

Preparation: Think of ways characters in “Mr. Pirzada,” “Shaman,” and other readings affected the narrators; next, think of characters, narrators, texts, from this semester or people in your service activity who have affected you. You might identify with a character, narrator, or person; you might feel some other connection. Formulate a tentative statement about what the character/text/person can teach you.

Due Date: Class #17 for the draft; you will have time over the holiday weekend to work (unconsciously, perhaps). The revision is due Class #19.

READING NOTES ALSO DUE: Two days after Class #17.

Audience: The reading public—think of publishing this online or in a magazine.

Length: 4-6 pages in draft; 5-7 in revision. N.B.: Some of you should write more.

Purpose: To engage with the readings or service--specifically, a character, author, text, person or experience that has significantly affected you. This requires first describing the person so s/he comes alive in the essay and second, showing how this individual influenced you: as a model, friend who allows you to express parts of yourself, example of a liberating way of thinking, a negative example, etc.

For the first requirement, portraying the person, use relevant physical description, revealing actions and characteristics, and relevant attitudes (political ones may not matter for this paper; words, ideas, fantasies, clothing, manners, gesture may).

For the second requirement, state the individual’s effect on you as *explicitly and precisely* as possible. For example, “My aunt’s creativity and daring encouraged me to step outside the life my parents approved while they also warned me about the possible costs: alienation from family, exclusion from the social circle, and initial loneliness.” Aim for explicit statements with fine degrees of discrimination (in the good sense). That is, avoid generalities.

Pay attention to techniques of establishing context, leading into specific events, narrating dialogue and action, and interpreting events in terms of either another person’s reactions or your own or both. Decide which essay or story you like best and consider why; you may use an essay as a model. Try talking about the person you choose to describe, either with a classmate or friend.

Tips: Remember that the essay may *explore your reactions and character* as much as it explores the other person’s. This part may occur more in **the revision than in the draft**. Given our schedule, you may want to put as **much of the relationship and your character into the 1st essay as possible**.