

Amer. Studies 316, Rutgers University, Fall 2015
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Below is a sample working thesis paragraph written in the format I want you to use for your first close reading paper. It is *not* a “perfect” thesis paragraph. As you read, please make note of: (1) The strengths and weaknesses of the student’s **close reading** of the opening block quote- Which aspects of this analysis were compelling? What details does the student miss or need to elaborate on? (2) Identify the student’s **thesis statement**- What is effective about it? What needs to be developed further?

Sample Student Thesis

No money, no papers. Who will remove microline? Who will give her job? When going for job, must fix hair so as to hide scars at Insertion Points. When will she ever see her home + family again? Why would she do this? Why would she ruin all, leave our yard? Could have had nice long run w/ us. What in the world was she seeking? What could she want so much, that would make her pull such desperate stunt? (26)

In this quote the narrator expresses his confusion over why the Semplica Girls chose to run away once their wire is cut. Although he begins by contemplating what will happen to the girls in this unfamiliar land, wondering, “Who will remove microline? Who will give her job?,” when he asks, “Why would she ruin all, leave our yard?,” we can see that the narrator is still focused only on his family. We do not see his concern for the Semplica Girls’ futures until they have affected his life, both financially and socially. Their escape means that his family might lose their home and newfound status in the community. Another important detail to note is how the narrator uses the pronoun “she” to describe the women throughout the passage. This is significant because there is not only one Semplica Girl escaping, but four. By using a singular instead of plural pronoun, the narrator depicts all four women as one person rather than viewing each as an individual person. This illustrates their dehumanization within the story. But while the Semplica Girls are dehumanized and may initially appear as passive characters because they are simply hung from a wire as yard ornaments, they signify much more than mere decorative objects. In “The Semplica-Girl Diaries” we learn that these women come from impoverished, foreign countries to earn money for their family’s survival and they escape from their job as Semplica Girls to attempt to better their lives and futures. Ultimately, the Semplica Girls are active characters and display women’s ability, drive, and sacrifice to provide for and support their families.