

Two scavengers in a
truck, two beautiful
people in a
mercedes, vultures
and nothi...



Throughout these three poems a sense of conflict, inequality and difference is created. All three represent one form of these emotions in ways that are similar to each other and others that are different to each other. The first poem, 'Two Scavengers in a Truck, Two Beautiful People in a Mercedes' is about the social and political issues that face society, as four people, two bin men and a rich couple, are held together by a red light, which is probably the only time they would ever be connected because of the social and economical differences that divide the two classes.

It also makes a clear point to question whether the politics and democracy has failed as they still live with a huge gap between classes. The second poem 'Vultures' is about how love can be found and flourish in some of the deepest depths of evil and vice versa, how evil can still live in some of the strongest love. The story opens with the two birds of prey feasting off death's remains yet feeling the strongest emotions of love towards each other in a situation that we would find disturbing and bleak. Then it goes on to use the same comparison but in a different context using the commander at the concentration camps as he cares and loves for his child. The final poem, called 'Nothings Changed' is the story of how racism still lives on after people have been brought together again.

In Africa, before the 1960's most of Africa was a mixed-race community where people of every colour lived happily together. The place Tatamkhulu describes is called District 6 and this was one of the areas where there was no distinction between groups of people. However during the 1960s the government invoked apartheid and declared District 6 a whites-only area.

Then years after the apartheid was ended, he returns to District 6 where

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although the segregation has officially ended there is still racism going on, and this is his response to that.

The three poems cover some pretty polar subjects but they are linked in the ways that they represent certain emotions especially conflict, inequality and difference. One of the ways that these emotions are represented in the poems is through the differences they portray. For example 'Two Scavengers in a Truck, Two Beautiful People in a Mercedes' and 'Nothings changed' both portray the differences between people for whatever reason, whereas 'Vultures' shows the differences in people. Both 'Two Scavengers in a Truck, Two Beautiful People in a Mercedes' and 'Nothings changed' tell of the divide between different groups. In 'Two Scavengers..

. it shows us how the difference of wealth can separate people. One way the writer shows the difference and inequality in this poem is through his choice of language. Right from the start even before the poem begins we get the sense of unfairness and inequality.

The title suggests straight away that there is a contrast between the two classes of people and his choice of language and describing words paint a picture in our minds. From the title we find language such as "Two scavengers... that immediately gives off a bad image towards the bin-men as they are describe as scavengers we get the impression that they live and feed of the waste and rubbish they collect and work with.

In contrast to this, the title then describes the two people in the Mercedes as being beautiful where it says "... Two beautiful people...

” From this we already get a feeling of inequality before the poem even begins as the people in Mercedes are put above the bin-men workers.

However the writer then plays on this idea later in the poem as he says the two bin-men are “...

looking down into an elegant open Mercedes... ” This plays with the idea because it’s saying the bin-men are physically above the Mercedes but then makes us think maybe it could be taken metaphorically and that the bin-men are perhaps above the couple in the Mercedes as they might not be as rich or glamorous as the couple in the Mercedes but they have a different type of wealth that out cedes the rich couple, even though it isn’t as visible on the surface. This really shows inequality and difference between the two types of people that come from different backgrounds and is just one of the many ways the writer represents conflict, inequality and difference in his poem.

One way that conflict is represented in one of the poems is through a juxtaposing idea. In the poem ‘ Nothing’s Changed’ the writer Tamtamkhulu Afrika uses juxtaposition to get across his idea of conflict. Juxtaposition is where you have two conflicting ideas together so naturally this would show conflict if used as a poetic device. The example of this is in 15th line where he says “.

.. nd the hot, white, inwards turning anger of my eyes”. The use of hot and white displays the juxtaposing ideas as white is usually considered a calm and soft colour that is very neutral, whereas hot is a much more angered term to use and you would think that a better descriptive colour to use would be red as it matches the ‘ hot’. However in this case the white shows just

how angry and mad this person is as the white creates a picture of just how hot the person is, as his anger is like a white hot flame.

