

12AP – Archetypes, Myths, and Central Allusions

Archetype: a universal theme, motif, character, situation, conflict, or image that repeats itself in many different cultures and societies over many different periods of time. Think of it as a blueprint, prototype, or stock figure that gets re-appropriated at different times for different purposes.

Jungian: Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist, considered archetypes to be “psychological organs” and suggested that they operate much like the physical ones. Instead of a heart, lungs, or liver, Jung proposed these psychological organs consisted of the Self, the Shadow, the Anima, the Animus, and the Persona.

***The Self:** the source of an individual’s uniqueness; your ideal (who you want to be most) – it is the only archetype that grows, shifts, or changes as you age

***The Shadow:** the opposite of the self, the Shadow consists of deeply recessed traits (some you may not even be entirely aware that you possess) and are predominantly hidden from day-to-day life

***The Anima:** the female or feminine image in the man’s psyche

***The Animus:** the male or masculine image in the female’s psyche

***The Persona:** what we present to the world (think of it like a mask for psychological protection)

Literary/Artistic: Also identified and discussed by Jung, these archetypes manifest in more than just your subconscious: Hero, Child, Great Mother, Damsel-in-Distress, Trickster, Warrior, Mentor, Scarecrow, Devil/Satan, Maiden, Wise Old Man/Sage, Wise Old Woman/Crone, and Martyr.

***Hero:** Courageous, larger-than-life men and women who are often willing to sacrifice personal safety in order to tackle some seemingly impossible task. The Hero is an incredibly popular archetype, going back to Antiquity with its emphasis on the epic hero but also extending through myriad cultural and societal shifts with the emergence of tragic heroes, Byronic heroes, Code heroes, reluctant heroes, antiheroes, etc. The Hero is often deemed to be a reflection of the Self, the ideal person you hope to be, and popular examples include Beowulf, Odysseus, Achilles, Luke Skywalker, etc.

***Child:** The Child most commonly manifests as an almost adult-like child, often giving more-mature-than-their-years type of advice; however, this archetype can operate in the reverse (an adult who appears as childlike, exceptionally innocent, or naïve to the corrupt or sinister ways of the world. Examples include: Stewie from *Family Guy*, Maggie from *The Simpsons*, Calvin from *Calvin & Hobbes*, and Simon from *Lord of the Flies*.

***Great Mother:** The Great Mother corresponds to the idea of a matriarchal or mother goddess figure in literature (consider a powerful or controlling god-like woman or female force. The mother figure is traditionally considered to be the most significant influence on the Self; this archetype reflects that same power and

dominance. Traditional “Great Mother” symbols and images include the Virgin Mary, a divine female (Hera, Athena, etc.), the Earth, the Sea/Ocean, a Cave (or other yonic symbols), a Tree, etc.

***Damsel-in-Distress:** One of the predominant archetypes used in medieval romances, the Damsel-in-Distress is often depicted as a beautiful virginal, and foolish young woman who, through either her own worldly inexperience or through the evil machinations of others, finds herself in dire need to rescue from a Knight Errant (a wandering knight in shining armor, if you will). Understandably, in modern readings, this archetype is oft-criticized by feminist critics for its depiction of women as naïve and in need of rescue. Consider: Andromeda, ANY of the Disney princesses/Grimm fairy tales, Daphne from *Scooby Doo*, Daisy Buchanan, etc.

***Maiden/Virgin:** Usually depicted as a beautiful young woman, the Maiden or Virgin manifests in literature and art as a symbol of innocence, purity, and wisdom. In medieval texts, the Maiden is often a symbol of religious purity whose physical appearance mimics that of the angels (blond hair, blue/grey eyes, white attire, etc.). In poems like “Pearl”, the Maiden appears as imposing figure who lectures the speaker on the importance of faith in God. Virginal connections to wisdom also appear in modern incarnations as well (consider, please, the other Scooby Doo mistress, the bespectacled Velma). This archetype tends to crossover with either The Child or The Damsel-in-Distress but reflects a cultural significance on a young woman’s chastity. Jung offered an archetype for all aspects of a female’s life cycle (child, maiden, companion, mother, crone, etc.); the Maiden taps into childlike dreams and impulses and reminds us of youthful desires.

***Trickster:** A god, goddess, man, woman, anthropomorphic animal, or spirit who actively seeks to create chaos, disobey the conventions of normal/standard behavior, or bend preexisting rules using trickery. In modern incarnations, these figures tend to be unintimidating, cerebral, and whimsical in nature. Popular iconic tricksters include Loki from Norse mythology, the Coyote – both from Native American mythos AND cartoon fame, The Joker/Riddler, Hamlet (in part), and Uncle Drosselmeyer from *The Nutcracker*.

***Warrior:** A source of protection of external and internal foes, The Warrior defends against attack (emotional, physical, etc.). This archetype is predominantly masculine/aggressive in nature, although Warriors may be female. Warriors are always on the side of good, and they are guided by a dominating sense of loyalty and justice. Popular Warriors include Xena, Beowulf, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, and Robin Hood.

***Mentor:** From the Greek character in *The Odyssey* whose form Athena assumes when assisting Odysseus’s son Telemachus’s assumption of power, The Mentor is a figure who proffers advice and wisdom from a place of experience and

knowledge to a person of less skill, capabilities, or understanding. Popular Mentors include Mr. Miyagi from *The Karate Kid*, Dumbledore/Gandalf, Obi Wan Kenobi/Yoda, Morpheus, and Glinda the Good Witch.

***Scarecrow:** The Scarecrow is often not what s/he outwardly appears to be or operates as a decoy within the text. These archetypes are often an extension of the Persona – the outward appearance or mask a person wears to mask who they really are. Ironically, the most well-recognized is probably The Wizard of Oz (as opposed to, you know, The Scarecrow from the same text). Jay Gatsby would be another excellent example of the type.

***Devil/Satan:** A common villainous figure, The Devil (Satan) often emerges as the source of how a society understands evil. Devils tend to be supernatural and powerful, and they are often regarded as the personification or epitome of evil within a culture. Think: Satan, Ursula the Sea Witch (or ANY Disney villain), Old Scratch, Voldemort, Sauron, and Hannibal Lecter.

***Wise Old Man/Sage:** Like the Mentor, the Wise Old Man manifests as a character known for his wisdom. This figure is definitely a stock type who often appears with a long white beard and is marked by kindness, sagacity, and absent-mindedness. There is generally something paternalistically familiar about him although he is generally much older than the person he guides. In most art forms, this archetype is generally killed off (or removed for extended periods of time) in order for the Hero/Mentee to gain confidence and develop on his/her own. Again, examples include Mr. Miyagi, Merlin, Gandalf, Dumbledore, Odin, and Polonius (albeit an ironic usage there).

***Wise Old Woman/Crone:** Like the masculine counterpart, The Wise Old Woman/Crone is distinguished by both her age and her propensity to divulge wisdom and guidance on a less-experienced protégée. The Wise Old Woman is often depicted as a representation of eternal female nature, although her moral nature is sometimes less benevolent compared to the Old Man (she can be good, as in Cinderella's Fairy Godmother, or she can be more complicated). Her primary function is still, however, to teach, yet her motives are not always clear. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Morgan le Fay appears disguised as an old crone and sets up a sinister scheme to test not only the chivalry of Arthur's knights but also to scare his wife to death. There is usually an element or connotation of "Witch" attached to this archetype and these figures are intelligent and helpful in shaping a Hero's journey if not always entirely trustworthy.

***Martyr:** Someone who is willing to suffer persecution (even die) for a cause or belief (usually religious but could also be political, social, etc.). The most obvious example is the Christian martyr Jesus Christ, but other examples include Mary Queen of Scots, Charles I, William Wallace/Braveheart, and Joan of Arc. Christ figures are an incredibly popular motif in literature and you should pay close attention to any character who either dies for his/her beliefs or whose death

proffers some hope of salvation, hope, damnation, or redemption (i.e. Simon, Gatsby, etc.).

Of course, these examples are just a small subset of the archetypes that exist and reoccur throughout literature, art, and mythology.

You will also notice that certain archetypal elements get repeated or reiterated in various incarnations. Some examples include:

Water: In all its myriad forms (rain, pools, snow, oceans, etc.), water is traditionally associated with birth/rebirth, death, cleansing/purification, the life cycle, and eternity. Rain is compelling as it is both cleansing and dirtying (rain washes away but creates mud which dirties).

Colors:

***Red:** blood, passion, sacrifice, violence/aggression, war, attraction/attention, strength, cheerfulness, cessation (STOP!), health (rosy pink), effemininity/femininity (light pink)

***Green:** growth, renewal, rebirth, fertility, youth, hope, death, decay, inexperience, jealousy, currency/money, guilt, supernatural otherworldliness (green light), procession (GO!)

***Blue:** peace, serenity, virginity (Virgin Mary often has a blue robe in art), fidelity

***Black:** unknown, mystery, death, evil, fear, depression, power

***Yellow/Gold:** cowardice, decay, ill health, money/wealth, impurity, caution, cheerfulness

***White:** purity, innocence, goodness, cleanliness, deception, fear, coldness, death, intense emotion

***Purple:** royalty, power, fantasy, mysticism, loneliness, depression, faithfulness (violet)

***Brown:** earthiness, fertility, comfort, stability, order

Numbers:

***One:** singularity, monotheism (one god)

***Two:** duality/dichotomy (light/dark, male/female, sacred/profane, good/evil, etc.)

***Three:** Holy Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), spiritual unity, male

***Four:** life cycle, four seasons, four elements (earth, air, water, fire), female, four Horsemen of Apocalypse, four Gospels

***Five:** Five wounds on Christ's body (the Scourging at the Pillar, the Crown of Thorns, the wounds in his hands, the wounds in his feet, and the wound to his side), Chamsah (Khamsa), five books of the Torah, pentagram/pentacle
***Seven:** days in a week (Creation), natural and divine perfection/completion, seven days of Passover, Seven Deadly Sins, Menorah, seven "last words" of Jesus on the cross, Seven Sacraments, Seven Sorrows/Joys of the Virgin, Seven Ages of Man, Seven Sisters
***Ten:** Commandments, completion, order
***Twelve:** months of the year (year cycle), 12 apostles, 12 Olympians, 12 Tribes of Israel, Virgin Mary wears a crown of 12 stars, 12 Days of Christmas, Twelfth Night, 12 Signs of Zodiac, traditional length of quest (plus one day – cycle begins anew)
***Thirteen:** superstition, Judas (13 at dinner/Last Supper), imperfection, traditional length of a quest, unluckiness, Friday the 13th

Garden: Harkens back to Genesis, a reference to an orchard, garden, tree grove, or any of that ilk is most likely going to be a reference to the pre-fallen Eden. Gardens thus often symbolize paradise, innocence, or unspoiled beauty. Of course, that depends solely on the state of the garden!

Tree: knowledge, immortality, shame, inexhaustible life (again, this image stems primarily from the previous one's source in Genesis but also has ties to older mythology).

Mythology/Mythos: A myth is a traditional story steeped in the communal beliefs of its corresponding culture. It can seek to explain, rationalize, or understand some element of creation, the world, the universe, or human involvement therein. It has strong affiliations with religion, cultural history, and anthropology. Historically, mythical narratives have been used as teaching tools, moral guides, or religious instruments.

General:

Creation: virtually every major culture/religion has its own creation myth, a narrative explaining how the world was made, who the governing forces making that world were, and how we came to live here.

