

The most successful poet amongst students within the sheffield college essay

[Profession](#), [Poet](#)



I am writing to you in response to your request to find out who is the most successful poet amongst students within the Sheffield College. I will therefore be putting forward a case explaining why I have chosen Grace Nichols to be the most successful poet. Grace Nichols is a well known black poet. She originally comes from Guyana in the Caribbean, where she worked as a journalist until she moved to Britain in 1977. Grace Nichols now works as a freelance writer and is without doubt one of the best.

Her abilities as a writer are remarkable as she gives the reader a fascinating but shocking incite into slavery and the oppression of black people by the whites. She also covers issues surrounding the oppression of women in society. One of her most moving works is a poem entitled ' In My Name', where she focuses on a ' slave' girl who has become pregnant after being raped by her white ' master'. This is an extremely well written piece which covers issues, both of the oppression of women and of blacks. The poet uses a vast vocabulary of words to describe in detail how this woman is feeling both emotionally and physically.

She uses comparisons, for instance, she compares her child with a curled bean. This captures the reader's imagination, as they are able to create a mental picture. She describes and compares her physical appearance, ' belly an arc of black moon'. Nichols captures hearts, creating sympathy as she describes the child as being ' tainted' her ' bastard fruit' but also as her ' perfect child'. The author then portrays the woman's emotional hatred for her attacker, ' Let the evil one strangle on his own tongue even as he sets his eyes upon you'.

After reading the poem you are left wondering what happened to her child, 'Now my sweet one it is for you to swim'. This creates uncertainty as it could suggest that she drowns the child to spare it from a life of slavery, or it could suggest that she keeps her infant. However, she cannot protect her child forever and it will have to take care of itself. Nichols uses a semantic field of positive words which have an affiliation with nature, including the words 'bean', 'seedling' and 'grape'. They all have associations with new life and growth. She also uses a semantic field to create strong positive imagery using words including 'moon' and 'earth'.

They both have associations with the universe and create a strong, powerful parental picture. This poem is outstanding and it contributes greatly to delicate issues that are not commonly raised. This piece alone should convince you that Grace Nichols is by far the most successful poet; her style is both informative and entertaining and should be acknowledged. Another powerful piece of writing is 'I Coming Back' which again looks at slavery.

This time it is written from a different perspective and gives the 'slave' some power over her master. The poem is about a 'slave' girl who is determined to gain revenge for crimes against her. The poet cleverly achieves this by writing the poem in the style of a ritual voodoo/magic spell. She uses repetitive statements or chants to create an image of the 'slave' having power, it shows that despite her master having almost complete control over her life he can't control her thoughts.

To enhance this image Nichols uses a semantic field associated with death. The words 'underworld', 'evil' and 'skull' all have negative connotations of evil and the afterlife. The image projected is of dark misfortune and misery which she wishes to inflict on her master. The piece is written in Creole instead of Standard English because it makes it easier for the reader to associate with the 'slave', and makes the poem feel a lot more personal. The poem 'Up My Spine' is about how an onlooker sees an old decrepit woman.

The poem again uses descriptive language to convey an image of the woman, 'I see her ravaged skin'. It shows how the effects of slavery have taken their toll on the woman. She uses repetition to emphasise the injuries of the 'old dry-head woman'. Again Grace Nichols uses a semantic field, this time in a negative context using words including old, rattle and ravaged which indicate death and decay.

Grace Nichols' work not only highlights the historic injustices perpetrated against race and gender, but also keeps the voice of a culture alive. Creole is used in many of her poems and without writers such as her, Creole would be widely unknown. Nichols also makes readers aware that this dialect exists. Grace Nichols uses both Standard English and Creole as they have both had an impact on her life "I tend to want to fuse the two tongues because I come from a background where the two worlds were constantly interacting,.

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These points are strongly addressed in ' I Coming Back' and ' Up my spine'. Nichols covers them with sensitivity but in an intelligible way. She also covers the issue of motherhood ' In my Name', and the impact that slavery has upon mothers lives and how it influences there decision making. She successfully contributes to the readers understanding of all the issues which she covers in a clear, interesting and entertaining manner.

Anything that gives a lasting impression like Grace Nichols' work should be rewarded. Grace Nichols has already been awarded the Commonwealth poetry prize in 1983 for ' I is a long memoried women'. This accolade brought her to the attention of a wider audience and is an obvious indicator to the quality of her poetry. Nichols' work is truly moving and a pleasure to read. I hope you will enjoy reading her work as much as I did and show credit where it is due.