Aim: How did eminent empires influence the history of Africa?
DESCRIBE THE MEANING OF THESE POEMS.
WHAT IS THE POET IMPLYING ABOUT AFRICA IN THESE POEMS?

Africa, Beautiful yet unappreciated
Africa, Sahara to the Atlantic
Africa, From Zulu Land to Yoruba Land
Africa, From Nile River to River Niger
Africa, Rain and Sunshine round the year,
Africa, With her greenery lustre
Africa, With Coolness, Calmness, a Serenity unequal
Africa, Your hospitality and warmth taken for granted
Africa, Raped and left desolate, yet richly blessed
Africa, Your Children scattered all over the World crying for you
Africa, You are simply mine Africa.

SEGUN RASAKI

African Phoenix

Out of the ashes of a phoenix
A new African phoenix is born
As black and as famished as ever
Carrying the same loads of thorn
The same batches of infamy
Of disease, of wars, of hunger
The same scars in the horn
As politicians to each others whisper
Sweet lies; with no conscience to scorn
As they exhale and praises inhale over dinner
And more ranks to their siblings adorn
Africa stands aloof as distant as ever
As unique as an alien unicorn
Writhing in mounts of litter
Burdened, broken and outworn
To what extent did geography shape the development of civilizations in Africa?
1. The deadliest creature lurking in rain forests is a small fly called the tsetse fly. Tsetse flies carry a disease that is deadly to livestock and can cause fatal sleeping sickness in humans.

2. Sahel means “coastline” in Arabic. African people may have named it this because the Sahara seemed like a vast ocean of sand.

3. The savannas are home to herds of animals such as giraffes, wildebeest, and antelope. They also support grain crops of millet, wheat, and maize (corn).

4. The dense trees and lack of edible vegetation in the humid rain forest make it an unwelcoming environment for most people.
I. GEOGRAPHY OF AFRICA

a. North Africa
*Mountain Ranges (Atlas Mountains)
*Sahara desert (world’s largest)

b. West Africa
*Grasslands
*Most populated

c. East Africa
*Mountainous
*Plateaus
*Grasslands
*Hills

d. South Africa
*Namib & Kalahari Deserts

e. Central Africa
*Equator
*Rain forests
f. DESERTIFICATION:
1. The spreading of a desert region.

*The region of Sahel is most affected by the spreading desert.*
g. RIVERS

1. Nile River: world’s longest (4,000 + miles)

2. Congo River: Central Africa – through rain forests, 2,720 miles long.

From Fertile Farmlands to Grassy Plains The northern coast and the southern tip of Africa, on the other hand, have welcoming climates and fertile soil. Summers are sunny, dry, and hot, while winters are mild. Rainfall is moderate. Because these coastal areas with Mediterranean vegetation are so fertile, they are densely populated with farmers and herders.
a. BANTU MIGRATION

1. **2000 BCE**: the Bantu begin to migrate southward into Sub-Saharan Africa lasted until **1500 CE**.

2. Spread agriculture, knowledge of ironworking.

3. Millions of Africans speak related languages, known as Bantu languages.
Bantu Symbol Writing

In South Afrika, the Bantu symbol-language is not taught to the common people. Yet Mutwa estimates thirty percent of the Bantu people could write in this language. Apart from medicine men and the elders and the wise ones, it is mostly women who still employ it. Bantu symbol-language is not a language like Arabic or Swahili. Each symbol does not represent a single character or letter; instead, each expresses a whole word or, more often, a complete idea, much like Chinese and Japanese symbols. The characters are arranged in sequence to communicate a fact: Man+sees+Lion. Lion+eats+ox.

male symbols

youth warrior with shield chief brain mind

female symbols virgin baby girl married woman mother-in-law old woman
BANTU MIGRATIONS IN AFRICA

Approximately 2000 years ago, a massive migration of peoples, which continued for 1500 years, began in Central Africa. This migration is sometimes called the Bantu Migration. Historians are not in agreement as to why Bantu speaking peoples began to move away from their home areas in Central Africa in the contemporary countries of Cameroon, Congo and Central African Republic. Some historians think that this area experienced rapid population growth at this time that resulted in a shortage of land. Other historians point to the development of centralized kingdoms. The process of bringing people under the control of a central authority resulted in the dislocation of defeated peoples, some of whom migrated in search of autonomy. Whatever the reasons for the migration, there is more information available on the impact of these migrations on East and Southern Africa.

