

AFRICAN POETRY

BLACK WOMAN BY LEOPOLD SEDAR SENGHOR

POET'S BACKGROUND:

Leopold Sedar Senghor is a poet, philosopher, scholar and statesman. He was born in Joal, Senegal in 1906. Senghor's name is generally linked with the philosophy of Negritude. He died in 2001 at the age of 95

THE BACKGROUND POEM

The poem "Black Woman" is a poem devoted to praise the beauty of African woman. The white writers had written so many praise poems celebrating white woman, adoring the physical beauty and the colour of the Whiteman which they see in terms of her whiteness, glory, frankness, elegant hands, the face's whiteness which they (the white poet's describe as radiance of the sun, dazzling moon etc. Senghor's Black woman published to adore the beauty of African woman which as of that time no poem has been written in praise of the beauty of African woman. The poem is devoted to all African women

SETTING OF THE POEM

The poem is set in African. It is set in the 1920 and 1930

THE SUMMARY OF THE POEM

This poem is devoted to the beauty of the black woman. The black woman is "clothed" with her colour of black which beautifies her.

In lines 1- 10

The black woman is naked but she is "clothed with your colour". The poet's love and adoration for black woman is not mainly for the colour and beauty but also she has been made the source of the life force and guidance of the house. It is in the guardian of this woman that the poetic persona grew up. "The gentleness of your hands" which may have smothered his face, hence he is talking about showing love, care and concern of the black women. The poet is so sure of the confidence is the ability of black woman to sustain and life.

The white mocks the blacks by featuring blackness or darkness, nakedness as ugly and nasty the poet see these as charming. The poet has reached his maturity stage as seen in stanza two when he says that "at the heart of summer /

at the heart of the noon". He comes upon his "promised land". This maturity can refer to the stage when he begins to understand and appreciate the beauty of African woman. In the third stanza, the poet extols his object of admiration. He uses images to describe and evoke emotions and spiritual realities about the black woman he praises. For instance expressions such as "like the flash of an eagle" which evokes the emotions that goes with the beauty and nobility of the eagle. He describes the suddenness of the beauty of the black woman.

The "naked" woman is metaphorically a "firm- fleshed ripe fruit". She is also referred as "somber raptures of the black wine". In lines 20- 28, Senghor refers to the woman`s beauty to "Oil that no breath ruffles". The oil the naked woman is likened to the oil that comes from "the athlete`s flanks" or from the flanks of princes of Mali. The "dark women is compared to gazelle (a small slender antelope) made in "paradise". Her skin is described as pearls and glinting red gold. This naked woman is the delights of the mind "just the same that "red gold" glints and adorns the woman`s watered skin". Her deep black and dark hair adds to her beauty, while her eyes are likened to "suns" which is set side by side face like the way the eyes are located on human."The neighbouring suns o f your eyes".

Line 29-33.The poet sees the beauty of African woman as perfect beauty. Though she is mortal but her beauty "passes" for the form and shape is eternally designed her beauty has gone perfection in the spiritual realm and cannot be killed by white man" criticism Senghor celebrates Africa especially his country, Senegal. He sees African as his "promised land", flowing with milk and honey. To him, Africa is everything good, beautiful and bright.

"Black woman" is a Negritude poem which aims at reviving through literature, the cultural values, identify and beauty of Africans.

POETIC DEVICES

1. Language and style:

The language is not simple one as the poem will pose a problem for an average reader because almost every ward used by the poet is symbolic. Such as "sun- baked" , "tau tom tom" etc. These words which European writers use as insults are used by the poet to showcase the

Beauty of “black woman”. Senghor assesses beauty from nature, stressing that a beautiful woman has to be judged from total nakedness.

Use of symbols and imageries:

The poem has so many images such as “naked woman” which shows that the woman is clothed with her colour.

“The gentleness of your hands” which cares for his eyes

“Any your beauty strike me to the heart like the flash of an eagle”

Others are “firm flashed ripe fruit”, mouth making lyrical my mouth etc.

The poet uses symbols to arouse the emotion of spirituality, beauty, mobility, perfection which he attaches with the black woman such as “black, dark and naked” etc.

Ambiguity/Abstraction which is a word with double meaning.

The poet says that the black woman is naked and clothed with your colour which is life. Does it mean that life has a colour?

“In your shadow I have grown up” can mean I grow up learning from your shadow or “Your shadow has enabled me to grow up.

Again the naked woman is described as my promised land and human being cannot be a land even though it is used here metaphorically.

Abstraction is unrealistic idea. The poet saying mouth making lyrical my mouth’ is this caused by the “raptures of black wine” “Calm oil on the athlete’s flanks on the flanks of princes of Mali” is mean less here so are abstract.

Metaphor _ The poet uses metaphor almost half of the expression seen in black woman is metaphor.

The black woman being referred as a promised I and “ripe fruits savannah, carved tom-tom, oil sun-baked pass, heart of summoned.