Immortality: The presence of divine beings (often who intercede in the lives of humans through both active and passive machinations) are also a traditional component of mythological lore.

Woman: birth, protection, danger, sexuality (virgin, mother, whore), witch

Grail Quest/Fisher King: The Grail Quest, while tangentially biblical as it pertains to the "holy grail," is a popular archetypal quest story in which an untested but "worthy" knight must traverse far and wide. Inevitably, he will arrive at a desolate, bleak, diseased land ruled over by a wounded, aged, or sickly king (Fisher King). It is essential that the worthy knight prove his purity/worth by obtaining the "holy grail" and restoring order

and health to the land and king. Temptations, tests, and trials work to impede the knight's progress. This concept was particularly popular in the Middle Ages (think: Gawain or Percival) but also appears in more modern incarnations (*The Great Gatsby*, for example).

Joseph Campbell/Hero's Quest:

Quest/Odyssey: Let's all thank Odysseus from Homer's *The Odyssey* for lending his name to this word which has come to mean an extended or lengthy journey. As you should all know by now, heroes must go on quests. No hero ever became a hero simply by staying home and waiting for the bad guys to come get him first. Sorry, doesn't happen. A necessary convention of epic heroism requires the hero to travel far and wide through often dangerous or unknown territory in lofty pursuit of something or someone. For Odysseus, it was a ten-year detour from Troy back to Ithaca, which had him visiting the treacherous isles of many a pretty goddess as well as escaping the cannibalistic grasps of many a sinister monster.

Initiation: So, how do heroes embark on these epic odysseys? Simple. They get called. Here is usually how it goes: the hero is summoned! Not always by an owl carrying an ominous letter from Hogwarts, but usually there is some distinct notice for the would-be hero that his or her life is about to change dramatically from what it once was. Now, most heroes do not respond to a first warning. You will encounter many heroes who deem themselves un-heroic (think of Bilbo Baggins in *The Hobbit* who considers himself impressively unsuited for adventure but who is also curious about leaving the shire and seeing other places), who consider themselves unfit, or who have obligations or duties that seem to prevent them from going on these quests. Don't be fooled. They'll come around. Usually around the same time a mysterious older, wiser figure appears in their lives to mentor them (see: Gandalf). The quest, however, is not officially started until the hero crosses the threshold (by which I mean he leaves wherever he was and heads off for lands unknown). And, of course, the hero's initiation does not come until he or she is first tested. The hero will usually fail some aspect of the **Road of Trials** (hey, he's still new at this thing!) and they traditionally come in groups of three (because three, as I've already told you, is a magic number).

Initiation can also apply more generically to any rite of passage (birth, naming, puberty, marriage, funeral, etc.). Thus, initiation serves as a way of casting off the old and adopting the new (consider: Jack's tribe's brutal slaughter of the sow in Chapter 8 of *LOTF*).

Belly of the Whale: A reference to Jonah (the haughty young lad from the Bible who learned a heavy dose of humility after spending some quality time getting acquainted to a whale's esophagus), Campbell's "Belly of the Whale" is the final transition from no-good-clod-hopper to hero! Or, more accurately, it is the final separation from the hero's old world, old way of life, and old self to his acceptance of the possibility or potential for new ones. This transition is usually marked by fear or darkness; metamorphosis isn't easy, people! The hero has to prove himself repeatedly, even in the early stages.

Meeting with the Goddess vs. Woman as Temptress: While technically still under the bracket of initiation, the hero's encounter with a Goddess and Temptress usually reflect the standard cultural dichotomy surrounding the perception and intentions of women. That said, when Campbell used the word "Goddess" he wasn't really being literal. Instead, the hero will encounter some form of all-encompassing love, unification of dueling forces within the hero, or unconditional love in some capacity.

Likewise, the meeting with the Temptress does not necessarily have to mean a woman (although, for Odysseus, it certainly is one. Or two. Or, you know, five). Dangers lurk behind every corner for our dear heroes, and those dangers proffer temptation, attempting to lure the hero away from his more noble pursuits (usually by trying to appeal to his more earthly, sensual, or lustful impulses).

Atonement with the Father/Wound: If you understand nothing else, please understand this: heroes are human. Or, at least, if not entirely human, they are certainly mortal. In Campbell's understanding, the hero must confront whoever has the most authority or power in the hero's life (this person is usually male, although does not have to be). The hero's old self must be killed, literally or figuratively, while attempting to concur this being/person/father figure (think: Darth Vader). If the hero does not die, the hero often receives a wound (hey, Luke didn't need that hand anyways), a reminder of his encounter and a physical mark of a key transformation within him.

Apotheosis/Sacrifice: The hero's sacrifice (or willingness to sacrifice himself) often results in either a literal or figurative death, as we've discussed. However, what happens after that is usually a period of calm, rest, or peace (or, for literal death, a period of transition of the earthly realm to the heavenly one). To apotheosize is to deify, or to become god-like in stature. This period usually marks the transition to the hero's return home.

The Ultimate Boon: Every hero has to have a goal, a desired object/objective, or mark of achievement for his quest to be complete. The previous steps aim to purify and test the hero to ensure he is ready to receive or earn his "boon" (as in a Grail quest, when the knight must prove his worth).

The Return: The Return is tricky. Our heroes have drunk with the gods, they sampled the good life, they've been tested, tried, found worthy, revered, and honored...so why come home? Sometimes, the hero must return simply because he has a magical object (a.k.a. The Boon) that he must bring back or protect from vengeful creatures who wish to take it from him. Sometimes, he has helpful guides who urge him homeward (much like they do to get him started). The quest is not usually complete, however, until the hero re-crosses that homeward threshold as a changed man (or woman or animal or whatever). Please understand, the homeward journey is often as difficult (and sometimes even more difficult) than the journey from home. Still, by the time he returns home, the hero no longer lives in abject fear of death; rather, he lives in the moment, not bound by regret or nostalgia.

Biblical:

Fall of Man: Also known as the Fall from Innocence, the Fall of Man refers to the moment of Adam and Eve's disobedience/knowledge of shame. Thus, there is a dichotomy that emerges between the pre-fallen paradise and the post-fallen dystopia (where not only do we know shame, but we also experience pain in childbirth and the fear of mortality and punishment). Ever wonder where the expression "Ignorance is bliss" stems from? Think of Adam and Eve before they eat that fruit.

These types of stories are incredibly popular. Ever read a book or watch a movie where two crazy kids cling desperately to one another while trying to preserve their world from some impending sense of doom? Please note: the two crazy kids don't necessarily have to be male and female (although they usually are).

Serpents/Eden/Forbidden Fruit: In the same vein, stories of the "Fall" tend to utilize familiar imagery – snakes, beautiful locales, gardens/jungles/orchards/natural splendor, and, of course, fruit. Please note, in the King James version of the story, Adam and Eve do not eat an apple, they eat "fruit" of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Many artists interpret this fruit as an apple OR pomegranate (which connects back to the myth of Persephone from classical lore), but the actual type is not particularly specific. This forbidden fruit serves as a source of temptation representing that which we should or cannot have and in modern incarnations does not have to actually BE fruit (remember, in *LOTF*, the boys eat too much fruit and suffer a sort of chronic diarrhea for their pains, but the real "forbidden" fruit, the item that once consumed serves as a point of no return in terms of their descent into savagery, is meat (pigs/blood/etc.).

When Adam and Eve are expelled from Eden, they are barred from return by two fiery-sword wielding cherubim (angels – like cupids, but more menacing). Not to beat a dead pig to death, but again, consider *LOTF* when the boys are expelled from their paradise by the all-consuming fire which prevents them from returning (and, that image also connects to one of Exodus, which we'll discuss later on in this section).

Ashes to Ashes (Dust to Dust): In essence, we are born from dust (read Genesis carefully: Adam was created from the dust – and Eve, by proxy, through Adam's rib) and we return to dust when we die. Thus, this passage is most often read as part of a Christian funeral procession. References to ashes permeate literature of all types and genres. In "Ring-around-the-Rosy" children sing "Ashes, ashes, we all fall down" as part of their creepy little hymn to the pervasive death of the bubonic plague. In *The Great Gatsby*, Nick and co. must travel through the Valley of Ashes to leave the insulated East and West Eggs of the Hamptons and travel to the wild, morally abandoned New York City.

Cain and Abel: The sons of Adam and Eve. Cain is the bad boy; Abel is the good boy. Abel is SO good, in fact, that Cain gets incredibly jealous of Abel and kills him. Cain then gets punished, marked, and exiled. If you believe *Beowulf's* narrator, Cain also spawns a line of monsters that culminates in his great-great-grandson Grendel. If you find yourself reading a story involving brothers (or siblings) where the rivalry between the

two manifests in homicidal tendencies then you're probably dealing with an allusion to these two boys. (Think: Claudius and Old Hamlet/"the primal eldest curse")

David and Goliath: David was a young, handsome man who slew the mighty (HUGE) Philistine champion Goliath with a slingshot and a stone. David has come to stand for any small, less successful underdog who dares to stand up against a Goliath (powerhouse, corporation, monopoly, etc.).

Abraham and Isaac: One of the more popular stories about sacrifice, Abraham was asked by God to sacrifice his youngest son Isaac as a test of his faith. God intervenes when it is clear that Abraham will in fact do as God asks.

Plagues: When the Pharaoh wouldn't let the Hebrew people leave Egypt, God sent ten plagues to express his immense displeasure at the leader's hubris. They were: Water to Blood, Frogs, Gnats/Lice, Flies, Diseased Livestock, Boils, Thunder/Hail, Locusts, Darkness, and the Death of the Firstborn.

Exodus/Parting of the Red Sea: Exodus is literally the story of Moses leading the Hebrew people out of Egypt to the Promised Land. There are basically too many well-used allusions here to do it proper justice (and I'd encourage you to read the section in The Bible from a literary standpoint, just to get the details). Images of babies in baskets (like Moses in the river), tyrannical kings, persecution, plague, a leader wielding a staff/walking stick, burning bushes (that talk or give direction, in particular), crossing large bodies of water, etc. all tie back to Moses and the Exodus of the People of Israel from Egypt. It's an incredibly popular allusion in literature (*The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Lord of the Flies*, *Lost*, even *Thundercats* have used imagery from this story).

Job: Job was a good man. A really, really good man. He was so good, in fact, that God wanted to test him and see just how good he really was. So, God let the Devil torment Job (kill his family, take his fortune, etc.). But Job wouldn't curse or turn his back on God. God restored his fortune and gave us this example of the importance of stalwart faith even in times of utter despair.

Sodom and Gomorrah: Biblical bad places – filled with sinners, lust, depravity, etc. Inhabitants of these places were punished and God cleansed the cities with rains of sulfur, fire, and brimstone. One man, Lot, and his wife were permitted to leave but could never look back (literally or figuratively); Lot's wife did. She was turned to a pillar of salt (a symbol of curiosity, condemnation, disobedience, etc.).

Solomon: King Solomon is known for his wisdom (the kind of wisdom we see in Athena and Odysseus – the crafty, clever kind, not the stuff you get from books). King Solomon once had to determine the mother of a child (two women both claimed the child as their own). Solomon decreed that they should cut the child in two and give one half to each woman. The one who cried out and was willing to let the child live unharmed with the other woman was deemed the real mother.