These migrations were very important in the history of eastern, central, and southern Africa. Most of the peoples living in these regions today are decedents of these migrants or from peoples formed as a result of the integration of Bantu migrants with indigenous groups. Importantly, the migrants brought with them new skills that changed the economic, social, and political practices in their new homes. Agriculture (the growing of crops and domestication of animals), the skill of mining and smelting metal, and methods of forging tools and weapons from copper, bronze, and iron, were first introduced by the migrants. Along with these practices, the migrants brought with them new ideas of social and political organization that resulted in the development of many important kingdoms in East and Southern Africa.

Questions:

1. What were the Bantu migrations?

2. What caused the Bantu migrations?

3. How did the Bantu migrations affect Africa?
B. NORTH AFRICA

1. Berbers (Moors) and Almohades converted to Islam.

2. Religion appealed to Africans because it believed in equality.

3. ETHIOPIA was a CHRISTIAN STATE.

4. IBN BATTUTA: Muslim Traveler who is known for his extensive travels, accounts of African society, which were published in the Rihla (lit. "Journey").
III. WEST AFRICAN CIVILIZATIONS (300-1400 C. E.) SUDANIC KINGDOMS
Interact with History

You are a trader who has traveled from a North African seaport south across the Sahara. You have arrived at the great trading center of Timbuktu. Among your trade items are manufactured goods and salt. In Timbuktu, you will meet with traders from the gold-mining regions to the south. You want to receive as much gold as possible for your trade items. The traders from the south want to receive as much salt and as many manufactured goods as they can in exchange for their gold. Together you must come to an agreement about what various trade items are worth.

What makes trade items valuable?

EXAMINING the ISSUES

- Does an item have to be a luxury to be extremely valuable?
- How do scarcity, usefulness, and transportation cost affect an item’s value?
- Do all items have the same value to all people?

As you discuss these questions in class, think about what you have learned about other trading peoples, such as the Phoenicians and the Europeans.

As you read about trade in the various regions of Africa, notice what steps rulers took to control trade moving through their territory.

To survive the trip across the Sahara, traders stopped at oases for water. However, it was 500 miles to Timbuktu from the nearest oasis! The journey was very hard.

The camel was the only animal that could go without water long enough to cross the Sahara.

Workers in the Sahara endured hardship to mine this salt. In a hot climate, salt helps the human body to retain water. Salt was scarce in the gold-mining region.

This cloth was shipped across the Mediterranean Sea to North Africa. Then it began the long journey to Timbuktu.

The king often demanded these gold nuggets as taxes. The bag contained gold dust, which the trader used as money.

These beautiful cowrie shells came all the way from East Africa. They were used as money.
Impact of Interactions: Africa

Which of the following statements accurately compares West and East Africa during the time period 600-1450?

a) Trans-Saharan trade was for West Africa what Indian Ocean trade was for East Africa.

b) Christianity converted large parts of the population in both regions.

c) Both areas were ruled by centralizing governments controlled by an emperor.

d) Large percentages of the populations converted to Islam and eliminated native beliefs.
A) Three of Africa’s greatest civilizations all developed in West Africa. They are:

1) Ghana
2) Mali
3) Songhai

B) Ghana, Mali, and Songhai all grew very wealthy for the same reason:

1. They were located along the TRANS-SAHARAN TRADE ROUTES and participated in the GOLD-SALT TRADE (i.e.- they traded their gold for the salt that they needed to survive).
A European drew this sketch of Timbuktu in the early 1800s, long after its economic power had declined. However, the mosque from the 1300s is still visible in the background.

**GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps**

1. **Region**
   Compare the regions occupied by the Ghana, Mali, and Songhai empires in terms of size and location.

2. **Human-Environment Interaction**
   How did the environment both contribute resources to and cause problems for traders?
“The king adorns himself...wearing necklaces and bracelets...The court of appeal is held in a domed pavilion around which stand ten horses with gold embroidered trappings. Behind the king stand ten pages holding shields and swords decorated with god, and on his right are the sons of the subordinate kings of his country, all wearing splendid garments and with their hair mixed with gold.”

