

Crossing cultures: Tradition and community (chapters 41–48)

Discussion points

1 GROUP WORK: Talk about the following questions.

- How did reading chapters 41 to 48 make you feel?
- How do the events in these chapters show the characters' struggles and emotions?
- Why does the novel reach its climax?
- What traditions have you noticed in the novel so far?
- How are these traditions portrayed?

2 ON YOUR OWN: You will be divided into PARTNER A and PARTNER B.

Analyse how the setting contributes to insights into tradition, culture and family life in chapters 46 and 48. Use the guiding questions below.

PARTNER A will focus on Cindy Edwards' funeral in chapter 45, p. 286 and chapter 46.

PARTNER B: will focus on Pa Jonga's funeral in chapter 48.

- a. What family members are present at the time of death? Where does it take place?
What does this suggest about family dynamics and cultural expectations?

- b. Describe the physical setting of the funeral.
What details about the location are given?

- c. What religious ceremonies or cultural practices are depicted in each funeral?
How do these rituals reflect the cultural values and beliefs of the community?

d. How are family members involved in the funeral?
→ What does it reveal about family relationships and cultural expectations?

e. What overall mood is created?

3 IN PAIRS: Working with a partner who worked on the same chapter, compare your notes and make any necessary additions or corrections.

4 GROUP WORK: Pair up with another pair who worked on the other chapter. Compare your answers and discuss the differences and similarities in how the setting, family and community are portrayed.

Use a Venn diagram to visually represent the overlapping and contrasting aspects of the funerals. (See info box next page)

5 IN CLASS : Present your results.

→ DICTIONARY

Comparing information,
p. 133

- ⊕ 6 Why do you think Imbolo Mbue chose to present these two funerals in such different ways?



Media literacy: Using Canva for digital organisation

Canva is a digital design tool that helps you create, organise and present information effectively. It is user-friendly and has a wide range of templates, from infographics to presentations. With its drag-and-drop function, it makes it very easy to customise designs to fit your needs.

How to get started:

1. Choose a template that suits your project, e. g. a Venn diagram.
2. Add text, images and other elements to organise your information clearly.
3. Download or share your finished design.

→ *Behold the Dreamers*,
p. 305–324

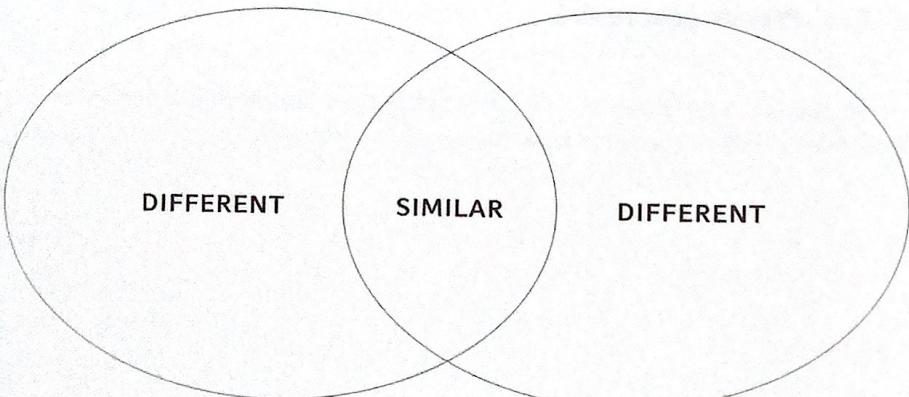
- 7 HOMEWORK: Read chapters 49 to 52.

SKILL BOX

Venn diagram

Venn diagrams are widely used in mathematics to solve complex mathematical problems, but can be also used to improve reading comprehension. They are graphic organisers for comparing two or more items and therefore visually illustrate the differences and similarities of these items and the relationship between them. They consist of overlapping circles. Each circle contains information/characteristics that is typical for the item. The section where the two circles overlap contains information/characteristics the two circles have in common.

