

# **Simplified Notes of Literature in English**

LOOKING FOR A RAINGOD AND  
OTHER SHORT STORIES FROM  
AFRICA

K.D. Kunitengo  
(0 999 3344 847)

Favour Publications

P. O. Box 1859

Blantyre

Cell: 0 881 484 337/0 999 334 847/0 888 755 744

[favour\\_publication@yahoo.com/kkumitengo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:favour_publication@yahoo.com/kkumitengo@yahoo.co.uk)

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***Kondwani D. Kunitengo***

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Literature can be defined as the study of writings that are valued as real works of art in form of fictions, poetry, folktales, riddles, jokes, proverbs, songs, drama, fables, myths and, legends,

### IMPORTANCE OF LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

1. It evokes critical thinking in the minds of students and enables the knowledge of the good and bad, right or wrong, wise or silly, moral or immoral.
2. It widens the cultural horizon.
3. It brings joy and humour.
4. It is educative and makes students broad minded.
5. It sharpens the skill of essay writing which is important in many academic subjects.
6. It is a spring board for the creative writing of poems/songs and stories.
7. It enhances the skill of reading and speaking English.
8. It enriches the vocabulary of the students and improves their passive knowledge of English.
9. It informs about other people's philosophies, beliefs and attitudes.
10. It enhances constructive thoughts and arguments about issues and ideas.
11. It increases self awareness by comparing the self with the characters in books.
12. It helps in comparing societies to know the virtues and limitations of inherited attitudes and values.

### ELEMENTS OF LITERATURE

#### 1. Character:

A character is a person featuring in a story or play. These characters can also be animals or inanimate and even non living things.

Characters are in two types as follows;

**(a) Major character:**

- This is a character who plays a great role in the story or play.
- The whole story is centered on him and he is the one who moves it forward.
- This major character is also known as the protagonist, the dynamic character, the main character, the round character or the hero/heroine.

**(b) Minor Character:**

- This is the character who works together with the major character in moving the story forward.
- The minor character is also known as the antagonist, static character, subordinate character, flat character, supporting character or stereo type character.

The word character as an element in literature also means the behaviour of a person in a story.

This character or characteristic of a person is usually given in adjective form e.g. cruel, kind, good, bad, superstitious, pious, faithful, hardworking, lazy, promiscuous, courageous, proud, selfish, helpful e.t.c.

**2. Characterization:**

This is the way of knowing the behaviour of the character.

The following are the sources of characterization:

- i The author's revelation of the character.
- ii The character's own revelation in words and actions.
- iii What other characters say about the character

Characterisation gives integrity to the characters as if they were real or true in life

**3. Setting**

This is the location of a story in time and place.

It exposes the time, geography, environment or political situation implied in the story.

Geographically the setting of a story can be described as urban, semi-urban or rural.

Chronologically a story can be set in the past, present and the future (with the specification of years or centuries)

#### **4. Theme:**

This is the main message or lesson (idea) contained in the whole piece of writing.

It is the whole purpose of the literary work as intended by the writer. However, themes are not explicit (easily seen or observed) in the literary works and readers can find them only after understanding the writing;.

#### **5. Plot:**

This is the summary of the whole story or play.

It can either be regular or irregular. A regular plot moves directly forward from the beginning of the story, to its highest point then to the end while an irregular plot can have a lot of flashbacks or flash forwards and foreshadows.

#### **6. Point of view:**

This is the angle at which a story is narrated (told)

There are two main ways of telling a story as follows;

##### ***(a) First person point of view:***

This narrator is limited because he/she explains only what he/she sees, hears, experiences or observes and can not know anything happening on the other side.

This narrator uses the first person pronouns (I or we)

##### ***(b) Third person point of view:***

This narrator is omniscient (all knowing) because he/she is not involved in the story as such he/she can explain something which the people in the story (characters) do not know. This is the advantage of this narrator over the first person narrator.

This narrator uses the third person pronouns (he, she, it, they) **The second person point of view** is not commonly used in many forms of literature except some poems and epistolary works (writings in form of letters) The second person narrator uses the second person pronouns (you-both singular and plural)



**7. Conflict:**

This is the main issue at hand which is like a struggle brought forward to be acted upon in the story.

**8. Exposition**

This is the revelation of the conflict of the story.

**9. Climax:**

This is the highest point (summit) of the story.

It is the focal point to which the story has been moving and this is why it is the most interesting and enjoyable part of the story.

**10. Denouement**

This is the falling action of the story.

It shows the writer's deliberate reduction of the tempo of the story and preparedness to conclude it.

**11. Resolution**

This is the point in the story where the conflict is put to an end.

**12. Author:**

This is the writer of a story.

**13. Poet:**

This is the writer of a poem.

**14. Playwright:**

This is the writer of drama (plays) e.g. William Shakespeare, Steve Chimombo and Du Chisiza Junior

**15. Persona:**

This is the speaker in a poem.

**16. Verse:**

This is a single line in a poem, song or any other poetic work.

**17. Stanza**

This refers to a number of lines that are linked together in a poem/song or any poetic work. It is made up of several verses.

### 18. Rhymes/Rhyming words:

These are the words that have the same sOn at the end.

**Examples:** ball/fall/hall/poll/mall/saw/tall/mow  
west/best/vest/nest/test/rest  
burn/turn/rain/learn

### 19. Alliteration

This is the use of the same words or the words that have the same sounds at the beginning of a sentence.

**Examples:** She sells sea shells by the sea here.

Father Francis the Franciscan from France found five foxes fighting.

Big Ben bought a big bottle of bitter beer before buying the bottle of better beer.

There are two main types of alliteration and these are consonance and assonance.

### 20. Consonance;

This is the repeated use of words that have the same consonants to produce half rhymes.

**Examples:** blood/blade, flash/flesh, slip/slap/slope/slit/slot.

### 21. Assonance:

This is the repeated use of words that have the same vowels or the same vowel sounds

**Examples:** old/okay, answer/another, in/ink, up/at.

### 22. Oxymoron;

This is the use of opposite words together in order to explain the opposite characteristics of some things.

**Examples:** sweet sorrow, profitable loss, clever fool, paihful pleasure.

### 23. Imagery

This is the use of words or expressions that produce a clear picture of something

In the mind of the one reading or hearing them.

**Examples:** dark clouds (sorrow/hatred) olive branch (peace), sunshine (love)

#### **24. Tone:**

This is a voice expression in a poem.

It expresses the speaker's feelings or thoughts.

The tone can be hostile, friendly, sarcastic, playful, mournful, light, satirical, sympathetic, ironic, humorous, light, sombre, or joyful.

#### **25. Mood:**

This is the emotional content of a poem or story as intended by the author or poet.

It is described in terms of feelings such as hostile, friendly, sarcastic, playful, mournful, light, sympathetic, humorous, light, sombre, joyful or gloomy

#### **26. Symbolism;**

This is the representation of beliefs or idea by pictures, signs, or figurative words with particular meanings.

**Examples:** a 'V' sign (victory), clasped hands (unity) olive branch (peace) a fist (power) a maize cob (bumper yields) rain/water (suffering)

#### **27. Rhythm/Meter:**

Rhythm refers to the rise and fall of voice when stressing some words whereas meter is the deliberate use of organised repetition and stress of words to produce a sound effect that arouses the interest of the reader and intensifies the meaning of the poem or passage.

Meter and rhythm are commonly used in ancient writings such as the plays of William Shakespeare and the epics of Homer (The Iliad and Odyssey).

#### **28. Soliloquy:**

This is when a person talks to himself/herself.

This style is mostly used in drama (plays) where a character may speak loudly to himself/herself in order to let the audience know his/her inner feelings which he/she does not want to share with the other characters.

**29. Dialogue:**

This is a conversation involving two or more people.

It is used in plays, stories and some poetic writings.

**30. Monologue:**

This is the conversation of only one side. The reader or audience can get only the words of one character and the words of the other character or characters are not heard or written.

**31. Satire/Parody:**

This is a clever way of mocking a person or a system in order to expose the weaknesses.

It uses humour and wit to attack and expose these features for humorous effect.

weaknesses. It may change or exaggerate other facts or features to enhance the humorous effect

**32. Hyperbole:**

This is a deliberate exaggeration intended at intensifying an emotional force.

*Examples:* My father has all the money

His hands are full of blood.

**33. Allusion**

This is a direct reference to a name or event in history or in literature in order to enrich the meaning of the poem or passage being read.

*Examples:* We do not need any Judas in this class. (traitor)

James is the John Chilembwe of our school. (freedom fighter)

**34. Simile:**

This is a group of words that implicitly compare two unlike terms.

It is a brief and direct comparison of two things or ideas.

It can be easily identified because it uses the words “as” or “like”

*Examples:* John is as strong as a lion.

Her beauty is like that of a star.

**35. Metaphor:**

This is a group of words that explicitly compare two terms that are not similar in order to give a specific meaning.

**Examples:** He is the lion of the village.

She is the star of the school.

**36. Antonyms:**

These are the words that have opposite meanings.

**Examples:** happy/sad, chaos/order, initial/final, clear/vague, merge/separate, first/last, boy/girl, many/few, buy/sell, up/down, over/under, near/far, in/out

**37. Synonyms:**

These are the words that mean nearly the same thing

They are the words that have almost the same meanings.

**Examples:** desperate/hopeless, delicate/fragile, desolated/ruined, mean/rude, large/big/huge, sofa/couch, buy/purchase, chapel/church, deity/god

**38. Homophones:**

These are the words that have the same sounds but different spellings and meanings.

**Examples:** their/there, tell/tale, sale/sell, waste/west, knew/new, wear/ware, kernel/colonel, it/eat, pat/part, bat/but

**39. Pun (Equivocation):**

This is the use of a word that has several meanings or use of words or phrases that sound alike in order to play with their meanings.

**Examples:** My little pet is in a hot soup.

They are flying planes.

You can't catch grasshoppers lying on the grass.

We saw the stranger with a microscope.

#### 40. Irony:

This is the use of words in a sense which is very different from their usual meanings. It is a contrast between what appears to be true and what is really true.

The following are some of the types of irony;

- i *Verbal irony*: This involves a contrast between what is said or written and what is really meant.

**Examples:** All offenders will receive the headmaster's ice cream (punishment)

He was sent to the high school after being found guilty in the crime

- ii *Situational irony*: This is when what happens is very different from what is expected to happen.

- iii *Dramatic irony*: This occurs when the audience or reader knows something which a character does not know.

#### 41. Personification:

This is a special kind of metaphor which refers to inanimate or abstract things as if they are humans. The personified things are given human identity (form) and are called by personal pronouns.

**Example 1:** Mother earth has dressed her children.

**Example 2:** Death has married my daughter.

#### 42. Apostrophe:

This is the giving of human features to non human objects and directly addressing them as if in a conversation.

**Example 1:** You death has robbed us of important citizens.

**Example 2:** Oh Night! Why are you so dark?

#### 43. Paradox:

This is a statement or a fact which seems to be absurd (funny) because it is contrary to the normal. A paradox can also contain two opposite facts or two characteristics that contradict each other.

**Example 1:** A witch doctor making people rich instead of enriching himself.

**Example 2:** Hoes wearing out not because of farming but digging graves.

This is a special kind of comparison in which a familiar subject is introduced in order to explain or justify an earlier subject which is familiar. Analogies are used to compare the relationships between things, ideas or some features which are alike.

**Example 1:** Water is to fish what air is to a human being.

**Example 2:** Fuel is important to an engine just as blood is to an animal.

#### **45. Foreshadow:**

This is the use of clues or hints that suggest the events that will happen later in the story in order to raise a dramatic tension by giving warning about the events to come.

