Virginia Fitzgerald

Language Arts 8, 6th hr.

Writing Analysis – Reader Response Journal Entries

Writing a reader response journal entry is like having a literary circle meeting in your head. It relates something you are thinking about as you read that you imagine you are having a discussion about with other readers. A reader response should be about a thoughtful topic, as if the topic is obvious to everyone there would be nothing to discuss. A reader response should also be well developed because since the topic is a debatable, not obvious topic, a position on the topic would need to be supported and explained in order to start the debate. The third reader response is thoughtful and well developed, but the other two response need some work on both of these characteristics.

Only the discussion of what is an enjoyable level of detail in a fantasy novel is thoughtful. Both of the other two topics were very obvious. Many novels have at least one antagonist; in *The Scourge*, one of the antagonists is Della. The reader is obviously supposed to dislike here. No one would disagree that she is hateful considering that she lies about the novel’s heroine, Ani, who tried to save her, saying Ani was trying to steal her boat, intending that the wardens will take her into custody. This would lead to no real discussion, instead only raising a couple comments like “Yeah, that was creepy!” The discussion would then come to a full stop and a new direction would need to be found. Hopefully that new direction would not be that *The Scourge* is similar to *Fever* because they are both centered around a contagious disease because that would also fall flat after a couple of slight nods by a few people. Really even the development is obvious because what contagious disease doesn’t have symptoms and everyone knows that someone with a disease can spread the disease and so should not come into contact with others. That is the basic meaning of the word “contagious.” So a discussion about the fact that symptoms are looked for and people are isolated in both novels would also die after the simple statement of that fact. But what level of detail is desired in any novel is debatable. Fantasy novels are well know to often contain quite a bit of detail, so taking the stand that less detail is actually more enjoyable is not an obvious stand to take. The author of the response works hard to prove her point, giving quite a few example from the novel and then raises the possibility of debate by attacking one of the most well-loved fantasy novels, *The Fellowship of the Rings*, making fun of the guidebooks and maps many fans buy to keep track of all the detail. One can imagine a lively debate arise because of this attack alone and then an examination of the amount of detail in *The Scourge*.

Writing a reader response journal entry can be fun if one enjoys discussing literature because it allows the reader to imagine a debate even when there isn’t one, which the third reader’s entry on the detail in *The Scourge* did very well. It was a successfully thoughtful entry.