– Al-Bakri

What does this quote tell us about life in Ghana?
The city of Ghana consists of two towns situated on a plain. One of these towns, which is inhabited by Muslims, is large and possesses twelve mosques, in which they assemble for the Friday prayer. The king adorns himself like a woman (wearing necklaces) round his neck and (bracelets) on his forearms, and he puts on a high cap decorated with gold and wrapped in a turban of fine cotton. Behind the king stand ten pages holding shields and swords decorated with gold, and on his right are the sons of the (vessel) kings of his country wearing splendid garments and their hair plaited with gold.

The following description of the Kingdom of Ghana was written by Al-Bakri, a member of a prominent Spanish Arab family who lived during the 11th century.

1. What does this excerpt tell us about the kingdom of Ghana?

2. What religion was found in Ghana?
The Kingdom of Ghana:
1. Both included much of the same land area
2. The gold trade was central to their economies
3. Muslim merchants become involved in gold trade

Other kingdoms mentioned:
- Kingdom of Mali
- Kingdom of Songhay
- Maghrib
C. MALI:
1. SUNDIATA
- *Foundation of oral tradition in Africa*
- *Griots: professional oral historians*
- *Founded the Mali civilization as was Mansa or emperor*
2. MANSA MUSA

- Converted to ISLAM
- Took the Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca.
- Spread wealth throughout Muslim world.
Ibn Battuta traveled in Mali in 1352. In this adapted excerpt, he describes his travels:

They are seldom unjust, and have a greater abhorrence [hatred] of injustice than any other people. Their sultan shows no mercy to anyone who is guilty of the least act of it. There is complete security in their country. Neither traveler nor inhabitant in it has anything to fear from robbers.


What two things impressed Ibn Battuta about Mali?
Kingdom of Mali.

The following description of the visit to Cairo in 1324 by the King of Mali, Mansa Musa, was written by Al-Umari, who visited Cairo several years after the Mansa Musa’s visit.

3. What does this passage tell us about Mansa Musa?

“When I went out to meet him {he said} that is, on behalf of the mighty sultan al-Malik al-Nasir, he did me extreme honour and treated me with the greatest courtesy. He addressed me, however, only through an interpreter despite his perfect ability to speak in the Arabic tongue. Then he forwarded to the royal treasury many loads of unworked native gold and other valuables. I tried to persuade him to go up to the Citadel to meet the sultan, but he refused persistently saying: “I came for the Pilgrimage and nothing else. I do not wish to mix anything else with my Pilgrimage…. This man [Mansa Musa] flooded Cairo with his benefactions. He left no court emir nor holder of a royal office without the gift of a load of gold. The Cairenes made incalculable profits out of him and his suite in buying and selling and giving and taking. They exchanged gold until they depressed its value in Egypt and caused its price to fall.” …

4. What pilgrimage was Mansa Musa on?
Mansa Musa expanded the Mali empire to twice the size of the Ghana empire it replaced. On his hajj to Mecca in 1324–25, Mansa Musa stopped in Cairo, Egypt. An Egyptian official described him:

This man, Mansa Musa, spread upon Cairo the flood of his generosity: there was no person, officer of the court, or holder of any office of the Sultanate who did not receive a sum of gold from him.

What about Mansa Musa impressed the Egyptian official?
D. KINGDOM OF SONGHAY (SONGHAI): 1450 C.E. – 1600 C.E.

1. The Golden Age of Africa.
1. SUNNI ALI

- Forged the empire
- Ruthless military commander
- Spread Songhai empire
- Conquered Timbuktu
In this excerpt, a Moroccan traveler using the name Leo Africanus describes the city of Timbuktu in West Africa.

Here are many doctors, judges, priests, and other learned men that are well maintained at the king’s costs. Various manuscripts and written books are brought here ... and sold for more money than other merchandise.