**Example 1:** The Soothsayer's warning to Julius Caesar is a foreshadow to his death on the Ides of March.

**Example 2:** The stubbornness of King Creon after being warned by his son, the blind prophet and the elders, foreshadows the troubles he faces.

#### **47. Flashback:**

This is the recalling or reliving in the past when telling a story by narrating what happened at an earlier time. It interrupts the action of the plot before returning to it to continue with it. A break in the plot to an episode in the future is known as "flash-forward".

Flash-back is important in the following ways;

- (a) It gives the background of the present action.
- (b) It summarises the plot.
- (c) It fills any created gap.
- (d) It shortens the series.
- (e) It can be the means of telling the whole story or poem.

#### **48. Denotation:**

This is the literal use of words. It is the use of words according to their actual dictionary definition. The words are used in simple, plain and direct manner in order to give ordinary everyday meanings.

**Example 1:** My father is working.

**Example 2:** Boys are playing football.

### 49. Connotation:

This is the figurative use of words. It is the use of a word to give a deeper or hidden meaning. It can stretch a word to accommodate a larger or a very different meaning. It uses different figures of speech like metaphors, idioms and irony.

**Example 1:** Please take a seat (be seated)

**Example 2:** The old woman enjoyed the music of the bleeding toe.

### 50. Idiom:

This is a figurative expression in which a group of words in a fixed order derives

a meaning which is different from that of the individual words. Many of the idioms are in form of phrasal verbs.

**Example 1:** Washing dirty linen in the public.

**Example 2:** Calling a spade a spade.

### 51. Onomatopoeia:

These are the words that sound like what they refer to, name or mean.

**Examples:** meow (cat) moo (cow) hiss (snake) croak (frog) buzz (bees)  
growl (dog)

### 52. Title:

This is the name of any literary work.

### 53. Narrator:

This is the person who tells a story.

### 54. Lyrics:

These are the words of a song usually written with a rhyme scheme.



**55. Genre:**

This refers to any category of literature or art.

**56. Act:**

This is the main division or unit of a drama. It is made up of several scenes.

**57. Scene:**

This is a sub division of a drama. Several scenes make up an act.

**58. Suspense:**

This is a type of writing which raises a feeling of curiosity, uncertainty or even dread about what may happen next. The level of suspense in a story is usually increased by clues (foreshadows) of what may happen next.

**59. Paraphrase:**

This means explaining a poem or a passage using different words other than those used by the writer in the text.

**60. Inversion:**

This is the writing of the words of a poem in a reverse way. It is usually done by poets in order to obtain rhymes and rhythms.

*Example 1:* Gone are the days. (The days are gone.)

*Example 2:* There we shall meet. (We shall meet there)

**61. Fantasy:**

This is imaginative writing that sets the story in an invented, unrealistic world.

This world of fantasy usually uses supernatural forces such as magic and spells.

Its characters are usually witches, deities, spirits, Martians, elves, giants, dwarves or fairies. The fairy tales are some of the oldest fantasies.

Science fiction is a type of fantasy that bases on the possible changes which science probably bring in the future.

**62. Atmosphere:**

This is the overall mood or emotion of a particular literary work or part of it. It is usually described in adjectives such as friendly, sarcastic, nostalgic,

dreamy, dark, lonesome, playful, mournful, light, satirical, sympathetic, ironic, humorous, light, sombre, or joyful.

It is created through the writer's use of words that create images, sounds, or descriptions that convey a particular feeling.

### **62. Refrain:**

This is a repeated sound, word, phrase, line, or a group of lines. Refrains are commonly used in poems, songs, speeches and other literary works.

Refrains are important in the following ways;

- (a) They build rhythm.
- (b) They provide emphasis.
- (c) They create suspense.
- (d) They help to hold a particular portion together

### **63 Prose:**

This is the continuous form of writing which bases on sentences and paragraphs without the patterns and controls of poetry. Its main categories are fiction and nonfiction. Prose mostly uses ordinary everyday language.

### **64. Sonnet:**

This is a poem with fourteen line arranged in three quatrains and a couplet.

By "quatrain" we mean four lines that are closely linked together while "couplet" means two linked lines. The lines of a quatrain of a sonnet have alternate rhymes while the couplet has rhyming words at the end.

**Examples:** Romeo and Juliet page 1 (the opening chorus) and lines # 105 ff (the first meeting of Romeo and Juliet)

## **GENRES OF M. S. C. E. LITERATURE:**

The syllabus of literature at M.S.C.E. level covers the following categories and books:

1. Novel: Smouldering Charcoal by Tiyaambe Zeleza.
2. Short Stories: Looking for a RainGod and Other Snort Stories from Africa- Selected and introduced by Ian Gordon
3. Poetry: Unsung Song, An Anthology of Malawian writing in English, edited by Reuben Chilambo, Zondiwe Mbano and Max J. Iphani.

4. Drama: One play by William Shakespeare such as:
- (a) Romeo and Juliet
  - (b) Macbeth
  - (c) Julius Caesar

# **LOOKING FOR A RAINGOD AND OTHER SHORT STORIES FROM AFRICA**

**SELECTED AND INTRODUCED BY IAN GORDON**

## **LIST OF THE SHORT STORIES:**

1. Looking for a RainGod – Bessie Head (Botswana)
2. Uncle Ben's Choice – Chinua Achebe (Nigeria)
3. The Dube Train – Can Themba (South Africa)
4. The Winner – Barbara Kimenye (Uganda)
5. The Torn Veil – Mabel Dove Danquah (Ghana)
6. Workday – Evelyn Awuor Ayoda (Kenya)
7. Mista Courifer - Adelaide Casely Hayford (Sierra Leone)
8. The Empty Basket – Grace Ogot (Kenya)
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19. In the Shadow of War – Ben Okri (Nigeria)
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30. Go Back to Your Room – Steve Chimombo (Malawi)

### **GENERAL THEMES CONTAINED IN AFRICAN SHORT STORIES:**

The following are the major themes that are portrayed in the African short stories that are in this collection:

- (a) The contrast and conflict between traditional ways and values and the ways and values of the modern world.  
This is portrayed in the story entitled “The Intruder”
- (b) The conflict between generations in a family  
This is clearly depicted in Mista Courifer, and Music of the Violin
- (c) The conflict between what people aspire to be and what they in fact manage to be.  
This can be seen in The Village Pastor
- (d) Breaking up of families as social problem.  
This is shown in the story entitled “Certain Winds from the South” where men abandon their families to seek employment in the south.
- (e) Unemployment and abject poverty.  
This is depicted in “Firefly”

- (f) Urban violence  
This is clear in *The Dube Train*
- (g) The squalor of prison life.  
This can be observed in the story entitled “*Out of Darkness*”
- (h) The evils of apartheid (Conflicts between the ways of life of the white people and the ways of life of the black people)  
This is also displayed in *Out of the Darkness* and in *Country Lovers*
- (i) Terror and brutality in times of trouble  
This can be seen in *Bindenh’s Gift* and *In the Shadow of War*
- (j) Injustices of an oppressive state  
This is clearly indicated in *The Case of the Prison Monger*
- (k) The plight of African women in the modern world  
*The Workday* and *The Refugee* portray this theme.

# 1. LOOKING FOR A RAIN GOD BESSIE HEAD

## (BOTSWANA)

The author is a Botswana national of South African origin. She sets the story in a rural Botswana village where there is drought for seven years from 1958. In the story, there is an old man named Mokgobja. He is seventy years old. His son Ramadi is married to Tiro and their children are Nesta, Neo and Boseyong. Nesta, the first born is an adult while Neo and Boseyong are little girls.

The Mokgobja family set out for the lands (fields/gardens) when little rains begin to fall. They travel in a donkey cart. When they reach the land, they clear and plough but they can not plant in the dry ground because there is no more rain from mid November.

### SIGNS OF THE DROUGHT:

- i The watering places are as dry as the open thorny bushy country
- ii Leaves of the country curl up and wither.
- iii The moss becomes dry and hard.
- iv The ground turns a powdery black and white.
- v The air is dry and moist free that it burns the skin.

### REACTIONS OF THE PEOPLE

- (a) A number of men hung themselves to death.
- (b) People return from their lands to their homes.
- (c) People turn to charlatans, incanters and witchdoctors for help.
- (d) People tie talismans and use herbs on hoes and ploughs for the rain to fall and crops to grow.
- (e) The Mokgobja family sells all their animals in order to buy food during the bad years.
- (f) Every night, Tiro and Nesta mourn in a strange way: it is a weird high pitched wailing which begins from a low, mournful tone to a frenzy.
- (g) Mokgobja, Ramadi and the two women agree to sacrifice Neo and Boseyong to a rain god by killing them and displaying their bodies on the land.

## **THE AFTERMATH.**

The two girls have been sacrificed, but still the rain does not come. The family goes back to the village where they lie that the children died and were buried on the land. However, they are betrayed by their ashen, terror-stricken faces. Upon the intervention of the police, Tiro reveals everything. Mokgobja and Ramadi are sentenced to death for ritual murder (tribal murder) Many people sympathize with them because their action was out of desperation.

## **THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE STORY:**

### **I Conflict between the natural law (conscience) and the law of the land enshrined in the constitution:**

The action of the Mokgobja family justifiable only by their own conscience but not the law of the country.

### **II Sacrifice and martyrdom:**

Neo and Boseyong die as martyrs to save the whole land from drought.

Mokgobja and Ramadi are executed as martyrs because their action was intended at saving the whole land from drought.

### **III Betrayal:**

Mokgoba and Ramadi are reported to police by some people.

The mother of the two sacrificed children betrays Makgobja and Ramadi by revealing the truth to the police.

Tiro and Ramadi betray their children (Neo and Boseyong) by accepting that they should be sacrificed.

### **IV Happiness in young people:**

Neo and Boseyong play happily as the older family members are full of anxiety due to the drought.

### **V Desperation in time of trouble:**

People consult charlatans, incanters and witchdoctors for help.

Men commit suicide to escape family problems brought by drought.

The Mokgobja family conspires to sacrifice the two little girls with the hope of ending the drought.



People tie talismans and herbs on hoes and ploughs for rain to come and crops to grow.

**VI Violence against children:**

The Mokgobja family agrees to sacrifice the innocent children,  
The rain god was receiving sacrifices of children only.

**VII Irresponsibility:**

Ramadi and Tiro fail to protect their children from the evil plans.  
Men commit suicide to escape family responsibilities.

## 2. UNCLE BEN'S CHOICE CHINUA - ACHEBE (*NIGERIA*)

This story is set in the Urban Africa of twentieth century. It is story of Uncle Ben, a single man who boasts about the following in the year 1919:

- (a) He was a young clerk at the Niger Company at Umuru. For him, this was the same as to be a minister.
- (b) He was getting salary of two pounds ten which has the value of fifty pounds at the time of the story.
- (c) He was a member of the African tennis and billiards club which was playing in tournaments with European clubs every year.
- (d) He had a brand new Raleigh bicycle.
- (e) He had brand new HMV Senior gramophone.
- (f) He was drinking expensive beer such as White horse.