The Birth of Christ: The Nativity (and the Annunciation) are oft depicted in art and literature. We all know this one: Poor mother, hugely pregnant (in this version by the Holy Spirit), traveling to Bethlehem in search of a place to stay. The inns are all full but they are permitted to stay in a manger (with the animals). Mothers and new babies who are “swaddled” in literature should always have you asking: have I just read something miraculous? The end of *Streetcar Named Desire* has Stella quietly watching her sister’s departure, clasping her swaddled newborn baby boy to her chest, and leaves readers with a heavy question regarding whether or not this child will “save” Stella from her marriage or not.

The Prodigal Son: A popular parable, The Prodigal Son recounts the tale a younger, wasteful (or, you know, prodigal) son who asks his father for his inheritance, goes abroad traveling and living the high life, squanders his fortune, and becomes desperately poor. He takes work as a swineherd, gets a heavy dose of reality, and starts thinking about how to make amends with the family with whom he cut ties. To everyone’s surprise, his father welcomes him home, asking for his “returned from the dead” son to be dressed in finery. Naturally, the perennially hardworking older brother (shades of Cain and Abel here, folks) is less than pleased that his wayward little brother has returned home to just joyous festivity, but the father impresses upon his eldest that the younger was “dead” and has just now returned to life. The moral of the day here, then, is the bountiful, limitless love and forgiveness (of God, through the character of the father). The eldest son’s need to adhere to laws of man in terms of reward and punishment is almost as guilty as the greedy, wasteful younger brother who must learn the value of hard work and repentance before he can safely return home to his father’s loving arms.

The Good Samaritan: We should mostly all be familiar with this parable as well. A Jewish man is beaten, bloodied, and left for dead by the side of the road. He is subsequently passed by a priest and a Levite (a member of the Hebrew tribe of Levi) who do nothing to help him. The eponymous “Good Samaritan” walks by and helps out his neighbor, even though in this time period, they would have been sworn enemies (Like Romeo helping out Tybalt, before he meets and weds Juliet). Again, the message is pretty clear here: love thy neighbor, people, even when you think you’re supposed to hate them.

John the Baptist and Salome: John was born under miraculous circumstances (Gabriel paid a visit to the barren wife of Zechariah) and became a notorious for baptizing many people in the Christian faith. He appeals to authors/artists because of the circumstances of his death moreover than the actions in his life. John was imprisoned by Herod who promised Salome anything she wanted (there may have been a dance of the seven veils in there somewhere); she asked for John the Baptist’s head. Herod delivered. Once more we have an iconographic female representing the dangers of seduction and lust.

Temptation of Christ: No good deed goes unpunished and no good person goes untested. Particularly in literature. The basic story goes like this: Jesus goes into the desert/wilderness where he fasts for forty days and forty nights. Towards the end of his fasting, the devil shows up and tries to tempt Jesus (by offering to turn stones to bread, by trying to get him to prove he is the Son of God by jumping off the highest point of a

temple, and by offering him “all the kingdoms of the world” for worshipping him). Jesus turns down these temptations and is ministered to by angels wielding nourishment. Simon, a biblically named character, experiences his temptation in the wilderness of the island jungle when The Lord of the Flies warns him to join in the fun or suffer the consequences. Simon attempts to refuse this temptation, traveling from the mountain top to the sandy beach to tell the boys the truth about the “beast.” He is, of course, killed for his efforts. His ministering angels are the efflorescent sea creatures who cover his skin and carry his broken body out to sea.

Crucifixion/Christ Figures: Christ figures in literature are often martyrs for their causes or beliefs, and they often adopt similar features or parallel Jesus’s suffering in some obvious way. As we discussed in number symbolism, Christ receives five wounds on the cross (Simon’s bleeding forehead or Ralph’s side injury from a spear in *LOTF* should now be a much more obvious reference to the crown of thorns and Spear of Longinus, then). However, in literature and art, a Christ Figure may merely mimic the outstretched arms or posturing of Christ’s body (think Gatsby, floating lifelessly in his pool). Melville’s Billy Budd is a particularly excellent example of the Christ Figure in literature – a young man (of about 33 but could be any age), with questionable parentage (usually mother is known, father is not), who must carry some heavy burden (literally or figuratively), and suffer for the collective sins of his society. Resurrection is also important here – the figure dies but returns in some way.

Pontius Pilate: The official scapegoat of Christ’s crucifixion, Pilate, who amidst a burgeoning riot, washes his hands literally and symbolically of Christ’s death proclaiming, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves!” We see Pilate figures everywhere – including in 10th grade English class with the Macbeths, who both use the same symbolic hand-washing to rid themselves of the guilt of Duncan’s murder.

Last Supper/Thirteen at Dinner: If you’re not already familiar with Da Vinci’s *The Last Supper*, Google it, please. Although the phrase isn’t in the Bible, the term has come to stand for the final meal Jesus shared with his Apostles before his Crucifixion. It is where he predicted that one (Judas) would betray him and Peter would deny him (three times before the rooster/cock crows). It is also the genesis of Eucharist/Communion (the blessing of bread and wine). Out of this dinner, arises a morbid superstition (thirteen at dinner) which suggests that at meeting of thirteen guests at dinner, the first guest to get up from the table/leave, will die. Agatha Christie used this concept in the novel of the same name. And, regardless of direct parallels to this particular supper, meals in general take a highly significant role in literature as result.

Pieta: One of the more recognizable images in medieval and Renaissance sculpture is that of Mary cradling Jesus’s body after the crucifixion. Michelangelo’s sculpture is, arguably, the most well-known incarnation of the pose with its unusually youthful depiction of Mary in conjunction with its grandeur. You should know that Michelangelo’s Pieta is signed with the letter “M” – which marks a transition from medieval interest in mankind to Renaissance focus on the individual (and shows us the dangers of miscrediting one artist’s work to another!)

The Great Flood/40 Days/Noah's Ark: In the Old Testament, times were tough. People were bad and God was vengeful (you should know, even if you are not religious, that there is a marked difference in parenting styles between Old Testament God and New Testament God). Noah was a drunk. In fact, he's sort of the first recorded alcoholic (or, more politely, the first person to enjoy the happier side effects of over-imbibing). The man liked wine. But Noah wasn't the only man with problems (and, boy, did he have some! Aside from the wine, Noah also had a very strange run-in with his son Ham...); in fact, compared to other men during the antediluvian period, Noah appeared righteous and above blame. So, God sent a flood to, let's say, clean the slate. And, of course, He asked Noah to build him an ark-y-ark-y where Noah would house his family and two species (a male and a female) of every type of animal. The flood lasted forty days and forty nights, and Noah discovers the flood will end by sending out a dove three times. Then, God promises never to punish mankind in this manner again and sends forth the rainbow as a symbol of that promise. Now, you're probably not going to see a strict allusion to this story in our course reading, but there will be elements. Characters on boats are always deserving of a closer look as water is always significant of something. Other times, the length of a journey might take 40 days/40 nights and marks some great trial in a person's life.

(The Land of) Milk and Honey: a.k.a The Promise(d) Land. God promises this land to Abraham (and, also, in some variations, to Moses) as a "safe space" for his people. It doesn't literally mean that there will be milk and honey bars all over the place; instead, people who live there will be free from persecution, will flourish economically, and will be self-sustained. When the Jews make their Exodus in hopes for a better life in *The Grapes of Wrath*, they're looking for their land of milk and honey. I believe there's a Winnie the Pooh movie where he goes to The Land of Honey and becomes a very happy Pooh Bear indeed. You get the idea.

Bread (loaves) and fishes: How do you create a miracle? You take five loaves and two fishes, and with them, you feed 5000 people. Dickens uses this allusion in *A Tale of Two Cities*. Toni Morrison used it in *Beloved*. If you read the phrase "loaves and fishes" anywhere, it's a reference to this moment from the Bible.

(Thirty Pieces of) Silver: The price paid Judas Iscariot by the Romans to betray Jesus at Gethsemane. Judas points out Jesus to the guards by kissing him. Later, in a fit of guilt, he returns the money and hangs himself. The image of silver coins permeates literature as a symbol of betrayal, and connections to Judas also reiterate the idea of "selling out" one's best friend for a morally paltry sum (I would also encourage you never to trust a seemingly out-of-the-blue kiss between friends, acquaintances, or even lovers in literature. Think about poor Fredo from *The Godfather* – kissed by his brother and then offed). Golding describes the "silvery laughter" of the boys who turn against Ralph in his moment of crisis after Piggy's death. Shakespeare's Falstaff has a mistress who quips "and didst thou not kiss me, and bid me fetch thee thirty shillings?" at her morally questionable partner.

Golden Calf/10 Commandments: Basically, all you need to know here is that a reference to a Golden Calf means someone is worshipping a false idol. This allusion is another one stemming from the Exodus story. When Moses goes to Mount Sinai to get the Ten Commandments (another forty day journey), he leaves his brother in charge. The Hebrew people want to build an idol of their God, they wore poor Aaron down with their nagging, and he complied. Long story short, Moses catches wind that his people are worshipping a shiny gold cow and losing sight of what is really important; he gets angry. Those loyal to God are spared; those who aren't suffer a plague. A valuable life lesson is learned by all (remember what I said about Old Testament God being vengeful? He wanted to kill all but Moses; Moses talks him down). The Golden Calf still appears in popular culture today (Mooby from *Dogma*), and the idea of set of rules to restore order also comes into play occasionally in literature (do I even have to say it?).

Four Horsemen/Apocalypse: In the end, the Apocalypse will be harkened in by the appearance of the Four Horsemen: the White Horse/Rider (Conquest/Pestilence), the Red Horse/Rider (War), the Black Horse/Rider (Famine), and the Pale (or Green) Horse/Rider (Death). This image is a hugely recognizable one in art and literature and if you're reading something where four men arrive on horses, you should pay closer attention. Toni Morrison uses it in *Beloved* and Agatha Christie used it in *The Pale Horse*.

Lucifer: We know Lucifer predominantly by his post-fallen name of Satan, but, before he was cast out of heaven, Lucifer was the brightest angel in the sky. An excellent wordsmith, too intelligent for his own good, Lucifer serves not only as the ultimate example or personification of biblical evil but also as the stern reminder as to the dangers of overreaching one's limits (Think: Icarus, but bigger). Even God's favorites suffer retribution for overstepping their bounds and challenging his authority. And God does not punish lightly; he even creates a new space for Lucifer, who has been permanently outcast from heaven/salvation/grace. In Hell, Lucifer reigns as Satan, yet still under the watchful (and permissive) eye of God.

Hell: Hell is murky (or so believed Lady Macbeth – and she's right in more ways than one). If Heaven has captured the spiritual imagination, its counterpart has captured the artistic one. It is a place created to punish the wicked (see: Lucifer), a place full of fire, brimstones, monsters, and the damned. Dante imagined it as having seven stages (ironically, the one harboring Satan is the coldest – hence the phrase “cold as hell” perhaps); each level doling out appropriate castigation for a specific category of sinner. Modern authors (and even some not-so-modern ones) tend to envision this world as being “hell-like” in scope; I mean, who can forget poor Piggy, looking down into the fiery pit of the mountain's side, wondering “what's grownups going to think” about the devil emerging within the boys.

Rainbows/Light/Doves: All symbols of God/peace/the Holy Spirit/goodness. If you see these in literature, they should be a little signal that something spiritual, mystical, or beneficent is happening. And, let's all kindly remember what the philosopher Dolly Parton once quipped: “You can't have the rainbow without the rain.”