You can use Venn diagrams to compare and contrast information about fictional and non-fictional texts, e. g. characters, stories, events, themes or text features, (authors') attitudes etc.



DICTIONARY

Comparing information

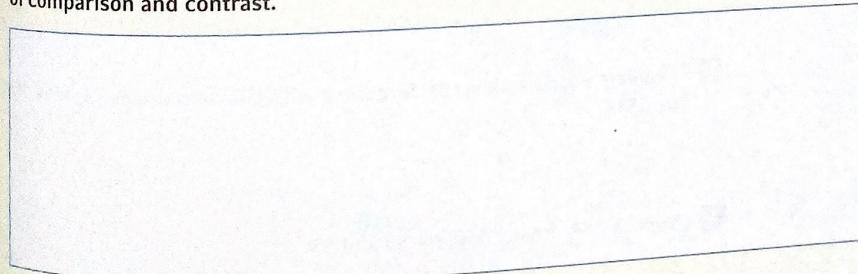
→ zu Schülerarbeitsbuch, S. 132, Aufgabe 6

- 1 Translate the sentences from German into English, using logical sentence connectives of comparison and contrast.

→ WORD BOX,
Sentence connectives,
p. 93

- a. Beide Beerdigungen beinhalten religiöse Elemente. Während Cindys Beerdigung in einer Kirche stattfindet, findet Pa Jongas Beerdigung draußen statt.
- b. Während Cindys Beerdigung eher formell und traditionell gehalten wird, ist Pa Jongas Beerdigung ein Gemeinschaftsfest.
- c. Genauso wie bei Cindys Beerdigung ist auch bei Pa Jongas Beerdigung die Musik von großer Bedeutung.
- d. Cindys Familie ist weniger in die Beerdigung involviert. Im Gegensatz dazu ist Pa Jongas Familie stark in den Prozess eingebunden.

- 2 Write down two more sentences using sentence connectives of comparison and contrast.



Tough choices: “How much suffering can a man take in this world, eh?” (chapters 49–52)

Neni and Jende are facing the crucial decision of whether to stay in America or return to Limbe. To help them make this decision, they gather their closest friends and family for a heartfelt discussion. The meeting takes place in the warm, inviting living room of their Harlem apartment, where everyone is seated on the floor, sharing a traditional Cameroonian meal. Each person offers their unique perspective on the situation.

- 1**
 - a** Familiarise yourself with the scenario above.
 - b** Choose the character you would like to play (p. 135).
The character will wear different “thinking hats” during the discussion.
 - c** Review your role card, understand the character’s motivations and prepare arguments.

- 2** Perform the dinner role-play.
Present the character’s perspective while considering the cultural, emotional and practical aspects of the decision.

- 3** IN CLASS: Present and justify your decision.

Discussion points

- 4** IN CLASS: Discuss the questions below.
 - How did playing your character’s role influence your opinion on whether the family should stay in America or return to Limbe?
 - Which arguments from other characters made you question your initial stance?
 - How do cultural expectations influence the characters’ decisions?
 - How would you personally feel if you were in Neni or Jende’s position?
 - How does the role of community and family support differ in America compared to Limbe, based on the discussion?

- 5** Evaluate your speaking performance with the help of the success criteria checklist (p. 154).

- 6** HOMEWORK: Read chapters 53 and 55.

thinking hats**JENDE'S HAT**

pessimism / realism

Focus on identifying potential risks, problems and drawbacks. Look at the situation realistically. Consider the challenges. What has already gone wrong?

arguments:

Life in the US is filled with hardships and uncertainty. The financial struggles and job instability are overwhelming.

Returning to Limbe offers a fresh start in familiar surroundings.

**NENI'S HAT**

optimism

Focus on the positive aspects, opportunities and potential benefits. Encourage hope and a belief in positive outcomes.

arguments:

In the US, Liomi and Timba can access quality education and opportunities that are unattainable in Limbe.

You believe that you have already invested too much to give up now. You are close to achieving your goal of becoming a pharmacist. Returning to Limbe would mean giving up everything you have worked for.