Source: Leo Africanus, “The Description of Africa (1526),” Reading About the World, Volume 2, Harcourt Brace Custom Publishers, 1999 (adapted)

What about Timbuktu impressed this writer?
2. ASKIA MUHAMMAD
- Extended the boundaries of Songhai to all of the Sudan.
- Muslim and pagan cultures mixed.
Benin Sculpture
According to tradition, Yoruba artists taught their techniques to artists in nearby Benin. One of the primary functions of the artists of Benin was to please the ruler by recording his history or displaying his power. Adorning the palace walls were brass plaques commemorating the ruler’s great achievements. Brass heads showed the ruler and his family as idealized figures.

Brass Leopard
This snarling leopard is a symbol of the king’s royal power. It is also a water vessel used on ceremonial occasions. Water was poured into the hollow vessel through a hole on top of the head. When the vessel was tilted, water poured out through the nostrils.

Queen Mother
Benin is perhaps most famous for royal heads such as this one. In Benin, the queen mother held a great deal of power. To symbolize that, she wore a woven crown called a “chicken’s beak.”

Bronze Box
This box is shaped like a section of the palace. On the center tower are a bird, which symbolizes disaster, and a python. Standing on the ridge of the roof are two Portuguese soldiers holding guns.

Connect to History
Drawing Conclusions What does each of these sculptures reveal about who had power in Benin? What can you conclude about changes that might have been happening in Benin?

Connect to Today
Comparing How do people today try to demonstrate their power to others—through art or through some other way? Explain.
Great centers of Islamic learning established

4.

Songhay Kingdom ends with the invasion of the Moroccans

5.

Islam becomes a major force in these regions.

6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empire</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Goods Traded</th>
<th>Key Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kush</td>
<td>East Africa south of Egypt</td>
<td>1000 B.C.–A.D. 150</td>
<td>Iron products, ivory, gold, ebony, slaves</td>
<td>Kush lost power to Axum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Nubia)</td>
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<td>Meroë</td>
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<tr>
<td>Axum</td>
<td>East Africa (Ethiopia)</td>
<td>A.D. 100–1400</td>
<td>Ivory, frankincense, myrrh, slaves</td>
<td>Axum was founded by Arab traders; the king converted to Christianity in A.D. 324.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adulis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>A.D. 400–1200</td>
<td>Iron products, animal products, gold</td>
<td>Ghana traded for salt from the Saharan salt mines.</td>
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<td>Saleh</td>
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<td>Mali</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>A.D. 1250–1450</td>
<td>Gold, salt</td>
<td>Mansa Musa doubled the size of the kingdom and created a Muslim center of learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timbuktu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Songhai</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>A.D. 1000–1600</td>
<td>Gold, salt</td>
<td>Songhai gained control of trade in West Africa with the conquest of Timbuktu and Jenne.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gao</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>Songhay</td>
<td>Swahili States</td>
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<td>The Kingdom of Ghana emerged c. 5th century C.E. around the Senegal River. Became one of the most powerful and influential Empires in West Africa because of the richness provide by the huge deposits of Gold close to its borders (it did not produce the gold but the trade routes from the mines). It is estimated that until 1400 2/3 of the World’s supply in circulation came from this region. It was obtained in rivers but also mined – they built mine shafts as deep as 100 ft – where small girls and boys would obtain the gold. Other commodities that were provided by Ghana were Ivory and Slaves which were sold to merchants who took them to North Africa.</td>
<td>In the early 1200’s as the Ghana Empire was weakening – a group of people known as the Makinke – who lived in towards the east of Ghana – began to create a new Empire. The creation of this new state would be achieved by the ruler called Sundiata (Sun - JAHT - ah) – legend has it that he was one of 12 brothers – but when he was young an invading tribe came and killed all of them except for him – they wanted to eliminate their rivals – after a period of interfamily and regional fighting he was able to prove himself as a great warrior and then leader and eventually leader of a new empire: the Kingdom of Mali.</td>
<td>As the power of the Mali continued in the 1400’s a state within the Empire was able to obtain its independence – this was called the Songhay Empire with its capital in the trading city of Gao. The height of the Empire came under the leadership of Sunni Ali who ruled from 1464-1493. He built an elaborate administrative and military apparatus to oversee affairs in his realm. He appointed governors to oversee provinces and maintained a professional army, with a cavalry and navy of small boats and canoes – which were able to patrol the Niger River.</td>
<td>The Swahili coast refers to a string of Islamicized African ports tied to the trade across the Indian Ocean. The term “Swahili” is an Arabic term meaning: “coasters” – and it refers to cities on the Eastern African coast such as: Mogadishu, Zanzibar, Mombasa and Sofala. The language – Swahili – is an example of cultural diffusion – in this case – Bantu speaking peoples adopting words from Arabic.</td>
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The rulers of Ghana became very rich because of the taxing of the trade that traveled through their Empire. They created large bureaucracies to help govern and raise large standing armies – the empire had superior techniques in iron making and were able to subdue nearby peoples who had weapons made from wood, bone or stone. Rulers demanded tribute / taxes from Chiefs of surrounding lands but left them in place as long as they recognized the supreme power of the Ghana ruler and paid their tribute.

