

Power & Conflict Poetry

English

***The Most Revealing Moments in the Texts***

1. ***Power***

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| Shelley’s *Ozymandias* |
| 1. In the opening lines of Ozymandias, Shelley uses the decaying statue of Ozymandias as a metaphor to explore the fragility of human accomplishments and how they are gradually consumed by the natural world.
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| 1. Shelley develops this theme to expose the tyranny of caeserism that he saw in his society, exposing it to be both cruel and unjust. **OR** *Shelley uses the statue of Ozymandias to critique the cruelty and arrogance of those who desire power and immortality.*
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| 1. Finally Shelley juxtaposes the human desire for immortalisation with the reality of human transience in the face of the terrifying power of nature.
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| Browning’s *My Last Duchess* |
| 1. In the opening of My Last Duchess, an exploration of the violent objectification of women, Browning traces the speaker’s desire to exert full physical and psychological control over his dead wife through her portrait.
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| 1. The Duke then reveals his fear and revulsion at female sexuality, distastefully criticising the Duchess and slighting her honour, and revealing fragile ego and arrogant desire for status and possession.
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| 1. Finally Browning reveals the speakers cold malice: how his jealousy turned to murder and how his impulse for ownership resulted in the final “taming” of the Duchess as a piece of art.
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| Blake’s *London* |
| 1. Blake opens the poem with the speaker mourning the loss of his city: the wonder and wild beauty of London is shown to be lost to rationalism, modernity and work.
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| 1. Blake then explores the inescapable suffering and corruption inflicted by the industrial revolution on the working classes.
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| 1. Finally, full of despair, Blake examines the city’s destruction of innocence and youth.
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| Rumen’s *The Émigrée* |
| 1. In the opening lines of The Emigree Rumens contrasts the idealised and nostalgic memories of the speaker’s home with the reality of the place now “sick with tyrants”.
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| 1. Rumens then describes the internal contradiction between the passing of time, which should distance the speaker from her identity and past, with the reality that purity of her memory pulls her ever closer to it.
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| 1. Finally, Rumens juxtaposes the joy the personified vision of her past city brings with the isolation felt when she compares it with its current incarnation.
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| Agard’s *Checking Out Me History* |
| 1. In the opening lines of Checking Out Me History Agard reveals the destructive nature of a British school system that has silenced the voices of its previous colonial subjects.
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| 1. As exemplified by his performance, Agard shifts into irregular rhyme and short verse in order to celebrate the achievements of the ethnic minority historical figures previously silenced by the myths of Empire
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| 1. Finally, Agard weaves together this history of resistance and rebellion to colonial subjugation and demands that the post-colonial voice and identity be heard.
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