Apostrophe- The whole poem and presented as the black woman is physically present with the speaker.

Simile- The poet uses simile in line 5” And your beauty strike like the flash of an eagle”.

Repetition- Certain words and are repeated to create effect as seen repetition of these naked woman black woman dark woman.

Alliteration- The poet uses alliteration such as a firm-fleshed” mouth making savannah shuddering. This is to make the poem musical.

The structure of the poem “Black woman” has thirty-three lines. It is a free-verse. It is writing in four stanzas of eighteen lines. The poet uses short line for emphasis and each stanza starts with naked woman or black woman.

Themes-

1. African beauty

The poet is a negritude poem that is devoted to the beauty of the black female. Here this woman is naked is adored in by describing her colour, shape, shadow and the gentleness of her hands. Some elements of beauty are used in “sun-baked pass”, the heart of summer, the heart of moon”, “firm- fleshed ripe fruit”, somber raptures of black wine” mouth making lyrical my mouth ,” East wind’s eager caresses, “contralto voice”,” the Beloved”, calm are on the athletes franks, gazelle limbed in paradise”,” pearls, are stars on the night of your skin”.

“Glinting of the red gold “, a watered skin”, etc.

All these words are used to praise.

2 Black is beautiful

Senghor in this poem extols blackness which was not recognized as good. In his poem he lifts blackness and sees it as a pride and worthy of adoration. In the poem the naked woman is “clothed with your colour which is life’. Blackness is seen as the colour of life.”

In contrast to how the white perceive blackness, Senghor recognize its beauty and elegance. The beauty “strikes me to the heart like the flash of | an eagle”. The wine that has “ruptured is black.”

African land scope feature and its vastness which enables “the East winds..... Flow freely.

3 African, the promise land”

The poet is concerned about his country and African. To him Africa is everything good, beautiful and bright. Africa is bestowed of good thing of life by nature. The weather condition is the nature best, so the poet sees Africa as his “promised land’, which flows with milk and honey. The poet uses many images to extol the values and identify of the African continent.

4 The aroma and beauty of African woman

The poet writes about black woman who is naked. He stresses that this woman is beautiful not because of adornments such as clothing or apparel which even can suppress or exaggerate a woman's beauty. Rather black woman is "clothed with your colour (black) which is life, with your form which is beauty". He promises the form and shape of the woman. He marks the gentleness of your hand was laid over my eyes"

This black woman is "firm_ fleshed ripe fruit" and liked to the "somber rapture of black wine". He does not compare her to red wine but black wine. The poet recognizes the mortality of black woman which is the lot of all both white and black.

5 Rejection of European standard of beauty.

The poet rejects the European standard of beauty. He judges and beautifies woman from her total nakedness. He believes beauty should be assessed from nature contrary to the European writers who cajole and criticize Africa as unworthy and undesirable. Senghor writes to reverse the negative image of Africa. In this poem black is a colour of life / it is the "from which is beauty. The attributes of black woman and of Africa are extolled. Africa and the woman is promised as "shadow," sun baked pass" Africa being the land of sunshine,

The "heart of summer" and the heart of moon". The maturity of Africa is emphasized when he refers to "firm fleshed ripe," somber raptures of black wine "etc.

Senghor reveals that Africa woman's beauty is to be judged by nature, maturity, warmth, fine weather, caring, delight of the mind, peace and friendly neighboring suns".

BASIC LITERARY TERMS

- 1) Rhyme: (often spelt Rime) Involves a comparison between two or more words and means the similarity of sound between the endings of two or more words, beginning at the accented vowel and continuing to the end of the word. Hall rhymes with call: cry rhymes with sky; sill rhymes with still, door rhymes with floor; and so on.
 - 2) Double of Feminine Rhyme: This is when two words rhymes within the same line. Example, spreading and tending, housing and rousing all words being of two syllables.
 - 3) Middle Rhyme: Is when a` rhyme occurs between an accented sound in the middle of a line and sound at the end. Example: All armed\ rides, whatever betides until I find the Holy Grail?
 - 4) Masculine Rhyme: Is when one syllable of a word rhymes with another word (e.g. sound and ground; touch and watch; match and catch- all words are of one syllable each)
 - 5) Triple Rhyme: This is a kind of rhyme involving three syllables, e.g. slender and tenderly or in quivering and shivering.
 - 6) Alternate Rhyme: This occurs when in a group of lines, of poetry, the first rhymes with the third and the second line rhymes with the fourth line. Example:
Gather ye rose-buds while ye may
Old time is still a-flying
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.
- It should be noted that the rhyme scheme of the above alternate rhyme is ab ab, cd cd.
- 7) Rhyme Scheme: This is a pattern or sequence in which the rhyme occurs in poetry.
 - 8) Verse: When we talk of verse in any literary work, it refers to any form of writing or any metrical composition arranged in lines, each conforming to pattern of accented and unaccented syllables. Poetry is mostly written in verse; therefore verse is mostly used as synonym for poetry.
 - 9) Couplet: A couplet is usually two lines of a poem having equal length and rhyming together.
 - 10) Triplet: This is stanza or a poem of three lines.
 - 11) Sestet: A poem of six lines is called sestet.
 - 12) Septet: Is a poem or a stanza of seven lines.

