

Summary

In this powerful meditation on slavery, Samba Gueye offers an analysis on the societal and psychocological ruptures that enable enslavement to happen and along with the after affects of it. Gueye opens with this, “Whoever says slavery, says ignorance. Ignorant of what? Ignorant of his origins, where he comes from. In reality, they separated him from his kin and they took him to a live[life] that isn’t his”. Though translation difficulties might be interfering here, Gueye appears to be speaking on the erasure and dislocation of one's past that occurs when they are enslaved. Gueye goes on to explain that the disrespect and dehumanization that follows from one being deemed a slave. Gueye feels that one becomes a slave by the outward oppression of one's conscience and leaving just a body to accomplish task. Gueye explains the societal disrespect and disregard that is leveled upon someone that is called ‘slave’. Gueye rebukes this oppression but argues that everyone is made equal before God and we should love and care for one another as we love and care for ourselves. Gueye then transitions into a poem entitled “The Signs of Annoyance”. In this poem Gueye locates the origins of black suffering in slavery and then traces that through a present history of low wages, poverty, and struggle. Gueye equates the suffering to “a swelling that itches”. The poem’s verses point towards the various ways this suffering manifests itself and acts as reflection on the continued legacy of slavery and the way it festers in the lives of Black people.

ISW Themes:

- Making Race: Creating Anti-Blackness (The degradation of personhood)
- Unfinished Business- Wealth (Gueye’s poem points towards the lingering economic effects of slavery in Africa)

Aspects of Story to Highlight for Video:

- “Whoever says slavery, says ignorance. Ignorant of what? Ignorant of his origins, where he comes from. In reality, they separated him from his kin and they took him to a live that isn’t his.”
- “They call him slave or Jiyado which means: they saw him as such. No one knows him and no one knows anything about him, they don’t even speak about respect in regard to him. This hurts like swelling that itches”
- “The signs of annoyance; from annoyance and from suffering; the suffering of Black folk; exhausted; reduced to slavery; forced slavery; This is the origin of our suffering; like a swelling that itches;” [Excerpt from poem]