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Assignment Week 5

1. In my interpretation, I see meaning-making as trying to form meaning out of something. One example of this is Mrs. Winterson’s obsession with the apocalypse, almost trying to create a meaning to her life by following religion and the book of Revelation stringently. On Page 9, Paragraph 4, Winterson describes that her mother was unhappy, that everyone had to be unhappy with her, and that she was waiting for the Apocalypse. Later in the story, we see that the church tent and Christmas play a large role in the Winterson family’s life, something that they always look forward to.

2. While I find the entire book rather interesting, one thing that stunned me is that there were no books allowed in Winterson’s household. While there were a few books, I simply cannot understand why Winterson’s mother didn’t at least try and pre-approve books that her daughter could read. I also feel as if this situation is just one of many that ultimately led to a rebellious attitude in Jeanette Winterson. The mother did not appear to understand that such strictness would be worse in the long run. The passage where this is found is pg. 33, paragraph 3.

3. I interpret self-construction as the process of creating an identity for you. I believe that Winterson means that adopted children need to build an identity for themselves because even though they have parents who care for them, they are not necessarily similar or agree with their adoptive parents. A good example of self-construction is in Jamaica Kincaid’s “Upon Seeing England for the First Time.” Jamaica Kincaid grows up in a British colony with British customs (non-native tradition and culture). Hence, like Winterson, she has to establish an identity for herself and slowly grow into her own being independent from what is expected of a British society. In essence, she must take back her individual and self-identity from the colonizers.

4. Winterson’s book must be understood by “moving around the text”. This is especially visible in each chapter as she moves from location to location, describing events that occurred regularly and occasionally. In addition, passages move through time quickly. Paragraph 4 on page 44 highlights what Jeanette Winterson’s living quarters were throughout her youth.

5. Winterson’s use of other literary texts through her story not only describes her fascination with various pieces of literature and authors, but she also uses this information to enhance her own text. For example, Winterson uses authors such as Virginia Woolf to explain how women were expected to write only factual pieces of work because they “were not supposed to go around making things up” (Pg. 118, Paragraph 4).