

TP-CASTT Poetry Analysis

As you respond to each section, write using complete sentences and clear language! Read over your responses carefully! Your responses don't have to be exactly like these, but they should be very close.

TITLE: Consider the title and make a prediction about what the poem is about.

I predict that this title has something to do with a place.

PARAPHRASE: Translate the poem line by line into your own words on a literal level. Look for complete thoughts (sentences may be inverted) and look up unfamiliar words.

Since this poem is short, I will paraphrase it by stanzas.

Stanza 1: What happens to a dream that is denied, delayed, or discouraged?

Stanza 2: Does the dream dry up, become infected, rot/stink, or become crusty?

Stanza 3: Maybe the altered dream gets too heavy to carry. Maybe it sags and loses its shape.

Stanza 4: Or, maybe the dream just blows up or gets destroyed somehow.

CONNOTATION: Examine the poem for meaning beyond the literal. Look for figurative language, imagery, and sound elements.

The poem, "Harlem," by Langston Hughes uses similes, imagery, and mood to create a work of art. This poem is about a person's dreams. It asks many questions about those dreams and uses vivid language to paint pictures in our minds and make us think. What happens if a person's dreams dry up, become a smelly mess, sag and get too heavy to keep/carry? How do we feel, or what do we do when our dreams blow up in our faces? The mood of this poem is serious and thoughtful. Lastly, Hughes uses similes to compare someone's fragile dreams to things everyone can understand.

ATTITUDE/TONE: Notice the speaker's tone and attitude. Humor? Sarcasm? Awe?

I feel this poem has more tone than attitude. I believe the concept of dreams is a serious topic that Hughes is trying to bring to our attention.

Depending on where we live, we may be encouraged to dream or not. Once a dream becomes a reality, is it allowed to grow? Or, is the dream discouraged, infected by negative opinions, or destroyed? I think Mr. Hughes wanted the world to be aware that this is happening to some people in our society.

SHIFTS: Note any shifts or changes in speaker or attitude. Look for key words, time change, punctuation.

Shifts exist in this poem because it builds in intensity as the reader moves through it. The first line stands alone, so you can register the subject matter. The second stanza asks questions about a lot of different things. The isolation of the third stanza-- along with its content-- builds tension. The last stanza is full of emphasis! Emotions are highest in the last stanza where you can almost feel the "explosion" that could potentially happen.

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

The title could refer to a group of people whose dreams are often delayed, diverted, or destroyed. Perhaps, the people in a place called, Harlem, live where dreams are often denied or overlooked.

THEME: Briefly state in your own words what the poem is about (subject), then what the poet is saying about the subject (theme).

A couple of themes could come from this work.

I believe Hughes' message for the reader could be one of the following:

Be careful how you handle a Man's dreams.

Everyone dreams, and they affect us deeply.