- 13) Octet: Is a group of eight lines of poetry.
- 14) Octave: The first eight line of the sonnet is called the octave.
- 15) Nunullet: Is a poem or a stanza of nine lines.
- 16) Sonnet: Is a poem of fourteen lines of five basically iambic feet.

We have two types of sonnet:

- a) The Italian or patrarchan, and
 - b) The Shakespearean or Elizabethan sonnet
- 17) Rhyme Couplets: Rhymes couplets as their name implies, rhymes in pairs, AA, BB, CC. DD. They are usually four or five basically iambic feet.

INTRODUCTION TO WUTHERING

HEIGHTS BY EMILY BRONTE

Author's background

Emily Bronte was born in 1818. She was the daughter of an Irish clergyman and was the fifth child. *Wuthering heights* published a year before death in 1847 at the age of thirty.

The background of the story:

Wuthering Heights was published in 1847 during the reign of Queen Victoria called Victorian Era. The novels written that era were characterized by formal rules of behavior where love courtship and marriage are concerned. Then woman were not allowed to meet gentleman except when accompanied by some elderly person. Marriage was between couples of the same class but after the industrial revolution, woman began to move outside the home, were education, began to work, and these challenge many of the societal value.

Then the society was mindful of class hierarchy. There were the upper class, the middle class and the working class. Inter- class marriage was not welcomed and when it happened. It created a lot of tension.

The early made use of the convention of realism which Emily used also so *Wuthering Heights* combined realism and romance which made the novel gothic in nature. A gothic fiction evokes terror, horror, mystery through its atmosphere, themes, setting and elements of the supernatural.

SETTING:

The action that happen in *Wuthering Heights* takes place in or around two neighboring houses on the Yorkshire moors which are *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange*. It was published in 1847.

THE PLOT OF THE STORY

The story is told through the diary of Mr. Lockwood who writes his experiences and the recollection of others.

He rents Thrush Cross Grange, a remote house in the Yorkshire moors of Northern England one day he visits Wuthering Heights a nearby home of his new landlord, Heathcliff. He encounters several strange and unpleasant characters: Cathy, Heathcliff's beautiful but rude daughter-in-law; Hareton; Hareton Earnshaw, an uncivilized yet prideful young man; Joseph, rude and bad tempered old servant and Heathcliff the misanthropic (a person who does not like other people) owner of both Wuthering Heights and Thrush Cross Grange.

Lockwood visits for a second time. He is forced to sleep there because of a snowstorm. He is awakened by a ghostly child who calls herself Catherine Linton who begs him to let her in through the window. Lockwood is afraid and wakes Heathcliff who comes and opens the window, calls and begs the ghost to return. Lockwood is desperate to leave the haunted house and desires to move to Thrush Cross Grange. He returns to Thrush Cross Grange and asks the housekeeper, Nelly Dean if she knows about the strange occupants of Wuthering Heights. Nelly Dean explains that she grew up as a servant at the Wuthering Heights and tells her story of the house beginning that nearly thirty years earlier, Wuthering Heights was owned by the Earnshaw family: Mr. and Mrs. Earnshaw and their two young children; Catherine and Hindley. Mr. Earnshaw returns from a trip a certain day with a young orphan boy who was later named Heathcliff. Catherine and Heathcliff become friends. Heathcliff is preferred by Mr. Earnshaw which arouses jealousy and hatred of Hindley. Hindley is sent to college to resolve this problem. When Mr. Earnshaw dies and Hindley returns with his new wife, Frances and takes control of Wuthering Heights,

he reduces Hindley to a servant. Hindley does not care for his sister but devotes his time to his wife and as a result Heathcliff and Catherine's children are unmonitored so wander through the moors misbehaving together.

During such moments they sneak to Thrush Cross Grange, where the refined Linton family lives. Their dogs attacked them while they were spying through the window. Mr. Linton takes Catherine in while he, Heathcliff is chased away.

Catherine stays till the dog bite heals and she returns to Wuthering Heights where Hindley humiliates H Heathcliff asking him greet Catherine as a queen Catherine like other servants. Catherine calls heathcliff dirty and compares him to her new friends, Edgar and Isabella Linton. When Catherine new friend's visit, Hindley humiliates him again and he vows to revenge but Nelly advises him forgive him. Frances gives birth to Hareton but dies; this devastates Hindley who sinks deep into alcoholism so become abusive. Edgar Linton courts Catherine and she is confused about Heathcliff's love and Edgar's love. Catherine, even though has accepted Edgar's proposal, she would have loved to marry Heathcliff but states that it will be degrading to marry his class. Heathcliff over hears it and moves out of Wuthering Heights.