Uncle Ben continues to use flashback to explicate tell us the following:

- i He is cautious of cunning women of Umuru as he was advised by his father who said that a handshake should not go beyond the elbow.
- ii He is in love with Margaret Jumbo who wants to convert him to Roman Catholic.
- iii On New Year's Eve, he goes to drink at a club and returns at dawn.
- iv Upon returning to his house, undressing and jumping into his bed, he falls on a naked woman (She is hundred percent naked)
- v When he lights matches he discovers that she is not a human being and he runs to the house of his kinsman, Matthew Obi.
- vi Matthew tells him that he was visited by a spirit known as Mami Wota, the Lady of the River Niger.
- vii He tells him that if he was to sleep with this spirit, he could become very rich but could not have wives and children.
- viii He congratulates Ben for being the true son of his father who never said that a man should prefer wealth to wives and children

- ix Matthew tells Ben the story of Dr S.M. Stuart- Hill who made love with the spirit and became the richest man but she did not allow him to marry and have children.

## **THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE STORY:**

### **I Superstition:**

The author is presenting the supernatural (spiritual world) as a reality. Matthew Obi believes in the powers of the spirit Mami Wota.

### **II Hypocrisy (self-contradiction):**

Margaret Jumbo pretends to be a good Christian who wants to convert Uncle Ben to Roman Catholic but latter on wants to go to the club to drink beer with him.

Uncle Ben claims to be strong towards women but later on starts touching a woman he meets in darkness.

Ben does not want to accept that he falls into the trap of Margaret Jumbo, a cunning woman who comes to him in the name of religion.

### **III Boastfulness and self elevation:**

Uncle Ben is despising second hand things.

He claims to be drinking expensive beer.

He is boasting bout his achievements in the year 1919.

### **IV Love of luxuries and life of pleasure:**

Uncle Ben joins a tennis and billiards club which plays in European tournaments.

He buys a brand new Raleigh bicycle,

He buys brand new H.M.V. senior gramophone.

He drinks expensive beer such as White Horse, whisky and Guinea Gold.

### 3. THE DUBE TRAIN CAN THEMBA (*SOUTH AFRICA*)

This story exposes a violent society in the urban South Africa. The story is set in train which sets off at Dube Station on a Monday morning and passes through Phefeni Station, Mzimbhlophe (The Dirty White Station) New Canada, Croesus Cemetery and Langlaagte.

The narrator seems to be a woman as she is so sentimental and expresses discomfort about the following;

- A clogged feeling in the chest.
- Congested trains with sour smelling humanity at Dube Station.
- The lateness of the trains.
- The shoving savagery of the crowds.
- The grey aspect around her.
- The announcer who gives confused directions over the loudspeaker.
- Taking a seat next to the door.
- The dull, undramatic lights of the carriage.

At Phefeni station a school girl steps in the train.

She looks mean and has the features of the township girls.

At Phomolong, a Tsotsi (Town trouble maker) illegally jumps into the train where he starts harassing the girl in the following ways;

- i He claims that she ducked him the previous night.
- ii He clutches her breast through her sweater.
- iii Nobody comes to her rescue when she is in panic.
- iv The Tsotsi does not let her get out of the train at New Canada.
- v He gives her a vicious slap across the face and her beret goes flying.

**vi** The Tsotsi follows her as she escapes from him.

**vii** Men in the train give way to the Tsotsi as he chases the girl.

The following are the other occurrences in the story;

- A woman reprimands the men in the train for tolerating the abuse of the little, innocent helpless girl.
- The Tsotsi anatomically curses and insults the woman.
- A fat huge man faces the Tsotsi and scolds him for cursing and insulting the woman.
- After Croesus Cemetery, the Tsotsi uses his sheath knife to stab the chest and upper arm of the huge man.
- The big man screams and catches the Tsotsi by the upper arm and between the legs, lifts him and throws him through the paneless window where he is crushed by the same train.
- The huge man gets off the train at Langlaagte Station and none of the passengers express sympathy for dead Tsotsi or the huge man who was stabbed by the Tsotsi.

## **THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE STORY**

### **I A stitch in time saves nine:**

The passengers tolerate the menacing behaviour of the Tsotsi and this leads to the wounding of the huge man and the subsequent death of the Tsotsi.

If the Tsotsi was not to be stopped by the huge man, he would have probably caused a lot of harm to the people in the train.

If the passengers had not tolerated the Tsotsi, they would possibly have saved him from his fate (death) and that of the huge man (injury)

### **II. Urban violence:**

The Tsotsi stabs the huge man after cursing the huge man and harassing the innocent girl.

The huge man takes the law into his own hands and inflicts death penalty on the Tsotsi.

### **III. Betrayal:**

The passengers in the train betray the girl by letting the Tsotsi harass her. Some women in the train believe in what the Tsotsi is claiming about the girl and they blame her.

## 4 THE WINNER BARBARA KIMENYE (*UGANDA*)

This story is set in the Ugandan village of Kasalanda in the past when the kingdom of Buganda was still in existence.

The main character in the story is Pius Ndawula, a 65 year old man who gains popularity after winning football pools. This is a system in which people win money when they make correct predictions of football games. A lot of people travel to Kasalanda to visit Pius.

The following are some of the visitors of Pius;

- i Mr. Musisi, a postman from Ggombolola Post Office who brings the telegram which indicates that the amount won is seventeen thousand pounds.
- ii Newspaper reporters, cameramen, and radiomen from Uganda Radio Station who come to interview him.
- iii Close and distant relatives such as cousins, nephews, uncles and nieces who come to Kasalanda by bus.
- iv Salongo, the custodian of the tomb of Ssabalangira, who is a close friend of Pius.
- v Cousin Sara who was once married to late Kivumbi who was a step son to one of the cousins of Pius.
- vi Yosefu Mukasa and Kibuka who come by car to take Pius to Mutunda.

The following also happen in the story;

- Most of the relatives suggest to properly invest the money, preferably in their own businesses.
- Salongo and Cousin Sara compete for Pius' attention.
- Different groups of relatives become jealousy of each other.
- The visitors led by Cousin Sara prepare tea and eat a lot of food and also drinks beer from the house of Pius.
- Salongo advises Pius not to cooperate but to say nothing to the radio journalists who want to interview him.

- Sara takes interviews on behalf of Pius and discloses that she is ready to live with him as long as he wants.
- Pius is very tired of handshakes and the celebrity life.
- Yosefu Mukasa and Kibuka take him to Mutunda to rest with their sister Miriamu.
- Musisi brings another telegram which states that the prize money is to be shared among three hundred people. By calculation, Pius is entitled to only over a thousand shillings.
- Pius is not very disappointed with the reduced amount bearing in mind his past age.
- The celebrating crowds of relatives and friends leave his compound in disappointment upon hearing the latest news. This is after they have trodden down his plantations and putting his 'shamba' out of order.
- Sara vows to remain by Pius and promises to put everything in order at his Shamba.
- After getting his prize money, Pius visits Salongo to honour his pledge of renovating the tomb of Ssabalangira.
- He reveals his intention to marry cousin Sara and invites Salongo to the wedding the following month.
- Salongo sends as gifts to Cousin Sara a bunch of bananas and some cabbages and he declares her as the real winner.

### **THEMES DEPICTED IN THE STORY**

#### **I The power of money:**

It gives Pius a lot of publicity through the media and wide. He gets a lot of friends and relatives.

He is offered business partnerships.

He is offered marriage and companionship by Cousin Sara.



**II When poverty strikes friends run away:**

All the fake friends and relations leave Pius when they hear the second message brought by Musisi.

**III A friend in need is a friend indeed (True friends are seen in time of Trouble):**

Cousin Sara remains to help Pius rebuilt what the false relatives and friends have destroyed.

**IV Patience and endurance brings joy:**

After persevering cousin Sara and Pius are rewarded by getting married.

**V Crossing the bridge before reaching it:**

People are celebrating at Pius home before see the money.

Pius allows people misuse his property before he gets the money.

**VI Humility:**

Pius is calm and simple to the people who try to control him so that things can be done in their own way.

He disagrees with Salongo who calls the people as “scavengers” by saying that it is normal for them gather around him at the time like that.

**VII Honouring promises and Pledges:**

Pius does not reverse his decision of donating to the tomb of Ssabalangira even when the prize money is too much little than expected at a the time of making the pledge, he still donates a hundred shillings.

## 5. THE TORN VEIL MABEL DOVE DANQUAH (*GHANA*)

This is tragic story which expresses the evil of a traditional customary law in Gold

Coast which is now Ghana. In the story, Kwame Asante marries Akosua Asare under the native customary law. This law gives an opportunity to a man to set himself as the lord and master of his wife. After ten years, Kwame has achieved recognition in society and has many ambitions.

The following are some of the achievement and ambitions of Kwame;

- i He has elected a two storey building.
- ii He is member of the committee of an important club.
- iii He has received associateship at his academy.
- iv He intends to join the town council to become Councillor Kwame.
- v He intends to marry a frock lady.

He offers Akosua a-hundred pounds to pay her off and divorce her according to the native customary law.

Akosua shows her courage in the following ways

- (a) She protests the offer of Kwame.
- (b) She threatens to strike his face.
- (c) While he is in Kumasi, she takes her belongings and children and leaves his house for Akwapim where her father lives.
- (d) She is ready to face her father who was appreciating her marriage to Kwame because of his education.
- (e) She does not come back when Kwame tries to call her back.

Afterwards, Kwame regrets and tries in vain to call her back. Then the following happen

- He marries Martha Aryeety at Holy Trinity Church and a reception at Rodger Club.

- After the reception Kwame sits on the veranda and while dozing he sees a lady in bridal finery. She is Akosua who looks so lonely and beautiful and she beckons at him
- He runs after her but she eludes him (runs away from him)
- After chasing her, he gets a fast told of her veil.
- Suddenly he trips over the leg of the table and fall, knocks his temple on the edge of the table.
- He dies while the piece of the veil is clenched in his fist.
- In the morning, Yaw Asante his young brother and best man finds him dead; Martha faints; her veil is not torn.
- Dr. Adjaye reads the telegram that came from the Kofi Asare and it explains that Akosua died at 10 am on the wedding day. This means that the lady who visited Kwame was not the real Akosua but probably her ghost.

## **THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE STORY**

### **I Violence against women:**

This is constitutionalised in the native customary law.

Kwame perpetrates this violence by unjustly deciding to divorce AKosua and marry Martha which possibly leads to her death.

### **II Selfishness and Pride:**

Kwame begins to consider Akosua as inferior and illiterate ten years after their marriage because of his success.

He does not want her to go on her own but he wants to boast by paying her off.

He prepares a bill for her and her parents although he does not send it.

He refers to her as entitled to only twenty five pounds.

### **III Ingratitude:**

Kwame is not grateful to his wife for her own contribution to his life during the ten years of their marriage.

#### **IV Regrets have no remedy/crying over spilt milk:**

Kwame shows his regrets in the following ways;

- a** He sends two telegrams calling back Akosua.
- b** He sends two middle aged women to Akosua to plead for him.
- c** He claims that he was just teasing her about marrying a frock lady.
- d** He concedes the fact that he can not live without a woman in his house.
- e** He finds consolations in friends, drinks and local cigars.
- f** He marries Martha Aryeety.

#### **V. Male Chauvinism:**

This is the belief that the male sex is better than the female hence the former should be in control of the latter.

Kwame insists that he is the Lord and master of Akosua and the native customary law supports this.

#### **VI. Evils of forced marriage:**

It seems Kofi Asare had a hand in the marriage of Akosua to Kwame and this is why Akosua fears for his reaction.

The results of this forced marriage are a tragic for both Akosua and Kwame who die in the end.

## 6. WORK DAY EVELYN AWUOR AYODA (KENYA)

This story unveils violence against children who are employed as housemaids in different-homes. In the story there is Mary who works as a housemaid for Peter and Elizabeth in Nairobi; so the story is set in urban area. The family has the following four children, Otieno, Okwach, Awino and Akong'a.

