

Assignment #5

You've now engaged in at least two readings of Part II of Percy's essay and one reading of Part I, and you've had a chance to discuss what you and others have noticed about his essay. For this assignment, you will write an essay that attempts to work out more thoroughly the difficulties you've had with Percy's essay and that discusses the ways in which you've used writing, class discussions, note-taking, and your colleagues' texts as a means of arriving at different or alternative understanding of the text and of these difficulties.

You should begin by describing terms, ideas, and/or passages that you have had or continue to have difficulty understanding—either because they are hard to understand in and of themselves or because you can't see how they fit in with other terms, ideas and/or passages in the essay. I realize that I am asking you to write about Percy's essay in a way that might be new to you: to focus not on what you feel you do understand at this point but on what you do not. The purpose of having you do this is to give you an opportunity to use writing not merely to record, but to actually work through (and work out) what is difficult to understand. You should use your writing to explain things to yourself and your reader.

To do this effectively, you'll need to do more than create a list of what you find difficult. Instead, you'll need to take the time to focus on why a particular term, idea, or passage seems confusing or difficult and in what possible ways it might be understood. So, in this assignment, you will not only raise questions but also consider possible answers to those questions. You can and should refer to (even quote from) the two sets of notes you've taken, your earlier essay in response to Part II, your colleagues' writing, and class discussion to help explain the process by which you've attempted to understand "The Loss of the Creature."

This essay should be at least three (3) pages long. It's understood that you won't be writing a full and final response to Percy's essay (in fact, in many ways this essay might not be seen as a "response" to Percy's essay at all but rather an exploration of your process of understanding a difficult text). Nonetheless, you should attempt in this draft to explain yourself clearly (and this will involve, among other things, quoting from Percy's text to identify passages, words, and statements that seem to have contributed to your difficulties or interfered with your understanding). This assignment should be typed. Bring a hard copy to class for small group workshop.