**On Theme**

It can be argued that, in literature, theme is the only thing that matters. It can also be argued that theme is irrelevant in the face of what comprises it: the elements of literature. As readers, it is our job to purposefully witness these two inseparable aspects of literature and, through our written and spoken words, liberate the true meaning that is shackled within the piece. However, some would argue that, by analyzing, we are imprisoning the literary work itself.

**The theme of a piece of fiction is its view about life and how people behave.**

**In fiction, the theme is not intended to teach or preach. In fact, it is not presented directly at all. We extract it from the elements of that story (plot/language/structure).**

**In other words, we must figure out the theme ourselves.**

This doesn’t necessarily mean that this is the view of the writer. As we delve deeper into literary theory, you will find that some theorists and bigwig professors will argue just that. However, for the moment, we must examine the piece of literature as something that has been released into the world and, by analyzing the words as they stand, we are discovering meaning. To say that a piece of literature means something different to every person is too simplistic; a piece of literature can take on a different meaning for every reader *given* the appropriate evidence and logical reasoning.

In essence, your literary analysis thesis should comprise of the following:

* The theme
* The literary elements that bring us to this theme

A Mad-Lib for this thesis would essentially look like this:

In \_\_(writer)\_\_\_\_\_’s \_\_(genre)\_\_, \_\_(title)\_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_(literary elements illuminate(s) the work’s theme of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(statement about humanity or the human condition)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

As the writer, you are welcome to utilize the sentence structure of your choice in your introductory paragraph as long as the above components are addressed. For the remainder of your analysis essay, you would go on to prove how those elements could lead the reader to the theme.

**My notes on theme:**