Mary has a monotonous routine as she has to do the following things on every work day;

- (a) Getting up at five o'clock in the morning when it is still dark and cold.
- (b) Folding up her blanket and rolling up the mattress to store them in the cupboard.
- (c) Taking a bath and dressing up.
- (d) Waking up the children and bathing them.
- (e) Getting the children ready for school.
- (f) Preparing breakfast.
- (g) Setting the table.
- (h) Sweeping the house.
- (i) Making her own breakfast.
- (j) Washing the previous day school clothes of the children.
- (k) Buying some food items such as milk and bread.
- (l) Preparing lunch.
- (m) Taking the children to bed for a siesta.
- (n) Washing the dishes.
- (o) Cleaning the dining room and sitting room.
- (p) Mopping the bathroom.
- (q) Preparing the children for a walk to the city park.
- (r) Preparing dinner for the family.

The family of Peter and Elizabeth is compounded in the following problemsii.  
Elizabeth

- i** Peter is a drunkard and always comes home late.
- ii** He does not provide any money for food in the house.
- iii** He ill-treats his wife by beating her in the presence of the children.
- iv** He has a love relationship and sleeps with another woman.
- v** He does not show interests in his children and their education.
- vi** Elizabeth is always very tough to Mary the house girl.
- vii** The children do not obey orders of Mary.
- viii** The children do not follow the rules in the house.
- ix** The children fight in the presence of their mother.
- x** Mary does not know how to read time for meals the children's programmes.
- xi** She burns the food when she is told to prepare.
- xii** She beats up Okwach when he refuses to sleep up-stairs
- xiii** Elizabeth locks Mary outside the house when she burns some food.

Elizabeth blames Mary for a lot of things as follows;

- (a) Walking up Otieno and Okwach very late.
- (b) Shouting out when Elizabeth calls her.
- (c) Preparing the children late for school.
- (d) Burning toasted bread.
- (e) Not laying the table.
- (f) Burning ugali.
- (g) Not removing her belongings from the sitting room.

- (h) Letting the children watch television before it is six o'clock.
- (i) Preparing rice instead of chapatti.
- (j) Making her (Elizabeth) break a plate accidentally.

Elizabeth asks Mary to understand her because she is under stress since her boss treats her badly and also insults her and her husband also ill-treats her.

## **THEMES DEPICTED IN THE STORY**

### **I Selfishness and pride:**

Peter treats his wife badly.

He does not provide for his home.

He does not care about his children and their education.

Elizabeth gives Mary too much work and blames her unnecessarily.

### **II Child labour:**

Mary is a young girl but she is employed as a domestic worker.

Other young boys and girls such as Priscilla and Mwangi are also employed as household domestic workers.

### **III Violence against children:**

Elizabeth gives Mary too much work to do.

She also treats her badly by insulting her and locking her outside the house.

### **IV Dangers of being emotional:**

Elizabeth emotionally insults her husband and this makes him very hard and inconsiderate.

She breaks a plate as she works emotionally.

She makes Mary burn food as she gives emotional commands.

### **V Exploitation:**

The parents of Mary make her work as a domestic servant and receive all her monthly wages (300 shillings)

## **VI Male chauvinism:**

Peter challenges Elizabeth by saying that she is not the man in the house.

Piscilla, the friend of Mary says that a woman has a special role of taking care of the home (Due to this Mary thinks of never getting married when she is a grown up)



## 7. MISTA COURIFER ADELAIDE CASELY HAYFORD (*SIERRA LEONE*)

In this story the author is exposing the folly of being led by a desire for advancement. The story also shows the conflict between the younger and older generations in a family.

In the story, the writer is telling us the following about Mista Courifer;

- i He runs a coffin workshop.
- ii He considers everything European to be right probably because he once stayed in England.
- iii He tries to set everything on European standards.
- iv As one in a coffin making business, he wears black as the English undertakers in order to appear somber.
- v He is a Christian and pillar of a church where he performs the following activities;
  - 1 He superintends Sunday school.
  - 2 He conducts meetings.
  - 3 He occupies the pulpit (preaches)
- vi In preaching, his favourite themes are Jonah and Noah whom he compares as people who hid somewhere to the problems of this world.
- vii His son Tomas Courifer junior is a clerk in the civil service.
- viii Mista Courifer wants Tomas to emulate his example and appreciate everything European.
- ix He makes him discard the national wear and dress in European suits which he orders from Liverpool every year.

At his work place Tomas wants to resign because of the following;

- 1 He has never been given a proper holiday for four and half years.
- 2 There is unequal treatment between the black and white employees.
- 3 The white employees get a much better salary than the blacks.

He misbehaves in the following ways so that he can be dismissed;

- (a) He reports at the office one hour later.
- (b) He smokes in the office against the office rules.
- (c) He messes up the work which he is given to type.

When his boss, Mr Buckmaster is angry, he tells him his frustrations.

Mr Buckmaster gives him a two months holiday. He goes to Mista Courifer's workshop where he gets a paper and writes a testimonial for Tomas.

Mista Courifer is disappointed by Tomas in the following ways;

- i He does not want to look like a European any more and he wants to burn the European suits, however, his sister Keren flatters him by saying that he fits well in them.
- ii He tells Mista Courifer to stop ordering him the Liverpool suits.
- iii During his two months holiday Tomas does not want to learn coffin making but love making (getting married)
- iv Tomas wants to build mud house (not a European one as that of his father)
- v His fiancée, Accastacia does not know how to cook and they intend to employ a cook once they are married.
- vi On his wedding, he and his bride wear native Wolof clothes from Gambia.

This disappoints Mista Courifer very much that he stops preaching in the local church but just concentrates on his coffin making business.

### **THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE STORY**

#### **I Conflict between generations in a family:**

Mista Courifer wants to choose a way of life for his son, Tomas who later rebels against him.

#### **II Oppression of the black people by the whites:**

The working conditions the office of Tomas favours the whites over the blacks.

**III Selfishness:**

Tomas misbehaves at his office instead of just directly speaking to his boss about his problems.

Mista Courifer is always the first one to eat in his house

Mr. Buckmaster writes the testimonial of Tomas at his father's shop and gives it to the father and not Tomas.

Mista Courifer wants to choose the way of life for Tomas as if he is a small boy.

**IV. The vanity of imitating:**

Mista Courifer fails to speak English properly although he wants to live as a European.

Tomas fails to live as a pure African by appreciating some European values pertaining to marriage.

Mista Courifer fails to live as a European by practicing some African traditions in his family and also by appreciating African marriage values.

**V Segregation against women:**

Mista Courifer does not want to hear views of his wife.

He says it is useless to teach woman carpentry.

He wants a woman to be doing all the cooking instead of employing a cook.

He does not eat with his wife but he is always the first one to eat in the house.

## 8. THE EMPTY BASKET GRACE OGOT (KENYA)

In this story the author says the following about a woman called Aloo;

- (a) She lives in the village while her husband is a police officer in town.
- (b) She goes to weed a beans garden.
- (c) She has three grown up children and a seven months old baby named Akoth.
- (d) When she goes to the garden her children are with her cousin Onyango who assists as a nurse for Akoth.
- (e) Ouma, her two year old daughter waves her goodbye.
- (f) A big snake enters the house and a lot of people try in vain to kill it by throwing stones and other objects and hitting it with sticks.
- (g) The snake creeps onto the bed where Akoth is sleeping and coils itself into a heap.
- (h) Upon returning from the field and hearing about the snake Aloo lashes at the men for failing to rescue her baby.
- (i) She enters the room and is not moved by the snake which sees her and waggles its tongue furiously to scare her.
- (j) As the snake starts to descend, Aloo grabs the baby and as quickly as lightning rushes out of the room.
- (k) Ochieng and Obwolo enter the room to kill the snake.
- (l) Obwolo stands on a chair and brings down a basket which was empty and was hanging on a club ceiling. Surprisingly, the basket is very heavy and Obwolo throws it down.
- (m) The snake comes out the basket and traps him on the doorway.
- (n) He escapes through the window and runs to his house where gets some poisonous arrows that he uses to kill the snake.

(o) When Ojwang the husband of Aloo comes, she blames him for not clearing the bush behind the house.

(p) Ojwang links the incident of the snake to the bad dream which he had.

### **THEMES IN THE STORY:**

#### **I Courage:**

Aloo goes into the house to rescue Akoth from the snake.

Obwolo and Ochieng enter the house and searches for the snake.

The villagers throw different things at the snake to kill it.

Obwolo kills the snake with a poisonous arrow thrown at short range.

#### **II Superstition:**

Ojwang the husband of Aloo links the coming of the snake to the bad dream which he had.

#### **III Mother's love:**

It is out of love for her baby that Aloo risks her own life and enters the room.

#### **IV Importance of the ethics of hygiene;**

According to Aloo, it is the bush behind the house that attracts the snake.

## 9. JUSTICE: *AN ETHIOPIAN TRADITIONAL STORY*

This is a humorous story from Ethiopia.

In the story the following things happen;

- i A woman goes to look for her goats that have wandered away.
- ii She asks a deaf man if he has seen the goats.
- iii He thinks she wants to be directed to the water-hole so he points the way to the river.
- iv Coincidentally she finds the goats and offers the deaf man a kid which has broken its foot as a way of thanking him.
- v The man does not understand and thinks the woman is accusing her of injuring the kid.
- vi After protesting vehemently he beats the woman.
- vii She takes him to the judge who unfortunately is also very deaf and very short sighted.
- viii The judge does not listen properly as the man, the woman and the people that witnessed everything speak.
- ix As a result, he pronounces the following wrong judgements;
  - a The man should stop mistreating the wife.
  - b The woman should not be lazy and should not be late with the meals of the husband.
  - c He blesses their beautiful baby (the goat) so that she may have a long life and should grow to be the joy for both parents.

### THEMES IN THE STORY:

#### I The importance of communication:

Due to lack of communication, there are misunderstandings, firstly between the man and the woman between the judge and the man, the woman and the crowd that witnessed everything.

This because of the physical defects of the man and the judge.

**II Gratitude:**

The woman is thankful to the man for thinking that he helped her to find the goats.

She shows this by offering him a kid.

**III Injustice caused by ignorance:**

Due to ignorance of the man and the judge, the woman is a victim of injustice (ignorance can be vincible or invincible; deliberate or not)

**IV Coincidence:**

The woman finds the goats in the direction, pointed by the man by mere chance but she thinks that it is him who guided her.

**V The dangers of being emotional:**

The deaf man quickly loses his temper and beats the woman. This could put him in very big problem if he could be properly prosecuted.

## 10 THE CASE OF TIDE PRIISON MONGER: HAMA TUMA (*ETHIOPIA*)

This is a story which uses humour and wit to attack the injustices of a dictatorial regime.

At the beginning of the story, the author explains the philosophy of satisfaction as follows;

- The more a person wants the more the chance of losing what they already have.
- When people stretch their hands to reach higher things, they drop what is under their arms.
- To have plenty is to be confused but to want plenty is more than to be confused.
- Guerilla fighters who want more freedom, equality, peace and democracy die in the bush after suffering.
- The late king of Ethiopia accumulated a lot of money from the people but lost everything when the people rebelled.

He also explains the following on the philosophy of poverty and servility;

- How to live satisfied with an empty stomach.
- Dangers of getting fat and lazy because of not exercising the mind.
- How to realize happiness through deprivation.
- The filling capacity of one-fruit –a-day- meal.

