October 10, 2018

Professor Allison MacLeod

English 101 (27682)

**LITERARY ANALYSIS PROMPT**

Thesis statement: October 14, 2018

Online Peer Review: October 19, 2018

Final Draft due: October 26, 2018 by 11:59 via Canvas.

**Requirements:**

* 3-4 pages in length – not including a Works Cited page.
* 3 outside sources: research articles / or books written about the text you choose to analyze.
* Include **direct quotations** from the primary text in your essay as evidence of any claims.
* MLA Format

**Grading will be based on:**

* Thesis Statement – must be declarative, clear, and arguable.
* Organization – each paragraph must transition well into the following paragraph. Each paragraph should point back to the thesis statement. The conclusion summarizes points made in the essay, and may repeat the thesis statement using different language.
* Analysis – the essay must support the argument made in the thesis statement. It must contain textual evidence, as well as support from outside sources.
* MLA – the essay must be in correct and complete MLA format
* Mechanics – spelling, punctuation, and grammar must be correct.

*When writing your Literary Analysis, DO NOT SUMMARIZE THE PLOT of the text. That is a book report.* ***To write a Literary Analysis, you need to deconstruct the text; think about how each part works together to form a whole.*** *Some of the constituent parts, or elements, of a text are: the setting, structure, imagery, symbolism, language, metaphor, narrative point of view, characterization, tone, mood, conflict, etc.*

**Summarizing = WHAT (what happened)**

**Analyzing = HOW & WHY (How did Shirley Jackson utilize literary devices to convey her theme -central message- and why**

1. Ask yourself, why did the author choose to use *these* devices, in *these* particular ways?  How does this kind of character, plot event, or type of imagery help the reader understand the theme you choose to write about?  
   **Remember, tell your reader how & why—don’t just summarize!**
2. **Using Elements of Literature**

Students are asked to write literary analysis essays because this type of assignment encourages you to think about **how and why** a poem, short story, novel, or play was written.  To successfully analyze literature, you’ll need to remember that authors make specific choices for particular reasons.

**LITERARY DEVICES – Think about how Jackson utilized the following literary devices to transform what, at first, seems like a simple into a text that can be read as a criticism of religion, tradition, complacency, etc.**

**Allegory** - narrative form in which the characters are representative of some larger humanistic trait (i.e. greed, vanity, or bravery) and attempt to convey some larger lesson or meaning to life. Although allegory was originally and traditionally character based, modern allegories tend to parallel story and theme.

**Character -** representation of a person, place, or thing performing traditionally human activities or functions in a work of fiction

* **Protagonist** - The character the story revolves around.
* **Antagonist** - A character or force that opposes the protagonist.
* **Minor character** - Often provides support and illuminates the protagonist.
* **Static (or flat) character** - A character that remains the same.
* **Dynamic (or round) character** - A character that changes in some important way.
* **Characterization** - The choices an author makes to reveal a character’s personality, such as appearance, actions, dialogue, and motivations.

*Look for: Connections, links, and clues between and about characters. Ask yourself what the function and significance of each character is. Make this determination based upon the character's history, what the reader is told (and not told), and what other characters say about themselves and others.*

**Figurative language** - the use of words to express meaning beyond the literal meaning of the words themselves

* ***Metaphor*** - contrasting to seemingly unalike things to enhance the meaning of a situation or theme without using **like** or **as**
  + *You are the sunshine of my life.*
* ***Simile*** - contrasting to seemingly unalike things to enhance the meaning of a situation or theme using **like** or **as**
  + *What happens to a dream deferred, does it dry up* ***like*** *a raisin in the sun*
* ***Hyperbole*** - exaggeration
  + *I have a million things to do today.*
* ***Personification*** - giving non-human objects human characteristics
  + *America has thrown her hat into the ring, and will be joining forces with the British*
* **Imagery** - the author’s attempt to create a mental picture (or reference point) in the mind of the reader. Remember, though the most immediate forms of imagery are visual, strong and effective imagery can be used to invoke an emotional, sensational (taste, touch, smell etc.) or even physical response.

**Plot** - the arrangement of ideas and/or incidents that make up a story

* ***Foreshadowing*** - When the writer clues the reader in to something that will eventually occur in the story; it may be explicit (obvious) or implied (disguised).
* ***Suspense*** - The tension that the author uses to create a feeling of discomfort about the unknown
* ***Conflict*** - Struggle between opposing forces.
* ***Exposition*** - Background information regarding the setting, characters, plot.
* ***Rising Action*** - The process the story follows as it builds to its main conflict
* ***Crisis*** - A significant turning point in the story that determines how it must end
* ***Resolution/Denouement*** - The way the story turns out.

**Point of View** - pertains to who tells the story and how it is told. The point of view of a story can sometimes indirectly establish the author's intentions.

* ***Narrator*** - The person telling the story who may or may not be a character in the story.
* ***First-person*** - Narrator participates in action but sometimes has limited knowledge/vision.
* ***Second person*** - Narrator addresses the reader directly as though she is part of the story. (i.e. “You walk into your bedroom.  You see clutter everywhere and…”)
* ***Third Person (Objective)*** - Narrator is unnamed/unidentified (a detached observer). Does not assume character's perspective and is not a character in the story. The narrator reports on events and lets the reader supply the meaning.
* ***Omniscient*** - All-knowing narrator (multiple perspectives). The narrator knows what each character is thinking and feeling, not just what they are doing throughout the story.  This type of narrator usually jumps around within the text, following one character for a few pages or chapters, and then switching to another character for a few pages, chapters, etc. Omniscient narrators also sometimes step out of a particular character’s mind to evaluate him or her in some meaningful way.

**Setting** - the place or location of the action.  The setting provides the historical and cultural context for characters. It often can symbolize the emotional state of characters. Example – In Poe’s *The Fall of the House of Usher*, the crumbling old mansion reflects the decaying state of both the family and the narrator’s mind. We also see this type of emphasis on setting in Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice*.

**Structure** - The way that the writer arranges the plot of a story.

*Look for: Repeated elements in action, gesture, dialogue, description, as well as shifts in direction, focus, time, place, etc.*

**Symbolism** - when an object is meant to be representative of something or an idea greater than the object itself.

* *Cross - representative of Christ or Christianity*
* *Bald Eagle - America or Patriotism*
* *Owl - wisdom or knowledge*
* *Yellow - implies cowardice or rot*

**Tone** - the implied attitude; is it hopeful, pessimistic, dreary, worried? An author conveys tone by combining all of the elements listed above to create a precise impression on the reader.