**Part III: Critical Reading - Instructions**

1. Make detailed critical notes:
   1. AGREEMENTS (valid claims): Go through your notes from the charitable reading carefully, and list all the claims that the author makes that you originally agreed with, or that you have since become completely convinced of (or that you have decided to assent to for the purposes of your criticism). These constitute your analysis of the unflawed part of the author’s argument.
   2. PRIMARY CRITICISMS (fatal logical flaws): Go through your notes from the charitable reading carefully, and make note of all disagreements that have not been reconciled (the ones you could not make a case for, even when being as charitable as you could, and even by trying to fix the problems). Mark these as the PRIMARY POINTS of your critical analysis, since they point out fatal flaws in the author’s reasoning.
   3. SECONDARY CRITICISMS (non-fatal logical flaws): Examine each disagreement that you reconciled by fixing a problem in the author’s argument—meaning you managed to make an acceptable case for it, but only after fixing something that was wrong. Mark these as the SECONDARY POINTS of your critical analysis. These point out non-fatal (fixable) flaws in the author’s reasoning.
   4. TERTIARY CRITICISMS (non-logical flaws): The remaining disagreements should all be over values, assumptions or evidence. Find each of these and mark them as your TERTIARY POINTS. These are flaws in items that the author is taking for granted in their argument. So, while they are technically “non-fatal” from a logical perspective, they may well be ultimately more fatal to the argument than even the primary logical flaws. For instance, if an author accepts a murderous ethical premise that almost everyone else would consider obviously immoral, then that single flaw could be more fatal to the overall argument than any logical flaw in the actual argument itself. By separating out the primary, secondary and tertiary criticisms, you make it clear what the actual objection is to each, and what their relationship is to each other. As a result, all your criticisms will usually be strengthened.
2. Now write a critical analysis by explaining the most important of the above points in at least 500 words. Five hundred is a bare minimum; you may write more if you choose (and it is possible you may need to in order to make all the necessary points). You do not have to include every point from your notes, just the ones that are central to your critique. Always start by stating your main points of agreement with the author. For the criticisms, you should generally group points of the same kind together. For instance, you could go through the four types in the same order as given above, dedicating one paragraph or section for each: agreements first, followed by primary, secondary then tertiary criticisms. However, many writers prefer to do reverse order for the criticisms, explaining tertiary points first, then leading into secondary fixable flaws and ending with the primary fatal flaws. This pattern matches a typical narrative structure by building tension and ending with the knock-out punch at the end. If you have no reason to prefer a different structure, I recommend this one, preceded by a brief summary introduction at the beginning, and ending with a conclusion of the key take-aways:
   1. Introduction
   2. Agreements
   3. Tertiary Criticisms
   4. Secondary Criticisms
   5. Primary Criticisms
   6. Conclusions

You might consider the original ordering (primary-secondary-tertiary) if there is a tertiary point that you actually consider more problematic than any of the primary points. However, the reverse ordering actually still works well even in this case, but you need to give the reader a sense of “coming full circle” by returning to the fatal tertiary point right after your critique has culminated in the most damaging of the primary points. This creates a contrast between the worst of the logical flaws and the fatal non-logical flaw, which can really drive home to the reader that even though there are logical problems with the author’s argument, the underlying assumptions or values are, in this case, what ultimately matter more.

If some of the claims in the Agreements section were originally points of disagreement, and the author convinced you to change your mind, you should (almost always) treat these as special. If you changed your mind, there are probably others who might as well. You should explain your original disagreement and why you changed your mind. This can either be done in a personal style, as you explain your own conversion to the author’s viewpoint, or it can be done in a hypothetical style, in which you present your original objections as impersonal hypothetical objections and explain why the author’s argument refutes them. You can even present points that you agreed with from the very beginning in the same way—by refuting a hypothetical objection—just make sure the objection is plausible (do not force it).

One more thing: not all of the four types need to be represented in your analysis. If you have absolutely no points of agreement with the author, there will be no Agreements section. If the author completely convinces you of every point, you will *only* have an Agreements section. Usually, though, your points will not be so one-sided.

1. Submit both your detailed critical notes and your critical argument. This is Part III, the final installment of this assignment.