

Literary Essay on Poetry INTRODUCTION to LITERATURE ENG 200

Due Date: Tues., Oct. 25 , in class, in folder with one earlier draft

Relevant Poems

- “Icarus” -- Erasmus Darwin
- “Musee des Beaux Arts” -- W. S. Auden (in text)
- “Icarus” - John Updike (in text)
- “Landscape With the Fall of Icarus” -- William Carlos Williams
- “To A Friend Whose Work Has Come To Triumph” -- Anne Sexton
- “Icarus” -- Christine Hemp
- “Waiting For Icarus” -- Muriel Rukeyser
- ”Icarus Sees His Father Fly” -- John O’Donnell

Assignment Purpose

1. To demonstrate how different poets can work originally with the same material--in this case, the story of Icarus and Daedalus.
2. By employing the tools (terms and methodologies) of critical analysis, to show major similarities and differences between selected poems

Writing Strategies

1. After a title, begin paper with a brief background paragraph of the Icarus/Daedalus myth and its origins. Cite your source in-text using sufficient signal phrases and line numbers (ex.: lines 12-14). Use author’s name whenever necessary to avoid confusion, since three of poems are named the same.
2. Select three poems, including “Icarus” by Erasmus Darwin, to support your thesis.
3. Read, annotate, and complete analysis worksheets on the selected poems. As you do this work, think about how the poems relate to each other and how they distinguish themselves.
4. The body of the essay should evolve from a thesis statement (which you present toward the end of the essay’s first paragraph) having to do with how artists can react differently to the same material.
5. As you introduce each poem into the analysis, identify both poem and author, and make a statement that summarizes that poem’s “essential self” as it relates to your principles of analysis (see below).
6. Analysis by **comparison and contrast** will be your primary rhetorical mode. Your principles of analysis should include the following: **image, tone, metaphor, irony, pattern, and perspective (including both visual and audial patterns)**.
7. Move from the analysis of one poem to the next seamlessly by employing appropriate and effective transitions. Get the reader thinking about connections and distinctions.
8. Your conclusion should return to the territory mapped out by your thesis. However, it will not be a mere rephrasing or restating of the thesis. Instead, your conclusion will accommodate your new learnings and accomplishments as revealed in the body of the essay.
9. Don’t forget to liberally employ relevant and appropriate terms of poetic analysis.

Guidelines

Length: 3 - 5 pages Format: MLA (don't guess; use a handbook) Margins: Approx. 1"

Pagination: In upper right hand corner of all pages place your last name and proper page number

Title your essay. Create an original title. Don't underline title or place quotes around it.

Citations: Include in-text references to poem and author.

Mechanics: Yes, of course grammar, diction, punctuation, capitalization, spelling coherence count.

Polish: Proof read your work before submitting. Staple.

Submit: Include essay and earlier, complete draft, notes, and any other related materials in a plain manila folder identified on the tab by your name, course number, and "Poetry Essay.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the unattributed use, unintentional or intentional, of someone else's work or ideas. This assigned work is to represent your ideas and your ideas alone. Refer to any composition rhetoric (like the Simon & Schuster Handbook) if you need clarification on what plagiarism is and how to avoid committing it. *See the Campus Code Academic Integrity should you have questions about the consequences of plagiarism on this campus*

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From "Icarus" by Erasmus Darwin (grandfather of Charles)

...with melting wax and loosened strings
Sunk hapless Icarus on unfaithful wings;
Headlong he rushed through the affrighted air,
With limbs distorted and disheveled hair;
His scattered plumage danced upon the wave,
And sorrowing Nereids decked his watery grave;
O'er his pale corse their pearly sea-flowers shed,
And strewed with crimson moss his marble bed;
Struck in their coral towers the passing bell,
And wide in ocean tolled his echoing knell.

"To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph" by Anne Sexton

Consider Icarus, pasting those sticky wings on,
testing that strange little tug at his shoulder blade,
and think of that first flawless moment over the lawn
of the labyrinth. Think of the difference it made!
There below are the trees, as awkward as camels;
and here are the shocked starlings pumping past
and think of innocent Icarus who is doing quite well:
larger than a sail, over the fog and the blast
of the plushy ocean, he goes. Admire his wings!
Feel the fire at his neck and see how casually
he glances up and is caught, wondrously tunneling
into that hot eye. Who cares that he fell back to the sea?
See him acclaiming the sun and come plunging down
while his sensible daddy goes straight into town.

