Book Review Assignment

Length 4 – 5 pages

In this class we have looked at several books both fiction and non-fiction. For this assignment, we will be writing a review of one of the books discussed in class.

Your review should have an introduction that gives the reader a sense of the purpose of the book and the basic details and a brief synopsis. The conclusion should be impartial and support your endorsement or rejection of the text. Some questions to answer for your review:

**For non-fiction:**

The primary focus of a nonfiction review is the clarity of the text’s communication. Nonfiction books are typically written to convey information to the reader. As you build your review of such a text, you need to note a variety of important items:

• Evaluate the author’s intentions. What is the author’s primary purpose? What does he or she hope to communicate to the reader? Your estimation of the author’s success in this endeavor informs much of your final evaluation of the text’s worth.

• Consider the text’s organization. Does it progress in a logical fashion that is easily followed? Did you have any problems following the author’s train of thought?

• Identify its place in the larger body of scholarship. How well does your selected text match up to others like it in the field? What are its shortcomings and limitations?

• Take note of its support sections. Does the author provide substantive footnotes throughout? Is the index or the preface particularly useful? Features such as these contribute to a text’s overall clarity and effectiveness, and they can help it to stand out and earn favorable reviews when compared to similar nonfiction texts.

**For fiction:**

The primary focus of a fiction review is the author’s skill in crafting a compelling story. The success of a novel or short story can be measured, in part, by how well the text draws the reader into the plot and the characters. When writing a fiction review, you will need to answer the following questions:

• What was the story about? Typically, the events in the story are referred to as the plot. Your discussion of it should include the main developments without revealing the end to the readers of your review. You will also want to provide evaluative commentary on the plot. Was it engaging? If so, explain what made it so. If not, share that in your review.

• Who were the characters? Take some time to identify the main characters and what made them memorable. Were they believable? Did the author’s portrayal of them evoke sympathy? You may want to even identify your favorite character and explain why.

• What is the author’s style like? You will want to talk about the author’s tone, use of language, and quality of imagery. Works of fiction with perfectly serviceable plots can be ruined by a clumsy use of language or tone-deaf writing. If you encounter this in your selected text, be sure to identify this shortcoming in your review.