Catherine marries Edgar and lives at Thrushcross grange with Edgar's sister, Isabella. Heathcliff returns and now have mysteriously fortune. He stays at Wuthering Height Hindley has become a gambler, Catherine is happy to see Heathcliff while Edgar hates him and hates his unusual relationship with Heathcliff. heathcliff courts Isabella knowing she is the heir to Edgar's property.

This causes conflict between Heathcliff, Catherine and Edgar. Heathcliff is ordered to leave and he elopes with Isabella. The stress cause Catherine to fall sick and dies soon after giving birth to a daughter called Catherine.

Heathcliff vows to revenge her death on Edgar. Isabella flees to London and gets delivered of a son called Linton Heathcliff whom she raises alone. Hindley dies and Nelly gets to know that Wuthering Heights has been mortgaged to Heathcliff. Edgar trains his daughter, when Isabella dies, he tries to adopt Linton but could not because Heathcliff demands that his son come to live with him at the Wuthering Heights. The young Catherine later discovers about Wuthering Height and her cousin Linton.

Heathcliff succeeds in revenging by forcing Catherine to Mary sick Linton which will ensure that he will gain control of Edgar's daughter and his family home Heathcliff kidnaps Cathy and forces her to Mary Linton. Edgar dies and Linton inherits.

Thrushcross Grange. He forces Cathy to move to Wuthering Heights. Linton dies after leaving all his property to Heathcliff. Heathcliff raises Hindley's promising son.

Hareton a rude, uneducated servant observes how Hindley treated Heathcliff, his revenge on Edgar by gaining ownership of Thrushcross Grange. How he made Edgar's daughter miserable. This story makes Lockwood leave the area. He returns month later to discover that Heathcliff has died. He desires to reunite with Catherine. Nelly revealed to Lockwood that Heathcliff began behaving strangely, saying that he was within sight of heaven".

After his death several villagers claim to have seen his ghosts and Catherine's ghosts walking through the moors. Lockwood is surprised to hear about his plan of Cathy and Hareton to Mary in the New Year. Nelly reveals to him their plan to move back into Thrushcross Grange after wedding. Lockwood wonders over to the graves of Edgar, Catherine and Heathcliff, wondering if they are finally at peace.

THE THEMES

- 1) Deceit and betrayal: This is portrayed in Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff who appears to be helpless and harmless plays his way to the kind heart of Mr. Earnshaw who shelters and protects him. He takes out revenge on Hindley and extends it to his son, Hareton. He also revenges on Cathy because she marries Edgar. He blackmails Hindley which causes his untimely death. Heathcliff deceives Catherine to marry his son in order to get their inheritances. Even when Edgar discovers his deceit on his deathbed, he bribes the lawyer so that he avoids going to Edgar to avoid him changing his will. Heathcliff betrays the trusts of Mr. Earnshaw.
- 2) Another theme is love: In Wuthering Heights, Catherine and Heathcliff's passion for each other is displayed. It is the source of most of the major conflicts that structure the novel's plot. The first half of the novel centering on the love between Catherine and Heathcliff and the second half features the developing love between young Catherine and Hareton. The love between Catherine and Heathcliff is real, and progressively. They develop strong for each other when they were young even when they became adult and even in death both are buried side by side. So the type

of love that exists between Catherine and Heathcliff is based true love while Catherine and Edgar`s marriage is based on selfishness and on the other hand the love that exists between Isabella and Heathcliff is based on infatuation Catherine Linton`s love to her cousin whom she later married is on infatuation. Catherine Linton`s love to her cousin whom she later married is on infatuation; but she later develops true love.

- 3) Parental responsibility: In Wuthering Height theme of parental responsibility is seen in the life of Earnshaw who cares for his family and spends time with his children, unlike his son Hindley who leaves his responsibility to the nannies. Heathcliff also abandons his parental responsibility to house helps. Edgar is shows an example of good parenting, even as a single parent he raises a well behaved daughter, young Catherine.
- 4) Revenge and retribution: This is a major theme in the novel. Heathcliff hates people and likes to revenge. He exacts his revenge on Hindley and Hareton, his son. He revenges on Catherine because he feels she left him to marry Edgar. This he achieves this by marry Edgar`s sister, Isabella and this causes Catherine`s and Isabella`s death and even Edgar`s death. Heathcliff reaps the fruit revenge when he is struck with a strange illness which eventually kills him. And he suffers from the curse placed on him for destroying her life. Heathcliff is tormented and he suffers sleepless nights for eighteen years so his revenge results in retribution. No one who causes other pain go unpunished.

- a) The narrative techniques in Emily Bronte`s Wuthering Heights. The story uses many symbols. The setting is symbolic, even the climatic conditions, the characters and various object or symbols. The author uses series of enveloping first person narratives. Lockwood who is the first narrator narrates the stories which Nelly dean, the main narrator, the narrating of Isabella, Catherine and Zillah.

