

WRITING EXERCISE #2**Due: Monday, Week 3, before lecture****Analyzing Texts: Poems and Short Stories**

In WE #1 you analyzed a visual text (an advertisement) and the details it uses to convey a message to the public. Imaginative texts such as poetry, songs, and short stories also include details and elements to infer meanings based on cultural myths and values. As you analyze these texts' specific details, you can begin to identify and interpret how the texts are shaped by and/or resistant to cultural ideologies and myths (Maasik & Solomon 13-14).

Your Task: Write a 1-2 page analysis of a poem, song, or short story.

- 1) Choose a short story, poem, or song from the list below.

Poem	Song	Short Story
"Howl" "A Litany for Survival"	"Strange Fruit" "The Sound of Silence"	"She Unnames Them"

- 2) Read your text, annotating it as you go along.
 3) **WHAT IS ON THE PAGE?** While re-reading it, *do a brainstorm of details (Level 1)*. Use the list of genre-specific questions below to guide your brainstorm.

Poem	Song	Short Story
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who is speaking and who is the audience? (Refer to the speaker as the poet or speaker, not by the author's name.) What is the speaker's tone? Why is the speaker talking? - What conflict or issue is being explored? What happens? When? Where? - What is the language like? Are the key images? What are word choices like? Are there any metaphors used? - Where is there repetition? - What's the poem's structure like--line breaks, punctuation, groups of stanzas, organization? - What is the rhyme or rhythm like (or lack thereof)? - What is the title? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze the lyrics using the questions for poetry. ← - What instruments do you hear? - What do the vocals sound like? - What is repeated or what stands out in terms of sound, rhythm, or beat? - Is there any improvisation? - Is there any speaking versus singing? - Are there backup vocals? What are they like? - What is the title? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who is the narrator? Do we know? What voice does he/she speak in (i.e. first person, third person...)? Why is he/she speaking? - How is the story organized? How does it begin or end? - Who are the characters and what are they like? - What is the tone like? - What conflict or issue is explored? What happens? When? Where? - Do any images, words, phrases, etc. repeat themselves? - Is there any figurative language being used? - What is dialogue like (if any)? - What is the title?

- 4) **HOW ARE THESE DETAILS RELATED?** Next, *group related details into categories* (Level 2) and think about what each category suggests on its own.

- 5) **WHY ARE THESE CATEGORIES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS IMPORTANT?** Last, looking at your categories and the suggestion each implies, *craft a broader interpretation*, being sure to explain why your interpretation is significant (Level 3).

Get Help...

See sample analyses on the* DOC 3 website and * Writing Assistance website

DUE Monday, Week 3, in lecture: - The annotated version of the text.- Your brainstormed notes.- A brief, 1-2 page analysis of the text comprised of an overall interpretation (Level 3), supporting sub-claims (Level 2), and details that support each of those sub-claims (Level 1). As with all DOC assignments, your assignment must be typed, double-spaced, in a 12-point font, with a proper heading and signed Honor Code statement.

Resources: The Writing Center. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/poetry-explication.html (3/25/2008)