

Soweto Road Homework

Using the techniques we practiced in class, analyze the poem "Soweto Road." You will need to identify and address all three aspects of poetry: sounds, form, and meaning. Please color-code your comments and make a key. Please do not simply label; include explanations of how these aspects influence your reading/the meaning of the poem.

One paragraph summary of your analysis (typed or neatly written in ink) and color-coded key, with marked-up poem due next class.

Grading Rubric:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Accurate key | —/5 |
| 2. Paragraph summary includes analysis of form, sound + meaning | —/6 |
| 3. Paragraph includes 2-3 examples of poetic devices and how they <u>affect</u> the poem/reader. | —/4 |
| 4. On time, appropriate length, typed/in ink. | —/5 |

—/20

Soweto Road

On this spot rough
from cares of slow years
on these streets
muddy from torrents red
on these crooked roads
yawning for direction
here where like early spring
awaiting rain's seeds
young voices stormed horizons
how yet like summer streams
young blood flowed over
flooded flower
in the dead of winter

On this road here
here this road here
tingles and shudders
from acid taste
the snakeskin snakestooth whiplash road
 where snakes tongue flicker lick
broken glass children's park
road school for shoeless feet...
olympic track perfected
by daily daring sprints
against passes
and barbed wire nakedness...
this road pressed soft
oozing like tear-falls
treeless show-ground for hard-ware
 processions

all the June sixteen festivals
and their mad array of hippos
muffling contrary anthems
with machine-gun chatter
naked greed and lust for blood in camouflage
Soweto road drunk
from rich red wine
this sweet arterial blood
for choice Aryan folk...
battlefield road here yes

Here
yes even here
where road-blocks to life pile
precariously
here we kneel
scoop earth raise mounds of hope
we oath
with our lives
we shall immortalize
each footprint left each grain of soil
 that flesh shed here
each little globe of blood
dropped in our struggle
upon the zigzag path of revolution...
Soweto blood red road
will not dry up
until the fields of revolution
fully mellow tilled
always to bloom again

Lindiwe Mabuza

In analyzing poetry there are three elements to focus on.

Language/Sound

* Alliteration: A repetition of initial consonant sounds in words such as *Rough* and *Ready*. Dynamo Destroys Dirt! Hapless Haunted House owner Hears Horrible Howling Hoots!

* Assonance: A repetition of vowel sounds.

* Consonance: A repetition of consonants. Although it is similar to alliteration, consonance is not limited to the first letter of a word.

"and high school girls with clear skin smiles..."

* Rhyme: For words to rhyme, they have to have the same ending sounds. They don't have to have the same number of syllables though. Here are some examples: bed/head, tiring/inspiring, spoken/broken.

Structure

* Verse: the proper term for a line of poetry
It is named according to the kind and number of feet composing it: iambic pentameter etc.

* Stanza: a group of verses thought of as one piece of a poem. A stanza can be made up of any number of lines. A line is skipped between stanzas.

* Meter: the patterned repetition of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. For instance, most nursery rhymes are written in verse and are given meter.

* Rhyme scheme: Ending rhyme pattern, usually expressed in, for example, ABAB or AABB format.

Example:

All in a hot and copper sky,	A
The bloody Sun, at noon,	B
Right up above the mast did stand,	C
No bigger than the Moon.	B

-Coleridge "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

Meaning

* Simile: A comparison between two things that uses the word "Like" or "As" - for example, "her tears fell like rain."

* Metaphor: A comparison made by describing one thing as another - for example, "The march of the army was a drumbeat heard throughout the countryside."

* Plot: what happens in the poem - for example, "the poem paints a picture of a rainy day on a farm."

* Message: the idea or reality the poet is expressing or exploring - for example, "the poet is trying to express the movement of a grasshopper" - OR - "the poem suggests that everyday objects can be poetic of one really looks at them."

Poetry Analysis Fact Sheet

BASIC DIRECTIONS

Title-- Ponder the title before reading the poem

Paraphrase-- Translate the poem into your own words

Connotation-- Contemplate the poem for meaning beyond the literal

Attitude--Observe both the speaker and the poet attitude (tone).

Shifts-- Note shifts in speaker and in attitudes

Title-- Examine the title again, this time on an interpretive level.

Theme --Determine what the poet is saying.

SPECIFIC SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Title: Ponder the title before reading the poem; predict what the poem may be "about."

Paraphrase: Translate the poem into your own words. Focus on one syntactical unit at a time, not necessarily on one line at a time. Or write a sentence or two for each stanza of the poem.

Connotation: Contemplate the poem for meaning beyond the literal. What do the words mean beyond the obvious? What are the implications, the hints, the suggestions of these particular word choices?

Devices: Examine any and all poetic devices, focusing on how such devices contribute to the meaning, the effect, or both, of a poem. (What is important is not that you can identify poetic devices so much as that you can explain how the devices enhance meaning and effect.) Especially note anything that is repeated, either individual words or complete phrases. Anything said more than once may be crucial to interpretation.

Attitude: Observe both the speaker's and the poet's attitude (tone). Diction, images, and details suggest the speaker's attitude and contribute to understanding.

Shifts: Rarely does a poet begin and end the poetic experience in the same place. As is true of most of us, the poet's understanding of an experience is a gradual realization, and the poem is a reflection of that epiphany. Trace the changing feelings of the speaker from the beginning to end, paying particular attention to the conclusion. To discover shifts, watch for the following: key words: but, yet, however, although; punctuation: dashes, periods, colons, ellipsis; stanza and/or line divisions: change in line or stanza length or both; irony: sometimes irony hides shifts; effect of structure on meaning, how the poem is "built"; changes in sound that may indicate changes in meaning; and changes in diction: slang to formal language, for instance, or positive connotation to negative; the crux, the one crucial part of the work that stands out, perhaps presenting the complete idea all by itself.

Title: Examine the title again, this time on an interpretive level.

Theme: In identifying theme, recognize the human experience, motivation, or condition suggested by the poem. Use this theme chart:

PLOT: A summary of the "plot" or events of a poem written in a short paragraph form

SUBJECT: Subjects of the poem are listed as words or phrases

THEME: After combining subjects where appropriate, write a complete sentence identifying what idea the poet or speaker (narrator) is conveying about each subject.