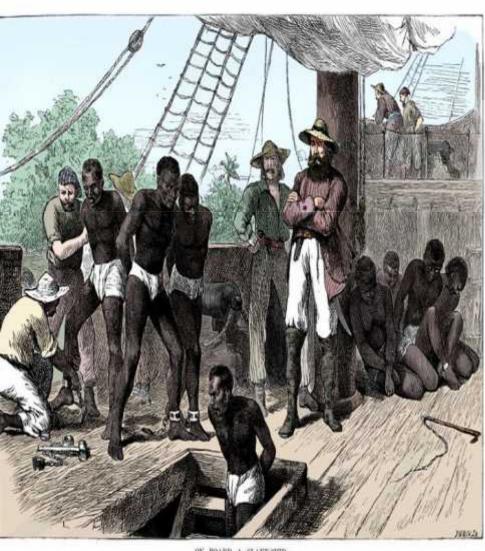
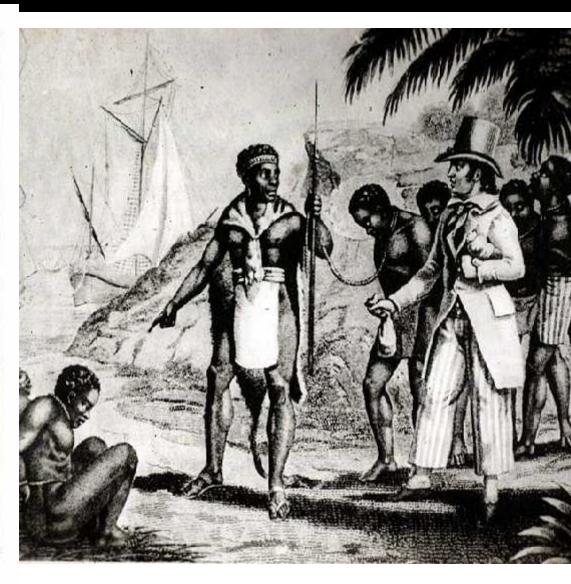
Explanation and Analysis of the African Poem: "The Grieved Lands of Africa" BY &GOSTINHO NETO (1922 - 1979)

Slavery and slave trade: The African Experience...





ON HOARD A SLAVE-SHIP.

THE GRIEVED LANDS OF AFRICA"

Ugwu Lawrence
Enenche
(M.A English Literature)

STANZA ONE:

The grieved lands of Africa In the tearful woes of ancient and modern slave In the degrading sweat of impure dance Grieved

Stanza One Summary/Analysis

The grieved land recall the "tearful woes" of what we suffered by Africans in their lands in the hands of the colonizers. The influx of people from other lands using force to conquer Africa is what the poet considers "degrading sweat." The poet argues that the reasons the colonizers gave for coming to Africa was not genuine "impure dance."

Modern slavery in African lands...





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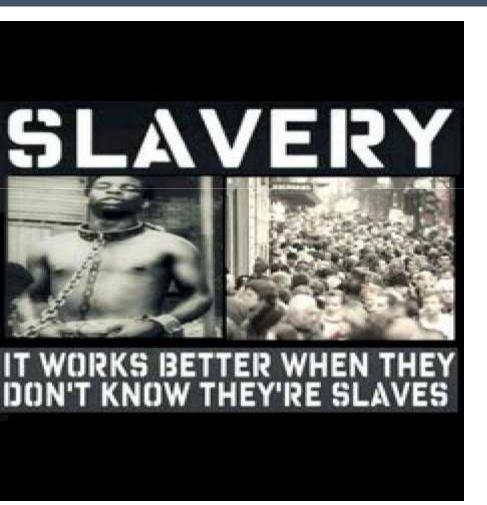
STANZA TWO:

The grieved lands of Africa In the infamous sensation of the stunning perfume of the Flower Crushed in the forest By the wickedness of iron and fire (modernization) The grieved lands

Stanza Two Summary/Analysis

The poet returns to the motif of "the grieved lands of Africa" (I.6). The beauty of the land was destroyed by "the wickedness of iron and fi (modernization). The so-called modernization is no more than taking away Africa's resources. The reference to "lands" is an indication the injustice to Africa was not at one spot but all over the continent.

"In the infamous sensation..." "ancient and modern..."





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STANZA 3

The grieved lands of Africa
In the dream soon undone in jingling of jailer's keys
And in the stifled laughter and victorious voice of laments
And in the unconscious brilliance of hidden sensations
Of the grieved lands of Africa

Stanza Three Summary/Analysis

Another level of the persecution of Africa is "in the dream undone" (1 13) using imprisonment — "jingling of jailers keys." The Africans dream of freedom from colonial exploitation and hoped for self-rule. This freedom which will bring "laughter and victorious voices is being "stifled" by the colonizers. The stifling heralds "laments" from the Africans. The poet argues that Africans are dogged and that is "hidden' from their oppressors. He envisaged the eminent freedom in the last two lines.

STANZA 4

"The Grieved Lands of Africa" Alive
In themselves and with us alive
They bubble up in dreams
Decked with dances by baobab over balances
By the antelope
In the perpetual alliance of everything that lives

Stanza Four Summary/Analysis

In spite of all, Africa and Africans remain "alive" and can sustain "themselves" without the aid of the colonizers. The poet argues that the exploitation of Africa did not lead Africans to depression, rather Africans are "lively" and bubbling with "dreams". Africans dream dance and hope for better future where "everything" will work in "alliance" to the favour of the Africans.

Ugwu Lawrence Enenche M.A English Literature) "The Grieved Lands of Africa"

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STANZA 5

They shout out the sound of life
Shout it
Even the corpses thrown up by the Atlantic
In putrid offering of incoherence
And death and in the clearness
Of rivers

Stanza Five Summary/Analysis

This stanza is a continuation of the argument of the poet froi stanza four; that despite the dehumanizing treatment of the Africans, Africans are still in sound health and full of life. The "corpses thrown up by the Atlantic" do not discourage the African consciousness. They are the corpses of the dead while enroute to European countries for purposes of slavery. The death of many Africans do not deter the living Africans from envisaging freedom and victory.

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STANZA 6

They live
The grieved land of Africa
In the harmonious sound of consciences
Contained in the honest blood of men
In the strong desire of men
In the sincerity
In the pure and simple rightness of the stars'
Existence

Stanza Six Summary/Analysis

Rather than Africans die, "they live" (l. 29), the grieved land of Africa survived the colonial invasion. There is the will among the Africans to live Africans urvive their years of human denigration. Africans survive because the stars also do survive — "the rightness of the stars Existence."

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STANZA SEVEN:

They live
The grieved land of Africa
Because we are living
And are imperishable particles
Of the grieved land of Africa.

Stanza Seven Summary/Analysis

The grieved land of African are not dying they live "because we are living" (l. 40). The poet argues that Africans are "imperishable", despite the several attempts by the colonizers to annihilate them from their homeland.

Class Activity

- 1) How does the poem portray the circumstances of Africans before and now?
- 2)Attempt a justification of the title of the poem in relation to its content.

ABOUT THE WAITER

"Mr. Ugwu Lawrence Enenche is an organized professional lecturer/teacher with strong subject knowledge and practical experience, providing high quality lessons delivery to students and furthering the cause of education by implementing successful teaching practices learned over the years of working as a school teacher, university lecturer and facilitator with students of different backgrounds and cultures. He is a prolific writer and reputable researcher on African literature and folklore. His poems, articles, research works, short stories and novels have won several awards. His recent novels are **Just** After Dawn, A Talking Dream, Gone With Love and Concrete **Shadows.**" Contact: ennywall1234@gmail.com