



EMIGREE

Compare with identity and memories

in:

- *Checking Out Me History*
- *Prelude*

Key Quotes:

- It may be at war, it may be sick with tyrants
- I am branded by an impression of sunlight
- The white streets of that city
- It tastes of sunlight
- They accuse me of being dark in their free city
- My city hides behind me

What it's about:

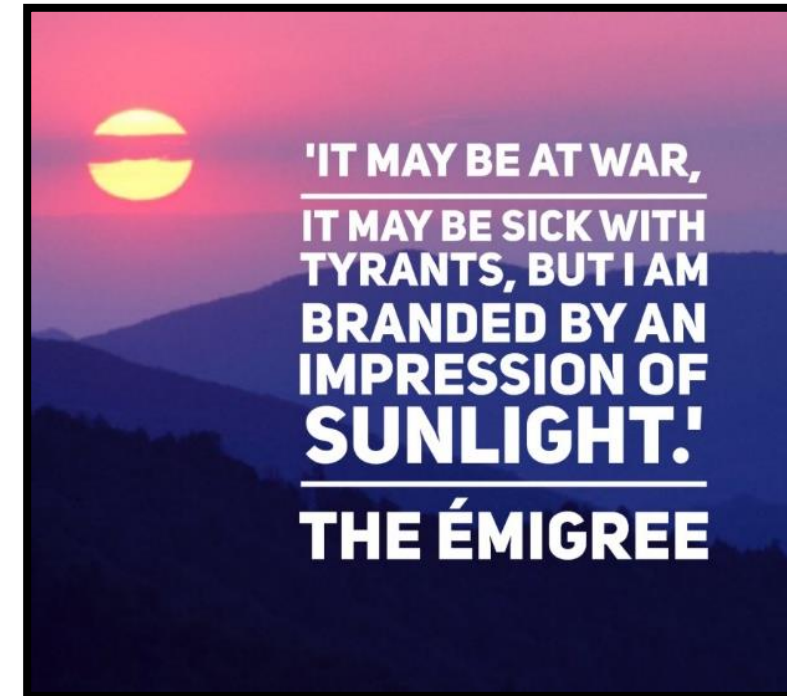
- 'Emigree' - a female who is forced to leave their county for political or social reasons.
- The speaker describes her memories of a home city that she was forced to flee. The city is now **"sick with tyrants"**.
- Despite the cities problems, her positive memories of the place cannot be extinguished.

Language and themes:

- The emigree is left nameless and we don't know where she has come from because the story applies to anyone who has been a refugee
- The language shows she is protective of her memories as they are how she constructs her identity
- The reader can see that is fooling herself by believing that her homeland is a peaceful place that hasn't been destroyed by war and conflict

Form and Structure

- First person.
- The last line of each stanza is the same: "sunlight": reinforces the positivity of the city and of the poem.
- The first two stanzas have lots of enjambment - conveys freedom.
- The final stanza has lots of full-stops which conveys that fact that she is now trapped





CHECKING OUT ME HISTORY

- Compare with identity and imbalance of power in:
- Storm on the Island
 - The Emigree

Key Quotes:

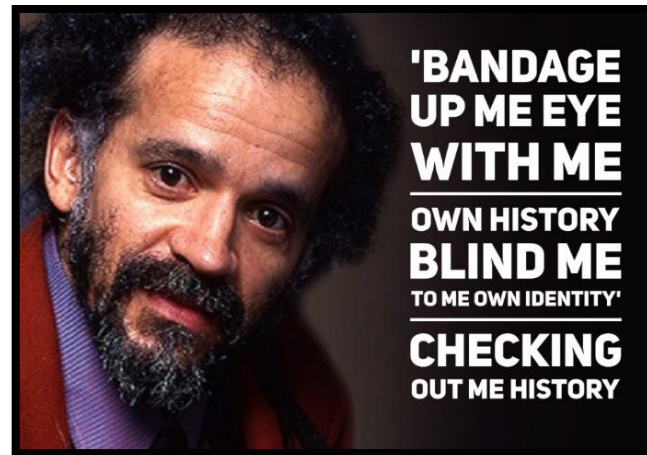
- Dem tell me
- Bandage up me eye
- Blind me to me own identity
- De beacon of de Haitian revolution
- Nanny... fire woman
- Mary Seacole... a healing star... a yellow sunrise
- I carving out me own identity

What it's about:

- 'Represents the voice of a black man who is frustrated by the Eurocentric history curriculum in the UK - which pays little attention to the black history.
- Black history is quoted to emphasise its absence in the British curriculum and to stress its importance.
- John Agard was born in Guyana in 1949 and moved to the UK in the 1970s.

Language and themes:

- Agard is angry that the British education system doesn't promote black culture and important people from black history- making it impossible for him to understand his identity and culture
- He uses the metaphor of being blinded and unable to see as a way of accusing the government in an angry tone



Form and Structure

- Stanzas about Eurocentric history (normal font) are mixed with stanzas on black history (in italics to represent rebellion).
- Black history sections arranged as serious lessons to be learned; traditional history as nursery rhymes (mocking traditional history).
- The lack of punctuation, the stanzas in free verse, the irregular rhyme scheme and the use of Creole could represent the narrator's rejection of the rules.
- Repetition of "Dem tell me": frustration.