C. 10th century the rulers of Ghana converted to Islam – which expanded the relationship between Islamic traders from North Africa and themselves. They made little attempt to convert their subjects and they still retained much of their African religious beliefs. The Muslim concept of a ruler who united civil and religious authority reinforced traditional ideas of kingship.

- As Mansa – or emperor /king of this Empire he was able to set up a bureaucracy with able administrators in charge of Mali's finances, defense and foreign affairs. He also re-established the gold-salt trade routes which made Mali even more powerful and richer than Ghana.

- Even though he allowed local Chiefs to rule over their subjects he did create garrisons throughout the empire to maintain loyalty and security – this made travel secure as crime was severely punished.

- Like Ghana many rulers of Mali either converted to Islam or honored it. They also did not actively attempt to convert their subjects.

- The height of the Empire came under the leadership of Mansa Musa who may have been the grandnephew of Sundiata. He ruled from 1312-1337.

- He extended his empire over the areas formally controlled by the Mali rulers – he conquered the cities of Timbuktu and Jenne (which took him 7 years of siege warfare – he finally married its Queen to solidify his rule).

- From the capital city of Gao the Songhay rulers presided over a prosperous empire that participated in the trans-Saharan trade that brought: Salt, textiles and metal goods in exchange for gold and slaves.

- Despite the fact that the rulers were Islamic and supported Islamic institutions: mosques / universities – the vast majority of the populace remained non-Muslim.

- The Songhay meet their demise in 1591 when they took on a Moroccan army armed with musket gun – the defeat left open an opportunity for regions to revolt against Songhay administration.

- These cosmopolitan trading towns were a mixture of: Arabian, Persian, Indian, Chinese and African cultures and peoples.

- The ruling families of these cities were very rich as they oversaw the movement of: gold, ivory, iron, slaves, and exotic animals in exchange for silks and rugs from Persia, porcelain from China and spices from Southeast Asia.

- The ruling families and the merchants tended to be Muslim and sponsored the construction of mosques and places of learning – however – the majority of the people remained non-Muslim.
The empire was eventually weakened by invaders out of the Sahara in the 13th century which eventually brought the empire down.

- Between the rule of Sundiata and Musa there had been political turmoil as Mali saw 7 different rulers in 50 years – but Musa brought an end to this. He was a skilled military leader who as ruler maintained a strict controlled empire.

- He kept a standing army of close to 100,000 men and as the empire grew – to over twice the size of Ghana – he divided it into provinces and appointed governors who reported to him.

- As a devout Muslim he went on a hajj to Mecca from 1324/1325 – this trip became legendary since it brought the attention of the Islamic world to the Kingdom of Mali and its ruler. It is said that he lavished the areas that he visited so much with gold that it actually devalued the metal’s worth in local markets! When he came back he took his religion more serious than before and began creating mosques and universities in cities like: Timbuktu, and Gao.

Mosques and universities in cities like: Timbuktu, and Gao.

They became some of the most important cities in the empire where Muslim judges, doctors, religious leaders and scholars were attracted. The “book” was the symbol of “civilization” in the Islamic world – and the book trade was one of the most lucrative businesses in Timbuktu.

Despite the riches of the Empire of Mali and Ghana – away from the trading centers with markets and thriving trading networks – most of the people in the empire were small agricultural farmers – where between 80% - 85% of the people were farmers. Life was difficult but villages worked under the “commune” system.

After the rule of Mansa Musa the successors lacked the ability to govern and the empire resided in power and influence.