

ASM TUITION ACADEMY

TISSUE (POWER AND CONFLICT)

Context: Imtiaz Dharker is a contemporary poet known for her exploration of cultural identity and the human experience. "Tissue" was written in the late 20th or early 21st century and reflects on themes relevant to the modern world. The poem engages with the impact of human creation and the impermanence of power structures, resonating with a global context shaped by technological advancements, political complexities, and cultural shifts.

Themes:

1. Power and Fragility:

- The poem explores the delicate balance between power and fragility, symbolized by the tissue. The thinness and vulnerability of tissue paper become a metaphor for the ephemeral nature of human endeavours, including political and economic structures.

2. Human Creations and Permanence:

- "Tissue" delves into the idea of human creations, both physical and metaphorical, and questions their permanence. The poem suggests that even seemingly powerful institutions are as fragile as tissue paper in the grand scheme of time.

3. Nature vs. Man-made Structures:

- The contrast between natural elements and man-made structures is a recurring theme. The poem reflects on how human attempts to control and shape the world often stand in stark contrast to the enduring power of natural forces.

Structure:

1. Free Verse:

- The poem is written in free verse, lacking a strict rhyme scheme or meter. This form allows for flexibility and fluidity, mirroring the themes of impermanence and unpredictability explored in the poem.

2. Enjambment:

- Enjambment is used throughout the poem, creating a continuous flow of ideas. This technique emphasizes the interconnectedness of various themes and ideas, reinforcing the notion that everything is interwoven and inseparable, much like tissue.

3. Sparse Punctuation:

- Dharker uses sparse punctuation, contributing to the open and contemplative feel of the poem. This lack of punctuation allows for a more fluid reading, encouraging readers to consider the connections between ideas and images without interruption.

In my opinion, "Tissue" is a thought-provoking poem that invites readers to reflect on the transient nature of power and the intricate relationship between human creations and the natural world. The free verse form and skilful use of literary devices contribute to the poem's impact, making it a poignant exploration of universal themes that resonate in the contemporary context.

GRAMMATICAL TECHNIQUES:

1. Enjambment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lines that flow into the next without a pause at the end contribute to a sense of continuity and fluidity. Enjambment is often used to create a natural rhythm, enhancing the overall flow of the poem.
2. End-stopped Lines:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In contrast to enjambment, end-stopped lines conclude with punctuation, creating a pause or a deliberate break. This technique can be used to emphasize certain ideas or create a more measured pace.
3. Repetition:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repeating words, phrases, or structures can create emphasis and reinforce key themes. It adds a musical quality to the poem and helps in driving home specific points.
4. Parallelism:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This involves using similar grammatical structures, such as phrases or clauses, to create balance and symmetry within the poem. It contributes to a sense of order and rhythm.
5. Anaphora:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anaphora is a specific type of repetition where the same word or phrase is repeated at the beginning of successive lines or clauses. This technique can be powerful in emphasizing a particular emotion or idea.
6. Alliteration:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alliteration involves the repetition of initial consonant sounds in nearby words. It can create a pleasing rhythm and enhance the musicality of the poem.
7. Assonance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds within nearby words. It can add a melodic quality to the poem, contributing to its overall auditory appeal.
8. Consonance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consonance involves the repetition of consonant sounds within or at the end of nearby words. Like assonance, it contributes to the poem's musicality.
9. Ellipsis:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The deliberate omission of words creates ellipsis, leaving spaces for the reader's imagination to fill. It can build suspense, evoke emotions, or allow for a pause in thought.
10. Inversion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inversion involves reversing the usual order of words in a sentence. This technique can be employed for emphasis, to create a particular rhythm, or to draw attention to a specific element.

In my opinion, the use of these grammatical techniques in poetry is akin to an artist's brushstrokes on a canvas. Each technique serves a unique purpose, contributing to the overall structure, rhythm, and emotional impact of the poem. The interplay of these elements allows poets to craft language in a way that transcends mere communication, creating a nuanced and resonant artistic expression.

SYMBOLISM:

1. Koran:

Symbolism: The Koran, or Quran, is not merely a religious text; it symbolizes guidance, wisdom, and a spiritual journey. In a poem, it can represent the profound search for meaning, the quest for divine understanding, and the universal longing for inner peace.

