**Week 1: Week 1 - W1: Assignment 2 Discussion**

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| **Assignment 2: Symbolism and Imagery in Poetry**  By **Wednesday, December 5, 2012,** complete and post your assignment to the **Discussion Area**.  By the end of the week, comment on at least two of your classmates’ submissions. Remember that your replies should help your classmates expand, clarify, defend, and/or refine their work. You can ask questions and use declarative sentences to express your thoughts. Be sure to be honest, clear, and concise, referring to specific words and passages from your classmates’ work. Always use constructive language, and avoid negative language; work toward using a tone and spirit of intellectual curiosity and discovery. Your responses to your peers' writing should include specifics if you are attempting to make a point.  **Symbolism**  Consider for a moment: What one object would you choose to represent yourself? To symbolize yourself as a student, you might choose a book. To indicate that you are a parent, you could select a picture of your child. If you are a musician, you could use a clef. A sports fan might consider a football or hockey stick. Some people might identify their astrological sign or birthstone. All of these things are symbols, and they tell something about a person.  **Question**  Choose “The negro speaks of rivers” from among those you were assigned this week ***except Sonnet* 29,** which will be used as an example below.  **Part A**: Review the poem you have chosen, and for about 15 minutes, record the emotions that you experience when you read the poem. You may include emotions that you had when you first encountered the poem. Don’t worry about grammar or spelling at this point. Try to capture the feelings as best you can. Write a paragraph for this part of the assignment.  **Part B**: Now, look at the poem again. Make a table with three columns. In the far left column, list the specific words or phrases that triggered the emotions you identified in **Part A**. In the middle column, describe the emotions that these words evoked. Finally, in the right-hand column, speculate why the poem’s language caused the emotions you identified.  For example, someone who reads Shakespeare’s Sonnet 29 (copied below) might create the following the chart. Here is the sonnet and then the chart:  Sonnet 29  When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes, I all alone beweep my outcast state  And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries And look upon myself and curse my fate,  Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd, Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,  With what I most enjoy contented least;  Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising, Haply I think on thee, and then my state,  Like to the lark at break of day arising  From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate; For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings That then I scorn to change my state with kings.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Sonnet 29: Words** | **My Emotions** | **Explanation** | | deaf heaven | hopeless, sad, abandoned, alone | The idea that God might not hear my prayers is the worst thing I could imagine. I would not be able to cope with my problems if I didn’t have faith. | | sullen earth | depressed, glum, despondent | This makes me think of patches of frozen mud during winter. It’s cold, and everything is dreary. The only colors in nature in winter are shades of brown and gray. “Sullen earth” is dark, hard, and dull. | | lark at break of day arising | Peaceful, joyous, relaxed, eager, energetic, hopeful | As a child, I lived near a forest preserve, and the birds would wake me every morning. It was magical to listen to them twitter and call out to each other as the sky went from gray blue to rosy orange to bright sunshine. I felt safe and happy when I heard these sounds. I still associate joy, serenity, and excitement about the potential offered by a new day when I hear birds’ morning song because that is how I felt when, as a child, I woke up and listened to the birds outside my window. |   **Part C**: Now make a second chart. It should have two columns. Go over the poem one more time, and in the left column, list all the symbols that you can find. In the right column, briefly tell some of the characteristics of those symbols. If some of the vocabulary is unfamiliar, look up the words in the *Dictionary of Symbols* (the link is in the lecture on symbolism).  For example, a chart based on Sonnet 29 would start like this:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Symbol** | **Characteristics** | | hymns | Happiness, joy, lyrical, praise, worship | | hymns | Entrance to paradise, door to God’s home, beautiful place, perfection | | kings | Powerful, rich men | | bootless cries | Sadness, anguish, hopelessness, depression |   **Part D:** Go over all the notes that you have made (paragraph + two charts), and write at least one-half page (175 words) discussing how symbols are used in the poem you chose for this assignment. How do the symbols enrich the poem and deepen your understanding of its meanings? Remember to provide evidence for your claims in the form of excerpts (a word, phrase, or line, as appropriate) from the poem.  **Part E:** You are ready to put it all together! Assemble the materials from **Parts A, B, C, and D** into one document. You will have a paragraph, two charts, and a discussion of at least a half page in length. Remember that claims in all parts of the assignment should be substantiated by excerpts from appropriate sources. Quotations, paraphrases, and summaries used in the assignment should be arranged according to APA rules of style, and in-text and reference citations should be provided, also formatted in APA style. Quoted material should never exceed 25% of the document. Post the final document in the **Discussion Area**.  **The following is the assigned poem by,**  **Langston Hughes 1902–1967**  Langston Hughes composed his first published poem, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” in 1920, during the summer after he graduated from high school in Cleveland, Ohio. It was published the following year in the NAACP magazine *Crisis* and was included in Hughes’s first book, *The Weary Blues* (1926). He dedicated the poem to the political activist and intellectual leader W. E. B. DuBois, cofounder of the NAACP and editor of *Crisis*. (For a biography of Hughes, see page 369.)  **The Negro Speaks of Rivers**   * I’ve known rivers: I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than    the flow of human blood in human veins. My soul has grown deep like the rivers. I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young. I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to * 5    sleep. I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it. I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln    went down to New Orleans, and I’ve seen its muddy    bosom turn all golden in the sunset. I’ve known rivers: Ancient, dusky rivers. * 10 My soul has grown deep like the rivers. |  |  |