

## **Writing Assignments for *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster (Adapted from Donna Anglin)**

### **Assignment Details:**

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, or films (Yes, film is a literary genre). If your literary repertoire is thin and undeveloped, use the Appendix 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. **Please note that your responses should be paragraphs -- not pages!**

Put the title on the top of each paper turned in so that I will know which chapter you are referring to. Turn in on the date due (you will fill in blanks as they are announced), or on the day you return when absent (with appropriate form). Late work will require a Paynter Point for each day late. Use the HRLP notes given you to help you identify works that might be used in your answer. Remember that many of these works can be found online in full-text. Use the Internet for any definition clarification or identifications (such as Greek gods) you may need.

Concerning mechanics, pay special attention to pronouns. Be clear on your identifications. Example: Say Foster first; not "he." Remember to capitalize and punctuate titles properly for each genre. This is a writing assignment, so do not get sloppy. You may type your answer or it can be hand-written (legible, please). There is no minimum or maximum, but you know if you have answered the question or just put "stuff" on the page. Grades are for answers only. Put your name on the paper. Any without a name will just be put in the trash.

These are a daily grade, but there will not be an automatic 100. If you do not answer the question or are "off base" to an extent that it is obvious that you did not read the chapter, you will receive little if any credit. If it is reasonably clear that you copied your response from another (including Internet sources), you will receive a zero and if identified as the work of another student, so will your provider. **DO NOT COPY FROM ONE ANOTHER.** If this happens more than once you will also receive a referral, and so will your provider.

### **\_\_\_\_\_ 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 that have helped you in reading specific works.

### \_\_\_\_\_ **Chapter 6 -- When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare...**

Discuss a work that you are familiar with 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**

Read "Araby" (available online). Discuss Biblical allusions that Foster does not mention. Look at the example of the "two great jars." Be creative and imaginative in these connections.

### \_\_\_\_\_ **Chapter 8 -- Hansel and Gretel**

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**

Write a free verse poem derived or inspired by characters or situations from Greek mythology. Be prepared to share your poem with the class. Note that there are extensive links to classical mythology on the Internet.

### \_\_\_\_\_ **Chapter 10 -- It's More Than Just Rain or Snow**

Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work, not in terms of plot.

### **Interlude -- Does He Mean That**

### \_\_\_\_\_ **Chapter 11 --...More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence**

Present examples of the two kinds of violence found in literature. Show how the effects are different.

## \_\_\_\_\_ **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 show that one of the works you have read in high school 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 -- for example, *Star Wars*, *Cool Hand Luke*, *Excalibur*, *Malcolm X*, *Braveheart*, *Spartacus*, *Gladiator* and *Ben-Hur*.

## \_\_\_\_\_ **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**

OK ..the sex chapters. 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 than 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 his 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...**

Discuss at least four different aspects of a specific literary work that Foster would classify under "geography."

## \_\_\_\_\_ **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**

Figure out Harry Potter's scar. If you aren't familiar with Harry Potter, select another 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 two characters who died of a disease in a literary work. Consider how these deaths reflect the "principles governing the use of disease in literature" (215-217). Discuss the effectiveness of the death as related to plot, 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 (from the century written). 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.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Chapter 27 -- A Test Case**

Read "The Garden Party" by Katherine Mansfield, the short story starting on page 245. Complete the exercise on pages 265-266, following the directions exactly. Then compare your writing with the three examples. How did you do? What does the essay that follows comparing Laura with Persephone add to your appreciation of Mansfield's story?

\_\_\_\_\_ **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?

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