Poetic Exploration: In the ink of sacred verses, a compass to the soul, The Koran's pages, a map to the celestial goal. Each word, a building block of spiritual might, A symphony of guidance in the quiet of the night.

2. Building:

Symbolism: A building, in the context of a poem, can symbolize the construction of one's life, aspirations, and identity. It may represent growth, resilience, and the tangible manifestation of dreams and ambitions.

Poetic Exploration: Brick by brick, dreams ascend to the sky, Foundations of hope, reaching mountains high. Each building, a testament to human might, Poetry etched in concrete, stories taking flight.

3. Themes Maps:

Symbolism: Maps, as a symbol, represent the exploration of life's themes, the intricate paths of personal growth, and the interconnectedness of experiences. They embody the journey of self-discovery and understanding.

Poetic Exploration: Maps unfold like parchment, life's themes charted clear, In the cartography of existence, destinies appear. Themes intertwine, like rivers on the map's vast sprawl, A poetic navigation, where every story calls.

4. Grocery List:

Symbolism: A grocery list, seemingly mundane, can symbolize the essentials of life, both tangible and intangible. It may represent sustenance, simplicity, and the daily rituals that compose the fabric of our existence.

Poetic Exploration: In aisles of life, a grocery list unfolds, Essential tales in baskets, stories to be told. Ingredients of existence, on this paper they persist, Life's grocery, a poem in every item on the list.

In my poetic interpretation, these symbols weave into the tapestry of life, illustrating the universal human experiences of spiritual seeking, personal growth, life's intricate paths, and the everyday essentials that collectively shape our existence. Each symbol

becomes a vessel for profound meaning, inviting readers to reflect on the richness and depth hidden within seemingly ordinary aspects of life.

COMPARISON WITH,

1-OZYMANDIAS

2-LONDON

When comparing "**Tissue**" by Imtiaz Dharker, "**Ozymandias**" by Percy Bysshe Shelley, and "**London**" by William Blake, we observe shared themes of **power**, **impermanence**, and the **fragility of human constructs**. However, each poem explores these ideas from different perspectives, with a unique focus on the nature of power and its effects on people and society.

1. Themes:

- **Fragility of Human Power:**
 - "**Tissue**": Dharker explores the fragility and transience of human power through the metaphor of paper. She suggests that institutions, borders, and other human constructions, like tissue, are delicate and ultimately impermanent.
 - "**Ozymandias**": Shelley's poem presents the idea that even the mightiest rulers and empires will crumble over time. The shattered statue of Ozymandias is a symbol of the impermanence of human power, no matter how grand or authoritative it once seemed.
 - "**London**": Blake's poem criticizes the oppressive systems of power in 18th-century London—such as the government, monarchy, and church—by highlighting the **suffering** they impose on ordinary people. Blake portrays human power as corrupt and dehumanizing, causing misery and oppression, but his critique also implies that this power is unnatural and morally fragile.
- **Impermanence and Time:**
 - "**Tissue**": The poem reflects on the transience of human life and the institutions we build, emphasizing that everything created by humans is temporary and vulnerable to time and natural forces.
 - "**Ozymandias**": Shelley explores the idea of time's eroding power, showing that all human achievements, including monuments to rulers like Ozymandias, will eventually decay and be forgotten.
 - "**London**": While Blake does not directly reference the passing of time, there is an underlying suggestion that the suffering and oppression caused by the city's power structures cannot last forever. Blake implicitly criticizes these institutions as unsustainable and unnatural.
- **Oppression and Power:**
 - "**Tissue**": Dharker takes a more subtle and abstract approach to the idea of power. She doesn't criticize specific institutions but instead suggests that human power is fragile and should be more transparent and flexible, like tissue.
 - "**Ozymandias**": Shelley's poem critiques the arrogance of tyrants who believe their power is eternal. Ozymandias represents oppressive leadership, but the

poem shows that even the most powerful leaders cannot escape the eventual decline of their influence.

- **"London"**: Blake's poem is a direct and forceful critique of institutionalized power, focusing on how it exploits and dehumanizes the people of London. He describes the city as a place where power oppresses the weak and perpetuates suffering.

