

AP Literature and Composition  
Summer Assignment 2017

In order to both frame the year and to be sure that we have some common background knowledge from which to analytically discuss the literature we read throughout the upcoming year, the following pieces are your summer assignment for the course.

1. Read and complete the assignment (see pg.2) for *How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines, Revised Edition* by Thomas C. Foster.  
\*This can be purchased new or used and is available at most national bookstore chains. It can also be found on Amazon for as little as \$2.83 + shipping.
2. Closely read and annotate “The Allegory of the Cave” from Book VII of Plato’s *The Republic* (see attached).

**ANNOTATION RUBRIC** (PLEASE read carefully.)

**EXCELLENT:**

- Comments are written on **many pages** throughout the book: beginning, middle and end (**quality** is more important than quantity here, as “fluff” used to increase number of comments will not improve level).
- Comments demonstrate **analysis and interpretation**—thinking **beyond the surface level** of the text.
- **Many patterns** of similarity, contrasts, and anomalies are marked; the writer may have created lists or cross-references.
- Comments accomplish a **great variety of purposes**: (see next page)  
personal response  
summary of events/ideas  
questions  
predictions  
connections (within the text and to works and experiences outside the text)  
vocabulary awareness  
reflection  
awareness of writing strategies/text structure  
purpose of literary devices  
any other assigned focus

**PROFICIENT:**

- Comments are written on many pages throughout the book: beginning, middle and end.
- Comments demonstrate **some analysis and interpretation**—thinking beyond the surface level of the text.
- **Some patterns** of similarity, contrasts, and anomalies are marked.
- Marginal comments accomplish **some variety** of purpose.

**UNDEVELOPED:**

- Comments are written on some pages, but may be concentrated in few parts of the book.
- Comments demonstrate **little analysis or interpretation** – are mostly surface level.
- **Few patterns** of similarity, contrasts, and anomalies are marked.
- Marginal comments accomplish **only a few different purposes**, mostly summary of events and observations.

***How to Read Literature like a Professor*** by Thomas C. Foster (2014, Revised Edition)

Outline/Notes Assignment

Introduction: This is a reference book, not a novel. It is filled with information that will help you throughout your year in AP English AND BEYOND! The insights you read in this book will help you ANALYZE the literature you read. It will also help you analyze movies, history, and life in general. Thus, taking good notes will benefit you both during and after reading this book. As you read each chapter, keep notes in the same format as shown below, using one new page for each chapter. We will refer back to these notes and add to them as the academic year progresses.

Directions: The titles of every chapter should be given at the top of each page of notes. Under “Explanation” write notes about how/what this chapter is teaching you about how to analyze literature. For “Example,” write down the major works referenced by Foster for each section AND a book or movie outside of the examples given in the text with which you are familiar with what part applies to this analysis. The first chapter is done for you—read it to see how the notes match up.

You must (neatly) HANDWRITE these notes/outline.

Chapter 1: Every Trip is a Quest (Except When it's Not)

*Explanation:*

- *Many stories follow the Quest mode/archetype*
- *The real reason for a quest is always self-knowledge (Foster 3)*
- *Parts of a Quest (the archetype—how you know if the story is a Quest):*

*The Quest: key details*

1. *a quester (i.e. the person on the quest)*
2. *a destination*
3. *a stated purpose*
4. *challenges that must be faced during on the path to the destination*
5. *a reason for the quester to go to the destination (cannot be wholly metaphorical)*

*Example:*

*Foster - The Crying of Lot 49*

*Personal - Shrek (the 1<sup>st</sup> movie) Shrek is a quester going to rescue the princess, with his sidekick Donkey. He faces trials like the rickety bridge and the dragon, and his real quest is his journey to accept himself and love himself.*

*(Star Wars, The Odyssey, the story of Jesus Christ, and Finding Nemo are also quests.)*

**DO NOT PLAGIAIRIZE!** – Yes, I check, and you do not want to start the year that way.

## The Allegory of the Cave

### BOOK VII.

And now, I said, let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened:— Behold! human beings living in a underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

I see.

And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

Yes, he said.

And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?

Very true.

And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice which they heard came from the passing shadow?

No question, he replied.

To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

That is certain.

And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive some one saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned towards more real existence, he has a clearer vision,—what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them,—will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?

Far truer.

And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take refuge in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

True, he said.

And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent, and held fast until he is forced into the presence of the sun himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

Not all in a moment, he said.

He will require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world. And first he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day?

Certainly.

Last of all he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another; and he will contemplate him as he is.

