

How does nothing's changed convey the poets feeling's and attitudes essay sample

[Profession](#), [Poet](#)



Nothing's changed is an autobiographical poem written by Tatamkhulu Afrika; a white South African who grew up in Cape Town's District Six. The apartheid government declared District Six as an area for only white people, and soon after, the area was destroyed. In this poem he returns to District Six to find the black people in the same situation as before, and though apartheid is said to have been abolished they are still discriminated against. He states that in fact, nothing has changed.

When the poet first arrives to District Six in stanza one, he describes the wasteland and overgrown area surrounding him. The first line consists of a sentence with monosyllabic words and each word is therefore stressed; "small round hard stones click". They are also onomatopoeic words and this adds more effect to the opening sentence of the poem. We are informed that there are cans scattered about amidst "tall, purple-flowering, amiable weeds". The "trodden on" cans is possibly a metaphor suggesting that the cans are like the black people being trodden on by white people.

Overall the area described seems to be unkempt and neglected; people simply do not care for it anymore as the whites do not care about the black people. Afrika sees a "new, up-market" restaurant which is "brash with glass". These two words produce harsh sounds, and the word brash instantly tells us how showy this place is. He peers through the glass and sees that the inside is elegant and expensive; with a "guard at the gatepost" ensuring that only white people enter. Amongst the weeds, Port Jackson trees are starting to grow.

They suggest that this particular area is beginning to create a more sophisticated look, because Port Jackson is a smarter area of Cape Town. The restaurant offers 'haute cuisine' which is high class food. The poet maintains his description of the restaurant in the next stanza. He knows what he will see inside, but presses his nose "to the clear panes" to confirm and prove his beliefs. The clear pane window shows class, as everything is superior and expensive with "crushed ice white glass", a linen tablecloth, and a "single rose" on each table.

The words clear, glass, ice and white are cold words, and this is the second time the poet has used the word "white" in the poem. The poet compares this elegant restaurant to the "working man's cafe" nearby. This stanza emphasises the huge inequalities between black and white people and the contrast is used very effectively. The lovely table settings of the expensive and guarded restaurant are vividly compared to an unsophisticated working man's cafe with cheap furniture and cheap food. The "haute cuisine" is distinctively contrasted to the "bunny chows".

Like a small, grubby place, without posh toilets or serviettes, you "wipe your fingers on your jeans" and you "spit a little on the floor" because there is no need to try to keep the place tidy and clean, or perhaps because the food does not taste very good. The last line of the stanza, "it's in the bone" is filled with bitterness and sarcasm. He suggests that these people behave like that instinctively because they are too poor and looked down upon to enter a place where manners are kept and maintain them. With sarcasm there is

also the idea maybe if given the chance, they are just as sophisticated and classy as white people.

In the final stanza the poet moves back from the window and feels the same hatred that he in his childhood at the time of the apartheid government. The "small mean O" may be of his expression but also the breath mark that has been left on the glass as he stares with anger and disgust. He is angry because the black people are still treated as if they are inferior to the white people and throughout the other 5 stanzas his fury has built up to this point. He wants to smash the glass and destroy the restaurant, "Hands burn for a stone, and a bomb".

The reader can imagine how his hands "burn" for revenge and the want to get a bomb to "shiver down the glass". The last line reiterates the title, that even after all this time, even after the apartheid government has been abolished "Nothing's changed." A Comparison between Nothing's Changed and Two Scavengers Nothing's Changed by Tatumkhulu Afrika is about the segregation between black and white people and "Two Scavengers in a Truck, Two beautiful People in a Mercedes" by Laurence Ferlinghetti is about two couples who are different because of their social class and wealth.

They have many similarities but are also different in some ways. They are both very effective poems which are written to state some kind of inequality between people, and they are both globally key issues. Afrika's poem is set in South Africa, Cape town, and Ferlinghetti's poem is set in San Francisco in

America; one is a third world country and the other is a highly developed country, yet there are still prejudices in both.