Juxtaposition is also present in one of the other poems, 'Vultures'. This idea is picked on many times throughout the poem. An example of this is in the second stanza where it starts by saying " a dump of gross feathers, inclined affectionately to hers. " This is a key point to pick out as there is very clear juxtaposition occurring. The first part of the sentence starts out very bleak and miserable as it uses adjectives such as " dump" and " gross" which create an image of a unpleasant looking bird as " dump" makes us the reader visualise a actual dump of rubbish and how the rubbish has no particular order or fashionable state as the mess just lies anywhere. It also shows how the feathers aren't as beautiful or elegant that some other birds might have.

This idea is then followed through by using the adjective " gross" as it also makes us see the feathers as not being beautiful or nice. The word gross is also very special as a descriptive word as it is very to the point and blatant, and doesn't make any effort to try and cover up the condition of the feathers. The second idea of the sentence is where the juxtaposition kicks in, where it says "...

inclined affectionately to hers. " This has an opposite effect to the first half and this seems to change the mood to a more sincere and more loving feel to it. The use of " affectionately" shows how this ugly creature has a loving and affectionate side to it which is the opposite of the image created earlier in the sentence. The use of juxtaposition represents the theme and mood of

conflict in the poems. Going on from conflict, the next emotions represented in one of the poems are difference and inequality.

An example of these two is in “Nothings Changed”. From line 24 to line 26 we get a feeling of inequality and difference. It says in these lines “whites only inn. No sign says it is: but we know where we belong”. There is a clear sense of difference and inequality in these lines as the use of “we” really drills in a message that there are two different groups at hand here. Also it is clear to everyone which parts belong to the white and which belongs to the black even though apartheid had finished there was still a racial divide between the two groups of people and in the poem one group is displayed with a higher class than the other.

In this case it is the white people’s side of District 6 is described as a lot more luxurious than the black people’s side. This also shows the social issues of difference and inequality as there is a divide between the two types of people and how they live. An example of this is where it says in the 5th stanza “crushed ice white glass, linen falls, the single rose.” This is the description of an up-market restaurant where white people are welcome. The description creates a very vivid image of a very typical posh restaurant with lots of glassware and linen covers over the table with a flower added to the top.

However, when put in contrast with the description of what the black people’s natural dining place there is a clear picture of difference between the two. It starts on the stanza below with “down the road, working man’s cafe sells bunny chows. Take it with you, eat it at a plastic table’s top, wipe your

fingers on your jeans, spit a little on the floor: it's in the bone. ” This creates an opposite image and feel compared to the first description.

The image created from this description is of some cheap “ working man's” fast-food diner as it says “ eat it at a plastic table's top... ” which when compared with the description of the first restaurant's tables which are covered in linen sheets we see that there is a real difference between the two. Another representation of the social issues facing us is in ‘ Two Scavengers.

.. ‘ In the poem the way the two types of people are described and imagined shows difference and inequality and it can even be looked at in a deeper context to, rather than the differences of the clothes they are wearing. It says in the poem, on line 11: “ the man in a hip three piece linen suit.

.. ” Linen is also described in one of the other poems as well, and is characterised as being a very deluxe material. The poet has also used it to the same effect here. Then when compared with how the bin-men are dressed we can see some differences between them.

The bin-men are described as “... two garbagemen in red plastic blazers” and also “.

.. with grey iron hair”. On a face value it is easy to see that the man in the Mercedes appears to be dressed much more elegantly than the two bin-men are, however when looked at more closely you can see there might be a deeper meaning behind it. Natural linen is a cream colour that is very dull and lifeless looking, but when you look at the way the poet described the

bin-men he has used much more rich and strong colours such as “ red” and “ grey iron” which paint a more vivid picture in the readers mind.

This might show that the poet is trying to say that even though the bin-men aren't as well off as the couple in the Mercedes they live brighter lives as shown metaphorically through the imagery of their uniforms. Shown through description, differences are created in the poem between the bin-men and the couple in the Mercedes. The poet also describes one of the bin-men as having a hunch back and looking like “..

. some gargoyle Quasimodo”. This is a striking description as Quasimodo is the Hunchback of Notre Dame in Victor Hugo's novel. Despite his ugliness he is a loving and kind person. Quasimodo also means almost finished or half done.

This might relate to the bin-men's life and, because of the poets belief that society has failed, how they have only achieved half as much as they could with their full potential. This could have been for a number of reasons such as wealth, education and their lifestyles. There is also another way in which conflict, inequality and difference are represented. The message behind ‘ Nothing's Changed’ is racism.

