

ASSIGNMENT 6: SHIFTING / CONTRASTING TONES

PROMPT

The following passages contain tonal shifts. The tones in these passages are not complementary – they reflect a change in attitude by the author or the speaker. You are to highlight important words and to identify two contrasting tones from the word bank below. See the example after the Word Bank. After you have determined tone, you will need to write two original sentences using each tone word in a sentence that clearly reveals the tone's meaning.

WORD BANK:

distressed, clinical
accusatory, noble

critical, thoughtful
humble, proud

EXAMPLE

Speech Against Conscription and War
by Emma Goldman, Anarchist

"Friends, tomorrow morning I am sure that you will read the report that a meeting took place on the East Side attended by foreigners, by workmen, and illkempt, poorly washed people of the East Side -- foreigners who are being jeered at the present time in this country, foreigners who are being ridiculed because they have an idea. Well, friends, if the Americans are to wait until Americans wake up the country they will have to resurrect the Indians who were killed in America and upon whose bodies this so-called democracy was established, because every other American, if you scratch him, you will find him to be an Englishman, Dutchman, Frenchman, Spaniard, a Jew and a German and a hundred and one other nationalities who sent their young men and their women to this country in the foolish belief that liberty was awaiting them at the American Harbor, Liberty holding a torch. That torch has been burning dimly in the United States for a very long time. It is because, the Goddess of Liberty is ashamed of the American people and what they have done in the name of liberty to liberty in the United States.

And yet, friends, I am not sorry for the things that are happening in America today. I have come to the conclusion that every nation is like an individual, it must have its own experience and it does not accept the experience of other nations any more than you accept the experiences of another individual, for if it were possible for a nation to learn by the bitter and tragic experiences of other nations America today could not be in war..."

The tone in the first paragraph is suggested by the words *foreigners, illkempt, poorly washed people, jeered, ridiculed, wake up the country, resurrect the Indians, killed, so-called democracy, scratch, young men, women, foolish belief, burning dimly, Goddess*

of liberty, ashamed, in the name of liberty to liberty. These words indicate that she is angry and critical.

The tone in the second paragraph suggests a *tonal shift*. The following words indicate a thoughtful, almost philosophical attitude: *not sorry, things that are happening, does not accept experience*.

- A. TONES critical, thoughtful
- B. Example sentence: Although he cares very much about his younger brother Sam, Jared can still be very critical of him.
- C. Example sentence: Before she takes any action, Melissa gives thoughtful consideration to any problem.

AND NOW YOU TRY!

1. This excerpt is from the personal account of a doctor who was a prisoner at Auschwitz during World War II.

***Man's Search for Meaning* by Victor E. Frankl**

"I remember a personal experience. Almost in tears from pain (I had terrible sores on my feet from wearing torn shoes), I limped a few kilometers with our long column of men from the camp to our work site. Very cold, bitter winds struck us. I kept thinking of the endless little problems of our miserable life. What would there be to eat tonight? If a piece of sausage came as extra ration, should I exchange it for a piece of bread? Should I trade my last cigarette, which was left from a bonus I received a fortnight ago, for a bowl of soup? How could I get a piece of wire to replace the fragment which served as one of my shoelaces? Would I get to our work site in time to join my usual working party or would I have to join another, which might have a brutal foreman? What could I do to get on good terms with the Capo, who could help me to obtain work in camp instead of undertaking this horrible long daily march?

I became disgusted with the state of affairs which compelled me, daily and hourly, to think of only such trivial things. I forced my thoughts to turn to another subject. Suddenly I saw myself standing on the platform of a well-lit, warm and pleasant lecture room. In front of me sat an attentive audience on comfortable upholstered seats. I was giving a lecture on the psychology of the concentration camp! All that oppressed me at that moment became objective, seen and described from the remote viewpoint of science. By this method I succeeded somehow in rising above the situation, above the sufferings of the moment, and I observed them as if they were already of the past. Both I and my troubles became the object of an interesting psychoscientific study undertaken by myself....Emotion, which is suffering, ceases to be suffering as soon as we form a clear and precise picture of it."

A. TONES _____

B.

C.

2. *Address to the First Anniversary of the American Equal Rights Association*
by Frances D. Gage

"When men stand upon the public platform and deliver elaborate essays on women and their right of suffrage, they talk about their weakness, their devotion to fashion and idleness. What else have they given women to do? Almost every profession in the land is filled by men; every college sends forth the men to fill the highest places. When the law said that no married woman should do business in her own name, sue or be sued, own property, own herself or her earnings, what had she to do? That laid the foundation for precisely the state of things you see to-day.

But I deny that, as a class, the women of America, black or white, are idle. We are always busy. What have we done? Look over this audience, go out upon your streets, go through the world where you will, and every human soul you meet is the work of woman. She has given it life; she has educated it, whether for good or evil. She it is that must lie at the foundation of your country, because God gave her the holiest mission ever laid upon the heart of a human soul – the mission of the mother."

