

HOW
to
READ
Lit
LIKE A
PROFESSOR



analysis:

When you move beyond the affective/emotional response of a text to engage with the textual elements of a text. Feelings no longer matter.

- ✓ Where did that effect come from?
- ✓ Whom does this character resemble?
- ✓ Where have I seen this situation before?
- ✓ Didn't author say that?

More beyond your emotions and look for symbols and patterns. Rely on your memory of other texts. Build back ground... READ. MORE.

INTRODUCTION: How'd He Do That?



Faustian Legend

- Something hero wants (power, knowledge, etc.)
- hero gives up soul/identity

PATTERN

Grammar of literature

= language of reading
a set of conventions, patterns, codes, and rules employed by writers.
READERS + WRITERS agree on meaning

Stories/Novels

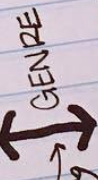
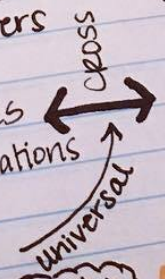
- types of characters
- plot rhythms
- chapter structures
- point of view limitations
- setting
- theme/symbol

POEMS

- form
- structure
- rhythm
- rhyme
- fig. lang.
- Speaker

PLAYS

- plot
- character
- Act structures
- setting
- theme/symbol



{MEMORY}

Where have I seen this before? What else has the same themes? Same characters? Etc.

{SYMBOL}

Everything is a symbol of something until proven otherwise.
Metaphor? Analogy? IMAGINATION

{PATTERN}

What elements add to the significance? What are the tropes? Archetypes?

Spring, new life, young lambs, children skipping

SPRING/SNOW/DARKNESS/SLEEP

rebirth, fertility, renewal

ABSTRACT

NOTE: "Always" and "never" are not words that have much meaning in literary study... Someone will come along and disrupt the absolute... pay attention to the PATTERNS, though

CHAPTER 1: Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not)

A knight a dangerous road a Holy Grail at least one dragon one evil knight one princess

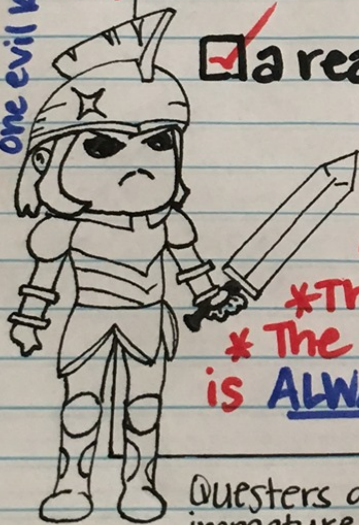
5 ASPECTS of the QUEST

- a quester
- a place to go
- a stated reason to go there
- challenges + trials enroute
- a real reason to go there

stated goal fades away

mistaken for real mission

Star Wars, Harry Potter



*The REAL reason for a quest NEVER involves the stated reason.

*Their quest is EDUCATIONAL.

*The REAL reason for a quest is ALWAYS self-knowledge.

Ex: Huck Finn, Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, Harry Potter, Hunger Games

Questers are usually young, inexperienced, immature, and sheltered.

BILDUNGSROMAN

genre that focuses on the psychological and/or moral growth of the protagonist.

"Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar." - Freud

↳ it is equally true that just as cigars maybe just cigars, so sometimes they are not.

apocryphal (dubious/authenticity)

Not always holy or decent.

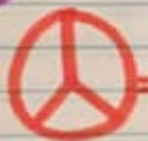
CHAPTER 2: Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion

COMMUNION

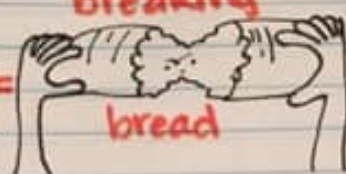
whenever people eat or drink together.

the sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts or feelings at the mental or spiritual level.

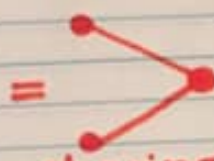
"I'm with you, I like you, we form a community together" (8).



peace



breaking bread



sharing

how

CHARACTERS

are getting along OR

not getting along.

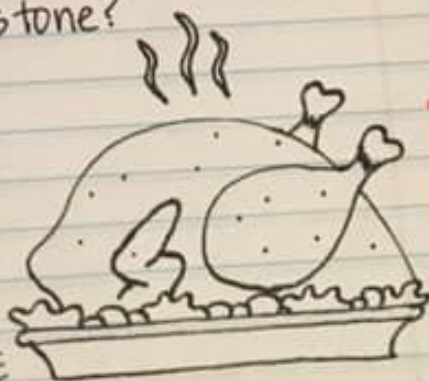
Q

- What kind of communion?
- What kind of result can it achieve?
- What is the dinner's tone?

KIND | RESULT

SEXUAL HANG-UPS
 FAILED
 DEATH
 EDUCATION

CONSUMING DESIRE
 CHANCE TO OVERCOME
 BAD SIGN
 COMMON EXPERIENCE
 CHANCE TO LEARN FROM OTHERS.



"We're all in this TOGETHER." (14).

"WRITING A MEAL SCENE IS SO INHERENTLY UNINTERESTING AND SO DIFFICULT, THAT THERE REALLY NEEDS TO BE SOME COMPELLING REASON TO INCLUDE ONE." (8)

Vampire: alluring, dangerous, mysterious, tends to focus on beautiful, unmarried (19th c. = virginal) women. **Victims** tend to become more like him/her.