Use of verbal and dramatic which the author uses when Heathcliff eavesdrops on the conversation between Catherine Earnshaw (Linton (and Nelly about Edgar`s marriage proposal, he does not wait to hear about Catherine`s talk about her true love for him describing him as her

soul mate but leaves ignorant of her love for him while the readers are aware of her real love for him. It is also ironical for Heathcliff to be obsessed about possessing Wuthering and the Grange when he is the rightful inheritor

MAJOR CONFLICT

1. Catherine Earnshaw is thrown in conflict between the love for Heathcliff and her desire to marry from her class (being a gentle woman). To Catherine marry Heathcliff is degrading so her desire to marry Edgar Linton puts almost all the novel's characters into conflict with Heathcliff.
2. The need for Heathcliff to revenge himself for Catherine's betrayal for leaving him to marry Edgar and revenge for all Hindley's abuses humiliations climax. The death of Catherine results to deeper desire for Heathcliff to revenge to Hindley and Edgar.

Foreshadowing: Lockwood's initial visit to Wuthering Heights and the mysterious relationship between the characters create an air of mystery. The ghostly night mares which he had when he spends in Catherine's old bed show many of the events of the rest of the novel.

USE OF CONTRAST

There are contrasts between the characters of Heathcliff and Edgar, between Catherine and Isabella and between Linton and Hareton, the contrasts between good and evil, chaos and order, nature and culture revenge and forgiveness etc.

Wuthering Heights is a gothic novel so it is designed to be characterized by an atmosphere of mystery and horror. It creates terror and dread by creating fearful atmosphere, themes, setting and elements of the supernatural. The setting of the gothic novel is usually a haunted castle or mansion. Heathcliff's residence has gothic architecture being an old mansion with a lonely solitary occupant and solitary neighbor who lives in the mansion called grotesque.

Wuthering Heights uses ghosts which appear in nightmares and is superstitions; this is seen in the experience of Lockwood in Wuthering Heights

of having nightmare. The ghost of Catherine visits and she comes in apparition form. The ghosts of Heathcliff and Catherine are also sighted.

Again the mysterious wealth of Heathcliff is an element of gothic as no one knows how he made his money. He is dangerous and vengeful. Again characters are seen wandering the desolate and rugged setting of the novel in harsh weather and circumstances which create gothic consciousness in the novel.

Assignments

- 1) Emily Bronte`s novel, "Wuthering Heights" is characterized by complex but deliberate pattern of repetition and contrast. Discuss.
- 2) Examine in detail the process of Heathcliff`s revenge. Is it justifiable? Give your reasons either in support or against.

POET'S BACKGROUND

Agostinho Neto was born in 1922 in Angola. He was a trained doctor, a politician and a poet; he wrote many poems. He was imprisoned because of his political views. He became Angola's first president and he died in 1979.

THE BACKGROUND OF POEM

The Grieved lands of Africa is a poem written about African land which is said to be aggrieved because of the negative impact of many hundred years of human slavery during which many Africans were exported as goods to different parts of the world. Africa also was devastated by the effect of colonialism and even though some African countries later gained their freedom through dialogue and negotiations, Angola, which is the poet's country, gained theirs through war.

THE SETTING

The Grieved lands of Africa are set in Africa during the colonial periods when Africa was subjected to various sufferings in the hands of the Europeans.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

The Grieved lands talk about the sufferings of Africans in the hands of the Europeans as the poet put it "tearful woes of ancient and modern slave", the painful experiences of the African slaves being transported on the high seas. It takes about the "degrading sweat of the impure dance".

Unfortunately this sorrowful experience did not stop with slavery but continued during the colonial period. The white lords committed evil against the Africans. They oppressed and suppressed their rights in African lands. They tortured, intimidated, and repressed the people of Africa. In the first stanza Neto, the poet calls "Africa" "The Grieved Lands" and describes her as a citadel of regret and sorrow which they receive from the way they are being treated by the white masters. We see the poet sorrowfully lamenting that the colonial lords condemn the egos and values of Africa out of mere envy and wickedness. The Grieved lands of Africa suffer from "the infamous sensation of the stunning perfume of the flower crushed in the forest. "By the wickedness of iron and fire", in stanza three, the poet regrets that their quest and ambition to study to acquire knowledge were stopped by the jealous colonial masters. This is made possible by the persecution of Africa using imprisonment. Their dreams could not be achieved "in the dream undone"- "jingling of jailer's keys. The poet in stanza four assures Africans of hope by urging her to rise. In spite of years of sorrow Africans still have dream, dance and hope for future. He boldly states that they "stand tall". He believes that Africans are alive in themselves and it's alive 'Africans their music' shout out the sound of life I shout'. In the 5th stanza, he urges Africa to be bold for her children are struggling to survive. He urges Africa not to give up nor be discouraged. Stating that even the continuous punishments and death from the colonial masters could not force them to give up.