“Landscape with the Fall of Icarus” by William Carlos Williams

According to Brueghel
when Icarus fell
it was spring
a farmer was ploughing
his field
the whole pageantry
of the year was
awake tingling
near
the edge of the sea
concerned
with itself
sweating in the sun
that melted
the wings' wax
unsignificantly
off the coast
there was
a splash quite unnoticed
it was
Icarus drowning.

“Waiting For Icarus” by Muriel Rukeyser (1973)

He said he would be back and we'd drink wine together
He said that everything would be better than before
He said we were on the edge of a new relation
He said he would never again cringe before his father
He said that he was going to invent full-time
He said he loved me that going into me
He said was going into the world and the sky
He said all the buckles were very firm
He said the wax was the best wax
He said Wait for me here on the beach
He said Just don't cry

I remember the gulls and the waves
I remember the islands going dark on the sea
I remember the girls laughing,
I remember they said he only wanted to get away from me
I remember mother saying: Inventors are like poets,
a trashy lot
I remember she told me those who try out inventions are worse
I remember she added: Women who love such are the worst of all

I have been waiting all day, or perhaps longer.
I would have liked to try those wings myself.
It would have been better than this.

“Icarus Sees His Father Fly” by John O’Donnell

I've spent hours watching you
Glide, soaring on updrafts
Far above the wrinkled sea
And you nearly seventy!
Up there it's all wind and lift,
Wheeling in the brilliant blue
Harnessed in that brittle frame
Of feather, wood and gum.
You swoop with a delighted screech
And climb again, so high over the beach
You seem closer to the sun
Than me. But it's just one more game
To you, aloft on your own genius
Showing how it's done.
I wonder did you ever doubt
Your own ability, trundling out
Off this cliff edge into the stun
Of that cool rush of nothingness
Beneath your feet? It's unlikely
You stopped first to think of reasons
Why you shouldn't also share the sky
With startled birds, clouds that grumble by;
All confidence, you said. I thought of gravity, some
Shift in the weather; breezes out at sea
Turning into sudden storms instead.
But you're drunk on air now, insistent
That I follow into azure by your side
Making a man of me, or you? So much I've tried
To make you proud. Shouts of encouragement
Loud in my head. Your voice once more. My arms spread.

“Icarus” by Edward Field

Only the feathers floating around the hat
Showed that anything more spectacular had occurred
Than the usual drowning. The police preferred to ignore
The confusing aspects of the case,
And the witnesses ran off to a gang war.
So the report filed and forgotten in the archives read simply
Drowned, but it was wrong: Icarus
Had swum away, coming at last to the city
Where he rented a house and tended the garden.
That nice Mr. Hicks the neighbors called him,
Never dreaming that the gray, respectable suit
Concealed arms that had controlled huge wings
Nor that those sad, defeated eyes had once
Compelled the sun. And had he told them
They would have answered with a shocked, uncomprehending stare.
No, he could not disturb their neat front yards;
Yet all his books insisted that this was a horrible mistake: What was he doing aging in a suburb?

Can the genius of the hero fall
To the middling stature of the merely talented?
And nightly Icarus probes his wound
And daily in his workshop, curtains carefully drawn,
Constructs small wings and tries to fly
To the lighting fixture on the ceiling:
Fails every time and hates himself for trying.
He had thought himself a hero, had acted heroically,
And now dreamt of his fall, the tragic fall of the hero;
But now rides commuter trains,
Serves on various committees,
And wishes he had drowned.

“Icarus” by Christine Hemp

It was his idea, this flying thing.
We collected feathers at night, stuffing
our pockets with mourning dove down. By day,
we'd weave and glue them with the wax
I stole after we'd shooed the bees away.

Oh, how it felt, finally, to blow off Crete
leaving a labyrinth of dead-ends:
my clumsiness with figures, father's calm
impatience, cool logic, interminable devising.
The sea wind touched my face like balm.

He thought I'd tag along as usual,
in the wake of his careful scheme
bound by the string connecting father and son,
invisible thread I tried for years to untie.
I ached to be a good-for-something on my own.

I didn't know I'd get drunk with the heat,
flying high, too much a son to return.
Poor Daedalus, his mouth an O below,
his hands outstretched to catch the rain
of wax. He still doesn't know.

My wings fell, yes - I saw him hover
over the tiny splash - but by then I'd been
swallowed into love's eye, the light I've come to see
as home, drowning in the yes, this swirling
white-hot where night will never find me.

And now when my father wakes
each morning, his bones still sore
from his one-time flight, his confidence undone
because the master plan fell through,
he rises to a light he never knew, his son.