TPO61C1 Essay Discussion

Listen to a conversation between a student and the professor.

P: All right, Karen. I'm glad you stop by for our appointment. So we can chat before you write the final draft of your essay.

S: Is there something wrong? I mean, is there something I forgot?

P: Well, you've got the correct essay form and all that. You followed the writing guidelines very well. So there's no problem there. S: That's encouraging. Professor.

P: I'm just a little unclear about some of the content. You seem to be unsure of what you want to say in a few places. And I want you to take a look at that. Don't forget the assignment was to write a review of any book you read this term and then provide an analysis. I notice you've left out your analysis.

S: Oh, yeah. Um, I'm a little hazy about it's just that I’m not sure about the point the author is trying to make. Early in the book, the main character of Rebecca is excited to hear about her transfer to the overseas office, but then suddenly she's rather upset about going. When I sat down to write the analysis, I just wasn't sure why. I'm not sure if the author wanted the reader to think for Rebecc’s transfer was a good thing or a bad thing. I can't find reasons why Rebecca has this change of heart.

P: Well, the author is intentionally leaving this out. This sort of ambiguity you experience in the story is a technique the writer is intentionally creating. Nothing is ever black and white. S: Oh

P: We don't always understand the reasons we do things right? So you might want to analyze the ways the author uses words to hint it this uncertainty. Well, I prefer the term ‘’ambiguity.’’

S: But should I be focusing on the main character in the analysis? Or should I describe the authors writing techniques?

P: Well, it really depends on how you want to develop your essay. It would be interesting to describe the events surrounding the main characters, change of heart.

You can analyze the main character in detail, filling in the gaps to see if he can find reasons in her personality, why she'd suddenly change her thoughts about the transfer.

Of course, you should give examples of the words and writing techniques the author uses to create this point of view. S: Okay.

P: Now to go one step further in your analysis, do you think the main character is similar to the author? And the author leaves the reader with unanswered questions about the motives of the main character? Why would the author do this?

S: To create unknowing? To create an uncertain feeling.

P: Okay, now you're catching on. It might be an uncomfortable feeling, but this is what the author had in mind.

S: Ok. Thanks, professor. I'll go back and read the book more closely.