"Even in the corpses thrown by Atlantic. In putrid offering of in coherence of one death end in the clearness of rivers. In the last stanza the poet states that Africans live rather than dying, "they live". "They live in harmonious sound of consciences". Africans live and survive their years of dehumanization which their colonial lords have inflicted on them.

"They live"

The grieved land of Africa
Because we are living
And are imperishable particles
Of the grieved lands of Africa

POETIC DEVICES/ TECHNIQUES

- 1) **LANGUAGE (DICTION):** The poem was translated from Portuguese into English language. The diction (poet's choice of words) can be understood by average readers. The poet carefully uses words that create fear, sorrow, and pity. The poem is interested and full of emotion.

- 2) METAPHOR: The poet closes words metaphors to reveal the cruelty and series of sufferings which African are passing through such as the 'grieved lands', 'tearful woes', 'The wickedness of iron and fire', 'degrading sweat; stunning perfume'
- 3) ALLITERATION: is the repetition of the initial consonant sounds. The poet uses some examples such as 'decked with dances'

'Baobabs over balance'

'Simple stars'

'Degrading dance'

'Flower – forest'

'Jingling - - jailers'

'Sweat—seas'

'Victorious voice'

In the last stanza the poet states that Africans live rather than dying. 'they live'. They like in the harmonious sound of consciences' Africans live and survive their years of dehumanization which their colonial lords have inflicted upon them.

'They live

The grieved land of Africa

Because we are living

And are imperishable particles of the grieved lands of Africa.

- 4) ONOMATOPOEIA: Some onomatopoeic words are 'bubble up', 'stunning', 'grieved', 'crushed'
- 5) PERSONIFICATION: The land of Africa are said to be grieving as if they were human beings 'the wickedness of iron and fire is used as if it were human beings 'victorious voice of laments', 'unconscious brilliance and honey blood of men' are also personified.
- 6) OXYMORON: Is placing two opposing words side by side. The poet uses words 'putrid offering.' 'Ancient and modern', 'stifled laughter' etc.
- 7) REPETITION: Some words are repeated, examples 'grieved land', 'they live', 'in the 'alive' dance, dream, sea etc.

IMAGERY\ SYMBOLS

'The wickedness of iron and fire' symbolizes the harsh treatment of colonial masters, dream symbolizes ambition. There imageries 'crushed in forest' 'slave', 'golfers', 'key', 'baobabs', 'antelope, Stan' 'honest blood' etc.

TONE\MOOD

The mood of the poem is intimidation, insecurity protest etc. The grieved lands are poem of lamentation, regret and encouragement. It is a protest poem. The tone shows pitiable and lamentable conditions of African during the slavery period and colonization. The poem has seven stanzas of unequal line.

THEMES

1. The theme of colonization and racial discrimination. In this poem, the poet treats these themes to show the maltreatments and discrimination by the colonial masters. They are deprived of their rights and are kept under strict checks. The blacks are punished ruthlessly at the slightest sign of disturbance so to the poet Africa is 'the grieved lands', 'corpses thrown up', 'voice of lament' etc.
2. Hope in adversity \ courage and encouragement. The theme is seen in the poem. This is seen in stanza four of the poem, where the poet reveals that there is hope for Africa, his mother land. He urges the people of Africa to rise and not give up in their struggle and desire to develop. The poet says that 'dream soon undone.' He talks about 'victorious voice of laments and 'in the unconscious brilliance of hidden sensations'. The stifling laughter can just be for a while the

poet boldly states that Africa would stand tall in spite of all harsh treatments being perpetrated against her.

3. Slavery the poet laments of the ``tearful woes of ancient and modern slaves'' which are experienced by ``the grieved land Africans suffered during the slavery period. They were made to experience ``the degrading sweat of impure dance of other seas''.

THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

THE BACKGROUND OF THE POET:

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born on the 26th September, 1898 at St. Louis, Missouri, in the United States of America. He was a school-master, bank clerk, essayist, author, publisher, literary critic, poet, playwright, editor etc. He studied philosophy and it influenced his life and art. He was also a recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1948, the Goethe prize of Hamburg, Dante medal, United States presidential Medal of Freedom in 1964. He died in 1965.

BACKGROUND

The Journey of Magi is a poem by Eliot that talks about growing in Christian faith although he believes in the incarnation, he remains physically present in a sinful world that we live in. The birth of Christ is a revelation not just for the humankind but for the poet. As well as represents the death of the old, sinful life. The Magi embark upon difficult journey to achieve the kind of spiritual wisdom is compared to the earthly wisdom of a Magus [the singular form of `Magi` Eliot`s spiritual journey parallels that of the three wise men. The journey of the Magi reflects this momentous personal journey of the life of the poet.

SETTING OF THE POEM

This poem is about a journey where the reader is made to travel through various setting. The poem is set in the Middle East, on the road on which the wise men [the magi] traveled to visit the new born child, whom we think to be Jesus. This is during winter season.

