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Free-Write Topics

1. In *Literary Theory*, the following assertion is made: “Cultural studies does not believe that its intellectual work *will* make a difference. That would be overweening, not to say naïve. It believes that its work ‘is supposed to make a difference.’ What does Culler mean by this statement? What would postmodernists and poststructuralists think of this idea as presented by Belsey and Butler?”
2. Choose one idea, term, statement, claim, etc. from chapter 3 of each text. Explain the idea and its significance using your own words. Why did you choose this particular concept over others discussed in the chapter? How does this concept relate/not relate to the other terms you chose?
3. Chapter 3 in *Literary Theory* often refers to changes that require students to consider new forms of expression when analyzing literature. It states that “literary excellence doesn’t determine what is studied” (48). Works must be representative of something: “The value of studying Shakespeare rather than soap operas can *no longer* be taken for granted and needs to be argued” (53). According to Culler, why is it important to study popular culture? What has changed? Has anything changed? Haven’t there always been other forms of expression? What would postmodernists and poststructuralists think of these arguments about change and Culler’s claims?
4. What is the significance of Abel Barbin’s story in chapter 3 of *Poststructuralism*? How does this story relate to the ideas of self and identity as discussed in *Postmodernism*? Finally, based on the definitions of culture as described by Culler, what can be said about Abel’s culture and society as compared to our own?