

Date 4 / 3 PV Log: (circle one) Poem / Movie / Picture / LyricTitle "Power"Author / Director / Adrienne Rich

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

I found this poem after looking up and browsing through various scientific poems and poems that in some way relate to various scientific fields.

Content / CD / Summary / Precis (Say? "Plot? Setting/Situation? Key lines/phrases scenes, etc?)

"Power" begins with a speaker telling a brief story about how a backhoe unearthed "one bottle [of] amber" that supposedly is a "cure for fever or melancholy." The story is one of those fake and artificial scientific stories about items that can cure the human race of all of its problems. Suddenly, however, the speaker shifts gears and begins talking about the scientist Marie Curie because he was reading something about her earlier in the day. The speaker imagines that Curie "must have known she suffered from radiation sickness" but "denied [it] to the end," drawing the reader's attention to the tension between what Curie knew and what she divulged to the world. Finally, the speaker tells of Curie who "died a famous woman" while "denying / her wounds came from the same source as her power."

Content / CM / Meaning? / Theme(s)?

Through Marie Curie, a powerful lady who had a huge influence on the history of science, "Power" warns the reader of the abuses of power as well as depicts the struggle for feminine equality during the time period of her existence. Back when Marie Curie was still exploring and discovering new scientific knowledge, radium, which she discovered and is now known as quite dangerous in modern times, was actually considered a cure for insanity or melancholy. Instead of admitting that her discovery, her source of power and public acknowledgment in the scientific world, might have been causing severe and significant damage, the author of this poem speculates that Curie refused to admit the dangers of her discovery since it was her source of power. Especially in a time when woman were so suppressed by men, Marie found something that gave her power and strength, and thus she was unwilling to let go of it. Her need to cling to her source of power outweighed her need to warn others and the scientific community about the harm and damage imposed by radium poisoning. As intelligent as Marie Curie was, she must've known that the substance was extremely harmful, and, unfortunately, she died at the hands of her own struggle for power.

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

"Power" is written in free verse, meaning that it does not have a stable rhyme scheme or meter. Nevertheless, there is something particularly interesting with the way that the author wrote the poem. Almost all of the lines in the first part of the poem seem to be leaving things out, as there are abnormal spaces and pauses that exist without any punctuation, giving the poem a feeling of being fragmented. Symbolically, radium represents the corruption of power in society, and Marie Curie's death symbolizes its effects and consequences.

Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections / Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

Because I am naturally inclined towards anything relating to science or any type of scientific studies, I inherently chose to do a log on this poem without even reading the whole thing first because I knew I would automatically like it. In fact, because of the scope of the science portion of the Academic Decathlon competition in elementary school, I also already possessed a significant source of knowledge about Marie Curie before analyzing and observing this poem in the first place. Nevertheless, this poem went beyond its scientific nature and instead tried to discuss one of the most prominent issues in society today and throughout all of human existence, and that actually surprised me greatly. Although scientific context was present, this poem used Marie Curie and her amazing and world changing scientific discoveries as an impetus for discussing a value that many humans often struggle with, the abuse of power. Marie Curie's extraordinary achievements in the scientific world of course should not be devalued or lessened in any way because of this poem, but I still think that the poem offers a valuable and relevant lesson. "Power" claims that because Marie so longed for and desired power for herself and for women in general, she overlooked the potential harm and detriment she could have inflicted on herself and on members of society, thus causing her and likely others to reap sad and premature deaths. When people abuse power, chaos generally ensues, such as in T.H. White's *The Once and Future King* before Arthur takes the throne. At this time in the kingdom, people are being murdered, raped, and maltreated because the knights have corrupted their power and are doing whatever they want. Finally, I think that this poem is poetic because it shows how the thirst for hunger can have dire and drastic consequences, thus advocating people to use their power for just and righteous purposes and reasons. The poem also encourages people to accomplish and achieve things for the betterment of themselves or for the betterment of society rather than to pursue tasks for superficial and egotistical purposes.

over (do not mix logs; e.g., no poem log in front, and movie log on back)