STORM ON THE ISLAND

Compare with reality of war, power of nature, loss and absence in:

- The Prelude

Key Quotes:

- We are prepared we build our houses squat
- The wizened earth has never troubled us
- Nor are there trees/ which might prove company when it blows full/ blast
- Laves and branches can raise a tragic chorus
- There are no trees no natural shelter
- The flung spray hit/ the very windows
- Spits like a tame cat/ turned savage
- Strange, it is a huge nothing we fear

Language and themes:

- The semantic field of the stormy weather highlights the unrelenting attack of the storm
- The storm is a metaphor for the conflict on the streets of NI
- Military imagery is used to hint at this
- The poem focusses on how they have been accustomed to the troubles

What it's about:

- The narrator describes how a rural island community prepared for a coming storm, and how they were confident in their preparations.
- When the storm hits, they are shocked by its power: its violent sights and sounds are described, using the metaphor of war.
- The final line of the poem reveals their fear of nature's power

Form and Structure

- Written in blank verse and with lots of enjambment:
- 'We' (first person plural) creates a sense of community, and 'You' (direct address) makes the reader feel immersed in the experience.
- The poem can split into three sections:
- Confidence: 'We are prepared:' (ironic)
- The violence of the storm: 'It pummels your house'
- There is a turning point (a volta) in Line 14: 'But no:'.
• This monosyllabic phrase, and the caesura, reflects the final calm before the storm.





THE PRELUDE

Compare with identity, memory and power of nature and humans in:

- Storm on the Island
- The Emigree

Key Quotes:

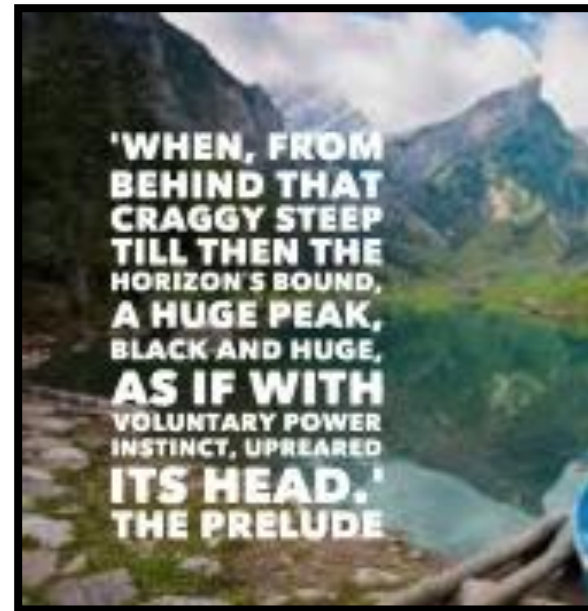
- Small circles glittering idly in the moon
- Sparkling light
- Heaving through the water like a swan
- A huge peak, black and huge
- Grim shape
- Upreared its head
- With trembling oars I turned
- Homeward went in grave and serious mood

What it's about:

- The story of a boy's love of nature and a night-time adventure in a rowing boat that instils a deeper and fearful respect for the power of nature.
- At first, the boy is calm and confident, but the sight of a huge mountain that comes into view scares the boy and he flees back to the shore.
- He is now in awe of the mountain and now fearful of the power of nature which are described as 'huge and mighty forms, that do not live like living men.'
- We should respect nature and not take it for granted.

Language and themes:

- The Prelude portrays an internal journey, in this extract the story of Wordsworth's spiritual growth, and how he comes to terms with his place in nature and the world.
- An extended metaphor is used to show that as he grew up he realised he was small and insignificant compared to the power of nature and the world



Form and Structure

- First person narrative - creates a sense that it is a personal poem.
- The regular rhythm and enjambment add to the effect of natural speech and a personal voice.
- The extract can be split into three sections, each with a different tone to reflect his shifting mood:
- Lines 1-20: (rowing) carefree and confident
- Lines 21-31: (the mountain appears) dark and fearful
- Lines 32-44: (following days) reflective and troubled
- Contrasts in tone: 'lustily I dipped my oars into the silent lake' versus 'I struck and struck again' and 'with trembling oars I turned'.



KAMIKAZE

Compare with memory, identity, power of nature, war and conflict in:

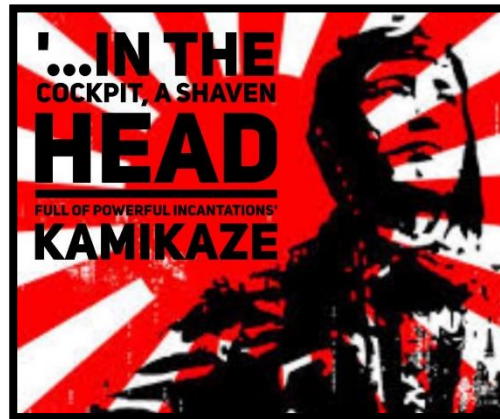
- Checking Out Me History
- The Prelude
- Emigree

Key Quotes:

- Head full of powerful incantations
- A one way journey in to history
- Little fishing boats... strung out like bunting
- Green blue translucent sea
- Remembered how he and his brothers
- A tuna, a dark prince, muscular, dangerous
- Mother never spoke again in his presence
- They treated him as though he no longer existed
- We too learned to be silent
- Wondered which had been the better way to die

Language and themes:

- The patriotic language contrasts with the sense of shame
- It's clear the daughter feels a sense of regret and loss that he is ostracised
- The sea teeming with life is a direct contrast with the death he is facing



What it's about:

- In World War 2, Japanese Kamikaze pilots would fly manned missiles into targets such as ships.
- This poem explores a kamikaze pilot's journey towards battle, his decision to return, and how he is shunned when he returns home.
- As he looks down at the sea, the beauty of nature and memories of childhood make him decide to turn back.
- Cowardice or surrender was a great shame in wartime Japan.
- To surrender meant shame for you and your family, and rejection by society: "he must have wondered which had been the better way to die".

Form and Structure

- Narrative and speaker is third person, representing the distance between her and her father, and his rejection by society.
- The first five stanzas are whilst he is flying on his set mission.
- Only full stop is at the end of Stanza Five: he has made his decision to turn back.
- The final two are in italics and have longer line to represent his life has shifted and will no longer be the same.