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| ENG 1101  Essay #3  **Response Essay to**  **Dinaw Mengestu** |

Length: about 2 1/2 pages, typed

MLA Format

No Works Cited page is required

Note: this is not an in-class assignment

**DUE: Tuesday, April 21, 2015**

For this essay you will write a response to works by or about Dinaw Mengestu:

* The novel excerpt (fiction): “Addis Ababa, 1977”
* The article by Aida Edemarium about Dinaw Mengestu, “The Man in the Middle”

You have three different ways to respond to these works: a comparative essay, a narrative essay, or a creative option. Whichever essay you choose, aim for 2 ½ pages typed in MLA format.

1. As we discussed in class, reading and understanding fiction requires different skills than reading and writing non-fiction. **Write an essay that compares your expectations and strategies for reading a work you understand to be “fiction” with your expectations and strategies for reading a work you understand to be “non-fiction.”** Questions raised in our class included: what do we mean when we say a story is “true”? What responsibility does the writer have toward the reader? **Your thesis** might be a recommendation to others who are considering ways to approach reading fiction and non-fiction; your thesis might also indicate to your reader which genre you prefer to read, using the comparison to support why you prefer reading non-fiction or fiction.
2. **Write an essay that explores an experience you had in which you felt that you were caught between two different cultures or lifestyles**, as Dinaw Mengestu is portrayed in Aida Edemarium’s essay “The Man in the Middle.” You may be dealing with two countries, as Mengestu discusses, or you might be navigating between your family’s religious beliefs and your own; between two philosophies about education (friends who don’t think college is worthwhile while you (I hope) do); or some other decision that puts you in a position in which you feel isolated. In your essay, clearly define the “middle” you are caught in. Your essay should explore one possible solution (as Edemarium’s essay does) and your analysis about whether or not this solution has been effective. If you use this essay, you must reference Aida Edemarium’s essay.
3. **Write a short work of fiction that explores a specific scene involving a family trauma.** As in the story “Addis Ababa, 1977,” you must show action and include dialog between the characters. Describe time and place and make the conflict as clear as possible. Give the characters fictional names. As in the story, try to tell the story from one character’s point of view.

* If you choose this essay, write one paragraph that discusses how reading “Addis Ababa, 1977” influenced or guided you in writing this fiction.