

In the poems "the
laboratory" by robert
browning and
"havisham" by carol
ann duff...



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In this piece of coursework I will be looking at the two poems; The Laboratory by Robert Browning and Havisham by Carol Ann Duffy. I will be looking at how the poets convey the extreme reactions of the woman in the poems that have been hurt by men. I will tackle the question by looking at different areas of the poems, such as the meaning of the poems, the structure, the type of language used and the image they create.

Havisham is a poem about a character called Miss Havisham from the book Great Expectations by Charles Dickens. In the book, Miss Havisham jilted by her scheming fiancé, can't get over what he did to her, so in spite wears her wedding dress and sits with the remains of her wedding breakfast for the rest of her life. She plans her revenge on all men, whilst in her spinster state - which she hates. The Laboratory is a poem about a woman who makes a potion that will kill her lover's mistress. This is all because the woman's lover left her for another woman.

This enrages her so much she is in a state of paranoia and decides to make this potion that she plans to give to her lover's mistress. She shows her anger by explaining how she is going to enjoy seeing her lover's face as his mistress dies. Already from reading the basic outlines of the poems you can already see the anger of these two women that have been hurt by men. The poem Havisham is structured in four unrhymed stanzas.

The idea of the first stanza is about her intent on planning revenge. It gets the reader into the poem and knowing what it is going to be about. In the second and third stanzas the poem is describing us about her life and state of mind. Then in the fourth stanza it explains her idea of death violence and

hatred on all men. The poem is structured in a way that makes the meaning clear to the reader and helps them comprehend it.

The poem is written as dramatic monologue which is where it is based upon a character in fiction or history who explains their feelings. In this case it is about Dickens' character from Great Expectations; Miss Havisham. The beginning of the poem is addressed at the man who jilted her saying how much she hates him now and wants to get revenge: " Beloved sweetheart bastard. Not a day since then I haven't wished him dead".

Throughout the poem it goes through her mental state of mind, from the words Duffy uses you can see she has had a bit of an emotional rollercoaster: " Some nights better, the lost body over me". In the poem you can see Duffy is interested in mixing her love and hatred as it shows Havisham's sexual passion has not ended yet. By looking at the structure in Havisham Duffy has created an effect that shows Havisham's hatred for men, how much men have put her through but still shows she isn't a ruin yet as she still has a sexual passion: " my fluent tongue in its mouth in its earthen down till suddenly bite awake". Furthermore as the poem gradually goes on you can see what Havisham's character is like, in stanza 1 it says how she wants to kill him but it gets worse and worse as the poem goes on to her psychological predicament. With this effect you almost get a sense of sorry, that you feel for Havisham as you know no her woes she has been through.

In Robert Browning's poem The Laboratory the poem is structured far more differently it is set out in twelve, four lined stanzas. In addition the poem is much longer. The Laboratory has a subtitle called ' Ancien Regime' this

places the poem in 18th century France, it means a formal use of Royal Palace. Underneath the suggestion of privilege and order lurks the woman's hatred and revenge. The title is an integral part of the poem; it tells the reader where the action is taking place.

In the poem the emotion is strong hatred, explaining her anger at her lover's mistress and what she wants to do to her: " Which is the poison to poison her, prithee", we are drawn into her feelings because we hear her speak as if we are there. Throughout the poem the woman's madness is slowly released into what seems paranoia, this is done by building it up verse by verse.

Whilst reading the poem there is a good sense of rhythm this is effective because it is opposite to the subject of the poem: " Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste, Pound at thy powder, — I am not in haste! In addition each verse is presented as a statement with a full stop at the end of each stanza, this makes everything clear for the woman, and this gives the poem a chilling sense, making it clear about her hatred. From the look of it Browning takes the ideas of pleasurable things and turns them upside down.

With the structures these two poets have used they have conveyed the extreme reactions of woman who have been hurt by men very well. I believe the most effect way they have both used this is by building up there characters stanza by stanza, showing their anger more and more. A highly linguistic style of writing is used in the Laboratory. The style of writing is continuous throughout the poem, and makes the meaning of the poem clear.

