

Unit 2 Subjectivity Paper

Questions to consider:

- the characters' interrelationships and their sense of *self*. Why do they behave the way they do?
- how the characters view themselves and others and whether or not this affects their actions.
- how a sense of *self* was developed in characters and how this shapes their lives. What are they subjected to that causes them to act or react in certain ways.
- physical features of the characters and whether or not (and how) this subjects them to judgment by others within the film?
- what the story says about the subject and the self.

So how does the sociocultural "subject" come into being? We tend to experience ourselves as relatively free and autonomous, so how can it be that we are products of culture – a subject rather than a self, a passenger rather than a driver, an effect rather than a cause? Perhaps the first thing to point out is this: To say that the subject is a cultural product is *not* to say that we are somehow simply *controlled* by culture – by parents, corporations, governments, boring textbooks, etc. It is, rather, to say that we are inexorably *dependent* on social and cultural categories for our well-being and satisfaction. To say that the subject/self is *made* or *constructed* is to say that it's dependent on myriad things other than itself. (Nealon and Giroux 42-43)

Your Task: Analyze how the subject and the self works within one of the short stories listed in the course syllabus. Does the story coincide with Nealon and Giroux's claim that "we are products of our culture" and that "we are inexorably dependent on social and cultural categories?" How is this seen through the central conflicts of the story and the characters motivations, decisions and actions? Be sure to focus on self and subjectivity – don't get caught up in plot summary or which characters or most likable.

I strongly urge you to use the bulleted questions above when drafting your paper, but make sure your final paper isn't a laundry list of answers to these questions.

Guidelines:

- 5-9 pages finished prose, double-spaced
- Times New Roman, 12-point font size – no smaller, no larger
- At least three secondary sources (such as the "Subjectivity" and "Differences" chapters from *The Theory Toolbox*, any of the core readings we have done in this unit. You are also encouraged to use additional sources if necessary. Literary texts are not considered secondary sources.)
- Reflection Letter
- Due Date: Monday, April 15 Please submit your paper to www.turnitin.com by midnight.