

Power Poems: Knowledge Organiser

Possible questions: Ideas about power, Attitudes to power, Control, Memory, Nature

Ozymandias - **Percy Bysshe Shelley** is inspired by discovery of the remains of a statue of Ramesses II. Ozymandias is one of the names for Pharaoh Ramesses II. This Pharaoh was a great, powerful ruler of ancient Egypt, but now 'nothing beside remains. Shelley immortalised Ozymandias as a symbol of ostentatious tyranny. Shelley was an atheist – expelled from university for it. Committed to freedom and equality, Shelley accuses the monarchy of having no true human emotion.

Impressive size (mirroring ego): "vast", "King of Kings", "colossal"

Semantic field of destruction to show great omnipotence has been destroyed: "trunkless...sunk... shattered... lifeless...wreck.!

Aggressive description of Ramses "sneer of cold command... hand that mocked them"

Arrogance of the king: "Look on **my** works, ye Mighty, and despair" – possessive 'my', superlative 'king of kings'.

Perhaps art survives (sculptor): "tell that its sculptor well those passions read"

Corrupted Sonnet Form – challenge to authority, reflects the crumbling structure of statue. Begins with iambic pentameter (language of speech) - "who **said** two **vast** and **trunkless legs of stone**", but "**Nothing beside remains**" disrupts this.

Nothing can outlive time - boundless and bare, the lone and level sands stretch far away

London – **William Blake** was a radical thinker with political views that were unusual at the time. While a Christian, he rejected established religion and was against oppression by Church and state. Blake lived in and experienced in London, and saw around him the poverty and social problems caused by the Industrial Revolution. The four stanzas offer a glimpses of the city, snapshots seen during his "wander thro" the streets.

Language of business/control - "chartered street", "chartered Thames", the repetition reinforces control. Man is even attempting to control nature.

Metaphors of suffering - 'mind-forged manacles' - oppression

Those in power refuse to acknowledge or support those in poverty. London as corrupted "black'ning church". Images of unfeeling power: "the hapless soldier's sigh runs in blood down palace walls"

Negative words: "weakness", "woe", "cry", "fear", "appals", "blood", "blights", "plagues" and "hearse"

Oxymoronic 'marriage hearse'

Repetition "marks of weakness, marks of woe" as if citizens have been branded. 'Every' – scale of suffering.

There is a strict rhythm and abab rhyme scheme in each of the four stanzas to emphasise control.

Extract from, The Prelude – **William Wordsworth** is a key poet of the Romantic movement. For him Nature was a supreme power, which had the potential to provide one with peace and solace when he/she is in distress. This was partly a reaction against the Industrial Revolution. The Prelude presents (according to Wordsworth) his views on "man, nature and society". Romantics believe poetry is the expression of the poet's inner feelings and best written when the poet is alone with nature.

Nature as beautiful '*Small circles glittering idly in the moon*' and dangerous '*the grim shape/ Towered up*'

Man can only imitate the beauty and elegance of nature – simile "*went through the water like a swan.*"

Personification of nature as threatening, omnipotent force "*a huge peak, black and huge*", "*upreared its head*", "*like a living thing strode after me.*"

Impact of the memory: '*a trouble to my dreams*' '*there hung a darkness.*'

Narrative/autobiographical poem – begins in euphony (pleasant sounding), ends in cacophony (harsh sounds) to reflect experience. Shift in approach to rowing – "*like one who rows, proud of his skill*", "*with trembling oars I turned*"

No breaks and use of enjambment – the journey on the river mirrors the journey of reflection.

In The Emigree by **Carol Rumens** she explores the impact of moving away from a homeland because of war or political reasons. Rumens was born in London and is not a migrant herself. She possibly uses the French form in the title to offer a more sympathetic view of the migrant experience than would be suggested by migrant or refugee.

Recurring ideas of: Exile/Leaving (there's no way back at all), News Reports (time rolls its tanks), Light and Dark (sunlight/being dark), Childhood (child's vocabulary I carried here like a hollow doll).