Classical:

Twelve Olympians:

Greek God:	Roman Name:	Personality/Associations:	Symbols:
Zeus	Jupiter	King of the Gods, God of Sky/Earth, Lover of Women (divine or mortal), Questionable Husband	Thunderbolt, shield, oak tree
Hera	Juno	Often jealous wife of Zeus, Hera is Queen of the Gods and the protector of marriage (which is a bit ironic considering Zeus's philandering ways). Diplomatic and nagging.	Peacock, cow
Poseidon	Neptune	God of the Sea/Ocean and earthquakes, carries a trident, Brother of Zeus	Trident, horse, Pegasus, bull
Hades	Pluto	God of the Underworld, Brother of Zeus, Husband to Persephone	Helmet, metal, jewels, black
Athena	Minerva	Goddess of wisdom, war, patriotism, and good citizenship; grey-eyed, virginal goddess named after Athens (city-state she protects), daughter of Zeus	Owl, aegis/shield, olive tree
Artemis	Diana	Daughter of Zeus, twin sister of Apollo, Goddess of the Hunt/Wild. Associated with virginity and the moon.	Crescent moon, cypress, stag/deer
Apollo	Apollo	Son of Zeus, twin brother to Artemis, God of music, poetry, the sun, medicine, and light.	Lyre, laurel, crow, dolphin, sun/light
Ares	Mars	Son of Zeus. Not the brightest bulb. God of war.	Vulture, dog
Aphrodite	Venus	Born from sea foam (or the blood of Kronos's castrated genitals in contact with sea foam), Goddess of Love and Beauty, Son Eros/Cupid is the winged "angel" with love potioned arrows	Dove, goose, sparrow, cypress
Hephaestus	Vulcan	Son of Hera (solo effort), crippled/lame, God of fire/forging, husband of Aphrodite	Fire, forge, blacksmith hammer
Hermes	Mercury	Son of Zeus, Messenger of the Gods, God of Science and Invention	Winged helmet and sandals, wand, aegis
Hestia/Demeter	Vesta/Ceres	Hestia: Zeus's sister, goddess of home and hearth Demeter: Zeus's sister, goddess of grain, harvest, cereal, and agriculture. Mother of	Hearth/wheat

Prometheus: Titan trickster whose biggest claim to fame is the theft of fire from the gods (which he gives to humankind). Used frequently as a depiction of the penultimate rebel against authority (king, country, religion, etc.). Modern incarnations incorporate an emphasis on Prometheus's over-ambition and over-reaching.

Cerberus: The three-headed guard dog of Hades.

Niobe: Mother of 12 children (6 boys and 6 girls) who brags that she is a better mother than Leto, mom of two children (who happen to be Apollo and Artemis). Leto demands retribution, Apollo and Artemis slaughter Niobe's children, and the grieving woman is turned into a perpetually weeping stone. Hamlet compares his "grieving" mother as "like Niobe, all tears" – implying that on the exterior she appears sad but internally she is an emotional rock. Ouch!

Cassandra: Ill-fated princess of Troy who rejected Apollo in hopes to remain a vestal virgin and was cursed with the terrible fate of being able to see the truth/future but have no one believe her. She becomes Agamemnon's concubine after the siege at Troy and he brings her home, despite her warnings, only to be slaughtered with him at the vengeful hands of his wife and her lover.

House of Atreus/Agamemnon: And speaking of Agamemnon, he comes from a long line of cursed sufferers (actually, Niobe's a part of this gene pool, too). Agamemnon is a Greek king who leads his men in the battle for Troy. He chooses to slaughter his youngest daughter (Iphigenia) in order to get winds from a spurned Artemis in order to sail to Troy, and doesn't actually discuss that decision with his wife beforehand. Hence her immense anger toward him. While he's away, she takes a cousin of his as lover, they plot murder, he returned with a shiny new toy to flaunt in front of his aging wife (Cassandra), and she and her lover (Aegisthus) kill him. Happy story? Wait, it gets happier. His son Orestes is then tormented – to be honorable he must kill his father's killer (his mother), but if he kills his mother, he will commit a crime so heinous he will be punished eternally by the Furies (not good!). Fear not, the gods cut Orestes some slack and after that his family's line gets much better.

Achilles' Heel: Achilles' mother, Thetis, wasn't exactly human (she was a nymph). To protect him, she dipped him in the river Styx. Sadly, she missed a spot. Thankfully for literary majors and authors everywhere, we now have an excellent phrase to describe a person's greatest source of weakness.

Judgment of Paris: Ever wonder how the Trojan War started? With an apple. So much of mythology focuses around fruit...it's a little frightening. In this version, a chaos-loving goddess named Discord tossed a golden apple with the tag "To the Fairest" over the walls of a goddess-infested dinner party. Of course, the three major goddesses all proclaimed the apple to belong to them and begged Zeus to make the call. Smart enough not to touch that one with a ten-foot pole, Zeus picked a poor human boy to make the final judgment.

Enter Paris. Hera promised him kingships, Athena promised him wisdom, and Aphrodite promised him the most beautiful woman in the world. He chose Aphrodite.

Helen of Troy: The aforementioned “most beautiful woman in the world”/”face that launched a thousand ships.” Helen was the wife of Menelaus – which was an unfortunate detail of the Aphrodite arrangement. She gives Helen to Paris, Paris takes Helen to Troy, and, voila! A war is born.

Arachne: There are a lot of myths about the dangers of boasting, bragging, or extending your ego among the ranks of the god. If you’re a human, you’re not a god. And if you try to be godlike, you get burned. In Arachne’s case, her skill was weaving, and the poor thing thought she could do it better than any Greek woman, including Athena. Oh, what fools these mortals be! Arachne and Athena had a weaving contest, Arachne lost, and Athena turned her into the perpetually weaving spider for her pains.

Ariadne: Another oft-explored aspect of the labyrinth myth, Ariadne was the daughter of Minos who most famously helped Theseus navigate the maze successfully on his quest to kill the minotaur. One account has Ariadne falling madly in love with Theseus, leaving with him after his work in the labyrinth is concluded, only to find herself abandoned by the man she loves later on (or shot down by Artemis, it varies). She is subsequently linked to the god Dionysus who marries her. This allusion mostly recently appeared in the film *Inception* (Ariadne is the character played by Ellen Page).

Philomela (or Philomel): A beautiful princess of Athens, Philomela was lusted after by King Tereus of Thrace who lured the maid into a cabin and raped her. Not one to be easily silenced, Philomela, in Ovid’s incarnation of the myth, proceeds to give a strongly worded verbal lashing to Tereus, promising to tell everyone who will listen of his cruelty. In response, Tereus cuts out her tongue. Not one to be outdone, Philomela weaves a tapestry (women in Greek literature are ALWAYS weaving) which reveals what Tereus has done; she then sends it to Tereus’s wife. Early Greek variants of the myth have each key player being turned into birds (Tereus becomes a hawk or a hoopoe, his wife Procne becomes a nightingale with a sad song, and Philomela becomes the songless sparrow). In later versions, Philomela is almost always associated with nightingales.

Trojan Horse: An expression of Odysseus’s creative and strategic genius, the Trojan Horse is the ultimate Greek decoy. Outwardly, the Horse seems to be a gift for the Trojans, who should accept such a mighty offer in case it comes from the gods (spoiler alert: it doesn’t). Inside the Horse, an army of Greek warriors lay in wait. After nightfall, the Greek warriors emerged from within the belly of the beast and seized Troy. The greatest lesson here? Always look a gift horse in the mouth.

Aeolus/Harp: Aeolus is the god of wind and is frequently depicted in Romantic poetry as a symbol of both order and wildness in nature.

Persephone: The maiden daughter of Persephone whose rape (by which I mean capture not sexual assault) by Hades is one of the more popular themes explored in literature. Pre-rape Persephone is depicted with images of springtime – flowers, roses, youth,

beauty, etc. Her mother grieves the loss of her daughter by giving us winter, thus the myth operates as one of explanation. However, post-rape Persephone (or Queen of the Underworld Persephone) is a far more imposing figure, usually depicted with funereal flowers and becomes, perhaps, one of the most dramatic juxtapositions of sex and death in literary history.

Icarus: Son of Daedalus, Icarus is the brash young man who, upon donning his waxy wings, dares to fly too close to the sun and pays for his godlike ambition with his life. Another example of the dangers of mortal men overreaching their human limits.

Medusa/Gorgons: The snake-headed sister of the Gorgons whose head becomes part of the aegis (Athena's shield). One look at Medusa will turn a person to stone.

Bacchanalia: Bacchus (Roman) or Dionysus (Greek) is the earthy god of wine. This god figure is usually surround by maenads, women who worship him, and together they engage in bacchanals – drunken orgiastic feasting and partying that could get out of hand and lead to murder. Orpheus, a prized musician who lost his wife Eurydice, dies in such a way. An excellent allusion to the dangers of lust, lasciviousness, excess, and ale.

The Fates/Moirai: Three weird, elderly sisters who spin the metaphorical thread of life.

***Clotho:** spins the thread of life

***Lachesis:** measures the threads of life (an individualized length for each person)

***Atropos:** cuts the thread of life (and chooses the manner in which a person's life will be cut short)

The Nine Muses (Greek): These women rule over arts and sciences, and they offered inspiration in both areas as well.

Calliope: the muse of epic poetry.

Clio: the muse of history.

Erato: the muse of love poetry.

Euterpe: the muse of music.

Melpomene: the muse of tragedy.

Polyhymnia: the muse of sacred poetry.

Terpsichore: the muse of dance.

Thalia: the muse of comedy.

Urania: the muse of astronomy.

12AP – English Literature: A Brief Catalogue of Major Literary Periods and Movements

The Classics/Classical Antiquity (c. 600 BC – AD 600): Although not technically “English” literature, the classics from ancient Greece and Rome have been largely influential to our understanding, development, and interpretation of literature and literary elements. While the word antiquity covers myriad literary periods, generally speaking, literature from this era emphasized and focused on the epic, the lyrical, the historical, the dramatic, and the philosophic. While Homer set the bar on establishing the heroic ideal with his characters of Odysseus and Achilles, philosophers like Plato and Socrates actively debated virtually every subject under the sun (and you can thank Socrates in particular for his useful contribution of “Socratic circles/seminars”). Playwrights like Euripides and Sophocles used Aristotle’s definition of tragedy in crafting plays like “Oedipus Rex” and “Medea” while Sappho and Pindarus crafted lyric poetry, poems sung and accompanied by music. Antiquity also gives us “the father of history” in the form of Herodotus who, in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, gives us the first use of prose in Western literature. Of course, its most relevant contribution (for our purposes) is not necessarily its contribution to the genesis of history and philosophy or the establishment of various Western literary genres, elements, and conventions; instead, myths from the time period have served as a constant source of inspiration for authors throughout the centuries. Understanding many allusions begins with reading the classics.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: epic poem, epic hero, epithet, catalogue/enumeratio, in medias res, invocation to the muse, divine intervention, quests, formal speech-making, hamartia, deus-ex-machina, peripeteia, anagnorisis, catharsis

Anglo-Saxon/Old English: (c.700-1100): Old English reflects the fusion of the Germanic Saxons and the English/Roman culture and is often regarded as one of the earliest forms of the English language. Literature of this time period also reflects the fusion of Germanic ideals (particularly on the concept of heroism) and Christianity, which was a burgeoning religion in England at the time. As I'm sure you remember from 10th grade, the major forms of poetry perpetuated by poets, or scop, in this time period are heroic and elegiac. The heroic picks up from the classic tradition of epic heroism (think: *Beowulf*) while the elegiac is a poem of mourning or loss, speaking to the isolated and transient nature of Anglo-Saxon life (remember "The Seafarer"?). Much of what we know about Anglo-Saxon literature stems from the few extant pieces that remain (many works were kept in one library that had a devastating fire – if you ever wonder why you have to read *Beowulf*, just know that it makes up 11% of what is left of Anglo-Saxon work). Key players (poets, philosophers, etc.) from this time period include Bede, Caedmon, and Boethius (although much of the work remains unaccredited). With the emergence of Christianity came a new trend in literature – translations, paraphrases, biographies, and poetry all inspired by saints, the Bible, and Christ.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: kenning, caesura, oral tradition, scop, alliteration, hagiography (biographies of saints' lives), elegiac, epic, litotes

