

Vultures and nothings changed essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Both of the poets are trying to explain the evil that can go on in people's minds and how race and colour can make huge differences in the way that people can be perceived. They do this in very different ways and as both of the poets had very different backgrounds, they bring their own experiences into the poems. Whilst Afrika is an Egyptian and as such was of mixed race, he was raised as a white man so that he would not suffer some of the racial abuse that exists in Egypt. Chinua Achebe on the other hand is a black-African and was not that badly treated.

He was born in 1931 and was very well educated. He was kept away from the racial abuse and in his poem he has tried to make the reader decide on what was happening. He has not told the reader what to think, unlike Afrika, he has let the reader judge for himself. In the first four lines of Afrikas' 'Nothing's Changed' the poet has tried to make sure that you feel relaxed, using calming words and images such as 'Seeding grasses' and 'Round hard stones click'. Those words bring about a mental image of a meadow, calm with nothing wrong anywhere.

It uses repetition of 's' sounds and gives the entire section a feeling that maybe the poem is going to be calm and serene, showing very 'pleasant' imagery. However as soon as you progress onto the fifth line you start to see that the poem has a darker, more malevolent side to it. The poet used a very good example of onomatopoeia when he uses the word 'crunch' and it gives you much more of a feeling of dread. This feeling is intensified afterwards when he personifies weeds by calling them 'Amiable'.

I think that this suggests that even after all the weeds have destroyed most of the things that give them life, they are still one of the best things that are there, better than the humans that the people live with. In a complete contrast to the opening of *Nothing's Changed*, Chinua Achebe's 'Vultures' allows the reader to embrace the cold darkness that is perpetually present in this poem. From the first line of the opening 'In the greyness' you know that this poem was not written to please people. The word 'greyness' can conjure up a multitude of images in your mind.

You can start to think of a cold wet sky or an old muddy lake. This gives Chinua Achebe the opportunity to follow with anything as nothing is wholly unexpected after the word 'greyness'. Similarly to *Afrika*, Achebe has used alliteration in the start of the poem as he uses a lot of 'D' sounds in the start of the poem. E. g. with the words 'One Despondent Dawn' there is a stream of images that is made in your mind. After that Achebe goes on to use words that are not normally used in common English speech.

Achebe apparently sets out to almost disgust his reader, and shock him into realising that this poem will not be a nice happy poem, rather a disgusting poem of hate. With the words 'swollen corpse' and 'Ate the things in its bowel' you can start to see that the poet has disgust for the situation himself but is not trying to force that imagery on you. However, the fact that the poet tries to show that love between the birds' shows, in my opinion, that he thinks that love can even exist in pure evil in the most abhorrent circumstances.

I think this because of the way that the words are quite shocking however amidst the evil that is shown there is also quite a large section of the poem that is devoted to love. When Achebe brings up images of 'tiny glow-worms' and 'tenderness' in the same section as words like 'ogre' and 'cruel heart' I start to think that even among these things that are appalling there is the possibility of some of the most radiant beauty and the most 'tender offspring' from one of the evils of this world.

He then goes on to describe 'the perpetuity of evil'. I think that Achebe chose that line to add to the poem so that the reader would be left with a thought that showed that the world wouldn't change no matter what any person would do about it. The fact that the evil is said to be perpetual I think means that he knows that evil will be never ending. Referring back to Afrikas poem, in the second paragraph I think that from the lines 'District six' and 'No board says it' I think that maybe the poet knows this area well.

I also think that when he says about the way that every part of his body knows where he is and what he is doing, that his body is almost 'turning on' for battle. I have a suspicion that from the words 'inward turning anger' that maybe some of the things in district six he was to blame for. As we know that he used to be actively involved in protest, maybe district 6 was one of his 'targets'. Perhaps the way the anger is focused on himself maybe he blames himself for what happened there and some people were killed because of his actions.

In the following paragraph you start to get a true feeling of what the poem is about. You can get the feeling of oppression that is ever present in the world.

From lines such as 'brash with glass', 'up-market' and 'whites only inn', you can start to see that the black people were very poorly treated and that they were probably annoyed. The white people have all of this luxury and it is solely the domain of white people only. I think that all of that pressure could have driven Afrika to terrorism.

The next two lines of the poem are set in a separate paragraph to try to emphasize what is being communicated in the lines. I am quite sure that the poet thinks that the white people are trying to push the black people back into the dirt. Perhaps by that point in history the black people gave up hope and are starting to give up the fight. From the line 'We know where we belong' I think that it shows that the black people don't even have to be told what they can and cant do anymore, that they know it off by heart and that they are not allowed to fight against the authority.

In contrast to Achebes' poem, which is about hope, the people in 'Nothings Changed' are used to not being fully recognised and have nothing else to do but accept it. In 'Vultures' at least the people in it have some hope and Achebe doesn't write all about despair, he has a hidden element of hope in his writing. In the next stanza down from the phrase 'I press my nose to the glass' I think that it is quite obvious to see that the poet is trying to see inside the building.

I have an idea that this may actually be a metaphor for looking inside a different culture and perhaps trying to understand what he is seeing. In relation to this from the line 'Crushed ice white glass' I think that he is not able to see inside the structure because of his 'white hot anger' which is

making the glass white, almost like surgical equipment. From the last line of the next stanza, 'It's in the bone' I think that you get a real impression of this place, everyone who has ever been there is a part of the place and it is a part of them.

Since he used to be an activist and may have committed acts of violence in this place he is almost certainly a part of the place and it has a very deep meaning to it. He chose the word 'bone' to describe the fact that the place is a part of him. He didn't use a more normal word like skin or blood he used the word bone. I think that he chose that word as it would have more of an impact as it could signify that there was much more of hardness to the experience than if he used another word to mean that the place was a part of him.

In the final stanza Afrika 'backs away from the glass'. I think that this means that he is fed up of trying to see the other people's perspective and is now going to go back to his terrorist ways. This feeling is enhanced in the next few lines when it says that he is looking for anything to throw, his 'hands burning' for a stone or bomb, fed up of the hell that the white people force him to endure, and I think that that means that he is willing to do whatever is needed to help free his people from the hell that he knows.

I think that the final line, 'Nothings Changed' also helps to reinforce that everything is the same as it always was. The perhaps the fact that the people are not allowing him to write have not stopped him from writing. I also think that he is saying that the black people are still too scared to stand up to the white people and that they are not willing to fight back against a

major injustice that is in their world. Being the same line as the title also helps to show that everyone is different and that not all people will see this poem as a way of expressing his feelings, rather a poem with no meaning.

To compare these two poems you must realise that they are talking about the same kind of thing. One of the major things that they are both talking about is oppression. The oppression in some of the African nations and the oppression from the days of the war. However, when you start to look at the poems in much greater detail you get the distinct feeling that even among all of this hatred and greed for the white people, there is still a tender and a loving side to them all.

Both poets go about their mission in different ways, however, they both achieve the same goal in the end. I think that the goal of both poets was to show that the world is not as rosy red as some people believe that it could be. Most people in the western world have no idea what goes on in the real world. These poets have tried to enlighten the reader and tell them that life is not all TV and Safety, there are some places that can't do that, and everyday is a never-ending struggle for life.