**Nineteenth Century Ecologies / CLOSE READING ASSIGNMENT**

*Due Tuesday, November 5, at the beginning of class, in hard copy.*



*Study: At a Reading Desk* (1877). Lord F. Leighton, oil on canvas

From the syllabus:

**Close reading exercise.**(2 pages, single spaced)  Details for this exercise in close reading will be provided, but essentially this is an assignment in the hyperbolically slow apprehension of a textual artifact.  Your task will be to take time to appreciate this object in all its dynamic specificity: terms, tips, and helpful suggestions will be provided.  You are not meant to argue but to *read*: your job is to notice everything.  Details to be announced.

**Details:**

Please produce a 2 page, **single-spaced** document (in normal font, with normal margins, c. 1,000 words) dedicated to the intimate and technically sophisticated *description* of a small section of text from *one of our primary (i.e. nineteenth-century) texts so far*. By “a small section of text” I mean very small: no more than a short paragraph of prose (short paragraph = 2-4 sentences). Your 1,000 words should include detailed citations of the text you’re describing. The text you choose is up to you – but please do make a plan to see me if you’d like to talk it over.

Your job is to notice absolutely everything about this selection: you should deploy **at least four** (but probably many more) of the terms in the handout of “critical terms” for literary study. You should notice grammatical structures (subjects, verbs, objects, etc.) You should notice syntactical form: passive voice or active? Future tense or past? You should notice metaphor, simile, and figures of speech. No detail is too small. Note that here you are **not being asked to make an argument** about your observations; rather, the task is simply to **apprehend and record with as much specificity as you can the specific technical dynamics of the piece of text you select**. The task, again, is to observe fanatically, and with hyperbolic technical specificity. Cut all loose talk. Sharpen. Repeat.

**IMPORTANT: Please be sure to reproduce the section of text you are reading. This quotation does not count toward your 1,000 words.**

No arguments, only reading. An exercise in advanced, highly detailed, and hyperattentive description. You will be graded on the fidelity with which you dedicate yourself to this task. Please have fun.