

Reinterpretation

Warm-up

I want you to think of a story you've experienced lately. This could be a new poem or book you've read, TV show or play you've watched, or film you've seen.

I want you to write a short piece about this story – what happened, what are the themes, what is your unique interpretation of the piece?

You have **5 minutes**.

Every time we experience a new piece of literature, like a poem or story, or a new piece of media, like a film or tv show, we will always have our own interpretation of its themes and what the piece in question is about.

Interpretation is our unique take on a piece – a poem written about a prisoner locked in a jail cell could be interpreted by some as a metaphor for being locked in toxic relationship. Our interpretation of a piece will be informed by our unique experiences, opinions, and worldviews.

Whenever we as creatives and artists make a new piece of work, we are opening ourselves up to different interpretations of our work. Its important to remember that while an interpretation of a piece may be radically different to our intent when writing it, art only exists to be responded to, and each interpretation is as valid as our intent.

Reinterpretation is the art of taking an already existing piece of work and reimagining it as something entirely different, drawing on our own unique interpretation of the original piece.

Reinterpretation is done for a number of reasons – sometime reinterpretations are done to make a commentary on the original piece (example: the works of N. K. Jemison have be cited as being reinterpretations of J. R. R. Tolkien’s work making commentary on the white medievalism in fantasy literature) other times reinterpretations are done to give a new spin on a popularly known story (example: the musical ‘Wicked’ is a new spin on ‘The Wizard of Oz’) and other times reinterpretations are done when a poem is translated from one language to another, and because of the nature of translation, certain words or lines in the poem have to be adjusted in order for the poem to be coherent.

Romeo and Juliet – ‘Queen Mab’ speech.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxxW5bl-Jac&ab_channel=NavyaSrivastava

- Romeo & Juliet (1968)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWi6QTxCf9Q&ab_channel=NationalTheatre

- Romeo & Juliet (2021)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

- 'Sonnet 18'

by William Shakespeare