2. Tone:

- **"Tissue"**: The tone is **meditative** and **reflective**. Dharker invites readers to think about the impermanence of human life and power without anger or bitterness. There is a sense of calm acceptance in her depiction of fragility.
- **"Ozymandias"**: The tone is **ironic** and **mocking**. Shelley portrays Ozymandias's pride and arrogance only to reveal the futility of his ambition. The broken statue serves as a powerful symbol of the vanity and transience of human power.
- **"London"**: The tone is **critical** and **indignant**. Blake's anger at the corruption and oppression in London is clear, and his portrayal of the city is one of despair and suffering. His tone is accusatory as he exposes the social injustices caused by the powerful.

3. Structure and Form:

- **"Tissue"**: Dharker's poem is written in free verse with irregular stanzas, which mirrors the theme of **fluidity and impermanence**. The lack of a strict structure reflects the delicate and ever-changing nature of the human constructs she describes.
- **"Ozymandias"**: Shelley's poem is a **Petrarchan sonnet** with a more rigid structure, but its theme is about the **breakdown of order** and the inevitability of decay. The structured form contrasts with the poem's message of collapse and destruction, perhaps highlighting the tension between human control and nature's dominance.
- **"London"**: Blake uses a **regular ABAB rhyme scheme** and quatrains, giving the poem a rhythmic, marching feel. This rigid structure reflects the oppressive control of the institutions Blake critiques, mirroring the rigidity of the systems of power that dominate the city.

4. Imagery and Language:

- **"Tissue"**: Dharker uses **light and paper imagery** to convey the idea of fragility. Phrases like "the sun shines through" suggest the transparency and delicacy of human life and power. Paper, though easily torn, is also capable of holding great significance in the form of maps, buildings, and documents.
- **"Ozymandias"**: Shelley uses **desert imagery** and the broken statue to symbolize the decay of human power. The "vast and trunkless legs of stone" and "shattered visage" emphasize the destructive power of time, while the surrounding desert signifies the **emptiness** left behind when human grandeur fades.
- **"London"**: Blake uses dark and oppressive imagery, such as "the mind-forged manacles," to illustrate how people are mentally and physically trapped by the structures of power. His description of "the blackening church" and "the soldier's sigh" creates a grim picture of the city's moral and social decay.

5. Portrayal of Power:

- **"Tissue"**: Power is portrayed as **fragile** and fleeting. Dharker suggests that the things humans use to exert power—maps, buildings, money—are as fragile as paper, and should be viewed with a sense of humility rather than permanence.
- **"Ozymandias"**: Power is portrayed as **arrogant** and ultimately futile. Ozymandias believed his rule would last forever, but the shattered remains of his statue show that time erases even the greatest empires. Shelley critiques the hubris of leaders who believe they can escape the passage of time.
- **"London"**: Power is portrayed as **oppressive** and harmful. Blake shows how the government, church, and monarchy exploit the citizens of London, causing widespread suffering. Power here is not fragile like in "Tissue" or impermanent like in "Ozymandias," but deeply corrupt and morally bankrupt.

6. Message:

- **"Tissue"**: Dharker's message is that **human power and life are transient**. She suggests that if we recognize the fragility of the things we build and embrace change and flexibility, we might live with more humility and openness. The poem advocates for **soft power** and transparency rather than rigid control.
- **"Ozymandias"**: Shelley's message is a critique of **pride and tyranny**. The poem demonstrates that no matter how powerful a ruler may seem, their influence will eventually fade and be forgotten, eroded by time and nature.
- **"London"**: Blake's message is a condemnation of **institutional power and oppression**. He critiques the way the systems of government, religion, and monarchy dehumanise and exploit the people, turning the city into a place of suffering and decay. The poem reflects a desire for change and a hope for liberation from these oppressive forces.

Conclusion:

- **"Tissue"** presents human power as **fragile** and emphasises the need for **humility and openness** in understanding life's impermanence.
- **"Ozymandias"** focuses on the **futility of human arrogance**, showing how even the greatest empires are subject to decay and destruction over time.
- **"London"** critiques **oppressive power structures**, focusing on how institutions dehumanise and exploit people, causing widespread suffering and social decay.

Each poem reflects on the **temporary nature of human constructs**, but while Dharker takes a more reflective and abstract approach, Shelley and Blake provide more direct critiques of power and its lasting (or decaying) effects on society and individuals.