Reading Reflection Assignment Instructions

Instructions: Respond to the following questions and upload or copy and paste your response below. Be sure to respond thoroughly to the prompts and follow the guidelines provided. In addition, provide in-text citations and a works cited entry for the source references (Edmundson and hooks). Follow the guidelines in your handbook for citing an essay from an anthology.

Response Questions:

1. In “Who Are You and What Are You Doing Here?” Mark Edmundson criticizes higher education as a place where students want easy degrees, professors want to research rather than teach, and administrators want impressive numbers. In contrast, Edmundson believes that, whether students are rich or poor, college isn’t merely about obtaining a degree, but should be about self-discovery and encounters with new ideas. He says, “The quest at the center of a liberal arts education is not a luxury quest; it’s a necessity quest. If you do not undertake it, you risk leading a life of desperation….For you risk trying to be someone other than who you are, which, in the long run, is killing” (410). Ultimately, Edmundson argues that serious students will have to “fight” to get a true education while in college. To what extent do you agree with his argument about the current state of higher education and the purpose of pursuing a college degree? (For instance, in your experience, are most college educators, administrators, and students focused on something other than learning/educating? Should education be about self-discovery and seeking truth? Should it be about something else? Is the answer the same for both the rich and the poor as he claims?) Provide examples and discussion.

2. In “Seeing and Making Culture: Representing the Poor,” bell hooks argues that the media consistently provides negative, stereotypical representations of the poor as “shiftless, mindless, lazy, dishonest, and unworthy” (488). Too often, according to hooks, these negative portrayals of poor, immoral characters appear in contrast to positive portrayals of rich, benevolent characters. To what extent do you agree with the author’s argument about the representations of the poor in the media (television, movies, the news, advertising, and/or social media) and its impact on viewers? Can you think of examples that support or negate her argument? Have you or people you know internalized any of the negative views she describes? Provide examples and discussion.

NOTE: Hooks’ argument hinges on an understanding that the effects of media portrayals can be subconscious. That is, we may not realize that media alters behaviors and thinking patterns as it happens. However, through media portrayals over time, we may internalize ideas and attitudes about ourselves or others without fully realizing it.