

Reading Literature Like a Professor

Name: _____

Consider the following elements from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* as they apply to a specific novel, play, poem, or short story. Be prepared to discuss your observations in class.

Title & Author:		
Chapter from <i>Professor</i>	Element	Observation & Significance (What do you notice?) & (Why is it important?)
Introduction "Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?" (5)	Memory, Pattern, Archetype "Life and books fall into similar patterns. [...] Literature is full of patterns." "This intertextual dialogue deepens and enriches the reading experience, bringing multiple layers of meaning to the text."	
"Geography Matters..." (19) "...So Does Season" (20)	Setting & Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time, season • Place, space, shape 	
"Marked for Greatness" (21) "He's Blind for a Reason, You Know" (22) "It's Never Just Heart Disease" (23) "...And Rarely Just Illness" (24)	Physical Characteristics "The hero is marked in some way." "So if a writer brings up a physical problem or handicap or deficiency, he probably means something by it." Indiana Jones principle: "If you want your audience to know something important about your character (or the work at large), introduce it early, before you need it." "When a writer employs [disease or sickness] directly or indirectly, he's making a statement about the victim of the disease."	
"Every Trip is a Quest (Except When It's Not)" (1)	Quest "The real reason for a quest is always self-knowledge." "Some days I just drive to work – no adventures, no growth. [...] Sometimes plot requires that a writer get a character from home to work and back again. That said, when a character hits the road, we should start to pay attention."	

<p>"Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion" (2)</p> <p>"It's All About Sex..." (16)</p> <p>"...Except Sex" (17)</p>	<p>Communion</p> <p>"Whenever people eat or drink, it's communion."</p>	
<p>"Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires" (3)</p>	<p>Vampires & Ghosts</p> <p>"Ghosts and vampires are never only about ghosts and vampires."</p> <p>"As long as people act toward their fellows in exploitive and selfish ways, the vampire will be with us."</p>	
<p>"Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?" (5)</p> <p>"When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare" (6)</p> <p>"...Or the Bible" (7)</p> <p>"Hansel and Gretel" (8)</p> <p>"It's Greek to Me" (9)</p>	<p>Allusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biblical • Mythological • Fairy Tales • Shakespeare • Other 	
<p>"It's More Than Just Rain or Snow" (10)</p> <p>"If She Comes Up, It's Baptism" (18)</p>	<p>Water</p> <p>"It's never just rain."</p> <p>"If she comes up, it's baptism."</p>	
<p>"More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Acts of Violence" (11)</p>	<p>Violence</p> <p>Character-on character: "Violence is one of the most personal and even intimate acts between human beings, but it can also be cultural and societal in its implications. [...] It may be a metaphor."</p> <p>Violence without agency: "corruption," "innocence to experience," "What does this type of misfortune represent thematically?"</p>	
<p>"Is That a Symbol?" (12)</p>	<p>Symbol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Object • Event • Color • Name • Other 	
<p>"It's All Political" (13)</p>	<p>Political Statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Issues <p>"Dickens picks Scrooge not because he's unique but because he's representative, because there's something of Scrooge in us and society. We can have no doubt that the story is meant to change us and through us to change society."</p>	
<p>"Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too" (14)</p>	<p>Christ Figure</p> <p>"Perhaps the parallel deepens our sense of the character's sacrifice if we see it somehow similar to the greatest sacrifice we know of."</p>	

"Flights of Fancy" (15)	Flight "Flight is freedom [...but] irony trumps everything."		
"Don't Read with Your Eyes" (25)	Historical perspective "Don't read from your own fixed position in the Year of our Lord two thousand and some. Instead try to find a reading perspective that allows for sympathy with the historical moment of the story, that understands the text as having been written against its own social, historical, cultural, and personal background."		
"Is He Serious? And Other Ironies" (26)	Irony "Irony – sometimes comic, sometimes tragic, sometimes wry or perplexing – provides additional richness to the literary dish. And it certainly keeps us readers on our toes, inviting us, compelling us, to dig through layers of possible meaning and competing signification. We must remember: irony trumps everything. "		
Special Focus	Textbook Element (Plot & Structure, Characterization, Point of View, Theme, Symbol, Allegory, Fantasy, Humor & Irony)	Relevant elements from the chapter introduction present in the text:	Significance:

Other notes & considerations: