

## Stylistic Analysis Worksheets

Title: *Red Anger* by R.T. Smith (Scottish and native descent) “Red” refers to Native Americans and is a slang term. “Anger”: refers to native oppression and abuse.

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Genre & Tone: The speaker in the poem is angry at the social conditions of poverty that his people endure on the Reservation. He is complaining about the neglect his people experience and his tone is one of disgust. The speaker believes that his people have been betrayed and lied to and he sees the abuse that his family has directly experienced as a result of the oppression. He says: “Years of lies fade into the black chalkboard”.

Overall his tone is negative, frustrated, angry, sad, dark and bleak similar to the atmosphere.

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Atmosphere, Setting, Place and Time periods:

The atmosphere is bleak and dusty, dirty and stained, unhygienic and the speaker is very angry and frustrated. The atmosphere is one of poverty and dilapidation. His father is a gambler; his mother is “growing puffy with disease; he is “nursing his anger like a seed”. He uses the settings of the Reservation school; his home (bedroom window); his garage where his father gambles, the outhouse where his sister shot herself with a 45, and the tourist lunch stand where he works as well as the desert.

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Narration (Points-of-view), Character & Themes:

The speaker is speaking in first person. The poem is told from his subjective point of view. The view is retrospective and so emerges from his memories. The main characters are: mother (diabetic, sick and dying with disease); father (alcoholic, hopeless and lost in reckless behaviour); his limping dog; his brother (referred to a goat scratching at the ground); his sister (a suicide). The themes are hopelessness, disgrace, poverty, neglect, abuse, irresponsibility, disgust and anger.

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Imagery: Descriptive & Sensory (sound, touch, taste, feel, and smell images):

Descriptive imagery is viewed in words like: my reservation school is brown and bleak (visual); “bugs guts mashed against the wall”; “rodent pellets” (visual); “stink of stale piss haunts the halls” (smell); “dirty, snotty brother claws the ground” (visual, sound, feel); “coil of hot shit” (smell and visual); greasy apron (feel and visual and taste); sister shooting herself” (visual, feel); “limping dog” (feel and sight); “fake feathered rain dance” (visual); spitting in their hamburgers” (taste, visual, smell); “trail of tears never ends” (visual, feel).

Language (emotional, detached, matter-of-fact, ornate, formal, informal, word choice):

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The use of personal pronouns makes this poem emotional and detached (“my other”; “my brother”). The use of definite articles makes the speaker appear detached (“The Reservation”). The language is informal in that the speaker uses many slang and rude words: “shit” for example. The language is also emotional and personal (“And they wonder why I spit in their hamburgers”; “the trail of tears never ends”) for example.

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Figurative language: (simile, puns, metaphors, personification, alliteration, irony, foreshadowing):

“I nurse my anger like a seed” (simile)  
“The trail of tears never ends” (metaphor, alliteration)  
“Even the snakes have left” (metaphor and personification)  
“Even the sun cannot stand to watch” (personification, metaphor)  
“Scratching like the goat that gnaws the garden” (simile, metaphor)  
“A thin American flag with 48 stars” (irony)  
“Pale moonshine whiskey” (irony)  
“Stale stink of piss” (alliteration)  
“Fake feathered rain dance” (alliteration)

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Cultural assumptions (arguments, evaluations & analysis):

Cultural genocide  
Cultural assimilation  
Health care  
Education  
Social control  
Abjection  
Negation  
Abuse

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Your Personal Views:

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