**The Things They Carried Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**“Love” and “Spin”**

**Postmodern Literary Devices**

**Part One:** Define the following literary devices.

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| **Literary Device** | **Definition** |
| **Juxtaposition** | **Juxtaposition** is a literary technique in which two or more ideas, places, characters and their actions are placed side by side in a narrative or a poem for the purpose of developing comparisons and contrasts. |
| **Metafiction** | **Metafiction** is a literary device used self-consciously and systematically to draw attention to a work's status as an artifact. It poses questions about the relationship between fiction and reality, usually using irony and self-reflection. |
| **Personification** | **Personification** is a figure of speech in which a thing, an idea or an animal is given human attributes. The non-human objects are portrayed in such a way that we feel they have the ability to act like human beings. |
| **Memory** | **Memory** is the use of past experiences and perspectives in writing. Memories are often presented as stream-of-consciousness rather than as a linear story with a clear beginning, middle, and end. |
| **Temporal Distortion** | **Temporal Distortion** is the use of a non-linear timeline. The author jumps back and forth through time. |
| **Fragmentation** | **Fragmentation** is the breaking down of central beliefs, core values, or authority. Fragmentation means there is no absolute truth; instead there are multiple voices, memories, and perspectives. |
| **Black Humor** | **Black humor** makes light of serious or taboo subjects. It is a form of humor that sees human suffering as absurd rather than pitiable (feeling sorry for someone). |

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Part Two:** Work with a partner to determine which literary devices are at work in the following passages. Then explain the passage’s significance to the novel. Note that more than one literary device is at work in each passage. All the devices are used at least once.

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| **Passage** | **Literary Devices and Significance** |
| **Pg 31**  “Norman Bowker and Henry Dobbins playing checkers every evening before dark. It was ritual for them. They would dig a foxhole and get the board out and play long, silent games as the sky went from pink to purple. The rest of us would sometimes stop by to watch. There was something restful about it, something orderly and reassuring. There were red checkers and black checkers. The playing field was laid out in a strict grid, no tunnels or mountains or jungles. You knew where you stood. You knew the score. The pieces were out on the board, the enemy was visible, you could watch the tactics unfolding into larger strategies. There was a winner and a loser. There were rules.” | *Juxtaposition to war; war has no rues unlike the checkers game.*  *Humans are used to rules; they like rules. War has no rules and therefore has atrocities.*  *Dobbins and Bowker hang on to their chess game to help them survive war.* |
| **Pg 32-33**  “Even in the deep bush, where you could die any number of ways, the war was nakedly and aggressively boring” | *Personification of the war*  *The war is a living, breathing thing that can swallow you whole* |
| **Pg 33**  “I feel guilty sometimes. Forty-three years old and I’m still writing war stories. My daughter Kathleen tells me it’s an obsession, that I should write about a little girl who finds a million dollars and spends it all on a Shetland pony. In a way, I guess, she’s right: I should forget it. But the thing about remembering is that you don’t forget. You take your material where you find it, which is in your life, at the intersection of past and present. The memory-traffic feeds into a rotary up on your head, where it goes in circles for a while, then pretty soon imagination flows in and the traffic merges and shoots off down a thousand different streets. As a writer all you can do is pick a street and go for the ride, putting things down as they come to you. That’s the real obsession. All those stories” | *Memory*  *Metafiction; by writing about his experiences, O’Brien is able to sort through his emotions/memories by objectifying them into a story (so as to separate himself from the memories)*  *His stories are apart of his past; who he is now as a direct result of them*  *Temporal Distortion and Fragmentation; writes his memories/stories as they come to him, no particular order* |
| **Pg 35**  “Or Ted Lavender adopting an orphan puppy—feeding it from a plastic spoon and carrying it in his rucksack until the day Azar strapped the puppy to a Claymore antipersonnel mine and squeezed the firing device.” | *Juxtaposition: the innocence of the puppy and the sweetness of Ted Lavender’s nurturing gestures versus the senseless cruelty of killing it with the bombing device*  *Why would Azar do such a thing?*  *Fragmentation, Memory: horrible little shards of memory, anecdotes of the soldier’s daily life, reflections of the effects of war on young men. (Azar says, “What’s everyone so upset about? I mean, Christ, I’m just a boy.”)*  *Black humor* |
| **Pg 36**  “Forty-three years old, and the war occurred half a life-time ago, and yet the remembering makes it now. And sometimes remembering will lead to a story, which makes it forever. Stories are for joining the past to the future. Stories are for those late hours in the night when you can't remember how you got from where you were to where you are” | *Temporal Distortion, Fragmentation, Memory; writing helps to understand the chaos in temporal distortion, stream of consciousness*  *What are stories for?* |
| *Find your own passage from “The Things They Carried,” “Love,” or “Spin.”*  **Pg \_\_\_\_\_\_** |  |
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