Example Analysis - *Sunday Bloody Sunday*  
by U2

U2’s *Sunday Bloody Sunday*, written in 1983 and recorded for their War album, is a song about how senseless the conflict and violence between protestants and catholics in Northern Ireland is. For much of the 20th century, Northern Ireland was governed by the British parliament. Many catholics in Northern Ireland didn’t like this - they wanted Northern Ireland to rule itself or be part of Ireland. The IRA (Irish Republican Army) killed many British soldiers and people in Northern Ireland during the 1970s and 80s to try and force Britain out of Northern Ireland. Protestant groups also killed IRA members. The song is called *Sunday Bloody Sunday* after one particular event which happened on Sunday, 30th of January, 1972 where 26 peaceful protesters were shot dead by British soldiers. The single event sparked much of the violence which came later.

The song begins with U2’s signature jangly guitar making an almost mournful sound. Bono sings that “I can’t believe the news today” and wonders “how long must we sing this song,” condemning the fact that this violence seems to go on forever. The first verse finishes with a call to action that “we can be as one” - violence is unnecessary.

The second verse looks at the impact of violence. “Broken bottles under children's feet” is a metaphor for the way violence has created a culture of conflict that children are raised in. The song continues by attacking violence - it does not solve anything, it will only put your “back up against the wall”. In other words, violence simply results in more violence.

The song then launches into its chorus “Sunday, Bloody Sunday” which introduces a change in musical tone of the song. The guitar goes from jangly to driving chords as Bono challenges “there’s many lost but who has won.” The heavy guitar underlines the fury in the song at the devastation violence has cause for no purpose.

The song finishes by criticising how we are shaped to be bystanders during this conflict. It says that “we are immune” because we are duped into thinking what is presented on TV is “reality”. We need to think for ourselves and reject violence. It’s not good enough to “eat and drink while tomorrow they die.”