

How do the main  
characters in the  
poems Charlotte  
O'Neil's Song and  
Nothing's Chan...



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The content in "Charlotte O'Neil's song" is of a maid who is extremely angry and is not willing to be a slave for her "mistress" any more. She then makes up her mind to immigrate to New Zealand.

In stanza one of "Charlotte O'Neil's Song" she makes a list of all the tasks and chores she used to have to do for her "mistress": "You rang your bell and I answered, I polished your parquet floor." I think that this is an ironic start to the song because she mentions all of the physical challenges at hand but does not state how she can overcome all of this.

In stanza two she tells us what a callous and bitter woman her "mistress" was and what differences there are between their life classes: "You dined at eight and slept till late, I emptied your chamber pot. The rich man earns his castle, you said. The poor deserves the gate." Which is saying the rich people deserves what they have earned by getting the castle and the poor only deserve the gate because that's what they have earned. This is also ironic because most poor class people have worked really hard for the money or food they get and the rich are sometimes born into money and are that tight fisted that the no wonder the poor cannot become rich.

The rest of the poem the writer emphasizes what chores and language the maid will not use to the "mistress" any more: "But ill never say "sir" or "Thank you ma'am" and I'll never curtsey more." The maid is now saying that chores will no longer be done and the physical tasks will come to an end because she's not off to do them anymore.

In the poem “ Nothings Changed” the content is of a black man being in a place called district six, which was once a whites only area in South Africa. The man in the poem describes the torture they were put through and the things the “ blacks” suffered from.

This poem starts by describing the environment in the place that used to be whites only area, district six: “ Cans trodden on crunch, in tall, purple-flowering, amiable weeds.” Tatamkhulu Afrika is describing a derelict place. District six is where the black community used to live but got evicted by the whites in their own country.

The poem is made up of seven stanzas; every single stanza is made up of an irregular number of lines. The poem is written in blank verse and has no regular structure.

This poem continues to explain how his body tells him he’s not welcome in district six anymore because of the colour of his skin: “ No board says it is:/ but my feet know/ and my hands, / and the skin about my bones, / and the soft labouring of my lungs, / and the hot, white, inwards turning/ anger of my eyes.” Repetition of “ and the” makes the atmosphere become tenser because it makes the reader rush to the end of the sentence.

In the next few stanzas Tatamkhulu Africa goes on to a restaurant where the whites dine and a *café* where the blacks dine. The restaurant where the whites dine is made too expensive for the blacks to eat there; this could be because the whites do not want to dine with the blacks dining with them.

This is in contrast with the *café* where the blacks eat, it is described as: “

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Down the road, working man's cafe½ 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: its in the bone." This means that the blacks belong in the cafe½ and the whites belong in the restaurant.

In the final stanza the poet uses derogatory expression " boy again," because he feels like he is still looked down upon by the whites, like he is still second-class. Tatamkhulu Africa then says " Hand burn for a stone, a bomb, to shiver down the glass. Nothings Changed." This portrays anger effectively. Tatamkhulu Africa believes that the Apartheid laws may have been lifted but " Nothings Changed."

In conclusion I have come to the result that Tatamkhulu Africa reacted to change negatively but Charlotte O'Neil reacted positively to start a new life in New Zealand.