Certainly.

He will then proceed to argue that this is he who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a certain way the cause of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to behold?

Clearly, he said, he would first see the sun and then reason about him.

And when he remembered his old habitation, and the wisdom of the den and his fellow-prisoners, do you not suppose that he would felicitate himself on the change, and pity them?

Certainly, he would.

And if they were in the habit of conferring honours among themselves on those who were quickest to observe the passing shadows and to remark which of them went before, and which followed after, and which were together; and who were therefore best able to draw conclusions as to the future, do you think that he would care for such honours and glories, or envy the possessors of them? Would he not say with Homer,

'Better to be the poor servant of a poor master,'

and to endure anything, rather than think as they do and live after their manner?

Yes, he said, I think that he would rather suffer anything than entertain these false notions and live in this miserable manner.

Imagine once more, I said, such an one coming suddenly out of the sun to be replaced in his old situation; would he not be certain to have his eyes full of darkness?

To be sure, he said.

And if there were a contest, and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the den, while his sight was still weak, and before his eyes had become steady (and the time which would be needed to acquire this new habit of sight might be very considerable), would he not be ridiculous? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if any one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.

No question, he said.

This entire allegory, I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument; the prison-house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world according to my poor belief, which, at your desire, I have expressed—whether rightly or wrongly God knows. But, whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private life must have his eye fixed.

I agree, he said, as far as I am able to understand you.

Moreover, I said, you must not wonder that those who attain to this beatific vision are unwilling to descend to human affairs; for their souls are ever hastening into the upper world where they desire to dwell; which desire of theirs is very natural, if our allegory may be trusted.

Yes, very natural.

And is there anything surprising in one who passes from divine contemplations to the evil state of man, misbehaving himself in a ridiculous manner; if, while his eyes are blinking and before he has become accustomed to the surrounding darkness, he is compelled to fight in courts of law, or in other places, about the images or the shadows of images of justice, and is endeavouring to meet the conceptions of those who have never yet seen absolute justice?

Anything but surprising, he replied.

Any one who has common sense will remember that the bewilderments of the eyes are of two kinds, and arise from two causes, either from coming out of the light or from going into the light, which is true of the mind's eye, quite as much as of the bodily eye; and he who remembers this when he sees any one whose vision is perplexed and weak, will not be too ready to laugh; he will first ask whether that soul of man has come out of the brighter life, and is unable to see because unaccustomed to the dark, or having turned from darkness to the day is dazzled by excess of light. And he will count the one happy in his condition and state of being, and he will pity the other; or, if he have a mind to laugh at the soul which comes from below into the light, there will be more reason in this than in the laugh which greets him who returns from above out of the light into the den.

That, he said, is a very just distinction.

But then, if I am right, certain professors of education must be wrong when they say that they can put a knowledge into the soul which was not there before, like sight into blind eyes.

They undoubtedly say this, he replied.

Whereas, our argument shows that the power and capacity of learning exists in the soul already; and that just as the eye was unable to turn from darkness to light without the whole body, so too the instrument of knowledge can only by the movement of the whole soul be turned from the world of becoming into that of being, and learn by degrees to endure the sight of being, and of the brightest and best of being, or in other words, of the good.

Very true.

And must there not be some art which will effect conversion in the easiest and quickest manner; not implanting the faculty of sight, for that exists already, but has been turned in the wrong direction, and is looking away from the truth?

Yes, he said, such an art may be presumed.

And whereas the other so-called virtues of the soul seem to be akin to bodily qualities, for even when they are not originally innate they can be implanted later by habit and exercise, the virtue of wisdom more than anything else contains a divine element which always remains, and by this conversion is rendered useful and profitable; or, on the other hand, hurtful and useless. Did you

never observe the narrow intelligence flashing from the keen eye of a clever rogue—how eager he is, how clearly his paltry soul sees the way to his end; he is the reverse of blind, but his keen eye-sight is forced into the service of evil, and he is mischievous in proportion to his cleverness?

Very true, he said.

But what if there had been a circumcision of such natures in the days of their youth; and they had been severed from those sensual pleasures, such as eating and drinking, which, like leaden weights, were attached to them at their birth, and which drag them down and turn the vision of their souls upon the things that are below—if, I say, they had been released from these impediments and turned in the opposite direction, the very same faculty in them would have seen the truth as keenly as they see what their eyes are turned to now.

Very likely.