Medieval/Middle English (c. 1100 – 1480): After the Norman conquest of England (1066), England experienced a literary shift from the sacred to the secular with the emergence of ballads, chivalric romances, allegorical poetry, alliterative poetry, morality plays, mystery plays, and miracle plays. The French influence also extended into the English language, moving from the Anglo-Saxon into what is now commonly regarded as Middle English. During this time period, through the advent of the printing press (William Caxton's version), English became more standardized. Key works of the time include Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, The Pearl Poet's "Pearl," "Patience," and "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, and the mystical writings of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: alliteration, consonance, chivalry, romance, ballad, mystery play, allegory, satire, exemplum, courtly love, medieval lyrics, antiphonal song

Renaissance/Elizabethan/Early Modern (c. 1450-1600): Quick caveat: I will use these terms interchangeably even though I admit there are shades of distinctions between them (basically this time period extends through the reign of James I, if you want to get nitpicky). The Elizabethan Era is a time of great political change and upheaval (think: lots of political assassinations). Again, after the introduction of Caxton's printing press, England experiences a huge boom in the publication of vernacular texts. The Renaissance represented, as its name suggests, a time of rebirth for the arts and English writers and artists turned to the Italians (whose Renaissance began prior to the English one) for inspiration. It also reflected a primary vowel shift that altered the sound of the English language to a more modern pronunciation (closer to the one it has today). This is the time period of William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, Francis Bacon, Sir Philip Sidney, Ben Jonson, and Thomas Hyatt. It is marked by a redirection from society/God to a more focused perspective on the individual.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: sonnet, tragedy, humanism, classical allusion, revenge/vengeance, melodrama, tragic flaw/hamartia, tragic hero, pastoral

Commedia dell'arte/Comedy of Craft (c. 1500 – 1700): This is a largely improvisational Italian theatrical form that gained popularity in England. It relied on the use of stock characters or types (the foolish gentleman, the melodramatic lover, the manipulative or crafty servant, etc.) and combined elements of farce, buffoonery, and exaggeration (commedia dell'arte is the antithesis of humanism). Its influence can be seen in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* when he assumes the stock role of a melancholy lover who has assumed (comically for us albeit less so for poor Ophelia) an antic disposition. It also appears in Hamlet's directions to the players in Act Two ("He who plays the king will be welcome"); he gives a litany of key stock parts and emphasizes the significance of improvising in his plan to capture Claudius's guilt. You can still see the influence of this time in modern comedies, dramas, and television sitcoms.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: farce, archetype/stock character, buffoonery, hyperbole, Mannerism

Jacobean (c. early 17th century)/Restoration (c.1650-1800): After the death of Elizabeth and Shakespeare, and with the ascension of James I to the throne of England, English literature underwent yet another change. Ben Jonson becomes the primary playwright and he focuses his work largely around medieval aesthetics and ideas (particularly the theory of humours). He was also skilled in the art of satire. Jacobean literature also saw a boom in popularity for the revenge play (popularized by John Webster whose "The Duchess of Malfi" reflects the interest not only in revenge but also in blood). Perhaps one of the more significant endeavors of the Jacobean period was the publishing of *The King James Bible* which became the standard bible to use in England. For Carolinian or Restoration literature (literature under the reign of Charles I and II), satire took precedence over revenge, although predominantly published anonymously out of fear of retribution. Prose is once more dominated by religious writing; however, political and economic writing also began to emerge as important and valued texts. Key themes centered around the flourishing middle class, the battle of the sexes (with a new emphasis on gearing plays toward the female spectator), and post-marriage relations. Seminal texts include John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim Progress*, John Locke's *Treatises on Government*, and William Congreve's *The Way of the World*.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: revenge play, paradox, oxymoron, rationalism, satire, Baroque style

Metaphysical Poetry (c. 1633 – 1680): The metaphysical poets combined direct or un-poetic subjects with paradoxes, wit, and conceits in an attempt to explore topics like love or religion. John Donne is perhaps the most well-known metaphysical poet; in one of his poems "The Flea," Donne uses the extended conceit of the flea biting the lovers. Here, the metaphor here becomes largely more conceptual as the flea represents more an unlikely, abstract representation of the lovers' relationship.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: metaphysical conceit, paradox, oxymoron, simile, metaphor

The Enlightenment/The Age of Reason (c. 1660 – 1790): Many literary periods are defined by rejecting the previous; the Enlightenment is exactly this type of time period. In contrast to the previous focus on religion, the Age of Reason saw an emphasis on science, rationality, and global

issues (economics, politics, society). Fiction also fell out of favor with Enlightenment writers (like John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Rene Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, etc.); non-fiction took to the forefront and philosophical and political essays and treatises gained immense popularity.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: metaphysics, rational theology, political philosophy, ethics

Neoclassicism (c. 1660 – 1798): A literary and artistic movement, neoclassicism reflected a rejuvenation and rediscovery of classical works. The major principles of this period emphasized balance, simplicity, order, restraint, and harmony. Historically, there was an overlap here with the Enlightenment as philosophical thought found a rebirth and the classic masters became sources of inspiration and education. Again, Neoclassicists, like their Enlightened counterparts, valued reason over passion, control over chaos, and minimalism over ornamentation. Famous Neoclassicist writers include Samuel Johnson, Alexander Pope, and Jonathan Swift.

Kit Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: symmetry, mock-epic, satire

Gothic Fiction/Horror (c. 1764 – 1820): Not to be confused with Gothic architecture (which is responsible for many of the cathedrals built in the Middle Ages), Gothic fiction combined elements of horror and romance. These stories served as the prototype for what we would now classify as the horror genre and the term Gothic first appeared in this context in Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*. While this genre strove to emulate an atmosphere of terror, the macabre, or the unknown, it also set the stage for the genesis of Romanticism. Key writers of this genre included Louisa May Alcott (who got her start here, not with *Little Women*), Ann Radcliffe (who wrote the *Mysteries of Udolfo*), the Bronte sisters (*Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* are shining examples), Edgar Allan Poe, and Lord Byron.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: Byronic hero, science fiction, psychological thriller, the madwoman in the attic, stereotype, imagination, fantasy

Romanticism (c. 1798 – 1832): With the industrial revolution and the depopulation of the country for the more lucrative city came yet another crucial change in literary ideology. In rejection of the ideals of the Enlightenment, the Romantic era was born. Spontaneity, the purity of nature, imagination, emotionalism, and introspection were essential to the Romantics who wrote against the sprawling urbanism and pollution and who longed for simpler, more beautiful times. The Lake Poets (consisting of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Shelley, and Byron) crafted lyrical ballads attempting to disseminate their philosophies, albeit through vastly different ways. Other authors with Romantic sympathies include John Keats, Jane Austen, Herman Melville, Sir Walter Scott, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and William Cullen Bryant.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: imagination, supernatural, historical novel, liberalism, nationalism, sublimity/the sublime, sensibility, originality, solipsism

The Victorian Era (c. 1832 – 1901): The reign of Queen Victoria I of England, a strict conservative, was a period marked by social, political, and cultural reform and criticism. This time period saw the genesis and rise in popularity of children's fiction, the mystery genre, and historical adventure tales. It encompasses everything from literary realism to the Gothic or supernatural tale of horror to the satirical condemnation of industrialized cities. Popular authors

include Charles Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle, H.G. Wells, Robert Louis Stevenson, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Matthew Arnold, the Brownings, and the Rossettis.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: Gothic, Romanticism, Naturalism, Pre-Raphaelite, comedy of manners, serialized publication, fin-de-siecle, caricature, grotesque, social comedy/drama, nonce words, frame narrative, adventure novels, bildungsroman

Transcendentalism (c. 1835 – 1860): Constructed in America (and mostly in New England/Massachusetts!), the Transcendental movement was a philosophical and spiritual cultural shift that spoke to the inherent goodness of both men and nature in communion with one another. Transcendentalists worried about an individual's purity being corrupted, particularly at the hands of government or organized institutions or religions. Emerson's "Self-Reliance," Thoreau's *Walden*, and works by Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, John Muir, and Louisa May Alcott all reflect the transcendental spirit.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: objective correlative, self-reliance, German idealism, nature, Mental Sciences/The New Thought

Pre-Raphaelites (c. 1848 – 1870): A brotherhood of English painters, poets, and critics, the Pre-Raphaelites rejected Mannerism and considered Raphael's classical poses and compositions as corrosive to the arts. They looked for creativity and genuineness in expression, they adhered to the need to study Nature, they sought out "the heartfelt" aspects of art (rather than the conventional), and strove to produce good pictures and statues. Many Pre-Raphaelites were inspired by the classics of literature – Greek and Roman tragedy and mythology, Shakespearean tragic and romantic heroines, and other key figures from popular texts like *The Bible* or Dante's *Inferno*. Marked mostly by scandal (seriously, you should read up on some of the relationship/model problems these painters had), the Pre-Raphaelites eventually disbanded, although their influence extended outside their circle even after their dissolution. Central artists here were: John Everett Millais, John Waterhouse, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, and John Ruskin.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: impressionism, Arts and Crafts movement, avant-garde, mimesis

Naturalism (c. 1865 -1900): A literary movement that valued pessimism and often emphasized the concept or inevitability of death, Naturalism is the progression of literary realism that sought to replicate elements or aspects of everyday life faithfully. Naturalists sought to present their literature "objectively" – choosing at times to assume a detached or even unnamed speaker or narrator. Naturalists reject the concept of free will, believing instead in determinism. As this literary movement stems as a rejection of Romantic ideals, clearly nature here does not play a beautiful or sympathetic role; instead, it appears as indifferent to mankind's inherent struggle.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: optimistic pessimism, determinism, detachment, realism, objectivism

Symbolists (c. 1870 – 1890): The Symbolist movement emerged in English literature in response to the French movement of Symbolism, which, according to its manifesto, valued absolute truths divulged by suggestive, and private and distinct metaphorical imagery and symbols. Symbolists favored less restrictive and more liberating forms and techniques (such as free verse); for these poets, symbols were a means of expression to reveal the inner workings of the poetic soul. This

movement is often most confused with decadence, although it is different in meaning. French leaders of the movement include Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, and Paul Verlaine; English counterparts include T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: synesthesia, free verse, prose poetry, decadence, sexuality, manifesto, mysticism

Modernism (c. 1890 – 1940): Again in response to realism, Modernism appeared at the end of the 19th century and flourished well into the 20th century and was a radical shift in literature and art from traditional interpretations and conventions surrounding religion, society, and morality. While rejecting these established mores proffered a more restrictive audience for Modernist artists, the literature of the time embraced this isolation (both culturally and thematically) and fostered an elitist exclusivity. Key artists/authors of the time period include T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, James Joyce, Jackson Pollack, Gertrude Stein, Pablo Picasso, Eugene O’Neill, and D.H. Lawrence. High modernism (the 1920s) is often considered to be the golden age of modernist literature.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: stream of consciousness, objective reality, alternating view points, abstract expressionism, concrete poetry, found objects, idealism, utopia/dystopia, juxtaposition, irony, satire, first-person narration, fragmentation, optimism, the American Dream, zeitgeist

