

Richard McCarthy  
Close-reading strategy  
MIST

**M:** Mood: how does it feel; WAHOO OR BOOHOO; happy or sad; WHAT IS THE PROBLEM IN THE POEM

Wahoo concepts: unity, understanding, completion, agency, joy, celebration

Bohoo concepts: isolation, confusion, waste, chaos, toil, fear

Sound and sense (euphonic and easy or harsh and grating; a struggle)

**I:** Imagery: adjective; **connotation**; impact of oppositional imagers (binaries, juxtaposition; inversion)

Auditory, tactile, gustatory, visual, olfactory, and taste

This is where the TENSION is most evident. The message of the poem comes through its images. Notice how the images lead you to a positive or negative mood. Is the imagery rich and lush, fantastic, light or dark? Is it an interior/exterior?

Figurative Language is imagery

--simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, symbol

**S:** Structure and Shifts : How the piece is built and how it moves and why.

--form: rhyme scheme; patterns or rules broken?

--pov or narrator

--shifts, transitions, repetitions

--syntax, line breaks, enjambment

--dramatic shifts in imagery and diction

--time shifts

**T:** Tension: the problem that reveals theme and meaning

What seems to be the **PROBLEM** the piece considers? What are the emotions or ideas that seem to be engaged or in opposition? Tension is primarily created through the use of **Imagery and Structure**. Are there things that are in contrast or out of place/structure?

## **MIST Clarification**

**MOOD:** how does it make the **READER** feel, wahoo or boohoo (happy or sad)? Refine the emotions from there. This is the overall sense of the poem and comes about due to **all** the elements and techniques.

--Students will find that most "complex" literature is sort of a Waboo (happy and sad)

--Sound impacts on mood: soothing (o, m, n, l..) or jarring (p,t, b,k...)

--assonance, alliteration, consonance, rhyme will impact the **spacing**

**\*\* Mood is not to be confused with TONE. TONE is made up of imagery, diction, and syntax\*\***

**IMAGERY:** what senses are appealed to and what is the weight? The images will "stack" in different areas or binaries to affect mood and tension through **connotation**.

--auditory, tactile, visual, taste, olfactory, gustatory; does the appeal to the senses vary or remain the same? To what purpose or effect?

If you discuss imagery, put an **ADJECTIVE** in front of the word imagery. The imagery can often be consistent or, more often, shifting and juxtaposed: vibrant/muted, dark/light, interior/exterior, broken/whole, secular/sacred.....

--Imagery is most often where the evidence of a **TENSION** or **PROBLEM** will show itself.

--**Figurative Language** is grouped with Imagery

--Unifying: personification, similes, and metaphors create connections

--apostrophe and hyperbole

**STRUCTURE and SHIFTS:** the discussion of the problem **FRAMED**

--Form: sonnet or something else; specific forms have set patterns that shift predictably

--Shift in pov, setting, speakers, or time; watch for **ITALICS** to reveal this

--transitional words: but, if, however, therefore..... shift a discussion

--Diction (high or low); Syntax (simple or complex) ; Enjambment or line breaks; closed or open stanzas

--A **SHIFT** in topic or focus will often be a "jump out" that changes the subject or a "drop down" that offers more detail that informs on the depth of the poem.

**TENSION:** what is the problem, what are the forces pushing and pulling; interior or exterior? Imagery and shifts will give you this.