Then he tells us the following about The Case of the Prison Monger;

- (a) His name is Matteos Gudu.
- (b) He has been arrested for six times in the last ten years.
- (c) He is a prisonomaniac who deliberately commits a crime in order to be sent to prison when he finishes serving one sentence.



- (d) In this particular case, he was caught shop-lifting.
- (e) The prosecutor asks the judge to free Matteo Gudu as a way of preventing him from getting what he wants.

The following are the reasons why he likes prison;

1. He is used to living in small rooms from his childhood.
2. Prison provides him accommodation, food and calm.
3. Prison gives him freedom; even when he is hungry he can't complain.
4. Prison provides him education and he is now in the third year of law.
5. He learnt carpentry in prison and he works as a carpenter in the workshop of prison.

Judge Aytenfistu agrees to free the prison monger as his punishment.

Upon being sentenced to freedom Matteo Gudu insults the judge by saying the following;

- i He is not worth a judge.
- ii He is a fat pig.
- iii He is an ignorant fool.
- iv He is a person who sleeps on his bench half the time.
- v His only qualification is stupidity.
- vi He is an impotent sissy,

Since it is a punishable offence to insult a judge, Aytenfistu is angry and he sentences Matteo Gudu to ten years imprisonment with hard labour at Robi Desert State Farm Prison. The accused is very happy because he gets what he wants.

## **THEMES DEPICTED IN THE STORY**

### **I The injustices of an oppressive government:**

Due to oppression, the government is failing to provide for its citizens in terms of employment and educational opportunities.

**II Poverty:**

Free people are very poor and prisoners are better off.

**III Importance of education:**

Matteos Gudu shows interest in higher education which he can get only in prison.

He uses his education as a law student to get what he wanted (imprisonment)

**IV Dangers of being emotional:**

Out of anger Judge Aytenfistu passes a judgment that favours the prison monger.

## 11. FLIGHT SINDIWE MAGONA (*SOUTH AFRICA*)

This is a story which does not have a clear plot at the beginning but becomes clear at the end.

The narrator is a little girl who tells us the following;

- She has an uncle who is an old man who works in the mines for about eleven months each year.
- On one of his holidays he takes a young woman for a new wife.
- As part of their initiation into marriage new wives are overworked as donkeys.
- According to the narrator the young woman cooked and cleaned well and children were saved from chores by her coming and due to this the narrator liked her.
- The little aunt fails to complete her initiation and chooses to run away
- The old uncle runs after her but he is frail.
- A lot of men help the uncle in chasing the young woman.
- She manages to outrun all of them and she escapes into the mountain where she disappears after being covered by mist, clouds and rain.
- By her going the old uncle does not only lose her as a wife but also the cattle he had given for her as lobola.

### **THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE STORY**

#### **I Violence against women:**

New wives are overworked like donkeys as their initiation.

The young woman does not have the freedom to go away peacefully.

Men intervene in a family wrangle and chase the woman.

The young woman is dressed in a long attire that she seems without feet.

**II Unfair customary law:**

New wives are over worked probably because of the lobola that is paid for them by the husband and her relatives; this somehow reduces her to the level of property purchased by the community which can thus abuse her.

Men of the village are willing to help in chasing the young woman possibly because they do not want the uncle to lose the lobola.

**III Courage:**

The little aunt chooses to take her flight during broad day light without any fear of what the old uncle and the men chasing her can do in case of catching her.

**IV Hope:**

The young woman is enthusiastic about running away because she has hope of getting some freedom.

**V Suffering:**

The young woman suffers by being given too much work (overworked as a donkey) and deprived of her other rights.

The clouds, mist and rain which cover the young woman also symbolize suffering.

**VI Importance of freedom:**

The young woman runs away from her troubles because she wants freedom.

## 12. THE OLIVE TREE TOLOLWA MARTI – MOLLEL (TANZANIA)

This is a story with a rural setting. In the story is an old man who has a coffee plantation. The narrator is Nyangusi, one of his grand children and he is telling us the following:

- There are eucalyptus trees around the plantation and an olive tree which marks the border (furthest point) of the plantation.
- The olive tree is also known as the "olmukuna tree" because the word "olmukuna" means "border".
- Apart from marking the border, the Grand father also uses the tree to punish cowards among his grand children.
- He is an ardent Christian who believes that cowardice is a sin.
- He sends a child on an errand at night to test his courage.
- The children are supposed to walk calmly, confidently and not run due to fear.
- The grandfather knows the child who had been running by the following;
  - (a) He checks the thumping chest.
  - (b) He checks the terror in the eye.
- He punishes the cowards by sending them at night to the olmukuna tree to bring a leaf.
- Those who can not go are lashed by the Grandfather who uses his strap (so the grandchildren have a choice)
- Nyangusi is sent by Grandmother on a moonless night to borrow some salt.
- He speeds into the night and collides with the Grandfather who is coming from a walk in the plantation.

- As they collide, the Grandfather sprains his ankle.
- Two weeks later, Nyangusi is sent to the ol mukuna tree as a punishment.
- With fear and anger, he plans to punish the Grandfather by bringing him five, ten or twenty leaves.
- He hears the hooting of an owl which according to the traditional beliefs of their society is an omen of death.
- As he jumps, there is a bang on his head and he passes out.
- When he comes to, there is a big bump on his head and he feels great pain.
- Among the people who come to visit him is grandfather who gives him a 'get well soon' and reminds him of the olive leaf which he still needs to bring.
- Nyangusi wishes he can not get well for a long, long time.

### **THEMES DEPICTED IN THE STORY:**

#### **I Violence against children/Cruelty:**

The training for courage which the Grandfather gives is too much: it is actually cruelty.

#### **II Superstition:**

The children believe that some demons hover the eucalyptus trees.

Nyangusi believes that an owl is an omen of death.

#### **III Obedience:**

The children obey the elders by going on night errands.

They also obey to be punished by the Grandfather; to go to the ol mukuna tree or to be lashed by his strap.

#### **IV Hypocrisy:**

The Grandfather claims to be an ardent Christian but uses religious justifications to show great cruelty to the children.

He does not forgive Nyangusi even after his injury but wants him to get well so soon so that he can go back to the olive tree and bring a leaf.

## 13. DIFFERENT VALUES: BARBARA KIMENYE (ZIMBABWE)

This is story about two house maids; Liza and Clara who engage in telephone conversations when their bosses are away. They gossip about their bosses, and share the problems encountered in their profession.

Liza complains to Clara about the following;

- (a) Her daily chore of racing up Popi the dog, at her age of 32.
- (b) Cleaning the shit of Popi in the kitchen where he sleeps.
- (c) Her two children cared for by her mother at home.
- (d) Her greedy boss who gets the whole salary of his wife, Tina.
- (e) The boss who does not allow Tina to slaughter any of the five hundred plus fowls when her aunt visits them. using the
- (f) The stingy boss who buys very few groceries and snaps at Tina for overusing them.
- (g) The boss who does not allow Tina to call him by the first name when girls at his office do.
- (h) The boss who does not allow Tina to wear lipstick when his girlfriends do.
- (i) The government which is arresting women found at night as suspects of prostitution when men are allowed to walk freely.

Clara complains to Liza about the following;

- i She cleans the mess of Lolly, the baby that she cares for.
- ii Her bullying boss beats up his wife very often.
- iii Her boss is a drunkard.

The following also happens in the story;

- Liza hangs up when her madam comes.
- The madam notices that Popi did not exercise enough.
- Liza lies by saying that she has sprained her ankle and pretends to limp.
- Tommy the house boy is called to race up with Popi.
- He notices the lie in the eyes of Liza but does not betray her.
- The madam notices that Liza was on the phone and she lies that she attended to incoming calls which were also all from wrong numbers.
- The madam says threatens to lock the phone but Liza protests by saying that she may need it in case of emergency such as theft.

### **THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE STORY:**

#### **I Male chauvinism:**

Lisa's boss over controls the whole house and even his wife's salary.

He gives her so many restrictions such as forbidding her from wearing lipstick and not allowing her to call him by the first name.

#### **II Violence against women:**

Clara's boss beats up his wife very often

The government arrests only women and not men as suspects of prostitution.

#### **III Different values:**

The employers Liza value value their dog very much, even more than the gardener who can not be picked in their car as Popi, the dog.

Lisa's madam shows much interest in the welfare of Popi than Liza and her injury.

Liza values her job because it provides her with money for her children and her mother although it is nasty and dirty.



**IV The futility of gossiping:**

Clara and Liza waste a lot of time gossiping to the extent that Liza fails to do her daily chores, this is tantamount to risking her job.

**V Unfaithfulness:**

Liza lies that she attended to incoming calls that were also from wrong numbers.

She lies that she has sprained her ankle and limps falsely.

## 14. THEY SOLD MY SISTER LETEIPA OLE SUNKULI (*KENYA*)

This story is exposing the ugly custom that exists among the traditional Masai people. The narrator is a ten year old girl named Naliki who tells us the following;

- Nyamalo, her older sister is gone to a boarding school after her female circumcision.
- Her father receives gifts (beer and blankets) and dowry, then cattle from Ole Sirayo who wants to marry her.
- Tumuka, their brother refuses to go and bring Nyamalo from the school but he pleads for her yet in vain
- Nyamalo is later brought, dressed and handed over to the parents of the bridegroom.
- Naliki is asked to keep her company for two weeks.
- Nyamalo does not cooperate with Ole Sirayo at their honey moon.
- She refuses to share his bed and wants to sleep with her sister Naliki
- He overpowers her and takes it all by force
- The following morning Naliki in tears bids farewell to her sister.
- Nyamalo sends a cursing message to her parents saying that the wealth that they have received should choke them to death
- Two years later Naliki gets the shock of her life when an elderly man, named Ole Timau shows interest in her as a heifer and promises to come back for her.
- Naliki fears for her education.
- Her only hope is in Tumuka who now works in Nairobi.
- She intends to write to him and later run away so that she can become the first literate Masaai girl.

**THEMES IN THE STORY:****I Greed for man and wealth:**

The parents of Nyamalo are enticed by material things and sell her off.  
The father also plans to sell off naliki in a like manner.

**II Violence against children:**

Nyamalo gets no mercy from her parents as she protest the marriage

**III Betrayal:**

The parents of Nyamalo betrayal her by selling her off.

Nyamalo's mother gives consent to her imposed marriage instead of sharing her feelings.

**IV Injustice:**

The forced marriage of Nyamalo is unjustifiable because it destroys all her dreams, ambitions and future aspirations.

**V The disadvantage of forced marriage:**

There is no cooperation between the bride and bridegroom on the first night of their marriage.

The actions of Nyamalo to her new husband are shameful to her parents.

**VI Exploitation:**

The parents of Nyamalo use their child as a piece of property to bring them money and wealth.

**VII Irresponsibility:**

The parents of Nyamalo fail in their responsibility of educating her and preparing a good future for her instead they abuse her.

**VIII Selfishness:**

Both Ole Sirayo and Ole Timau are selfish people in going after girls who are much younger than them and intending to marry them without their prior knowledge and consent.

## 15.THE INTRUDER PETER SONGA (*UGANDA*)

The story exposes the gap between educated and the uneducated who still follow traditional lifestyles.

