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| **Literature Paper 2 Section B: Anthology Poetry****Learning compendium****‘The Emigree’** |
| Key ideas\*The speaker describes having left her country behind when she as a child, but never losing her child-like image of it.\*Whatever bad news she hears of her country, she remembers the sunlight and its beauty.\*As an adult, she is becoming aware that this is a false image, but she cannot forget or dismiss this view.\*She cannot return to her city but she is preoccupied by images and fantasies of it. |
| FormThe poem presents itself as a first person account of an emigree’s relationship with her homeland. The spelling of the title ‘Emigree’ is a feminine form and suggests the speaker is a woman. The speaker nor their homeland is ever specifically named. This could suggest that the speaker represents others who are forced to leave their homelands due to political reasons or war. |
| StructureThe poem is written as a soliloquy, with the speaker musing/ thinking to herself. Use of caesura in line one indicates a flashback/ start of a memory.The use of the aside “I am told” shows there is a conflict between the speaker’s memory of the city (mildest city- personification) and events which have happened there to change it.There is a shift in tone from stanza 3, lines 22- 25. The tone becomes much more menacing and frightening. Use of free verse three stanza structure with the start of each stanza giving a positive image of her homeland city. The first two stanzas use enjambment. For example stanza one lines 5 and 6:‘The worst news I receive of it cannot breakmy original view…’The use of enjambment reinforces the speaker’s belief in her memories of her homeland. In the last stanza there are more end-stop punctuation. This reflects the speaker’s feeling of confinement in her new city.The speaker’s memory of the city grows and solidifies as the poem moves on- the city becomes a physical presence for the speaker in the final stanza. Each stanza ends with sunlight reinforcing the fact that the speaker sees the city in a positive light. The noun phrase “sunlight” is repeated 4 times. This is because, her memory of the city is as a symbol of freedom. |
| LanguageLight imageryThe speaker uses vivid description and colour to represent her memory of the city in a positive way. In stanza one her memory is described as ‘sunlight clear’ and in stanza two the city streets are described as ‘white’ which could suggest purity or even heavenly. MetaphorStanza one- the city is described as ‘the bright, filled paperweight’. It suggests that her memories are clear, either detailed or numerous but also that her view is fixed. Moreover it may add ideas of value and worth- paperweights are often treasured or valuable objects. Alternatively the idea of the city as a souvenir, shiny and unrealistic. The whole city could be viewed as an extended metaphor: a symbol of the lost childhood to which no adult can return.Stanza 3 ‘My city takes me dancing through the city/ of walls.’Her birth country represents freedom in contrast to where the speaker is now. It is described as the ‘city of walls’ with connotations of entrapment and being in prison. However there is an ambiguity with the use of the third person pronoun ‘they’. Who are they? People from her birth country and/or people from where the speaker now lives or is it the birth city but changed by the different events which have happened there. The speaker feels threatened and oppressed by them (“they circle me.”)Simile“That child’s vocabulary I carried here like a hollow doll, opens and spills a grammar.” This may be the remains of the speaker’s native language and how it seems the most natural speech for her and/or is part of her identity.PersonificationThe speaker’s (home) city is personified. In stanza one-‘It may be sick with tyrants’. This gives the suggestion that the country has been invaded and that the view given by the speaker is not accurate/ no longer accurate.In stanza three- ‘but my city comes to me…’Semantic field of conflictThere is a range of word choices which are associated with war, invasion and tyranny. This creates the sense that the city isn’t as perfect as the speaker remembers it.  |
| Feelings and attitudesNostalgia: The speaker’s positive views and memories of the city are unchanging and unwavering. Her use of language shows a sense of yearning for the city, her home country, and the past. |
| ThemesIdentity(Presentation of) placeFreedom and restrictionDisplacement and loss: The speaker has been displaced from her own country and her reaction to this is to cling harder to the things she has lost- her language and identity. The phrase “I have no passport” (17) suggests she has not adopted a new nationality and she can’t return to her birth country.  |
| Compare with…‘Checking out me History’ (identity)‘London’ (place)‘Prelude’ (place and/or memory)‘Storm on the Island’ (place and/or conflict) |
| Key quotations and analysisThe city… ‘mildest city’ / ‘I comb its hair and love its shining eyes’Memory… ‘sunlight clear’/ ‘the bright, filled paperweight’Identity… ‘That child’s vocabulary I carried here/like a hollow doll…’Restriction, tyranny, oppression ‘city of walls’/ ‘they circle me’ |