

**Paired Poetry: Edna St. Vincent Millay's "An Ancient Gesture"**

After the two read-alouds, complete the remainder of the TP-CASTT organizer for "An Ancient Gesture."

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| <b>T</b> | <p><b>Title:</b> Before reading the poem, make a prediction about what the poem is about based on the title.</p> <p>Ancient means old; a gesture is a movement--could the poem be about an old movement?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>P</b> | <p><b>Paraphrase:</b> Translate the poem into your own words. Look for complete thoughts and look up unfamiliar words.</p> <p>The speaker of the poem cries, and as she does so, she realizes that Penelope, Odysseus's wife cried a lot too as she weaved. The narrator concludes that Ulysses (Odysseus) also cried, but he only did so to communicate that he was overcome by emotion. The speaker concludes that Odysseus learned to cry from his wife, whose tears were real.</p>                                             |
| <b>C</b> | <p><b>Connotation:</b> What words or phrases stick out to you? Look for patterns and figurative language, imagery, and sound elements.</p> <p>The following words create a mood of hopeless grief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● tired</li> <li>● tears</li> <li>● tight</li> <li>● never</li> <li>● gone</li> <li>● nothing</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>A</b> | <p><b>Attitude/Tone:</b> Notice the speaker's attitude toward the subject of the poem. This is the author's tone.</p> <p>The speaker's attitude toward the subject (weeping) is resigned and melancholy.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>S</b> | <p><b>Shifts:</b> As you look for patterns, also look for contrasts or shifts/changes in poem. Look for changes in language, attitude, setting/imagery, mood, punctuation, other literary devices.</p> <p>The speaker uses first, second, and third person pronouns. The speaker (presumably a modern woman--maybe a housewife) opens speaking in first person. She then speaks of Penelope and the universal "you." She shifts back to first person to open the second stanza and concludes speaking of Penelope and Ulysses.</p> |
| <b>T</b> | <p><b>Title:</b> Examine the title again. What does it mean now that you've read the poem? Did the meaning of the title change?</p> <p>The gesture--the act of crying--is one that is as old as humans themselves.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

**Theme:** State what the poem is about (subject) and what the poet is trying to say about subject (theme).

**T**

This poem, published in 1954, provides a different perspective on Odysseus, the classic epic hero. The reader is left wondering if Odysseus's tears in Book Eight are authentic or if they are just for show.

The poem suggests that perhaps the people left behind sometimes suffer as much--or more--than the heroes that get glory.