In the story, Mungo lives in the city of Dar es Salaam and he visits Engaluka where the following happen;

- He meets two Masaai men.
- The Masaai are amazed and curious at the following;
  - The transistor radio of Mungo.
  - The aeroplane that crosses the sky.
  - The land rover which comes to pick Mungo.
- Mungo asks the Masaai the names of the two mountains and they tell him that they are Oldonyo Lengai and Ondonyo Sambu.
- They also tell him that ‘oldonyo’ means mountain in their Masaai language.
- The Masaai men estimated the cost of the radio in terms of cows.
- Mungo estimates the distance from Engaluka to Dar Es Salaam in terms of walking days (ten sunrises and ten sunsets) and they understand.
- On his way back to Dar Es Salaam Mungo considers Engaluka as a place to transform.
- He envisages a sprawling trading centre with green fields, cattle stalls, meat factory, electricity, new roads, hospitals and amusement parks.
- The Masaai however, are happy with their present situation and this is why Mungo is considered as an “intruder” to them.
- Mungo hears a story of young Masaai man who is withdrawn from studies after elders go to a witch doctor to cast out the spell of school madness out of his head.

## **THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE STORY**

### **I The gap between the educated and the uneducated who still follow tradition life styles:**

Mungo represents the educated and civilized people while the uneducated and uncivilized people are represented by the Masaai.

### **II Generosity and hospitality:**

The two Masaai offer Mungo a gourd of sour milk.

Mungo gives one of the Masaai some coins to buy pombe (local beer)

### **III Different values:**

Although Mungo is fascinated by the beautiful land of Engaluka, he still values city life and returns to Dar Es Salaam.

Although the Masaai are overwhelmed by the modernity of life in Dar Es Salaam, they are not ready to do and stay there.

## 16. THE TOILET: GCINA MHLOPE (*SOUTH AFRICA*)

The author bases the story on her own personal experiences of hardships of urban life. It is set in urban South Africa during the apartheid days. In the story there is a little girl named Mholo who lives in Orange Grove (Jo'burg) with her sister Irene who is a domestic worker.

Mholo has just finished her education and does not want the respectable professions of teaching and nursing. She wants to become an actress and this is why she comes to Jo'burg.

While living with Irene, she faces the following problems;

- (a) She is living in Irene's room illegally and at the danger of Irene's job.
- (b) The white employers of Irene are strict and segregative.
- (c) She is locked in the room of her sister during week ends.
- (d) When she later gets a job, her friends consider her as a 'bari' (foolish person) because she does not want to have a boy friend to give her lunch.
- (e) On every work day, she has to leave the house at five thirty and wait for the seven-thirty bus.
- (f) She has to wait from four thirty to six thirty in the evening so that she can go to the house without being noticed.
- (g) She waits in a public toilet for her free two hours in the morning and in the evening.
- (h) She fails to go into the house of Irene
- (i) Irene is given day off.
- (j) She is betrayed by barking dogs as she sits on the veranda, waiting for Irene.
- (k) She is supposed to use a candle as her source of light.
- (l) She is not supposed to use tap water but the cold water which was left in the open the previous night.

- (m) She is supposed to put on her shoes outside the gate for the fear of being noticed.
- (n) She has to tiptoe and not walk properly.
- (o) At her work place her supervisor shouts at her for not reporting some thieves.
- (p) She fails to use her usual toilet when she wants to write a story because someone is using it.
- (q) Irene shouts at her for not immediately turning off the alarm in the morning and for leaving the door open.
- (r) At her work place her supervisor shouts at her for not reporting some thieves.
- (s) She fails to use her usual toilet when someone is using it, at the same time she wants to write a story.
- (t) The toilet gets renovated and locked.

While seated on the closed lid of the toilet Mholo reads and writes poems and stories.

## **THEMES DEPICTED IN THE STORY**

### **I The hardships of urban life:**

Mholo fails to find a good place to stay and she has to use a toilet as rendezvous.

She lives in a life of numerous restrictions.

### **II Evils of apartheid:**

The employers of Irene do not allow her to receive her black relatives.

Mholo is sent away even when it is already night time.

### **III Oppression and exploitation:**

Irene is oppressed by her white employers who do not allow her to be visited by any one.

Mholo is exploited at her work place where she gets a salary of only eleven rands.

**IV Ingenuity and creativeness:**

Mholo finds solace in reading and writing while in the toilet.

**V Moral strength:**

Mholo does not follow the advice of Gwendoline to have a boy friend.

The hard situation at her sister's house does not make her lose her morality.



## 17.BINDEH'S GIFT: *SALIF EASMON (SIERRA LEONE)*

This story is based on real Sierra Leone's historical events. It is set in the 19th Century in Kailahun District. The narrator is Kallon, a native administrative clerk and a historian.

He explains the following about Kailondo, a great warrior king of Kailahun;

1. He ruled his own people well but he was a ruthless, fearless foe.
2. He was killing all soldiers who proved cowardly in battle.
3. These soldiers were flung from Kailondo rock into the Moa Falls in order to instill fear in the other soldiers.

While on the Kailondo rock, in the company of his friend Banky Vincent, Kallon tells Mr. Bob Brassfoot the atrocities during the time of war leaders.

He says the following about the reign of Kai Borie;

- He was a ruthless warrior king.
- His reign ended tragically one night when he was attacked by a woman.
- He sent his army to attack his enemy, Gbaserie in his war town.
- Bensali, his nephew (son of his sister) was the commander of his army.

In the story, Bensali uses the following tactics to attack Gbaserie;

1. His soldiers lie in the forest in the afternoon waiting for late night.
2. They scale the mud houses around the town.
3. They set fire to the crowded houses in the town.

However the army of Bensali suffers in the following ways;

- i Their plan fails because they are spied by the soldiers of Gbaserie.
- ii They set fire to a town which is already deserted.
- iii They are trapped by the soldiers of Gbaserie who come from the bush.

- iv** Many of Bensali's soldiers are slaughtered although they fight hard.
- v** The young brothers of Bensali die at his side.
- vi** Bensali is wounded on the upper arm and he retreats to his land. This is after killing baserie with a spear.

Kai Borie plans the execution of Bensati and justifies it as follows.

- (a) Everybody is death's child and can not escape her when she comes.
- (b) Death in honour is much better than death in disgrace.
- (c) He lost his left eye and got the scarred face when he fought and killed a leopard.
- (d) In war men are nothing if they are not men.
- (e) Manhood means courage and a willingness to sacrifice life for common good.
- (f) Bensali is no longer his nephew nor his heir but a soldier in his army.
- (g) Other men's nephews were ruled death for a similar crime.
- (h) Bensali's unborn son should be the heir.

Bindeh, the wife of Bensali intervenes in the following ways;

- i** She goes to the forest at night where no woman has a right to be.
- ii** She wails at the top of her voice without any restraint of grief.
- iii** She begs for Bensali's life from Kai Borie while in tears
- iv** She is accompanied by her grand mother who carries a basket.
- v** She reminds Kai Borie that Bensali served him well for five years.
- vi** She explains how she and family hate wars:
- vii** She explains that she has been married to Bensali for six months only.
- viii** She tears her clothes and exposes her body to show her three months pregnancy of Bensali

- ix She begs not to be made a widow and her son an orphan.
- x She stuffs her cloth in her mouth and chokes herself.
- xi She offers a gift in the basket to Kai Borie for the release of her husband, believing as she says that gifts can move kings.
- xii She throws the basketful of snakes over Kai Borie's head.
- xiii She flies into the Moa Falls where she vanishes.

Kai Borie dies from the bites of the poisonous snakes. Before his death, he makes Bensali and the soldiers taken an oath and swear that Bensali will be the next king. Realising that life must go on even after the death of his wife and uncle, Bensali becomes the next king.

## THEMES IN THE STORY

### I Cruelty and ruthlessness:

Kai Borie is so cruel not only to other soldiers but also to his own nephew and heir to his throne who is nearly killed by him.

### II Courage and bravery:

Kai Borie once fought and killed a leopard.

Bensali attacks and kills Gbaserie.

Bensali is not afraid of death at the Kailondo rock,

Bindeh goes to the forest at night.

She pleads with the king and later kills him.

### III Unnecessary (Injustice):

Kai Borie does not consider what Bensali accomplished in battle.

He also does not consider him as the only heir to the throne since the king himself has no children of his own.

### IV Death:

This is used as a punishment for all cowards of war.

It is also used to instill fear in soldiers.

There are some people who seem not to fear it such as Kai Borie, Bensali and Bindeh.

**V Ingenuity:**

Bindeh uses different tactics to convince the king to release her husband. She uses the tactic of the basket full of snakes in order to kill the king.

**VI Love and compassion:**

Bindeh shows her love for Bensali by risking and later giving her life, Bensali shows his love for Kai Borie by mourning his death as if he was his own father and not remembering his cruel acts.

**VII Humility:**

Bensali does not jump at the opportunity of becoming the next king but says it is useless to be a king after the death of Bindeh and Kai Borie.

**VIII Sacrifice:**

Bindeh sacrifices her life for Bensali and other soldiers by getting rid of the terrorist then giving up her own life.

## 18 THE VILLAGE PASTOR LEONARD KIBERA (KENYA)

This story is set in a village of Kenya during the colonial rule of the British. The Mau Mau indigenous inhabitants are in a rebellion trying to expel the colonialist who in turn fights to resist them. In the story there is an old pastor named Reverend K. Mwaura who is widely known as a good man.

The pastor encounters the following problems;

- i His own son Kamau is among the Mau Mau guerilla fighters.
- ii His Sabbath audience is made up of unmovable hordes of sinners as follows;
  - 1 Sinners half asleep.
  - 2 Sinners half drunk.
  - 3 Sinners still smelling of Saturday night's indulgencies.
- iii A bar has been opened near the church by Muriuki
- iv His own son patronises the bar.
- v There is a decrease in church attendance.
- vi There is lack of donations (from the brethren) for the building of a new church.
- vii When he takes his church to Muriuki Bar on Christmas Day and starts a hymn, no one sings with him.
- viii He is interrupted by Muriuki in his sermon.
- ix A lot of evils are manifesting in the village such
- x Unpaid fees for children.
  - No money for wives to run the homes.
  - Kids in tattered shirts.
- xi Muriuki tells the pastor to taste his beer.
- xii Kairu tells the pastor that he can not worship the white man's god because the white man amputated his leg.

- xiii** Very few people from the bar follow him to the church after his sermon.
- xiv** A jonny interrupts his service in the church when he shoots in the air.
- xv** He asks the pastor to produce a terrorist in a minute.
- xvi** The white young soldier (the jonny) refuses to join the service and repent.
- xvii** A lot of people leave his church for Muriuki's Bar as the jonny leaves.

Two years later the pastor dies and he is buried behind the church. A lot of people attend his funeral ceremony but soon after the burial they go back to the Muriuki's.

### **THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE STORY:**

#### **I The conflict between the body and the flesh:**

The people want to go the church by the spirit at the same time they are urged by the flesh to go the bar.

#### **II Courage and boldness:**

Pastor Mwaura is courageous in the following ways;

- (a) He goes into Muriuki's Bar to preach.
- (b) He rebukes Muriuki for building his bar close to the church.
- (c) He indirectly attacks Muriukias a Mau-Mau follower and spy of the white man.
- (d) He rebukes his church members for not donating to church project
- (e) He orders the young white soldier (jonny) to get out of the church.
- (f) He embarrasses the jonny by showing him his dirty muddy boots.
- (g) He invites the jonny to join the service (but he says 'duty calls')

#### **III Blasphemy and open defiance to the church:**

Muriuki defies the church by building his bar close to the church.

There is sacrilegious singing and blasphemous songs coming from the Muriuki's.

**IV Patience and endurance:**

The people in Muriuki's Bar listen to the Pastor although they are not interested.

Muriuki is patient with the pastor's accusations.

The pastor endures insult of Muriuki; to taste beer.