In stanza one the language used is describing the woman's persona, " Now that I, tying thy glass mask tightly" this is explaining how she will put her mask on to prevent herself being poisoned from the potion she is making.
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Already from the first line of the poem, in the way that it is written you can sense this woman could be spiteful, that she is only bothered about herself. In stanza two the use of repetition is used effectively to show the woman's paranoia: " they know that I know Where they are". Furthermore repetition is used again to express her anger and that she tried to find comfort in God by praying for them but instead she went to the Laboratory: " While they laugh, laugh at me". In stanza three, onomatopoeia is used to describe how the potion is made: " Grind away", " Pound at thy powder", the use of these words gives this part of the poem a strong and angry feeling of the persona, by the sense that she is mesmerised and starting to get lost in this paranoid world. Throughout stanza four, the narrator uses a metaphor to describe the poisonous tree - she calls it brave, in addition the colours the woman uses shows how excited she is.

She uses the word exquisite which means beautiful and precious, this makes the reader think the woman believes the poison is beautiful - like a work of art. In stanza six the persona of the character is becoming more and more prominent, as she is getting ecstatic about the potion being made. A metaphor is used to describe the power she has with what she's doing: " To carry pure death in an earring", this actually gives the poem a sense of fright and it starts to kick in how mad this woman is and what she's willing to do just to get back at her lover. Also with the rhymed AABB scheme the poem has the momentum it gets when starts to make the poem sound close to a song read out aloud, this contrasts the themes of the poem. In stanza six Browning uses repetition again effectively to show the power of the potion: " her head And her breast and her arms and her hands, should drop dead!

Once again we see how aggressive the woman is about making this potion.

In stanza seven we see that the woman is a bit of a perfectionist as she complains about the potion not being the right colour: " The colour's too grim! Why not soft like the phial's, enticing and dim? " She is upset about this as she wants the potion to be bright as it will lighten up her drink: " let her turn it and stir, And try it and taste, ere she fix and prefer! " The reader starts to sense the woman envisaging how the poison will hurt the mistress.

Stanza eight describes the other woman and how she is jealous that they are more powerful than her. Could she be making the potion as extravagant as she is doing so she can feel the power that they do? Dialogue is also used to emphasise that she doesn't believe her lover has no choice because he is ' ensnared' - trapped in this relationship. Stanza nine explains how the woman saw the two lovers together and she tried to kill the mistress by staring at her, it didn't work, but it shows how strong the woman's jealousy is, and how paranoid she is about the whole situation. In stanza ten, alliteration is used to reflect the anger felt by the woman: " Brand, burn up, bite into its grace- He is sure to remember her dying face! this shows the bitterness of the woman, how she wants her lover to remember the mistress' " dying face".

Stanza eleven explains how excited the woman is about killing and that the poison can't even hurt her - it'll only kill the mistress: " If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me? " The woman is at the point of no return; her conscience has gone out of the window. In the final stanza the woman is so happy with the person who's made the poison she offers him all her jewels: " Now, take all my jewels", once again you can see how mad this woman has become all because of the man.

In addition the poem ends with the reader knowing the woman is off to the dance with her poison, a glorified dance before she goes to kill the mistress. In the poem Havisham the language used is completely different but it still creates the same effect. The style of language used is continuous throughout the poem, with strong words being used that have a meaning underneath them. The poem starts off with a very strong sentence: " Beloved sweetheart bastard", already we get the feeling that this is going to be a strong powerful poem about romance.