Existentialism: A philosophical and cultural movement that focused heavily on the immediate experiences of the individual, Existentialism emerged as a means of understanding human nature and purpose through ownership and reliance on one’s character, spirit, and personality rather than organized ideals and abstracts. The general principle is that meaning in one’s life is solely in the hands of the individual and that the mark of a “good” life is one that is lived passionately, sincerely, and honestly. Existentialism removes the notions of fairness or karma in the sense that they do not categorize people as either “good” or “bad” – a good thing can happen to anyone, regardless of their social or moral merit and it doesn’t really matter if they are morally correct or deprave as a result. Existential writers and thinkers include Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir, Jean Paul Sartre, Soren Kierkegaard, and Friedrich Nietzsche.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: Absurdism, Nihilism, authenticity, essence, repetition, the Other, facticity

Bloomsbury Group (c. 1906 – 1930): Joined by shared literary interests and geographical proximity, the Bloomsbury Group were a band of English writers (friends, lovers, etc.) who gathered informally and valued ideals like love, the creation, aestheticism, and knowledge. They preferred the private to the public, a sophisticated and elite ideal of pleasure, and an opposition to war or other militaristic ventures. The informal group (they denied meeting) included Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, Clive Bell, Roger Fry, and Duncan Grant.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: aestheticism, feminism, literary criticism, pacifism, liberalism, sexuality, consciousness

Dadaism (1916 – 1922): Dadaism was born out the negativity surrounding the devastation of World War I. In response to the pervasive anti-war mentality, Dadaists emphasized a lack of realism, looking instead for nihilistic, anti-logical, irrational poetry and prose. It was an avant-garde movement, one built and defined by nonsense (the word “dada” has a much debated

meaning – some think it is a nonce word others the French word for “hobbyhorse”). Dadaism serves as the primary influence of later movements like postmodernism and pop art.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: anti-art, nonce word, impressionism, primitivism, jazz, surrealism, social realism, cacophony, collage, montage

Harlem Renaissance (c. 1918 – 1930s): Harlem, a predominantly African American locale in New York that cultivated and home the burgeoning African-American black population in the first part of the 20th century, experienced an explosion of culture, art, and literature during the 1920s. Post-abolition cultural, social, and political changes created an interest and need for literary and artistic expression. Instrumental artists of this time period include Langston Hughes, W.E.B. DuBois, Countee Cullen, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Toomer, Gwendolyn Brooks, Louis Armstrong, and Count Basie.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: gospel music, blues, jazz, seemingly superficial stereotypes who are in fact complex character studies, allusions to spirituals, folk tradition

Lost Generation (c. 1918 – 1930s): A self-adopted moniker to describe writers who as young men in their mid-20s – 30s had fought in WWI, the Lost Generation epitomized the post-war disillusionment and their writing reflected the fallen ideals of the American Dream and the nomadic experience of the expatriate existence. Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, T.S. Eliot, Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, and Sherwood Anderson all share this label.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: expatriate, Hemingway Code Hero, hedonism, fragmentation, contrapuntal structure, stoicism, decadence, narrative prose, snapshot/collage of imagery, existentialism, male-centricism, polysyndeton, Iceberg Theory/Theory of Omission

Surrealism (1920s – 1930s): Dream-like and illogical, Surrealism was born out of the Dadaist movement. Surrealists sought to dissolve the boundaries between reason and imagination, the rational and irrational, and the conscious and unconscious mind. Their work is largely regarded as experimental and avant-garde. Andre Breton, Salvador Dali, and Rene Magritte are a representative group of artists who employed this style in crafting their works.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: unexpected juxtaposition, non sequitur, automatism, the unconscious mind, Theatre of Cruelty

Absurdism (c. 1930 – 1970): Returning to its roots in Existentialism, Absurdism sought to challenge or redirect the previously revered concept of an ordered universe with the human inability to find purpose or meaning in their lives. These writers focused their ideology on the premise of what constitutes the “humanly impossible.” It was a predominantly theatre-based genre, and plays of this type often lacked clear narrative, motive, catharsis, or any other traditional or expected element of the art. Absurdist playwrights relied heavily on repetition, the breakdown of language, punning/wordplay, cyclical plot/narratives, undefined characters, and nonsensical/humorous scenarios and concepts. Tom Stoppard’s “Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead” and Samuel Beckett’s “Waiting for Godot” are often considered the most well-known examples of the genre.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: punning/wordplay, repetition, cliché, stereotyping, commedia dell'arte, metafictional conceit, breaking down the fourth wall, nonsense language, cyclical plot

Magic Realism (c. 1935 – present): Aiming to blur the lines between reality and fantasy, magic realism is a literary genre that has gained popularity in the recent past. The narrative should feel believable despite the inclusion of fantastical elements. It's a style made very popular by authors like Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Jorge Luis Borges, Isabel Allende, Salman Rushdie, Angela Carter, and Toni Morrison.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: science fiction, fantasy, objective realism, surrealism, myths and legend, negative capability, meta-narration, supernatural

Postcolonial Literature (c. 1950 – present): Modern attempts to address or respond to the impact or effect of colonialism, Postcolonial writers challenged Eurocentric values, traditions, and assumptions based on race, identity, and ethnicity. Postcolonial literature challenges the precepts on which colonialism was founded (essentially, the reiteration and reinforcement of the concept of European white supremacy) and thus often takes place in colonized parts of the world (i.e. Africa, Asia, the West Indies, South America, etc.). Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* are all excellent examples of works in this genre.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: magical realism, imperialism, otherness/the Other

Postmodernism (c. 1945 – present): After World War II and in response to modernism, postmodernism emerged as a response to the industrialized advances of a consumer and technology-based society. This literary type reflected the post-war decadence/financial boom by emphasizing media values over religious/spiritual or moral ones. Postmodernists saw social mores as being in the moment (or "local"/"historical" in nature) and attempted to present a parody of the upper and lower classes, and, by doing so, dissolve the barrier between them. Famous postmodern writers include Thomas Pynchon, John Barth, Kurt Vonnegut, Sylvia Plath, Truman Capote, E.L. Doctorow, William Burroughs, and Vladimir Nabokov.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: pastiche, skepticism, parody, pluralism, idealism, blurring of fantasy and realism, deconstruction, structuralism, anti-hero/no hero, meta-fiction, present tense, feminism/social issues, magic realism, irony

Beat Generation (1950s – 1960s): Another post-WWII group, the Beat Generation originated in America among some anti-conformist writers at Columbia University in the 50s and 60s. This group derived much of its inspiration through experimentation with sex, drugs, Zen Buddhism, and criminal behavior. They were reputed hedonists and are credited with establishing a bohemian counterculture that was later embraced by the hippie counterculture. Many of their works were deemed obscene, resulting in obscenity trials and redefining the parameters of American publishing. Key members of the Beat Generation were Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William S. Burroughs.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: roman a clef, Beat poetry, coffeehouse culture, hedonism, beatnik, liberation, revolution, idiosyncrasy, anti-materialism, cyberpunk

Contemporary (1970s – present): A continuation of postmodernist ideals, contemporary literature strives to examine the interconnections between people at the dawning of the new millennium. Works generally are set in the post-WWII world and reflect a renewed interest in the individual struggling to identify meaning in a seemingly disconnected world. It incorporates a myriad of genres from science fiction and cyberpunk to postmodernism and contemporary romance. Popular contemporary writers include Maya Angelou, John Grisham, Barbara Kingsolver, Alice Walker, Tim O'Brien, Sherman Alexie, Sandra Cisneros, Jonathan Safran Foer, and Amy Tan.

Key Literary Devices, Conventions, and Terms: postmodernism, modernism, science fiction, cyberpunk, magic realism, fantasy, metafiction, fragmentation, omniscience, complex language, irony, humor, anti-hero, autobiography, storytelling, symbolism

12AP – Types of Literary Criticism/Theory

Historical/Traditional Criticism: A historical critic is interested in examining how the author's life/biography or his/her experiences are reflected in the author's work. This criticism searches for textual evidence that specific locations, events, experiences, biases, or values from the author's life and background have impacted the course, creation, or meaning of his/her text in a significant way.

Guiding Questions: How does the work show elements of the author's past, interests, biases, etc.?

Socio-Economic/Marxist/Sociological Criticism: A critic under this umbrella is predominantly interested in examining a text via its depiction of the fiscally elite or subjugated, the middle class, or the interplay of social /societal relationships. Marxists in particular operate under the impression that art is the byproduct of the controlling classes of society; of course, Marxism was founded before the age of technology where art ceases to be a spiritual experience designed to reflect the cultural needs and wants of the elite classes and has now become mass-marketable and easily reproducible. For more generic sociological criticism, one would want to consider the myriad "isms" of society (Marxism, feminism, conservatism, fascism, totalitarianism, etc.) and how those "isms" operate within various social structures (i.e. race, class, gender, culture, etc.). Themes of oppression and liberation are particularly compelling, and a sociological critic examines those themes as they impact the individual, the family, a small social sampling, or an entire society.

Guiding Questions:

- *Who is depicted as "civilized" in the text? Who is savage/primitive?
- *What comment does this piece make about race, gender, ethnicity, religion, education, war, hunger, or ethics?
- *What family dynamic is portrayed by the text? How do the relationships between family members alter or shape the work as a whole?
- *What world events, politicians, or social occurrences were happening around or in the creation of this work? How do the ideas, effects, or reverberations of those events manifest in the greater context of the piece?

*What cultures or civilizations appear in the piece? How do they correlate, relate, or reflect the culture of the author? Our culture?

*How different is the society in the piece from our society today? How similar is it?

Formalist Criticism: This literary theory focuses the structural parts (or forms) of the whole work, with an interest in considering how each aspect works together to create that whole. This type of criticism uses only the internal structures of the text; it avoids any outside or external elements like historical background, allusions, psychoanalysis, mythological patterns, etc.

When approaching a text from this perspective, consider its parts individually first and then holistically. Homer's *The Odyssey* consists of 24 Books; the first four books are solely dedicated to Odysseus's son Telemachus and his journey. Homer includes a variety of characters and settings to depict Odysseus's quest. Epic poems also contain catalogues, formal speeches, elevated tone and diction, as well as an invocation to the Muse and a statement of purpose by the speaker. Once you have gathered all the various parts, look at how Homer crafts them together to skillfully create his poem.

Guiding Questions:

*Does each section/chapter/segment/stanza/etc. operate as a "work in miniature" or does it focus on an individual event?

*What point of view is used? Does it help or hinder the development of the story/narrative? Is the narrator reliable?

*How would the story have changed if a different character presented it? What would/would not get told? What would change?

*How much of the narrative is devoted to setting? Is it a static locale or does it shift frequently? Why would the author use fictional space in this way?

*How does the author employ characterization techniques to reveal his/her characters? How effective are those methods of characterization?

*How effective is the text's conclusion? What is its significance?

*How does the title of the piece connect to the work as a whole? Is it appropriate? Explain.

*How do all the parts fit together? What literary/poetic devices get utilized? What symbols/allusions contribute to the work's greater meanings? How do the parts unify the author's deeper purpose/meaning?

Structuralist Criticism: Like formalist criticism, structuralism requires looking closely at how the work is built and constructed in order to understand it.

Examine: diction, syntax, exposition, flashbacks, and foreshadowing. These conventions enable you to make sense of a text.

