THESIS AND EVIDENCE IN A LITERARY TEXT

Instructor: April Miller

Brief description of in-class writing exercise:
- Using the same set of evidence to support opposing theses.

Note to instructor: For this exercise, the class will be divided into two groups—one for each thesis statement.

Note to students: Below, you will find one thesis statement and three quotes from Djuna Barnes's short story, "The Terrible Peacock." For each of these quotes, write one or two sentences explaining how this textual evidence could be used to substantiate the thesis statement.

THESIS 1: In "The Terrible Peacock," Barnes utilizes the femme fatale in order to expose women's moral weaknesses and to caution men of the inherent dangers posed by such lecherous women.

THESIS 2: In "The Terrible Peacock," Barnes utilizes the femme fatale in order to expose men's moral weakness and tendency to become unintelligent and irrational when confronted by a beautiful woman.

Evidence:

"Garvey had capitulated long ago. Lilac Jane? Bah! What were a thousand Lilac Janes to this glorious creature, this Venus Anadyomene—Aphrodite of the Sea-Foam? In the bright light of the teacroom her green eyes were greener, her red hair redder, her white throat whiter. He would have given a Texas ranch for her, with the cattle thrown in."

"The newest victim of her lures (for such even Garvey recognized him to be) was an elderly business man, inclined to corpulency, with a free and roving eye. Garvey hated him with a bitter hatred. The Peacock danced once with him, then abandoned him, gasping flabbily, to another girl's tender mercies."

"He didn't care. Lilac Jane was definitely disposed in favor of a green goddess whose lure quite possibly spelled destruction. But he didn't care. He told the city editor that the Peacock story would be available the next day, and added the mental reservation, 'if I haven't resigned.' And he mooned through the work in a trance that made for serious errors in his 'copy.'"