

Written Response Assignment

The background:

The following is an excerpt from a high school textbook. Leading up to this statement the authors refer to an event in which Coleridge (the famous English poet) agreed with a friend in observing that the beauty of a certain waterfall was sublime¹. The authors comment:

When the man said, "That is sublime," he appeared to be making a remark about the waterfall. . . . Actually . . . he was not making a remark about the waterfall, but a remark about his own feelings. What he was saying was really, I have feelings associate in my mind with the word "Sublime," or shortly, I have sublime feelings This confusion is continually present in language as we use it. We appear to be saying something very important about something: and actually we are only saying something about our own feelings.

The Assignment:

In a short essay, respond to this statement from a Christian worldview. On a scale of 1-10 how problematic do you think this statement is? Why? What Biblical critique or affirmations for this statement can you find? Your response should be well thought out, and well supported using documented references to Scripture that are introduce and explained properly. Your response should also be written well. You may use first person, but you should have a formal tone using purposeful syntax and sophisticated vocabulary. Employ whatever resources and devices of language and rhetoric that you can without making your writing seem cluttered or disingenuous.² Your essay must be typed, and it must be over 150 words. You may bring in a hard copy or email it to me, but if you email it and I do not get it by class on the day it is due, it will be counted late.

¹ The Meriam-Webster Dictionary gives the following definitions for "sublime" as an adjective

a : lofty, grand, or exalted in thought, expression, or manner

b : of outstanding spiritual, intellectual, or moral worth

c : tending to inspire awe usually because of elevated quality (as of beauty, nobility, or grandeur) or transcendent excellence

² What I mean by this is I want it to seem like it is a real response, not a catalogue of literary devices or merely an exercise in rhetorical ornamentation.