Guiding Question: How is the work assembled in order to develop meaning?

Feminist Criticism: One of the more popular forms of criticism, feminist criticism challenges the traditional canon of literature by operating under the precepts that 1. women offer a different personal experience to reading/encountering literature or 2. the exclusion or historically negative depiction of women reveals a chronic mistreatment of the female gender in society and art. Feminist critics seek to identify the obscured female voice in the literary history of perceived patriarchal societies and to challenge preexisting stereotypes or assumptions made about women in that literature.

Guiding Questions:

*How are females portrayed in this piece? What stereotypical behavior/language/actions manifest in the female characters? How are the females portrayed compared to male characters?

*How would a female reader approach this text differently from a male reader?

*Where is the female voice in this text? Who/what would females identify with?

*What societal/patriarchal values or historical events regarding women are revealed by their treatment within the text?

Psychoanalytical/Psychological Criticism: A largely Freudian form of criticism, psychoanalytical criticism seeks to understand a character's latent or apparent motivations, confusion, desires, and needs through symbolic use of imagery and objects.

Key Freudian Terminology:

Id: pleasure-seeking ego (impulsive, amoral, selfish, insistent, lustful), tempered by the rational part of the psyche

Ego: a balancing force between the id and superego

Superego: the conscience (values learned from family/parents, society, etc.)

Projection: attributing a desire, emotion, or feeling onto another person

Oedipal/Electra Complex: Based on Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, the Oedipal Complex is the attachment a young boy often experiences toward his mother (usually in early childhood) which results in a hostile or antagonistic relationship toward his father. The Electra Complex is, essentially, the "girl" version of the same dynamic.

Aggressive Phase: The impulse or urge to rebel against perceived authority (parents, employer, police, government, etc.). A conflict emerges between a person's desire to rebel and societal pressure/duty to control one's aggression, often resulting in the production or manifestation of severe guilt.

Reaction Formation: Suppressing and replacing an undesirable emotion with its complete opposite (Hate with love, fear with courage, cruelty with kindness, etc.).

Denial: Completely refusing to admit an unappealing or unpleasant reality.

Phallic Symbol: Masculine or male object, usually visually and symbolically articulated to suggest power, dominance, aggression, virility, strength, etc. (i.e. swords, knives, spears, lances, guns, cannons, Washington Monument, Eiffel Tower, etc.).

Yonic Symbol: Feminine or female object, usually visually and symbolically articulated to suggest nurture, passivity, motherhood, physical weakness, female sexuality, fertility, etc. (i.e. caves, shells, tunnels, flowers, fruit, grails, cups, chalices, vessels, etc.).

Caveat: Much of Freud's theory had heavy sexual connotations or implications. Those implications are not always as clear or intended in the text, so try not to limit your readings by solely looking for the sex.

Guiding Questions:

- *What realities/truths/emotions does the main character have to endure? Does s/he endure them? Avoid them? Deny them? Replace them?
- *What relationships exist between the main character and various authority figures in the text? Do any unnatural attachments seem to exist? Any urges to rebel?
- *What symbols often get used to describe a character's motivations, confusions, emotions, desires, or needs? How does the symbol reflect the latent hopes/fears of the characters?
- *Does the character project his/her feelings onto another character (person, place, or thing)? How so and to what effect?

PLEASE NOTE: IF THIS OVERVIEW IS NOT SUFFICIENT ENOUGH FOR YOU, PLEASE CONSULT ADDITIONAL SOURCES TO HELP BOLSTER YOUR UNDERSTANDING!

ALSO, THIS OVERVIEW IS NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF CRITICISMS. THIS LIST SHOULD SERVE AS A BROAD OVERVIEW NOT ONLY OF A FEW OF THE MAJOR TYPES OF CRITICISM BUT ALSO ON WAYS TO READ THROUGH THOSE CRITICAL LENSES. HOWEVER, THESE ARE NOT THE ONLY CRITICAL THEORIES OUT THERE – JUST BE AWARE!

12AP – Literary Criticism Cheat Sheet (Based on *Writing About Literature*)

To help demonstrate to you how to use appropriately the various forms of literary criticism, I've constructed a little sampler using William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.

1. **Formalist: the idea here is that form is what makes something art to begin with, so to understand a work of art AS a work of art, one must focus on its form.**
 - **the artist presents the world in a strange or different way in order to show us something new or different about the world**
 - **what a work of literature says cannot be separated from HOW it says it! EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON AND THERE ARE NO MISTAKES! (so, yes, in *Catcher in the Rye*, Holden's hat and Allie's hair are both red for a reason!)**
 - **Consider the pieces – formalist critics examine character, style, tone, plot, etc. - you must understand the parts of the story to understand the story!**
 - **Virtually all of your expository writing in high school has a formalist bent to it. Any time you write about structural details, character development, deliberate use of imagery, setting, tone, diction, etc., you are being formalist in scope.**

In *LOTF*, you would want to consider the novel as a form and take into consideration the narrative style (for the most part, it is third person limited; however, there are moments – i.e. after Simon's death – where the text takes a more omniscient stance). You might also look at the island as a microcosm for the world. The novel also relies on structure – twelve chapters that often connect to, juxtapose, or play off of the ones surrounding it. Consider the end of Chapter Five which ends with the boys' plea to the world of adults, asking for a sign, and move to Chapter Six which begins auspiciously with a dogfight and a fallen parachute. Or, perhaps, consider Chapter 9 which begins with Simon lying on the jungle floor, exhausted, bloodied, and beaten from his epileptic fit and look how cyclically it parallels the final moments of the same chapter with Simon's bloodied, beaten, and lifeless body being delicately carried out to sea.

One might also consider Golding's use of foiling in the novel. Simply put, the main foils are obvious. The two leaders are both light-haired boys of roughly the same age – blond or "fair-haired" Ralph, who appropriately comes to represent democracy and order, and red-headed Jack, who comes to represent tyranny, oppression, and chaos. In the same

vein, the two black-haired boys are also at wildly differing ends of the spectrum. Simon, the sweet mystic, has a spiritual connection to the island, helps others when he can, and believes that Ralph will get back to where he came from. Roger, the creepy sadist, enjoys causing pain and destruction and constantly pushes the limits of authority, even within his own tribe. He never wants to return home.

2. Marxist/Economic – focuses predominantly on the depiction of the lower or working classes, usually revealing a negative bias against them in their depiction (i.e. the short, ugly dwarves in *Snow White*)

In *LOTF*, Piggy represents the lower classes, a fact that can be most clearly articulated through his language (“assmar” being the most distinctly memorable example). As a member of the lower class, Piggy is tormented by his peers. He is constantly bullied and no one ever listens to him, despite the fact that his ideas are often the most intelligent and rational among the group. Golding makes Piggy suffer further by making him appear fat and physically weaker compared to the rest of the boys on the island; his reliance on the conch and his job to take care of the littluns also renders him effeminate and useless in the eyes of the other older boys.

3. Feminist: examines the role of women in a text – how they defy, maintain, challenge, or subvert the traditional roles of their gender in particular (again, generally with an emphasis on their negative, unfair, or unequal depiction/treatment in a text).

In *LOTF*, the only female character is the sow – there are no other females on the island. Fittingly, the sow, a mother pig, is symbolically raped by Jack’s tribe as part of their tribe’s initiation and then is brutally murdered and decapitated. The characters associated with femininity (Piggy, for example) are perceived as weaker or lesser. Ralph, who assumes the first role as chief, ultimately must play surrogate mother – watching the littluns, reminding the boys to be clean, and taking care of the shelters – while Jack the hunter-father provides meat. The yonic symbol of the conch also represents a clearly feminine influence on the island, and Jack’s hyper-masculine group is clearly uncomfortable and at odds with this more nurturing, democratic symbol. In fact, upon seeing Ralph for the first time, the yonic conch gently laying in his lap, Jack dismisses Ralph’s authority and leadership without any further consideration, deeming him to be unthreatening and weak in comparison to his own knife-brandishing persona.

4. Moral/Intellectual: judges according to moral standards and ends to praise or blame by locating responsibility strictly within the "nature" or "character" of an individual, group, society, or culture
- **think of art as not only holding up a mirror to nature but also providing an opportunity to teach or improve society with what it shows us**

In *LOTF*, the morals range from political to religious in scope. Perhaps the most poignant moral comes from little Simon, who attempts to teach the others that the “beast is us” –

or, in other words, that the capacity to do evil can be found even in the seemingly most innocent of creatures. Golding, by adding parallels between the boys on the island and the adults around them, also attempts to send a general warning about the dangers of war and uncivilized behavior. We are on a slippery slope, indeed. Golding's employment of political and biblical allegory help to create his larger themes and morals, particularly those that emphasize and reiterate the inherent capability and propensity for evil that lurks deep within the shadows of men's hearts.

- 5. Psychoanalytical/Psychological: think of the text almost as a dream (in the Freudian understanding of the word) – beyond the literal is something latent, trying to get out. These critics look to symbolism as a means of understanding characters' wants, desires, needs, fears, etc. Symbols, thus, take a crucial role in determining the hidden or latent motivations of the characters' psyche.**

In *LOTF*, certain symbols clearly align with character desires, motivations, and needs. Consider Jack, who has a preoccupation with knives. In Freudian studies, the knife operates as a phallic symbol, a sign of masculinity, virility, and aggression (think Eiffel Tower and Washington Monument – these structures are meant to send a clear message about dominance and power). It is thus appropriate that Jack aligns himself with the same type of image – his tolerance for anything he perceives feminine or female is low. Again, when he meets Ralph, Ralph is holding the yonic or female conch in his lap. It is no wonder that Jack immediately dismisses Ralph and his authority, considering the latent value he places on masculinity. Jack also undermines the power of the conch both by refusing to adhere to the rules associated with the object and by declaring that the conch has no power on his side of the island.

Conversely, Piggy's psychological need for a rational, logical, and ordered world manifests in the two primary symbols associated with him: his glasses and the conch. Piggy's glasses, a source of potential salvation and enlightenment, break slowly during the novel, highlighting the transition from school boys to savages. Likewise, the conch serves as a source of communication and a gentle yet authoritative reminder of the importance of rules, decorum, democracy, and order. When it shatters with Piggy in the final moments of Chapter 11, its demise parallels not only the death of reason on the island but also the boys' vigorous new desire for chaos, savagery, tyranny, and abandonment.

12AP – Types of Literary Heroism

Fidler 2015

To encourage you to consider the wide breadth of heroism in literature, I've compiled a list of some of popular types. Be mindful: this list is not comprehensive!

The Epic Hero: Probably the type we are culturally most familiar and comfortable with, the epic hero is traditionally a larger-than-life man of high social standing with nearly superhuman or demi-god powers who traverses far and wide fighting against the tyrannies of evil. Remember, one cannot become an epic hero if one is not willing to leave the safety and comforts of home; the quest is essential. These types often reflect the cultural values of their geography and time period and suffer from a strange tendency to make long formal speeches or boasts. Epic heroes include: Beowulf, Odysseus, Achilles, Luke Skywalker, Harry Potter, Aragorn, etc. Traditional epic heroes also serve as the prototype of the modern superhero.

