Interpretive Assignment #3: Being and Unbeing in Sonia Sanchez

Name: _____ **Period:** _____

In "Nonlecture Two," E. E. Cummings sets out his idea of poetry and poets. Central to this idea are the notions of "being" and "unbeing." The terms "being" and "unbeing" are interesting terms that can help us see and say things about lots of poems. In this unit, you will have an opportunity to apply the "lenses" of being and unbeing to four sets of poems. This work will give you a chance to notice the arguments each poet makes about what it means to "be," or to "un-be." During this, your third opportunity to apply these lenses to a set of poems, you will have a chance to see what can be learned from reading the poems by Sonia Sanchez through the notions of "being" and "unbeing."

Please write a two-page essay in response to the following question:

What are "being" and "unbeing" to Sonia Sanchez?

There are many possible correct answers to this question. Your job is to think through the possible answers and choose the one you think is best. Then write a compelling, 2-page argument that supports your answer.

Use your "Checklist for Interpretive/Argument Writing" to help you remember everything you must include in your writing, and be sure to draw on all of your discussion notes and class charts as you write. These are valuable resources that will help you complete the assignment.

When you finish writing, make sure your argument includes

1. A claim that answers the question;
2. Support for the claim with evidence from the text;
3. An explanation that shows how that evidence supports your position; and
4. Commentary on potential counterclaims or alternate positions.

Citing Evidence

When you refer to a specific line or moment from our unit texts, make sure you quote it accurately and tell what line number the quotation or moment is from. When citing from Sanchez's prose poems (those written in full sentences and paragraphs not broken into lines), quote as you would any other prose text. Poetry broken into lines sometimes requires additional attention:

> In her poem "On Seeing a Pacifist Burn," Sanchez expresses a sense of disbelief, saying "this day is not / real" (1-2).

Please notice three things about this example:

1. The author and the poem is clearly identified so the reader knows which text it came from.
2. There are double quotation marks around the part that Sanchez wrote, and this quotation is copied exactly as Sanchez wrote it.
3. In poetry or verse, when a brief quotation includes a line break, the line break is indicated by a forward slash: /
4. The line the quotation comes from is placed in parentheses *after* the last double quotation mark but *before* the period. If the author or poem is not clearly identified in the sentence, place the author's name along with the poem title (shortened if need be) inside the parentheses, *before* the line number, like this: (Sanchez, "Pacifist" 1-2).

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Name: _____ **Period:** _____

Grades 11 and 12 Student Checklist for Interpretive/Argument Writing

Comprehensive Understanding of Issues

- □ I write about an important text in a way that shows that I fully understand it.
- □ I make clear why my claim is significant and the topic is important.
- □ I write in a way that anticipates the reaction of my audience.
- □ I support my claim or position by selecting and organizing evidence from the text.
- □ I give reasons that clearly explain how the evidence I chose supports my claim or position.

Organization

- □ My response is logical and is organized around the facts and reasons for my clearly stated claim.
- □ My response is well organized to provide a logical sequence of claim, evidence, counterclaim, and reasoning.
- □ My claim is precise and is presented in a way that my audience recognizes that I am well informed about the topic and evidence.
- □ I use specific and helpful words, phrases, clauses, and syntax to connect my claims to reasons and evidence and to link ideas throughout.
- □ My writing makes use of relevant and accurate evidence.
- □ I clearly show the relationships between the parts of my response.
- □ I have a conclusion that makes sense. It follows from the argument and connects back to my introduction.

Development

- □ I discuss information related to my claim that sets a context to help my reader understand my argument.
- □ My writing reflects my understanding of what my readers know, value, and are concerned about.
- □ I deal with potential biases of my audience.
- □ I show that I understand the text by citing sufficient evidence from the text.
- □ I weave my reasons and evidence together smoothly to support my claim.
- □ The evidence I select is the most relevant and accurate available.
- □ I use quotes and paraphrases of the text in a way that feels smooth and seamless.
- □ I am clear about how my reasoning and selection of evidence supports my claim and deals with counterclaims.