POETIC ANALYSIS

The Journey of the Magi is a poem that explores the journey the wise men took when following the star to Bethlehem where the Jesus Christ was born. It is a metaphorical poem representing birth and death, renewal and spiritual rebirth. The poem is in three stanzas and the narrator is a Magi. The journey to the birthplace and the doubt, the arrival to the place of birth and the satisfaction, the reflection and acknowledgement of a new faith. The poem "The Journey of the Magi" is a recreation of a Bible story. It is based on the biblical visit of the three wise men (Magi) from the East in the search of the new born child, Jesus. In this poem, the poet describes the experiences which Magi had in their victorious search for the new born king, Jesus. The experiences which are highlighted in the opening stage are difficulties which the Magi experienced because of the time of the departure as the journey is taken place in a cold weather "at the worst time of the year". He complains of their route being "the

very dead of winter” so snow was everywhere which resulted in the travelers camel being stubborn and uncontrollable, “lying down in the melting snow”.

Again the Magi is faced the problem of finding an inn to sleep at night because of the high cost, filth and hostility of those in and around the inn. They decided to travel all night soon the travelers were tired and needed some sleep so they slept “in snatches”, as they moved on. At dawn, the Magi came to a favorable, temperate valley, full of vegetation and life. They saw a tavern (a place of business where people gather to drive alcoholic drinks and be served food and travelers’ lodge, which decorated with vine leaves where they saw three men dicing for pieces of silver and kicking the empty wine- skins with their feet. The travelers did not see any that could give useful information to where the child Jesus was born yet they were not discouraged but endured till they found their destination “. . . . So we continued and arrived the evening, not a moment too soon finding the place, “it was satisfactory”. The poet persona reports that this happened “a long time ago”. He says he would undertake a similar journey again, it gave another opportunity.

The narrator begins to nurse some regrets over the hazardous journey and questions if it was birth or death that lured him and his colleagues to such unnecessary risk. He reveals that particular birth had been different since it produced the effects of death but the magi had consolation that after every hardship and difficulties, they had seen the “messiah” whose sight uplifted their hope and faith. At last, the narrator informed that at the end of their journey, they got home only to discover that things were no longer as they used to be because of the infiltration of foreign influences, yet he would be “glad for another death”, meaning he would prefer to have the same experience all over again in spite of the harsh conditions of the road and weather. In the poem there is no mention of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The focus is more on the process, the inner and outer journeys that a human has to undertake in order to experience spiritual rebirth. This poem was written, 1927 when the poet gained British citizenship but he converted to Anglo-Catholicism which he committed to for life. Elliot`s poem is so powerful that he makes one of the Magi, a magus, the speaker and turns the narrative into a psycho-spiritual journey, a typical of the pilgrim.

THE THEMES

- 1) The main theme is suffering for salvation. This is seen in T. S Elliot`s “Journey of Magi” which is an account of the Bible`s visit of the three wise men from the East in the search of the new born baby Jesus. The narrator

tells of their bitter experiences during their journey. The harsh weather, no resting place, the unconducive environment and unfriendly people were part of their experiences. They also met a temperate valley. At last they reached their destination and it was “satisfactory”. The three wise men travelled to see Jesus for the salvation of their souls, so their journey was for the salvation of their souls, which is for a rebirth and does not come easily. It involves the death of the old self. This is not as easy experience as one is faced with many trails and temptations which try to hinder one from getting saved. The road to salvation is full of ups and downs as seen in the poem

“A cold coming

The ways deep and the weather sharp,

The very dead of winter

The road to salvation is broad and smooth, but narrow, rough, rugged, deep and sharp. To attain salvation, one must be prepared to embrace and accept the difficulties and challenges on the road to it. Life is a journey from birth to death. The person who perseveres and persist to the end will have success.

- 2) Hardship in the journey to attain spiritual maturity, Elliot uses this poem to teach that religion is not pure and perfect as people think. He uses this poem to discuss that the way to salvation is not easy so the narrator talks about untold hardship that the Magi faced before they saw the messiah. The Journey of the Magi could be taken to be Christian’s journey to salvation. People think that the Christian life is so easy; hence it requires no stress, problem or difficulties. Some think that once one is a Christian, life would be easy and perfect. This is what Elliot dispels in his poem by showing life’s experiences are not always bliss. Christians are on a journey to find salvation in Jesus Christ so the poet presents that the way to religion is a rough way though gives the people satisfaction when attained. Death and rebirth is another prominent theme in the poem. The poet uses this to recreate the journey of the wise men to Bethlehem is used metaphorically to compare a spiritual death when one is dead to sin and a rebirth. No wonder he asks “were we led all that way for birth or death? Before their journey, the Magi thought that birth and death were different but soon discovered that the two ideas are different. The way to the new birth is hard, bitter and agony just as death.

