> Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's idea, writing, or work, and passing it off as one's own. If you fail to give credit to the source of the material, whether directly quoted or put in your own words, this lack of credit constitutes plagiarism. Whether you take, buy, or receive material from the Internet, from a book, from another student, or from any other source, and you fail to give credit, you are stealing ideas; you are engaged in plagiarizing. Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic standards and has serious academic consequences for the student.

Plagiarism is plagiarism, whether you plagiarize several words, one sentence, or an entire essay. Because you are not allowed to use outside sources when writing your essays, anyone who does so is engaged in an "intentional" act, and thus anyone who does so is opening himself or herself up to plagiarism. *The best way to avoid plagiarism is simply not to go to the Internet or the library to do any research on the assigned texts.*

If you plagiarize work (published or unpublished), you will receive an "F" in the course and be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students with the recommendation that you receive additional disciplinary action (such as expulsion or academic probation) as appropriate. Information on the student code of conduct, including academic integrity and plagiarism, can be found in the Student Handbook (Section 5.2.1).

Evaluation of Essay:

Essays in the A or B range demonstrate several if not all of these qualities:
The essay has all the qualities of a C level essay plus:

- The analysis makes original observations on the texts or uses passages from the text in a creative way.
- The introduction or conclusion offer an especially original way to engage the reader or close the essay.
- The chunks/ paragraphs are shaped so that the evidence is integrated well into the text and the sentences flow clearly from beginning to end.
- The sources are accurately quoted following MLA documentation style and are presented in a variety of ways (both introduced and blended).
- The writing itself shows a control of language and style.

Essays in the C range demonstrate these qualities:

- The essay demonstrates comprehension of the texts and the analysis reflects the lens /artifact pattern studied in class.
- The essay has an accurate summary of the lens.
- The essay has the general form of an academic essay:
    - A title
    - An Introduction that provides information about the subject and has a clear thesis that provides a focus for the essay, and it may attempt to interest the reader.
    - A Body that supports the thesis with

    - Chunks/ paragraphs focused on a single supporting point
    - Evidence (including quotations for each supporting point) that is presented and explained so that the connection to the supporting point / thesis is clear
    - Big transitions between chunks that show the connection between the ideas
    - A Conclusion that synthesizes the main ideas and attempts to open up
- The sources are accurately quoted following MLA documentation style (perhaps with only an occasional minor error)
- The sentences are generally clear and correct with few errors and the tone is formal (not informal).
- The essay meets the minimum length requirement

Essays in the D or F range may have some of the qualities of a C essay but also:

- The essay may misread either of the texts or it may summarize rather than analyze the subject text or simply compare the two texts.
- The essay may lack an introduction or conclusion (or simply write a thesis statement).
- The essay may lack logical chunking or paragraphing.
- The essay may lack adequate evidence to support the points made.
- The sources may not be acknowledged using MLA documentation style or may be carelessly used in the essay.
- The essay may have significant writing errors throughout.
- The essay may seriously fall short of the minimum length requirement

Limited readings or serious mis-readings of a text—either the lens or artifact—will make an essay ineligible for a grade of C or higher. You must demonstrate college-level reading, critical thinking, and writing abilities.

Please note that you must meet the length requirement (1500 words) to be eligible for a C.

All essay must follow the format guidelines described on the syllabus.