Beloved" and " bastard" are used in the same sentence at the start and this creates an oxymoron which adds to the powerfulness of the opening of this poem. Stanza one continues to talk about this man that is " beloved" but also a " bastard", and she states she has, " dark green pebbles for eyes", this suggests the jealousy and envy the woman has over the man and the life he's living away from her. Finally in stanza one Duffy creates a feeling of tension: " ropes on the back of my hands I could strangle with", firstly its saying she has ropes on the back of her hands because of her age and that she's getting old. However then she suggests these ropes on the back of her hand could be put to use by strangling someone, this gives out a sense Havisham is angry and aggressive. In stanza two Duffy describes the persona of Havisham; once again strong language is used to get across what kind of state Havisham is in. The reader starts to see how mad this woman is getting in stanza two: " in bed cawing Nooooo at the wall", this is signifying how the woman is going crazy, screaming but also frail.

It also suggests that the woman doesn't know what to do; she is lost in her own mind. Furthermore you can see how affected this woman is by the man <https://assignbuster.com/in-the-poems-the-laboratory-by-robert-browning-and-havisham-by-carol-ann-duffy/>

and how upset she is by the effectiveness of the language: " trembling if I open the wardrobe; the slewed mirror, full length, her, myself, who did this to me? " Words such as " trembling" and " slewed" are used to show how the woman is worried about getting changed and looking in the mirror at her frail self. Throughout stanza three Duffy describes the woman's sexual and physical feelings. Once again she uses strong language to get across the ache she has been caused: " Puce curses" this suggests she has bruises from the " curses"- possibly meaning the things her lover has said to her.

In addition Havisham's sexual lust is shown: " the lost body over me, my fluent tongue in its mouth in it's ear then down suddenly bite awake", this proposes the woman is dreaming about what her sexual side of life used to be with her man and how she wishes she could still have that now, but then she " suddenly bite awake", could this be where she wakes out of her dream? Finally at the end of stanza three Duffy uses an oxymoron to describe the relationship with the man she used to be with: " Love's hate", this straddles the break between verses, and shows the unstable mixture of Havisham's emotions. Stanza four uses the idea of Havisham's wedding to create aggressive atmosphere and uses items you would usually find at a wedding to show her anger. " a red balloon bursting in my face. Bang. " this implies the love she had with her man, and maybe its burst in her face as a comparison with the love bursting just as they were about to get married.

Havisham's anger is shown once again as she " stabbed at the wedding cake" suggesting the woman's violent side, her anger and how she wishes the wedding cake was the man. The reader gets a sense of maybe not

evilness but maybe what lengths she will go to when it says " give me a
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male corpse for a long slow honeymoon", this gives the impression the long and slow is a combination of enjoyment and torture. By looking at these two poems and the language used in them it has conveyed very well the extreme reactions of woman that have been hurt by men. The aggressive and powerful language used show the reader how angry and upset these two women have been.

Taking into account all the points raised in my essay, both poets have conveyed extreme responses of woman that have been hurt by men very well. In The Laboratory I believe the way Browning has built up each character stanza by stanza to show the aggression, anger upset and hatred in them has worked to a very good effect. In addition the way the poem has rhythm and carries a strong beat gives the reader a sense this plan is growing momentum with the woman. In Havisham, to get a resounding effect on the reader Duffy has used language that creates an intense atmosphere between Havisham and the man that jilted her.

This intensity is passed on to the reader and makes the reader think mixed emotions about Havisham, should they feel sorry for her for what she has been through or should they think she is evil the way she wants to kill the man. Furthermore the way that the poem is written unrhymed creates the effect that it is speech and that it is like a story, this is maybe to make the poem more warming. In conclusion I consider the poets have conveyed the extreme reactions of woman who have been hurt by men numerous different ways but have done it very effectively on the reader. The way the both poems are structured, even though each poem is structured differently they both create an effect on the reader. The type of language used shows what <https://assignbuster.com/in-the-poems-the-laboratory-by-robert-browning-and-havisham-by-carol-ann-duffy/>

these men have done to the two woman in the poem and show what the woman feel, and how they want to get revenge. Finally the image both the poems put in the readers mind shows how well these two poets have conveyed the extreme reactions of the two women, as you can clearly see by reading the two poems both woman have been put through a lot of pain and hurt, and they want revenge because of it.