CHAPTER 3: Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires

- an older figure representing corrupt, outworn values
not always an actual vampire, ghost, or doppelgänger
- a young, preferably virginal female
not always in visible form
- a stripping away of her youth, energy, virtue, virginity
have to do with things beyond themselves
- a continuance of the life force of the old male
- the death or destruction of the young woman.

ESSENTIALS of the VAMPIRE STORY

Vampirism is often about things other than literal vampirism:

- selfishness
- exploitation
- a refusal to respect the autonomy of other people
- Etc. (16).

★ A vampire is selfish; uses others to get what it wants.

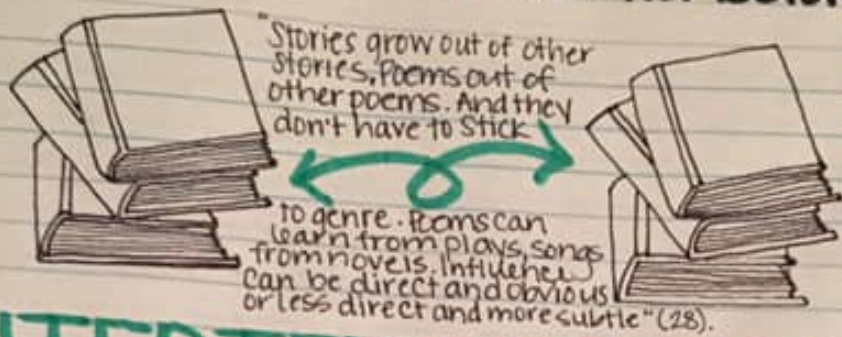
ghosts and vampires are never only about ghosts and vampires (18).



VICTORIAN: believed in the dual nature of humans; writers found ways to write about taboo subjects and issues (sex and sexuality) in indirect ways and other, hidden forms (17). (1837-1901)

"There is no such thing as a wholly original work of literature" (24). "There's only one story. Ever. One" (27).

CHAPTER 4: Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?



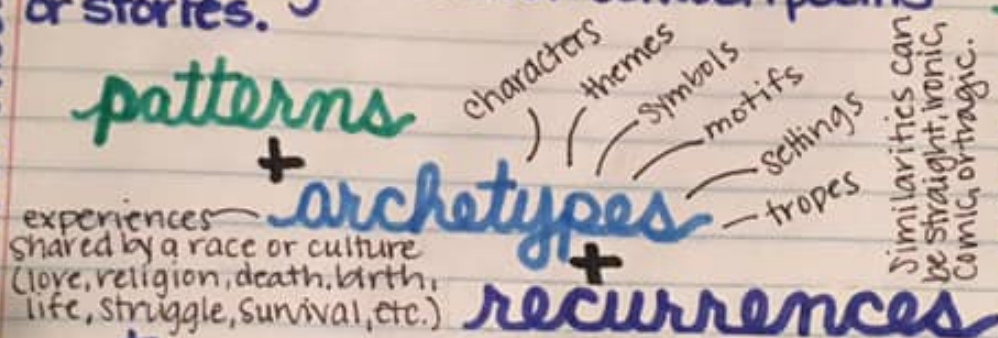
READ MORE.

↳ current events

↳ childhood experiences ↳ past reading ↳ every movie ever seen ↳ life

Develop a habit of asking where you've seen something before.

INTERTEXTUALITY: the ongoing interaction between poems or stories.



History + Culture + Literature

"Literature grows out of other literature" (24). New books have dialogues with older ones.

aha! factor the delight we feel at recognizing a familiar component from earlier experience (28).

Once you recognize a story from something else you've read/seen, the current story changes in meaning or purpose; your understanding deepens and becomes more meaningful, more **COMPLEX**. It's okay if you don't understand EVERYTHING.

Everything a writer/creator draws upon to create a text. Write some of it may be subconscious, usually a writer is consciously making these decisions. In purpose (25)

INTERLUDE: Does He Mean That?

* You keep saying that the writer is alluding to this obscure work and using that other that I never heard of but does it really matter. Probably... Since proof is nearly impossible, discussions of the writer's intentions are not especially profitable. Instead, let's restrict ourselves to what he did do and more important, what we readers can discover in his work.

* The best moments are those which precede the end of the novel or the end of the poem. I usually want to see something new or interesting in my reading.

* Lateral thinking (the thinking an author does between moments of active writing) is what we're really discussing: the way writers can keep their eye on the target of the plot or ending of the novel or the argument of a poem, and at the same time bring in a great deal of at least tangentially related material with allusions and devices that make reading interesting and worthwhile (95).

Reasons for Violence

* More often readers cause plot complications
 2. Authorial violence
 the death and suffering authors introduce into their work in the interest of plot advancement or thematic development they're not their characters, are responsible.

? What does this type of disturbance represent? Is it a sign of mental instability? Is it a sign of violence over another?

* Call other characters under various names
 * red-pair comparisons
 * sympathy

CHAPTER 11: Categories of Violence

* violence in literature is usually also something else (96)
 * More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence
 * Possible Themes
 * the hostile or uncaring relationship we have with the universe.
 * Our lives and deaths are as random in the universe or actively interested in our demise.
 * The frightening and alien aspects of facing our mortality in a cold, lonely universe.
 * The essential qualities of men and women have been lost in the demands of technology.
 * Redemption or corruption on the excesses of emphasis.



* Personal / intimate act
 * cultural * biblical
 * societal * Shakespearean
 * symbolic * Romantic (era)
 * historical * allegorical
 * mythical * Freudian
 * political * psychological