The jonny is patient with the pastor in the church.

**V. Deception:**

The drunkards deceived the pastor when they take refuge in the church.

**VI. Hypocrisy:**

Many people become Christians on Sundays but return to their sins after the service.

**VII The power of the holy place and the power of the man of God:**

Terrorists and other people on the run take refuge in the church.

The jonny does not cause trouble in the church.

He obeys the commands of the pastor with apologies.

No one harms the pastor in Muriuki's bar.

**VIII Stony hearts and stereotype minds:**

The people in the village do not adopt Christianity fully. They keep on going back to Muriuki's bar even after the pastor's death and burial.

## 19. IN THE SHADOW OF WAR: *BEN OKRI (NIGERIA)*

This story is set in a village during the troubled period of war. In the there is boy named Omovo who lives with his father. They listen to the radio where they hear about bombings, air raids and that an eclipse will occur. The father finds the news of the eclipse useless as it can not end the war. He lies to Omovo that an eclipse is when the world gets dark and strange things happen such as the dead walking about and singing. He also says that Heclipses hate children and eat them too. Then he pours libation to his ancestral spirits.

Through the window Omovo sees a woman who is peculiar in the following ways:

1. She has black veil over her head.
2. She has been passing by the house for the past seven days.
3. She always carries a basket.
4. She always disappears in the forest after the village paths.
5. She carries a basket.
6. She attracts the attention of many children.
7. Some children say that she has no shadow.
8. Other children say that her feet never touch the ground.
9. When children throw things at her, she does not flinch, quicken her pace or look back.
10. A soldier tells Omovo that she is a spy of their enemies.

Omovo follows the woman behind the soldiers who are also following her and observes following:

- (a) The woman goes into a cave where some voices thank her.
- (b) She reappears from the cave without the basket.
- (c) She is escorted by kwashiorkor stomached children and women ewaring rags.



- (d) Those escorting her leave her reluctantly as if never to see her again.
- (e) She goes to the muddied river where there are horrific things.
- (f) The soldiers catch her and ask her questions but she does not reply.
- (g) One of the soldiers tears off her veil and she spits into his face.
- (h) Her head is bald and disfigured with deep corrugation.
- (i) A bare chested soldier pushes the woman and she falls to the ground.
- (j) The woman howls at the soldiers and they back away.
- (k) A fat soldier shoots at the woman.
- (l) There are dead human bodies with bloated out eyes; at first they look like capsized canoes on the river then later as animals.
- (m) There re some things which look like the following items of sacrifice;
  - Loaves of bread.
  - Gourds of beer.
  - Coca-cola cans.

Omovo is scared by flying owl and he starts running away.

The soldiers begin chasing him. He trips over some roots and faints aft.or hitting his head against the ground. The three soldiers pick him to her father. When he comes to, his father tells him to thank the soldiers who are now drinking palm wine with him. Omovo begins to explain everything to the father who, apologetically takes to the soldiers takes him to bed.

## **THEMES DEPICTED IN THE STORY**

### **I Evils of war:**

A lot of people are killed and thrown into the river.

There are daily bombings and casualties as announced on the radio.

There are malnourished children and women in rags.

There are unfinished estates, collapsing fences and an empty cement factory.

**II Courage:**

Omovo follows the woman behind the soldiers to the forest alone.

He does not fear the Heclipse which his father says 'eats children'.

He lies to the soldiers that his name is Heclipse.

The mysterious woman faces the soldiers boldly.

**III Betrayal:**

The woman is a spy working for some enemies that are hiding in the cave.

**IV Superstition:**

The father of Omovo pours libation to the ancestral spirits.

He tries to link the occurrence of the eclipse to the war.

## 20 COUNTRY LOVERS NARDINE GORDIMER (*SOUTH AFRICA*)

This story is set on a farm in a rural area in South Africa during the apartheid Regime. The owner of the farm is a white man named Eysendyck. The black people who work on the farm reside at the farm kraal. Both white and black farm children play together when they are young. Paulus Eysendyck the son of the white farmer plays with the other children. He is very fond of Thebedi, one of the black girls and they fall in love from their childhood.

Paulus and Thebedi show love for each other in the following ways;

- i Paulus brings as a gift to Thebedi a painted box which he made in his woodwork class.
- ii Thebedi gives him a bracelet which she made of brass wire and grey-white beans of castor oil.
- iii She teaches him how to make clay oxen for toy spans.
- iv He brings a red plastic belt as a gift to her.
- v He gives her gilt hoop earrings.
- vi He tells her traveler's tales about school, punishments and the Middleburg town.
- vii She prompts with questions as a good listener.
- viii He still appreciates making love to her after encountering daughters of prosperous white farmers.
- ix She spends nights with him in the white farmer's house when he is away.
- x They still feel for each other even after she is married to Njabulo while he is at veterinary school.
- xi She receives him in the house of Njabulo when she has his baby.
- xii She cooperates with him when he comes to murder the the baby by claiming to feed it yet poisoning it.

Later on Paulus is betrayed by some unknown people and the police dig up the grave and the pathological tests on the baby reveal that it died of liver damage due to insecticide poisoning. Thebedi gives evidence against Paulus in the court

of law but the white judge delays the case for more than a year. The subsequent verdict that is given is that the accused (Paulus) is found not 'guilty'. However, the incident remains a shame to him and his father, the white farmer.

### **THEMES IN THE STORY:**

#### **I. Evils of apartheid:**

This type of government was regarding the blacks as inferior.

This is why Paulus and his family are ashamed of his lovemaking with Thebedi.

It is also the reason why he is about to kill himself instead he just kills the baby.

#### **II Jealous:**

Paulus is jealousy of Njabulo who robs him of his sweetheart and he does not want him to have the coloured child as well.

#### **III Selfishness:**

Paulus goes into the house of Njabulo without his consent and goes to the extent of poisoning the baby in the house.

He does not appreciate the effort which Njabulo took in receiving the poorly fathered baby at its birth.

#### **IV Violence against children:**

Paulus murders the child that is innocent just because of his own licentiousness.

#### **V Injustice (delayed justice):**

The court takes more than a year to complete the trial of Paulus guilty.

This makes Thebedi forget her earlier statements and contradict herself thereby making Paulus guilty free.

#### **VI Honour and disgrace:**

For Thebedi it is honour to be in love with a white boy but for Paulus it is disgrace to make love with a black girl.

## **VII Guilty conscious:**

Thebedi has guilty feelings because of the following:

- She did not tell Paulus that she was pregnant.
- She did not tell him that she was getting married to Njabuto.
- She did not officially announce the end of their relationship.
- She did not tell Nabulo that she was pregnant of Paulus.
- She did not tell Njabulo or anyone that she was in love with Paulus.

## **VIII Cruelty:**

Paulus shows his cruelty by;

Killing the baby.

Threatening to shoot Thebedi.

Not considering the efforts taken by Njabulo receiving the coloured baby.

## **IX Sincere and unfailing love:**

Njabulo shows real love to Thebedi in the following ways:

He is not suspicious of Thebedi's pregnancy even when he knows her

He is commended by the judge when he accompanies her to court.

He welcomes the coloured baby by buying the following;

- A pink plastic bath.
- Six napkins.
- A card of safety pins.
- A cap and booties.
- A dress.
- A tin of Johnson's baby powder.
- He also comforts Thebedi with words and caresses when the baby dies and organizes the burial as if it were his own baby.

## **X Immorality:**

- (a) Paulus and Thebedi indulge in premarital sex.
- (b) They illegally sleep together in the white man's house when he is away.

- (c) Paulus lies to his friends that the bracelet was made by workers at his father's farm.
- (d) Thebedi lies to her father that she got the red plastic belt and the hoop gilt earrings from the white farmer's wife.
- (e) She also lies to her friends that she has a sweetheart very far away on another farm.
- (f) Paulus murders the coloured baby.
- (g) He threatens to shoot Thebedi if she revealed about the murder of the baby.
- (h) Thebedi accommodates Paulus in Njabulo's house.
- (i) She does not reveal about the murder of the baby.

## **XI Fame:**

Paulus is impressive and famous in the following ways;

He starts driving tractors and other farm vehicles at the age of nine.

His parents leave him in charge of the farm over week ends when he is still a young boy.

He gets a driver's licence at the age of eighteen.

He is prosperous at work in soccer; playing in the second, then first team of his school.

The daughters of prosperous white farmers accept his love.

He wins the love of the headgirl of their sister school although he does not like her.

## **XII Unfaithfulness:**

Thebedi shows her unfaithfulness in the following ways;

- (a) She does not tell Paulus about her marriage arrangements to Njabulo.
- (b) She does not tell Njabulo that she was in a relationship with Paulus.
- (c) She does not reveal anything of pregnancy of Paulus.

- (d) She indulges in premarital sex with Paulus.
- (e) She lies to her father that she got the red plastic belt and the hoop gilt ear-rings from the the white farmer's wife.

## 21. THE REFUGEE JAMES APE (*UGANDA*)

This is a sad story about Margaret Abiyo who is a victim of war. She newly graduates from Makerere University with honours in English Language and Literature. She is betrothed to a lecturer in the department of Economics at the university of Nairobi. She is also an artist. She goes to the village to bid farewell to her ageing mother. She is to proceed to Nairobi to wed. On her way, she is forced to cross the border for safety in the neighbouring country where she lives as a refugee.

While living as a refugee, she faces the following hardships;

- She does not have proper kitchen utensils as she uses plastic plates and an aluminium sufuria for all her cooking.
- She has very poor diet as she eats vegetables that nearly make her vomit.
- She uses open fire and the smoke chokes her and irritates her eyeballs.
- There is poor hygiene in the camp as children relieve themselves outside.
- The floor of her hut is made of a rough coarse earth which is also soft and wet.
- She drinks dirty and unhygienic water.
- Her hut is not properly thatched as she can see the sun through it.
- She lives in a social isolation and compulsory solitude.
- She is irritated by three primitive native who visit her to ask for her hand in marriage to one of them.

The men are Wani, Pitcha and Duku. The suitor is Duku. Abiyo asks them to give her time to think and they promise to come back after three days.

She considers Duku contemptuously as follows;

- i He can not save her from misery and starvation.
- ii She does not need his salvation.



- iii** He has very little to offer her.
- iv** He can not discuss the great problems of the modern world.
- v** He can not know how and why Africa could and should unite.
- vi** He can not say anything on economic planning and exploitation.
- vii** He can not compare and contrast the failures and successes of the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.
- viii** He can not say anything on communism.
- ix** He can not say anything on literature.
- x** He can not analyse Christopher Okigbo's poetry.
- xi** He can not explain and pronounce upon logistics.
- xii** He can not know why La guma is a great writer, how Mazrui sometimes awful and why Achebe is a towering giant in African literary field.

When the three men come again she is so angry and she decides to rebuff the men in English and not their Kuku language. The men rise to go. Duku and Pitcha do not understand anything which she says. Wani understands English and he is the last one to go after speaking a few English words. Duku considers the rebuff as an insult but Wani tells him that it was just an explanation. Some days later the men know the truth about Abiyo and concede the fact that a book should not be judged by its cover.

## **THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE STORY:**

### **I The evils of war:**

Abiyo is victimized by war in the following ways;

She fails to go to Nairobi after her wedding.

She can not get a job after her graduation since she goes into exile.

She lives in very poor conditions at the refugee camp.

### **II Judging a book by its cover:**

The three men are deceived by Abiyo's looks in the refugee camp not knowing her intellectual achievements.

**III Different value:**

The three men boast about their property (cows, milk and cassaw fields which are nothing to Abiyo.