Racism represents the following social issues of conflict, inequality and difference as these are what fuels, drives and creates racism in the first place. Even though the apartheid has officially ended the poet feels like nothing has changed. This relates back to the title ‘ Nothing's Changed’ but is also represented in the last stanza as it says “...

I back away from the glass boy again... ” What is meant by this is that there’s been a change of time, yet no evidence of a change of views as everything remains the same. This relates to the racial views of the people in Africa and how they haven’t changed. He also goes on to use a metaphor to show there’s still a racial divide.

The metaphor he uses is also in the last stanza, line 48 where it says “... or a stone, a bomb, to shiver down the glass.

” In this case, the glass is a metaphor of the racial divide between white and the stone is what would be needed to break down the glass, but in real terms something bigger, such as a bomb, would be needed to break down the racial divide. This represents conflict, inequality and difference as the poet uses the glass as a metaphor of how there is still a racial divide in this day and age and how it would take something as powerful and destructive as a bomb to end racism. Another way that conflict, inequality and difference are represented is in the poem ‘ Vultures’. The poem focuses on how love and evil are linked, but this shows a conflict between two ideas.

An example of this is how the poet talks about how the commander at Belsen Camp, a death camp during world war two, is going home “... with fumes of human roast clinging rebelliously to his hairy nostrils” will go and pick up a chocolate bar for “...

his tender offspring waiting at home for Daddy’s return... ” This creates two different images of the commander: the first is of a being evil as he looks over and commands the slaughter of innocent people while the second is of a caring and loving father looking after his child.

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This shows how there is conflict between love and evil as this person is able to do his job of killing while being able to return as a father figure with love for his family. Another conflict is between the two titles he holds. The first is the commander position that brings out his evil side as his duty requires it, and the other is his father position as “Daddy” which shows his caring and loving side as he raises a family. Both points show how there’s a conflict between the two emotions of love and evil. They also both show how even though someone as grim as a commander at a death camp still has the capacity to love.

The final point about difference, inequality and conflict is in “Two Scavengers...” poem. In the last stanza, line 35 the poet writes “.

.. as if anything at all were possible between them across that small gulf in the high seas of this democracy.” This refers to the how the social classes are vastly separate.

If America is the high seas then the distance between the garbage truck and the Mercedes is only a small gulf then it should be easy to cross and these two classes of people be united. However, another meaning of gulf is a deep chasm or abyss. It may look possible to cross but the reality is that it is impossible. In this case it seems that the second meaning of the word is the one the writer was going for. The message the poet is trying to create is that even though the two pairs maybe be close for a brief time at the stop light, they will never genuinely be close together.

This shows the difference between the two classes as they are too different to be related to each other. In conclusion the way that the social issues of <https://assignbuster.com/two-scavengers-in-a-truck-two-beautiful-people-in-a-mercedes-vultures-and-nothings-changed/>

conflict, inequality and difference are represented in the following poems, 'Two Scavengers in a Truck, Two beautiful People in a Mercedes', 'Vultures' and 'Nothings Changed' varies in the each of the different poems. They are all very opposite to each other and cover different subjects. The first poem is written about how bin-men and a rich couple will always lead different lives and rarely cross paths. Its purpose is to show the differences and inequality in society as some people will lead brighter lives to others because of the gaps between them.

The second is of how a butcher of lives can come home and bring warmth and love back to his family as the commander of the death camps returns. Finally the last one is about how racism will continue to flourish even when it has officially ended. During these varied ideas, the emotions of conflict, inequality and difference occur. The differences in the two pair's lives, as the rich couple go visit their architect to begin their day as the bin-men finish theirs after a long shift.

This is shown through the way the poet describes the two classes of people. Conflict is portrayed through the way love and evil are connected as they are polar emotions, and how that someone that is evil will be conflicted with love and they can never escape that, and vice versa, how the most loving person will always have the ability to do evil locked deep inside them. Finally, an example of inequality being represented in the poems is through the differences between the two cultures as describe in District 6 of 'Nothings Changed'. The way that 'whites only inn' has linen cloth covering the tables with crystal glassware and roses on top whereas the 'working man's cafe'

has the messy fast food where they eat off the plastic table tops with their hands and wipe it on their jeans.