Protective of identity: "child's vocabulary...like a hollow doll." "original view, the bright, filled paperweight." "branded by sunlight."

Cultural conflict in new country: third person pronoun 'they' separates the Emigree from others. Conflict in old and new identity.

Idealised view of the city: 'my city comes to me in its own white plane'

My Last Duchess - **Robert Browning** heard the story of Duke Alfonso II, who ruled a place in northern Italy called Ferrara, whose wife, Lucrezia de' Medici, who died in 1561 aged 17, only two years after he married her. Browning was aware of the changing role of women in the society he was living in. No longer the "angel of the house" – start of the Suffragette movement. When a woman married they became the property of their husband.

Narrator who uses possessive pronouns (my)

Symbolism of painting, statue – elaborate display of wealth and power.

Words connected to control (I gave commands)

Arrogance and Status: "as if she ranked my gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name with anybody's gift", "Neptune...taming a sea horse." Flamboyant language: adds to the Duke's authority and status.

Use of blazon to 'deconstruct' the Duchess and attempt to gain power and control over her.

Words connected to innocence (the white mule, cherries)

Dramatic monologue: reflects the Duke's power; you are put in the position of the visitor

Enjambment (out of control) and Rhyme scheme (controlled)

Storm on the Island - **Seamus Heaney** was born in Northern Ireland in 1939, the eldest child in what was to become a family of nine children. His father was a farmer. Much of Heaney's poetry is centered on the countryside and farm life that he knew as a boy. His work also explored the Troubles – the war in Northern Ireland – from the 1970s onwards.

Violent or even military force of nature – 'strafes invisibly' 'space is a salvo' 'we are bombarded' 'exploding'

The safety and strength of the human response – "we are prepared: we build our houses squat"

The threat and fear the storm brings – 'leaves and branches can raise a tragic chorus in a gale'

The unpredictable power of nature – 'spits like a tame cat turned savage'

Symbol of the island - chaos of Ireland, Stormont?

blank verse or iambic pentameter – carefully built to mirror islanders' preparations

Tissue - **Imtiaz Dharker** was born in Pakistan, and moved to Glasgow, Scotland, when she was one year old. She now divides her time between Wales, London and Mumbai. She has often described herself as being 'stateless'. Her background and experience of different cultures provide the themes for her poetry: cultural identity, exile, travel, freedom and conflict.

Metaphor of paper (tissue) and possible uses: religious texts – Koran, maps, slips, receipts, even buildings

Words that suggest solidity and certainty – (where a hand has written in the names and histories)

Words that suggest change, fragility and impermanence – (raise a structure never meant to last)

Power of God (the light shine through, grand design), powerlessness of humans (fly our lives like paper kites)

Paper and memories (turned transparent with attention)

Nature is powerful (the sun shines through the borderlines...)

Architects and builders are too confident (the shapes that pride can make)

Use of collage to make connections – like paper, like life?

Final stanza different length – a focus, No regular rhyme or rhythm – fluttering, Use of enjambment – flowing

Checking Out Me History - **John Agard** was born in British Guiana (now called Guyana) in the Caribbean, in 1949. He moved to the UK in the late 1970s and is well known for powerful and fun performances of his work. Agard had to follow a history curriculum biased towards whites, especially British whites, so that he learned about mythical, nursery rhyme characters instead of living black people from the past.

Two structures, marked by two different fonts, Italics show history that is omitted – Toussaint Overture, Nanny de Maroon, Mary Seacole, Shaka the Zulu. Either conflict between white history and black history, or Agard includes them side-by-side to demonstrate equal value/worth.

Use of phonetic spelling and creole ("Dem") to demonstrate strong cultural identity, Direct political message: 'I carving out my own identity'.

Metaphors connected with nature, Imagery of light – 'a yellow sunrise to the dying' to describe Mary Seacole – reveals power of black figures, sometimes juxtaposed with white history alongside nursery rhymes (less important)

The first uses the repeated phrase "Dem tell me" shows divide in society and lack of equality 'Bandage up me eye...'