A. TONES _____

B.

C.

3. from John Steinbeck's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech in 1962

"In my heart there may be doubt that I deserve the Nobel award over other men of letters whom I hold in respect and reverence – but there is no question of my pleasure and pride in having it for myself."

A. TONES _____

B.

C.

ASSIGNMENT 7: CONTRASTING TONES / TONAL SHIFTS

You will be responsible for finding your own tone words in this assignment. Use any available sources, including the lists your class has made, a thesaurus, a dictionary, etc. Remember that you are looking for contrasting tones which may occur in tonal shifts. Write a sentence for each tone word that you use.

1. *Dust Tracks on a Road* by Zora Neale Hurston

"Of the Greeks, Hercules moved me most. I followed him eagerly on his tasks. The story of the choice of Hercules as a boy when he met Pleasure and Duty, and put his hand in that of Duty and followed her steep way to the blue hills of fame and glory, which she pointed out at the end, moved me profoundly. I resolved to be like him. The tricks and turns of the other gods and goddesses left me cold. There were other thin books about this and that sweet and gentle little girl who gave up her heart to Christ and good works. Almost always they died from it, preaching as they passed. I was utterly indifferent to their deaths. In the first place I could not conceive of death, and in the next place they never had any funerals that amounted to a hill of beans, so I didn't care how soon they rolled up their big, soulful, blue eyes and kicked the bucket. They had no meat on their bones."

A. TONES _____

B.

C.

2. *The Village Watchman* by Terry Tempest Williams

"Alan was a formidable man, now in his early twenties, stocky and strong. His head was large with a protruding forehead that bore many scars, a line-by-line history of seizures. He always had on someone else's clothes – a tweed jacket too small, brown pants too big, a striped golf shirt that didn't match. He showed us appearances didn't matter, personality did. If you didn't know him, he could look frightening. It was an unspoken rule in our family that the character of others was gauged in how they treated him. The only thing consistent about his attire was that he always wore a silver football helmet from Olympus High School where my grandfather was coach. It was a loving, practical solution to protect Alan when he fell. Quite simply, the helmet cradled his head and absorbed the shock of the seizures.

'Part of the team,' my grandfather Sanky would say as he slapped him affectionately on the back. 'You're a Titan, son, and I love you -- you're a real player on our team.'

The windows to the dormitory were dark, reflecting Mount Timpanogos to the east. It was hard to see inside, but I knew what the interior held. It looked like an abandoned gymnasium without bleachers, filled with hospital beds. The stained white walls and yellow-waxed floors offered no warmth to its residents. The stench was nauseating, sweat and urine trapped in the oppression of stale air. I recall the dirty sheets, the lack of privacy, and the almond-eyed children who never rose from their beds. And then I would turn around and face Alan's cheerfulness, the open and loving manner in which he would introduce me to his friends, the pride he exhibited as he showed me around his home. I kept thinking, Doesn't he see how bad this is, how poorly they are being treated?"

A. TONES _____

B.

C.

3.

Life on the Mississippi by Mark Twain

"I still keep in mind a certain wonderful sunset which I witnessed when steam-boating was new to me. A broad expanse of the river was turned to blood; in the middle distance the red hue brightened into gold, through which a solitary log came floating black and conspicuous; in one place a long, slanting mark lay sparkling upon the water; in another the surface was broken by boiling, tumbling rings that were as many-tinted as an opal; where the ruddy flush was faintest, was a smooth spot that was covered with graceful circles and radiating lines, ever so delicately traced; the shore on our left was densely wooded, and the somber shadow that fell from this forest was broken in one place by a long, ruffled trail that shone like silver; and high above the forest wall a clean-stemmed dead tree waved a single leafy bough that glowed like a flame in the unobstructed splendor that was flowing from the sun. There were graceful curves, reflected images, woody heights, soft distances; and over the whole scene, far and near, the dissolving lights drifted steadily, enriching it every passing moment with new marvels of coloring.

I stood like one bewitched. I drank it in, in a speechless rapture. The world was new to me, and I had never seen anything like this at home. But as I have said, a day came when I began to cease from noting the glories and the charms which the moon and the sun and the twilight wrought upon the river's face; another day came when I ceased altogether to note them. Then, if that sunset scene had been repeated, I should have looked upon it without rapture, and should have commented upon it,

inwardly, after this fashion: 'this sun means that we are going to have wind to-morrow; that floating log means that the river is rising, small thanks to it; that slanting mark on the water refers to a bluff reef which is going to kill somebody's steamboat one of these nights, if it keeps on stretching out like that; those tumbling "boils" show a dissolving bar and a changing channel there; the lines and circles in the slick water over yonder are a warning that that troublesome place is shoaling up dangerously....

No, the romance and beauty were all gone from the river."

A. TONES _____

B.

C.