**LERNHILFE**Thinking hats:
Jende

q-r.to/bfStX2

**BETTY'S HAT**

emotions

Focus on emotions, intuition and gut feelings. Express how people feel about the situation without needing justification.

arguments:

You understand Neni's emotional attachment to the American Dream. You believe that leaving now would be surrendering after all their hard work.

Draw from your own life in America to highlight the importance of perseverance. Point out how absurd it is to give up on the opportunities in the US just to face similar or worse difficulties back home.

**NATASHA'S HAT**

creativity / alternatives

Focus on creative thinking, generating new ideas and exploring alternatives. Encourage thinking outside the box and consider unconventional solutions.

arguments:

You encourage exploring all possible legal and community support avenues.

You suggest creative solutions to overcome the challenges. You believe that Neni has the potential to succeed and that giving up now would be premature.

The church community can offer practical help, such as food donations, babysitting services and possibly even financial aid.

Thinking hats:
Betty

q-r.to/bfStb8

**LERNHILFE**Thinking hats:
Natasha

q-r.to/bfStcJ

**WINSTON'S HAT**

critical thinking

Focus on managing the discussion, organising thoughts and ensuring a structured approach. Keep the group focused on the goal and ensure that all perspectives are considered.

arguments:

You understand the harsh reality of the American economy, especially for immigrants without strong educational backgrounds or job security.

Life in Limbe, though hard, offers the comfort of family, community and a familiar environment. They would not be as isolated as in the US.

**LERNHILFE**Thinking hats:
Winston

q-r.to/bfSta9

**FATOU'S HAT**

facts / culture

Focus on practical aspects without getting emotional and provide a clear, neutral perspective based on tradition and cultural expectations. Provide objective facts about the potential consequences of either decision.

arguments:

It is the husband who makes decisions for the family. As women, we stand behind our husbands.

Keeping the family together is the most important thing. Even if life is difficult in Limbe, it's better to be together in our homeland.

Life in the US is expensive and uncertain. Returning to Limbe, where the cost of living is lower and a strong family network await will provide stability.

**LERNHILFE**Thinking hats:
Fatou

q-r.to/bfStdI

IV IV

Neni: Fighter or pushover? (chapters 53–55)

- 1 List all of the desperate measures Neni undertakes to support her family.

- 2 How does Neni change from the beginning of the novel to the end?

- 3 ON YOUR OWN: Revise the discussion strategies in the
→ WORD BOX *Discussion star* on page 49.

1 GROUP WORK: In groups of three or four, discuss whether Neni Jonga's actions and choices make her a fighter or a pushover. Follow the steps below.

a Compile arguments for both sides and write them in one of the fields of the scale (p. 138–139). Identify relevant events and moments in the novel.

b In your group, discuss whether some arguments, moments, events and decisions are "heavier" (= have more impact) than others.

Use the link below to place your arguments on the scale accordingly.
The further to the right or left the argument is placed on the scale,
the greater its weight.

You can also stack the arguments on top of each other.

Alternatively, you may use the template on pages 138–139.



MATERIAL

Argument scale

[q-r.to/bfStgL](https://qr.to/bfStgL)

c Determine which way the scale tilts. Note that some arguments are heavier than others. Finally, formulate your point of view by addressing the most important moments on both sides, weighing them individually and against each other.

Conclude whether Neni can be labelled a fighter or a pushover.



LERNHILFE

Neni as a fighter



LERNHILFE

Neni as a pushover

[q-r.to/bfSthV](https://qr.to/bfSthV)

IV V

5 IN CLASS : Talk about the questions below.

- How do Neni's cultural beliefs and traditions influence her decisions?
- How does Neni balance her moral beliefs with the need to survive in a foreign country?
- What can readers learn from Neni's journey?

6 HOMEWORK: Read chapters 56 to 62 (end of the novel).

→ *Behold the Dreamers*,
p. 347–382