AP Literature Summer Assignment 2023-24

Professors and other informed readers see symbols, archetypes, and patterns because those things are there -- if you have learned to look for them. As Foster says, you learn to recognize the literary conventions the "same way you get to Carnegie Hall. Practice" (xiv).

Please read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas Foster. I have provided a PDF on Google Classroom, but you may want to buy your own. It is worth having. The assignment page numbers here are from the 2003 edition, but all these prompts will work for the 2014 edition. You will just have to adjust the pages. I also have copy of an outline of the book and works referenced in the book on Google Classroom.

Now, choose any five (5) of the following writing prompts and write a multi-paragraphed (NOT A FULL ESSAY) response using specifics and text whenever necessary. Label each response with the chapter title of the prompt. Look up words with which you are not familiar in these prompts. I have included a AP Handbook on Google Classroom which includes a glossary using terms in the context of literature- so they are correct for your use in this class. Follow the directions and answer the prompt, understanding they are general for a reason, for you to create focus. I know I do not have to say this, but do your own work. These are choices, and you are permitted to formulate and write on your own thoughts and theories. You will have to think for yourself in this class, so please do not sell yourself short with cheating or crutches.

These short writing assignments will let you practice your literary analysis, and they will help me get to know you and your literary tastes. Whenever I ask for an example from literature, you may use short stories, novels, plays, poems, or films (Yes, film is a literary genre). If your literary repertoire is thin and undeveloped, use the Appendix or the reference list in Google Classroom to jog your memory or to select additional works to explore. At the very least, watch some of the "Movies to Read" that are listed on pages 293-294. Again, response should be paragraphs, not pages.

NOTE: Even though this is analytical writing, you may use "I" if you deem it important to do so; remember, however, that most uses of "I" are just filler. For example, "I think the wolf is the most important character in 'Little Red Ridinghood'" is filler. As you compose each written response, re-phrase the prompt as part of your thesis. In other words, we should be able to tell which question you are answering without referring back to the prompts.

Concerning Mechanics: pay special attention to pronouns. Make antecedents clear. Say Foster first; not "he." No “you.” Remember to capitalize and punctuate titles properly for each genre. Avoid run-ons with fanboys, thincfitm, and wawawabusbiu. Please embrace the apostrophe when writing possessives.

**Prompts: Choose at least 5, please.**

Introduction: How'd He Do That?

How do memory, symbol, and pattern affect the reading of literature? How does the recognition of patterns make it easier to read complicated literature? Discuss a time when your appreciation of a literary work was enhanced by understanding symbol or pattern.

Chapter 1 -- Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not)

List the five aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to something you have read (or viewed) in the form used on pages 3-5.

Chapter 2 -- Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion

Choose a meal from a literary work and apply the ideas of Chapter 2 to this literary depiction.

Chapter 3: --Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires

What are the essentials of the Vampire story? Apply this to a literary work you have read or viewed.

Chapter 4 -- If It's Square, It's a Sonnet

Select three sonnets and show which form they are. Discuss how their content reflects the form. (Submit copies of the sonnets, marked to show your analysis).

Chapter 5 --Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?

Define intertextuality. Discuss three examples of intertextuality that have helped you in reading specific works.

Chapter 6 -- When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare...

Discuss a work with which you are familiar that alludes to or reflects Shakespeare. Show how the author uses this connection thematically. Read pages 44-46 carefully. In these pages, Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through both plot and theme. In your discussion, focus on theme.

Chapter 7 -- ...Or the Bible

Discuss Biblical allusions that Foster does not mention. Ow might they be used in a contemporary story as an allusion?

Chapter 8 -- Hanseldee and Greteldum

Think of a work of literature that reflects a fairy tale. Discuss the parallels. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation?

Chapter 9 -- It's Greek to Me

Propose and pitch an idea for a contemporary story which alludes to Greek mythology- a myth or character- as its foundation. Explain the function of the allusion. If an allegory, defend that as well.

Chapter 10 -- It's More Than Just Rain or Snow

Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work beyond its function in plot (the storyline or subject).

Chapter 11 --...More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence

Present examples of two kinds of violence found in literature. Show how the effects are different. Use actual works to prove your theory.

Chapter 12 -- Is That a Symbol?

Use the process described on page 106 and investigate the symbolism of the fence in "Araby." (Mangan's sister stands behind it.)

Chapter 13 -- It's All Political

Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." Use his criteria to prove how one of the major works assigned to you in your high school journey is political.

Chapter 14 -- Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too

Apply the criteria on page 119 to a major character in a significant literary work. Try to choose a character that will have many matches. This is a particularly apt tool for analyzing film.

Chapter 15 -- Flights of Fancy

Select a literary work in which flight signifies escape or freedom. Explain in detail.

Chapter 16 -- It's All About Sex...

Chapter 17 -- ...Except the Sex

The key idea from this chapter is that "scenes in which sex is coded rather than explicit can work at multiple levels and sometimes be more intense that literal depictions" (141). In other words, sex is often suggested with much more art and effort than it is described, and, if the author is doing their job, it reflects and creates theme or character. Choose a novel or movie in which sex is suggested, but not described, and discuss how the relationship is suggested and how this implication affects the theme or develops characterization.

Chapter 18 -- If She Comes Up, It's Baptism

Think of a "baptism scene" from a significant literary work. How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.

Chapter 19 -- Geography Matters...

Identify and discuss at least four different aspects of a specific literary work that Foster would classify under "geography." Use real or hypothetical examples to defend the significance of each.

Chapter 20 -- ...So Does Season

Find a poem that mentions a specific season. Then discuss how the poet uses the season in a meaningful, traditional, or unusual way. (Submit a copy of the poem with your analysis.)

Interlude -- One Story

Write your own definition for archetype. Then identify an archetypal story and apply it to a literary work with which you are familiar.

Chapter 21 -- Marked for Greatness

Select a character with a physical imperfection and analyze its implications for characterization.

Chapter 22 -- He's Blind for a Reason, You Know

Chapter 23 -- It's Never Just Heart Disease...

Chapter 24 -- ...And Rarely Just Illness

Recall a character who died of a disease or who are literally or spiritually blind in a literary work. Consider how the death or the blindness reflect the "principles governing the use of disease [or blindness] in literature" (215-217). Discuss the effectiveness as related to charaterization, theme, or symbolism.

Chapter 25 -- Don't Read with Your Eyes

After reading Chapter 25, choose a scene or episode from a novel, play or epic written before the twentieth century. Contrast how it could be viewed by a reader from the twenty-first century with how it might be viewed by a contemporary reader. Focus on specific assumptions that the author makes, assumptions that would not make it in this century.

Chapter 26 -- Is He Serious? And Other Ironies

Select an ironic literary work and explain the multivocal nature of the irony in the work.

Envoi

Choose a motif not discussed in this book (as the horse reference on page 280) and note its appearance in three or four different works. What does this idea seem to signify?

Adapted from Assignments originally developed by Donna Anglin. Notes by Marti Nelson.