The Tragic Hero: Like the epic hero, tragic heroes are also popular in our curriculum and they share several characteristics with the epic hero. They are traditionally male, of higher class or social standing, and their stories begin with these characters in a place of honor or respect. However, the tragic hero has a flaw – an overabundance of one specific characteristic or personality defect - that causes him (or her) to make a mistake that leads to his/her downfall (which is loosely translated as “fall from grace” or “death” in most tragedies). Classical tragedies adhering to the standards put forth by Aristotle must contain hamartia (tragic flaw/mistake), anagnorisis (epiphany or moment of recognition), peripeteia (reversal of fortune/turning point), and catharsis (purging of emotion). Most also have a deus-ex-machina. Tragic heroes include: Oedipus (the “perfect” tragic hero according to Aristotle), Macbeth, King Lear, Hamlet, Sirius Black, Inspector Javert, etc.

The Anti-Hero: A recent addition to the pantheon of heroism, the anti-hero is misanthropic, cruel, and often violent. Basically, whatever the opposite of the classical hero is (unconfident, weak, flawed, conflicted, etc.). Examples of the anti-hero include: Napoleon Dynamite, Tyler Durden, Ferris Bueller, Meursault, Holden Caulfield, Captain Jack Sparrow, Severus Snape, Gollum, Sherlock, etc.

The Reluctant Hero: The reluctant hero, as you might guess, doesn't really want anything to do with being a hero/different/special; they need to feel normal, even when it is clear to everyone else that they are not. Reluctant Heroes include: Bilbo (and to a lesser degree) Frodo Baggins, Han Solo, Neo, and Spiderman.

The Byronic Hero: The prototype for the modern anti-hero, the Byronic hero is a brooding, misanthropic, and charismatic man who often behaves in an immoral or socially reprehensible way. These characters are passionate, cynical, and attractive; their ends are often tragic. Byronic heroes include: James Bond, V, Donnie Darko, Milton's Satan, Heathcliff, Mr. Rochester, Edward Cullen, etc.

The Picaro/Picaresque Hero: A picaresque is a novel that focuses on the lively adventures of a lower class rogue (picaro) who manages to outwit and thrive in his/her corrupt society. These are satirical stories, barely held together, that feature a roguish, carefree character who almost passes the bounds of social acceptability (but usually stops short of criminality or moral reprehensibility). In other words, you want to root for the hero. Examples include: *Candide*, *Tom Jones*, *Moll Flanders*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Raoul Duke*, *Becky Sharpe*, etc.

The Hemingway Code Hero: For Hemingway, the world was a cruel and chaotic place and that living life, in essence, was fighting a losing battle. Code heroes fight that battle (and, in doing so, find self-worth or meaning). Hemingway himself defined his Code hero as "a man who lives correctly, following the ideals of honor, courage, and endurance in a world that is sometimes chaotic, often stressful, and always painful." Code heroes are stoic (showing emotion is womanly), they believe in Nada (nothingness), and they must face death bravely all as a reiteration of their masculinity. While they are men of beliefs and individualism, they do not talk about what they believe in and they tend to be men of action, not words (sorry, Hamlet!). He also can hold his liquor and enjoys manly pursuits (hunting, fishing, sports, etc.). Examples include: James Bond, Rocky, John McClane (from *Die Hard*), Santiago, etc.

Fallen Hero: Fallen heroes used to be heroes, but, due to some unforeseen traumatic event, have lost all sense of purpose and meaning (betrayal, loss of a loved one, etc.). Fallen heroes can retreat from society, overcompensate by taking drastic measures to "save" society, embrace anarchy, seek revenge for that which has brought them to this lowly state, or fight only as a way to dull the pain of living. They traditionally don't have happy endings. Fallen heroes include: Harvey Dent, Anakin Skywalker, Saruman, and Milton's Satan/Lucifer.

Chivalric Hero/Knight Errant: Popular in medieval/Arthurian romances, the knight errant was often the chivalric hero of the story. As his name suggests, he was a wandering or roving knight (often on a quest of some kind), who attempted to uphold the tenets of chivalry (courtesy, honor, chastity, honor, Christianity, loyalty/brotherhood, obedience, etc.). A ladies' man (usually one specific lady), the knight errant performs his deeds in her name, striving to do "good" because of her. Knight Errants include: Sir Gawain, Percival, Lancelot, Don Quixote (he is mock-chivalric), Indiana Jones, Batman, etc.

The Romantic Hero: The Romantic hero (as in the Romantic period not "Flowers are the least romantic gift you can give a person with allergies") is an off-shoot of the Byronic hero. He is prone to introspection (brooding), suffers from bouts of melancholy and wanderlust, and has misanthropic/antisocial tendencies. He tends to live apart from

society having both rejected and been rejected by it. Examples include: Mr. Darcy, Natty Bumppo, Don Juan, Edmond Dantes, etc.

12AP: Essential Tragedy Terms

Hamartia – Often translated as “tragic flaw,” hamartia is a more complex notion, defined by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. Loosely understood as “missing the mark,” hamartia includes “ignorant, mistaken, or accidental wrongdoing” as part of the hero’s failing of character. Consider: “Whether Aristotle regards the “flaw” as intellectual or moral has been hotly discussed. It may cover both senses. The hero must not deserve his misfortune, but he must cause it by making a fatal mistake, an error of judgment, which may well involve some imperfection of character but not such as to make us regard him as ‘morally responsible’ for the disasters although they are nevertheless the consequences of the flaw in him, and his wrong decision at a crisis is the inevitable outcome of his character” (cf. Aristot. Poet. 6.24.).

Bremer, J.M. "Hamartia." *Tragic Error in the Poetics of Aristotle and in Greek Tragedy*. Amsterdam, Adolf M. Hakkert, 1969

Peripeteia – A reversal of fortune or a turning point (the English variant is “peripety”)

Aristotle defined peripeteia as "a change by which the action veers round to its opposite, subject always to our rule of probability or necessity." He also believed it was the most important part of a tragic plot. It is a complete reversal: in a comedy, the moment of peripety could result in tears, sadness, or terror. Or, it could make a sad story happy. The goal of tragedy is, according to Aristotle, to inspire feelings of fear and pity in the viewer. In tragedies, therefore, these moments often mark a hero’s progress from good to bad (consider the triumphant war-hero Macbeth moving from honor to disgrace with the murder of Duncan, or, more poignantly, from man to monster, with the murder of Banquo). The hero is expected to undergo some sort of change or transformation as a result of peripety, even if the change is merely external in nature (rich men become poor, an unknown man becomes famous, etc.).

Anagnorisis – The moment of recognition, anagnorisis occurs at the moment in a play/tragedy when a character makes a crucial realization, discovery, or epiphany about their situation, characterization, relationships, or reality. For tragedies, Aristotle defined anagnorisis as "a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined by the poet for good or bad fortune" and often results in the discovery of one’s true character.

Catharsis – The emotional ‘cleansing’ or ‘purging’ of emotion (usually by a character, although, perhaps, also by audience) at the end of the tragedy, usually as a response to drastically changing fortunes.

Deus-ex-machina – Literally “god from the machine” – a character or device which comes in at the end of a play to conveniently restore order to the chaos pervading the

stage. Considered too artificial to create/establish/foster the realism necessary for tragedy to really succeed.

12AP: Tone/Attitude Words

1. accusatory-charging of wrong doing
2. apathetic-indifferent due to lack of energy or concern
3. awe-solemn wonder
4. bitter-exhibiting strong animosity as a result of pain or grief
5. cynical-questions the basic sincerity and goodness of people
6. condescension; condescending-a feeling of superiority
7. callous-unfeeling, insensitive to feelings of others
8. contemplative-studying, thinking, reflecting on an issue
9. critical-finding fault
10. choleric-hot-tempered, easily angered
11. contemptuous-showing or feeling that something is worthless or lacks respect
12. caustic-intense use of sarcasm; stinging, biting
13. conventional-lacking spontaneity, originality, and individuality
14. disdainful-scornful
15. didactic-author attempts to educate or instruct the reader
16. derisive-ridiculing, mocking
17. earnest-intense, a sincere state of mind
18. erudite-learned, polished, scholarly
19. fanciful-using the imagination
20. forthright-directly frank without hesitation
21. gloomy-darkness, sadness, rejection
22. haughty-proud and vain to the point of arrogance
23. indignant-marked by anger aroused by injustice
24. intimate-very familiar
25. judgmental-authoritative and often having critical opinions
26. jovial-happy
27. lyrical-expressing a poet's inner feelings; emotional; full of images; song-like
28. matter-of-fact--accepting of conditions; not fanciful or emotional
29. mocking-treating with contempt or ridicule
30. morose-gloomy, sullen, surly, despondent
31. malicious-purposely hurtful
32. objective-an unbiased view-able to leave personal judgments aside
33. optimistic-hopeful, cheerful
34. obsequious-polite and obedient in order to gain something
35. patronizing-air of condescension
36. pessimistic-seeing the worst side of things; no hope
37. quizzical-odd, eccentric, amusing
38. ribald-offensive in speech or gesture
39. reverent-treating a subject with honor and respect
40. ridiculing-slightly contemptuous banter; making fun of

41. reflective-illustrating innermost thoughts and emotions
42. sarcastic-sneering, caustic
43. sardonic-scornfully and bitterly sarcastic
44. satiric-ridiculing to show weakness in order to make a point, teach
45. sincere-without deceit or pretense; genuine
46. solemn-deeply earnest, tending toward sad reflection
47. sanguineous -optimistic, cheerful
48. whimsical-odd, strange, fantastic; fun

12AP – Key Literary Terms/Poetic Devices

Term:	Definition:
Alexandrine	
Allegory	
Alliteration	
Allusion	
Ambiguity	
Anaphora	
Antagonist	
Anthropomorphism	
Antithesis / Antithetical Expression	
Aphorism	
Apostrophe	
Archetype	
Aside	

Aubade	
Ballad	
Ballade	
Blank Verse	
Bucolic / Pastoral	
Cacophony	
Cadence	
Caesura	
Caricature	
Carpe Diem	
Characterization	
Circumlocution	
Comic Relief	
Complaint	
Conceit	
Conflict	

Concrete Poem	
Connotation	
Couplet	
Deconstruction	
Denotation	
Denouement	
Diction	
Didactic Poem	
Dirge	
Dissonance	
Doggerel	
Dramatic Irony	
Dramatic Monologue	
Ekphrasis	

Elegy	
End-Stopped	
Envoi	
Enjambment	
Epic	
Epic / Heroic Simile	
Epigram	
Epistle	
Ethos	
Euphemism	
Euphony	
Exposition	
Figurative Language	
Flashback	
Foil	

Free Verse	
Genre	
Gothic	
Hubris	
Hymn	
Hyperbole	
Imagery	
Invocation	
Irony	
Kenning	
Lament	
Litotes	
Lyric Poem	
Madrigal	
Metaphor	

Metaphysical Poetry	
Meter	
Metonymy	
Mimesis	
Mock Epic	
Motif	
Narration/Narrative Poem	
Negative Capability	
Occasional Poem	
Objective Correlative	
Ode / Horatian Ode	
Onomatopoeia	
Ottava Rima	
Oxymoron	
Panegyric	

Pantoum	
Paradox	
Parallelism	
Parody	
Pastiche	
Pathos	
Pentameter	
Persona	
Personification	
Point of View	
Prosody	
Protagonist	
Pun	
Quatrain	
Refrain	

Rhetoric	
Rime Royale	
Romanticism	
Rondeau	
Rondel	
Satire	
Sestet/Sestina	
Setting	
Simile	
Soliloquy	
Sonnet	
Stanza	
Style	
Sublime	
Symbolism	

Synecdoche	
Synesthesia	
Syntax	
Theme	
Tone	
Understatement	
Unreliable Narrator	
Villanelle	
Voice	
Volta	
Weltanschauung	
Zeitgeist	