- 3) Death means the change in the mindset of the Magi which make them not to be easy when they return to their native lands as they now consider their customs and traditions as old dispensation. They see their own people as an alien (strange) people clutching their gods. The old man died when they encountered Jesus at his birth and the new ones. Find it hard to fit into the old ways of doing things in the societies. The earthly pleasure and lust of life now mean nothing to them anymore showing that the birth of Christ leads to the death of the Magi, making them to lose interest in the things that charmed them most previously. Suffering is another special theme in the journey of the Magi. The poet reveals the sufferings of the Magi right from the set of their journey. They go through unfold hardship. The timing of the journey is not favorable, as it is “just the very worst time of the year for a journey”. It is “the very dead of winter” when the winds and the coldest, this year\ for a journey.
- 4) The weather also is another problem to both animal and human being as the camels are unco-operative and “sore-footed”. The inn offer is costly which makes the travelers (Magi) to travel by night, so denying them steep. The no only undo physical suffering but also psychological pains. This is seen in their questioning whether their decision to embark on such journey was worth it. The poet paints a clear picture of suffering and frustration leading to the aim of the poet to show that spiritual reformation and transformation is not gotten in a platter of gold. However, the Magi do not give up and go through a profound and life-changing spiritual experience as a result.

OTHER THEMES ARE:

- 1) Regret
- 2) The struggle between the spirit and the body
- 3) Disillusionment with life
- 4) Religion etc.

POETIC TECHNIQUES

THE STRUCTURE OF THE POEM:

The poem is a forty-two line poem and it has three uneven stanzas. Each stanza deals with different aspect of the difficult journey. The first stanza starts with the hazardous journey as we see the harsh weather, the hostile or the unfriendly people. In second stanza, there is an improvement as they reach their destination. The third stanza sums up the feelings of Magi concerning their journey. At last, they encountered a rebirth. There is no rhyme or metric system, it is written in a free verse. The technique used is

the stream of consciousness technique which is when all the words, phrases, clauses and sentences are fused in such a way that the entire poem reads like the thoughts of a person which are being revealed to the readers.

THE POETIC DEVICES ARE:

- 1) Language and style: The language is conversational and narrative, also a dramatic monologue. The persona uses first person pronouns such as ‘I’, ‘WE’ so that the reader get access to the mind of the characters. The diction is well chosen to reflect the mind of the poet. Such words as “sherbet”, “camel” men are line with men from the ‘East’, “shelters and night-fives” show long distant traveling. The words are simple and easy to understand but few are archaic words such sherbet, tavern etc. The poem is written in prose and verse form. It is narrative prosaic, descriptive and musical. The first lines is enclosed in inverted commas, this reveals the direct experience.
- 2) Mood\ tone: The style of mind of the poet is that of despair, disappointment at the initial stage but at last it turns to hope and happiness. The tone is that of disappointment and courage.
- 3) Repetition: Some words are repeated to lay emphasis and make the poem musical such as “Time”, “Birth”, and “Death” etc.
- 4) Alliteration:
 - ‘Cold coming’ line 1
 - Way --- weather--- line 4
 - Winding ways---- line 4
 - There ---- times line 8
 - Camel ---- cursing----- line 11
 - Then the ----- line 11
 - Wanting --- woman line 12
 - Sleeping --- snatches --- line 8
 - That this ---- line 20
 - Dawn ---- down ---- line 22
- 5) Allusion: The poet makes an allusion to a Christmas sermon given by Lancelot Andrews, Bishop of Winchester.
 - “A cold coming we had of it”
 - “Just the worst time of the year”
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Again in allusion, the Bible story about the three wise men who visited the baby, Jesus.

- 6) Rhetorical question: The poet uses rhetorical question in line 35- 36
“were we led all the way for birth or death?”
- 7) Synecdoche: Is taking a part for a whole or a whole for a part.
 - a) “And feet kicking the empty wine skin”. “Feet” stands for “people”, the drunkards at the tavern.
 - b) “Six hands at open door dicing line 17. “Six hands” stands for the three men at the open door of the tavern, “dicing” for pieces of silver.
- 8) Simile: “Hard and bitter agony of us, like death our death”
- 9) Irony: This is the opposite of what we mean to say. “I should be glad of another death”. It is ironical that after the severe suffering of the Magi.
- 10) Symbolism: The title is symbolic used to refer to the journey of all humans. Words like ‘cold’ and “the very dead of winter” symbolically represent hardship, the three trees symbolize the blessed trinity- God the father, God the son and God the Holy Ghost. The white horse symbolizes purity, it is also a symbol of Christ`s triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The running stream stands for Christ`s baptism in River Jordan. The vine leaves: The story of laborers in the vineyard. Pieces of silver symbolized the thirty pieces of silver which was the price at which Judas betrayed Jesus Christ. Wine- Skins- in the story of the wine skin which no one puts new wine.
The Dicing: This represents the casting of lots for the garment of Jesus by the Jews after his crucifixion by then the journey of the Magi symbolized a search for the salvation of man`s soul.

ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Examine the significance of the journey of the Magi by T. S Elliot
- 2) Examine the use of language and style in the journey of Magi