Yes, I said; and there is another thing which is likely, or rather a necessary inference from what has preceded, that neither the uneducated and uninformed of the truth, nor yet those who never make an end of their education, will be able ministers of State; not the former, because they have no single aim of duty which is the rule of all their actions, private as well as public; nor the latter, because they will not act at all except upon compulsion, fancying that they are already dwelling apart in the islands of the blest.

Very true, he replied.

Then, I said, the business of us who are the founders of the State will be to compel the best minds to attain that knowledge which we have already shown to be the greatest of all—they must continue to ascend until they arrive at the good; but when they have ascended and seen enough we must not allow them to do as they do now.

What do you mean?

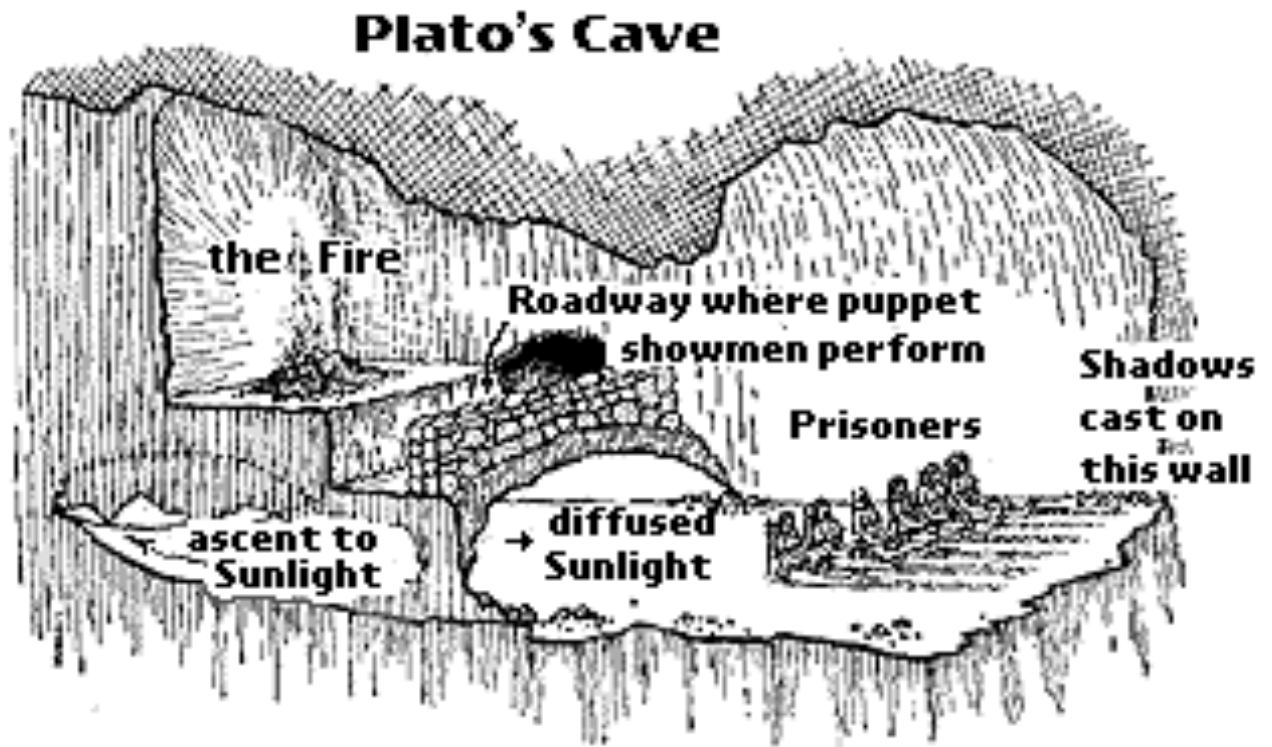
I mean that they remain in the upper world: but this must not be allowed; they must be made to descend again among the prisoners in the den, and partake of their labours and honours, whether they are worth having or not.

But is not this unjust? he said; ought we to give them a worse life, when they might have a better?

You have again forgotten, my friend, I said, the intention of the legislator, who did not aim at making any one class in the State happy above the rest; the happiness was to be in the whole State, and he held the citizens together by persuasion and necessity, making them benefactors of the State, and therefore benefactors of one another; to this end he created them, not to please themselves, but to be his instruments in binding up the State.

True, he said, I had forgotten.

Plato. "Book VII." *The Republic*. N.p. n.d. N. pag. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 26 May 2015.  
<<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1497/1497-h/1497-h.htm>>.



"The Allegory of the Cave." *Philosophy 320: History of Ancient Philosophy - Texts and Lectures*. University of Washington, 25 Jan. 2013. Web. 26 May 2015.