

Engl 1413. A1 – Fall 2020

Third Assignment – Essay on *The Rest is Silence*

Due: Thursday, Nov. 26, 2:00 PM

1. Follow and apply all the formatting rules introduced for the first and second assignments.
2. When you submit your file to Acorn, name it with your last name followed by your first initial, like so: CunninghamR.docx
3. Unless you have a compelling reason not to—and you’re going to have to share that reason with me—submit your third paper as a .docx file.
4. The introduction and the conclusion must be almost, though not quite, identical.

This third paper is to be written about *The Rest is Silence*, by Scott Fotheringham. The topic will be of your choosing. Some suggestions include: the impact of plastic and its destruction in the world of the novel; the slipperiness of gender categories; the effect of the past on the present; anything at all about human relationships. But these are merely ideas off the top of my head as I compose this assignment sheet. You are absolutely free to come up with a topic of your own.

Imagine you want to tell someone about this book you’re just read. Ask yourself why you feel that way. What is it about the book that would lead you to suggest it to someone? Therein lies your interest, and I encourage you to investigate it.

Your third paper should be an essay. The word “essay” comes from the word “assay,” and to assay means to try, or to test. The essay, properly understood, is a mechanism through which the author of the essay *tests* their own understanding of a topic. Show yourself what you think about the topic you choose.

To test your understanding this way, you must use, and base your argument on, evidence. And the evidence you’ll use is the words on the page of *The Rest is Silence*. What you want to say about the book *must* be backed up by words from the book. For example, if I want to say “Benny never felt comfortable in her own skin” I’m going to have to follow that up with something like the following quotation: “she had hated her body for too long, hated what it had been doing to her . . .” (Fotherham 231). So, if I put them together, it looks something like this:

Benny never felt comfortable in her own skin, as can be seen when we are told that she had hated her body for too long, hated what it had been doing to her . . .”
(Fotherham 231).

Do not forget to base what you say on evidence from the text!

Here’s some general advice that those who submit the best papers will heed.

- A. Use your title to communicate the main idea of your paper
- B. Get to the point immediately. Avoid generalities about novels, literature, history, people, etc. Get to the point: why should a busy person take the time to read your essay?
- C. Tell your reader what s/he will encounter in the essay. You should probably do this twice: once for you, to serve as an outline for your writing, and the second time for your reader.

The second time can only be done after you have completed the paper because only then can you know the result of the test (remember? Essay = test).

D. Offer the rest of your essay / argument.

1. Write a conclusion in which you explain to your readers what you have just said and, creatively and briefly, why we readers should agree with your position. Once you've written this conclusion, you can go back and revise your introduction to satisfy instruction 3, above.