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Interpretive Assignment #3: Being and Unbeing in Sonia Sanchez

Name: _____ **Period:** _____

Language Conventions

- □ I use correct spelling.
- □ I use correct grammar.
- □ My writing sounds formal.
- □ I use precise vocabulary to express my ideas.
- □ I make use of syntax to effectively express the meaning of my writing.

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Interpretive Assignment #3: Being and Unbeing in Sonia Sanchez

Name: _____ **Period:** _____

Scoring Sheet/Teacher Feedback

Interpretive/ Argument Writing	**4** The student response…	**3** The student response…	**2** The student response…	**1** The student response…
Comprehensive Understanding of Issues	• Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of a substantive topic or text(s) by building a knowledgeable context for cogent claims and counterclaims, establishing the significance of the claim and anticipating audience responses to the argument put forth, and addressing the issues that generated the argument.	• Demonstrates a reasonable understanding of a substantive topic or text(s) by building a general context for claims and counterclaims, acknowledging possible audience responses to the argument and issues that generated the argument, and by providing supporting reasons and evidence from the text	• Demonstrates a superficial understanding of a topic or text(s) and provides a vague context for the argument, with some support with text based reasons and evidence	• Demonstrates no understanding of the topic or text(s).
Organization	• Establishes a precise and knowledgeable claim(s) supported by valid reasoning and relevant, accurate, and sufficient text based evidence while acknowledging alternate claims. • Develops a logical and coherent structure to sequence the claim, counter claim warrants and evidence and to explicate the relationship between claims, counterclaims, warrant, and evidence. • Employs appropriate words, phrases, and clauses and syntax to establish links within and between ideas. • Provides a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument or the introduction.	• Establishes a clear organizational structure with a claim supported by some relevant and accurate reasons and text based evidence. • Acknowledges alternative claims. • Explains the relationship between claims, warrant, and evidence. • Uses some linking words, phrases, and clauses to join parts of the argument. • Provides a conclusion that follows from the argument.	• Uses a loosely linked structure to lay out the claim, warrant, and evidence and acknowledges alternative perspectives. • Offers some explanation of the relationship between the claim, warrant and evidence. • Employs a few linking words • Provides a brief conclusion for the argument.	• Uses a loosely linked structure to lay out the claim, warrant, and evidence • Does not address counterclaims. • Does not employ connecting words. • Provides a brief conclusion.

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Interpretive/ Argument Writing	**4** The student response…	**3** The student response…	**2** The student response…	**1** The student response…
Development	• Provides a context specific to the issues that establishes the writer's knowledgeable stance and his/her understanding of audience knowledge, values, concerns and possible biases and the variety of alternative perspectives. • Develops claims and counterclaims fairly and supplies the most relevant evidence for each, acknowledging strengths and limitations of both. • Smoothly cites textual evidence that is relevant, detailed, and accurate. • Clarifies the relationship between the claim warrant and evidence, and claims and counterclaims.	• Provides a context related to the claim that establishes the author's stance while acknowledging audience responses and/or alternative perspectives. • Develops claims and counterclaims fairly and supplies some evidence for each. • Cites evidence that is relevant and accurate. • Clarifies the relationship between claim, evidence, and warrant in a cursory manner.	• Provides a brief contextual reference for the claim • Provides only partial or uneven evidence for the claim • Cites some textual evidence for the claim(s) but does so in a disjointed manner • Fails to fairly deal with alternative claim(s)	• Does not provide a context for the argument • Provides only weak or vague evidence for the claim(s) • Evidence may reflect only superficial understanding of the text or topic
Language and Syntax	• Maintains a formal style and objective tone appropriate to purpose and audience and conforms to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which the argument is written. • Maintains precise meaning through the use of specialized and appropriate vocabulary. • Employs syntax, capitalization, and punctuation to effectively express meaning.	• Establishes a fairly consistent formal style and objective tone • Employs appropriate vocabulary to match purpose and audience • Provides correct syntax, capitalization, and punctuation	• Expresses ideas unevenly using simplistic vocabulary and syntax • May have some grammatical errors but these do not impede meaning	• Demonstrates a limited control of language and syntax • Contains frequent grammatical errors that obscure meaning.

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[Start task below]

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