

Poisonwood bible leah analysis



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

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FarrowAP Literature6 August 2011The Poisonwood Bible EssayThroughout The Poisonwood Bible, Barbara Kingsolver develops the Price family as the Congo constantly forces them to change what they believe to be true. As the absence of western culture comes into effect, the Price girls must adapt to their new life. All of the family members are changed by their African mission, but the change is most clearly and most extreme in the case of Leah. Over the course of the novel, Leah goes from the Preacher's daughter, who planned on following in his footsteps, to the wife of a Congolese rebel who openly questions her former American ideals.

Although her beliefs change dramatically, Leah's basic characteristics remain At the beginning of the novel, Leah had yearned for the attention and approval of her father, who much preferred to give it to the Lord's work. "I know he must find me tiresome, yet still I like spending time with my father very much more than I like doing anything else." (36). Leah reveres her father's persistence during the early stages of their stay in Africa; she sees her father's undying will and determination as a gift from God to help cleanse the natives, "This is what I most admire about Father: no matter how bad things might get, he eventually will find the grace to compose himself. Some people find him overly stern and frightening, but that is only because he was gifted with such keen judgment and purity of heart.

He has been singled out for a life of trial, as Jesus was. Being always the first to spot flaws and transgressions, it falls upon Father to deliver penance. Yet

he is always ready to acknowledge the potential salvation that resides in a sinners heart.??? (41-42).

Even as Nathan??™s first attempt to purify the new land, his demonstration garden, literally withers in front of everyone??™s eyes, her devotion to her Father does not falter in the slightest. Instead, she takes the lesson as He instructs her to, as a test from the Lord. This shows Leah??™s intense loyalty, although her father is beginning to show his stubbornness to adjust, Leah sees around it and makes her father even nobler for trying to conquer this land. Along with her twin sister Adah, Kingsolver describes Leah as the most intelligent of the girls; this is why as contradictions pop she is able to notice them quickly. Even early in the novel as her faith in God and her father are both still very strong she notices these contradictions, such as Tata Boanda??™s two wives. From the Christian viewpoint marriage is suppose to be monogamous, or monotonous as Rachel put it, however Leah cannot seem to justify Tata Boanda dropping either of his wives. This is where the reader first sees Leah question her religion, ??? I always believed any sin was easily rectified if only you let Jesus Christ into your heart, but here it gets complicated.

??? (102-103). In the same chapter Leah also feels anger toward her father for the first time, because he made her ??? a white preacher??™s child from Georgia??? (115) a problem she deals with a lot toward the end of the book. Leah??™s changes are not as much as an upheaval in her beliefs, but more a shift. For example, as Nathan becomes more obsessed with his need to baptize and closes himself off even more from his family, Leah??™s loyalty and devotion for him shifts to Anatole, as she is spending that time with him

instead. Anatole greatly furthers Leah's transformation by acting as a bridge for her between the two cultures. At first this happens as Leah is simply trying explain the American city system; yet by the end of their conversation Leah had already begun to question her Western priorities. Anatole is also their for Leah's greatest change, her loss of religion.

As an army of ants attack the village, seeing all the destruction first hand, Leah looks for a reason God would punish them and finds none. All in one night Leah's life shifts. When she cannot find a any reason to believe that God will intercede and restore things as they were, she abandons faith in Christianity for herself. She pours out her feelings to Anatole, trying to force him to explain how the ants could happen, how her family could be so wrong in what they were supposed to have been trying to accomplish; in essence abandoning all admiration of her father's work.

She also, tells Anatole that she loves him, which begins their courtship. Leah is without a doubt shaped by Africa, in namesake alone she had gone from Leah Price to Leah Ngemba. Although she had dropped Christianity, her Western sense of entitlement, and even resents her white skin, Leah remains just as loyal and compassionate as she was as a child.

Instead of her father and God, however, she nows lives for her new family and life with Anatole.