She values intellectual prowess very much.

**IV Patience and endurance:**

Margaret Abiyo is patient with the three men although she is irritated by their proposal for marriage.

She is also ready and able to endure the present hardships than to get married to run of low status than herself.

## 22. CERTAIN WINDS FROM THE SOUTH AMA ATA AIDOO (*GHANA*)

In this story, Issa is married to Hawa and she has ten day old baby named Fuseni. He comes at night to talk to M'ma Asana, his mother in law when Hawa and the baby are asleep.

He tells her the following;

- i He says that he wants to go to the south to find some work.
- ii He says that in the south the government pays the people who cut grass.
- iii He says that he does not want to watch Hawa and Fuseni starve.
- iv He reminds M'ma Asana that the kora went bad.
- v He also says that the current trade is not good.
- vi He says that he has left everything in the hands of Amadu.
- vii He says that he will be back perhaps by the next Ramadan

In the morning M'ma Asana goes to Hawa and explains the following (the writer uses monologue);

- (a) She says that her family has unlucky females who can not hold men.
- (b) She tells Hawa that Issa has gone to the south.
- (c) She says that he went the previous night.
- (d) She says that he could not take her because of the baby that has unhealed navel.
- (e) She explains that he could not watch her and Fuseni starve.
- (f) She says he is going to the south to find work.
- (g) She tells Hawa not to walk out of since he is not at the door.
- (h) She tells her not to behave like a baby.

- (i) She explains that Issa wants to catch the government bus that leaves Tamale early in the morning.
- (j) She tells her not to weep since he will bring money to look after her.
- (k) She tells he the story of Memunat who fell in love with a soldier when somebody had already paid the bride price and later became a prostitute.
- (l) She tells her the story of her own father who left for the south when she was only three days old and died there.
- (m) She explains how she (Hawa) showed strength in managing to survive during hard times of her infancy.
- (n) She tells her about the war between the English and the German which was involving a lot of black people.
- (o) She also explains that she refused to travel to the south to get compensation for her husband's death as no amount of money could equal him)
- (p) She says that she wants to get the biggest smoked fish and make a real good sauce.

### THEMES IN THE STORY

#### **I The plight of African women in society:**

They are often abandoned by their husbands who go to look for jobs.

#### **II Poverty:**

Issa leaves his family because he does not want to see Hawa and Fuseni starving.

There is little he can do to cater for his family because the kora went bad and the trade is not favourable.

#### **III Injustice in marriage:**

Issa leaves for the south without knowledge and consent of his wife.

He does not consider her condition and that of the baby.

**IV Evils of conscription (force recruitment in the army):**

The father of Hawa dies in the war between the British and the Germans yet they do not know why they are fighting.

Due to conscription Africans were fighting against fellow Africans according to their respective colonial masters.

**V Importance of comfort during hard times:**

M'ma Asana fails to comfort Hawa when her husband leaves.

She even discourages her in the following-ways;

She scolds her for weeping over her husband.

She says Issa will not be back soon, may be after next Ramadan.

She explains that Hawa's own father went to the south and did not come back but died there.

## 23. FIREFLY ADEWALE MAJA PEARCE (*NIGERIA*)

This is a tragic story which is set in Lagos, urban Nigeria.

In the story, a new family leaves their village and travels to Lagos for Employment. After the man gets a job, their child falls sick because of the long journey.

The woman accuses the man for his decision of going to Lagos because of the following;

1. Her father would have given him a job.
2. There is no relative and they do not know anyone in Lagos.
3. The man has no money, even one naira for the child's treatment.
4. She believes Lagos is not a good place.

In the hopeless situation the man observes a firefly hovering the room and he goes out. The woman thinks he is running away from them. When he returns, the child is dead and the firefly is still hovering above the lamp. He stretches his hand and catches it in his palm. The woman packs her things ready to go as she no longer needs him.

### THEMES DEPICTED IN THE STORY

#### I Selfishness

The man does not want to be employed by his father in law but wants to be his own man.

He takes the woman to Lagos without her consent.

#### II Superstition

The man is too suspicious of the firefly in the room.

The wife believes that Lagos is not a good place for no clear reasons.

#### III Poverty and unemployment

The new family moves to Lagos because of lack of employment.

They live in very poor conditions that they can hardly afford one naira for the treatment of their child.

**IV Evils of war;**

The man explains that soldiers destroyed their things and this is why they are in this situation.

**V Stubbornness;**

The man does not want to listen to his wife's suggestions and objections. He does not even concede his mistake in travelling to Lagos.

## 24. THE PIG DORIS LESSING (*ZIMBABWE*)

This story is set on white man's farm in Zimbabwe. On a pay day pays all his workers. He calls their families to warn them about stealing maize cobs from his farm. He mandates Jonas, an old labourer to shoot at anything loitering the farm; bucks, baboons, pigs and even human pigs with a .33 rifle.

Jonas does not want to work as a guard this year because;

1. He does not want to live his new younger wife all night.
2. A younger man visits his pretty young wife when he is away.
3. The white farmer does not help in solving his family problems.

Jonas has the following other problems;

- (a) His old wife is fond of mocking him.
- (b) His young wife mocks him with her actions.
- (c) His job involves going out into the cold, hostile and dark night.
- (d) A feeling of jealousy eats him up.

On a Saturday there is a beer drink and the young man comes in the evening and goes into the house of the Jonas' young wife. Jonas hides from the young man and later follows him when he comes out of the house.

He is drunk and tired. As they reach the shooting platform in the mealie fields, Jonas shoots the young man to death and calls him a pig.

### **THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE STORY:**

#### **I Betrayal:**

Jonas is betrayed by his fellow farmers who keep on stealing from the white man and put him into temptation of shooting them.

He is betrayed by his wives who give him problems at home.

He is also betrayed by the white farmer who gives him a night duty when he already knows his family problems.



**II Futility of jealous:**

Jonas is too jealousy of his young wife to do his job properly.

He does not guard the field for the the whole week and wild animals would be raiding the young plants during this period.

Out of jealous, Jonas shoots at the young man who is not a thief and this could put him in trouble in case of proper prosecution.

**III Promiscuity:**

Jonas is an old man but he marries another wife who is too young.

The young wife of Jonas sleeps with another man in Jonas' own house.

The young man goes for somebody's wife and sleeps with her in her husband's house.

**IV Cruelty:**

Jonas is a cruel man who shoots to death his rival in pretence of shooting a thief (a pig)

The white man, boss of Jonas also shows cruelty by commanding Jonas to shoot at anything loitering the farm, even human beings.

## 25. OUT OF DARKNESS ALEX LA GUMA (*SOUTH AFRICA*)

In this story, the author explains his experiences as a political prisoner.

The story exposes the horrors and squalor of prison life as follows;

1. There is a sharp smell of unwashed bodies and and sweaty blankets.
2. The heat in the cell is as thick as cotton wool making it like an oven.
3. Prison guards lash prisoners with their belts.
4. Prison guards insult prisoners as black bastards.
5. There is poor hygiene as some prisoners spit any how.
6. There is a sharp acrid smell of ammonia from the bucket latrine.
7. Prisoners fight each other.
8. Smiley Abrams beats up other prisoners.
9. The clothes and blankets are infested with lice.
10. Prisoners scratch themselves and fail to sleep.

The author tells us the following about the man who is nicknamed Ou Kakkalak or Old Cockroach;

- i He is in the seventh year of his ten year sentence for culpable homicide.
- ii He is insane but his insanity is of a gentle quality.
- iii He is friendly enough although mostly withdrawn.
- iv He is either a source of humour to the other prisoners or he is completely ignored.
- v He has frequently spells in which he seems to be talking to Cora or Joey.
- vi He calls Smiley Abrams “the ape-man” and king of the cave.

- vii** He is tall, thin and bony.
- viii** He is as dark as burnt leather.
- ix** He has slightly negroid features and kinky hair growing grey.
- x** He is a quite educated man and once served as a school master.
- xi** He was doing a university course while teaching at a junior school.
- xii** He was in love with Cora from his childhood as they grew up together in Dublin Street in Woodstock.
- xiii** He was working hard in order to have everything for Cora when they are married.
- xiv** He continued loving Cora even when she started going to white people's places and drifted from him.
- xv** He talked to Cora and pleaded with her about her behavior but she did not take any notice of what he said.
- xvi** He became angry, wept, raved and groveled for Cora.
- xvii** He was ready to lose his entire respect just to keep her.
- xviii** His friend, Joey called him a damn fool going off over a damn play white bitch.
- xix** He lost his head and hit Joey who cracked his skull on something and died.

The Old Coackroach explains the following about Cora;

- (a) She was very beautiful.
- (b) Her skin was soft, smooth and the colour of a rich cream.
- (c) She began to go to white place's places, bioscopes (cinemas) and cafes
- (d) She was getting invitations to the homes of white people who were thinking that she was really white.
- (e) She was going to parties and dances.
- (f) She drifted away from Old Cockroach who kept on loving her.

- (g) She said that Old Cockroach was selfish and was trying to deny her of the good things of this life.
- (h) She turned on the Old Cockroach and told him to go to hell.
- (i) She slapped the Old Coackroach on the face and called him a “black nigger”.

## **THEMES DEPICTED IN THE STORY**

### **I Squalor and brutality of prison life:**

There is a massive violation of the rights of the prisoners and the prisoners also illtreat each other.

### **II Love of education:**

Old Cockroach shows his interest in education by pursuing a university course at a later age when he is already a teacher.

He also talks in his spells about Romeo and Juliet and the novel entitled “Treasure Island”.

### **III Justice:**

The ten year sentence given to Old Cockroach is justifiable since he did not kill Joey intentionally but inadvertently.

May be it was also out of insanity that that Old Cockroach hi,# nd killed his friend.

### **IV Cruel and ruthlessness:**

Smiley Abrams ill-treats other prisoners by beating and trampling over them.

Prison guards lash prisoners with leather belts.

They also insult them as black bastards.

### **V Selfishness and pride:**

Cora takes advantage of her fair skin to go out with white people and neglect Old Cockroach.

She does not consider his hurt feelings but hurt him further by insulting him.

## 26. ASEMKA AYI KWEI ARMA (*GHANA*)

Although the author of this story is a man, he uses a female narrator and tells the story as a woman. In the story, there is a woman named Asemka who lives in the household of Ainoo probably, as a housemaid.

She complains about the following;

1. Mr. Ainoo does not respect for other people.
2. He does not greet.
3. He tells her to mind her own business when she offers to sweep his hall.
4. Hes does not take her advice to send her daughter, Essie away from his new wife who is not much order than herself.
5. Mr. Mensah the new neighbour does not show interest in her.
6. He gives short responses when she speaks to him.
7. Mr. Ainoo is angry and hard on her when she goes to see Essie who is alone in the hospital after being impregnated by Mr. Mensah.

Essie shows her bad behaviour in the following ways;

- (a) She quarrels with her step mother.
- (b) She always passes by Mr. Mensah's window.
- (c) She talks to him through the window of his house many times.
- (d) She goes to the house of Mr. Mensah at night.
- (e) She lies to her stepmother that she went to visit her grand mother when infact she was in Mr. Mensah's house.

Asemka observes the following signs of pregnancy in Essie;

- i She grew beautiful and soft.
- ii The water of her eyes grew cleaner.

- iii She is slow and careful.
- iv The colour of her face is not dark (but light)
- v Her palm is almost white.

Asemka does not reveal anything about Essie's pregnancy, because she does not want to trouble the peace of Mr. Ainoo whose pride does not break.

Mr. Mensah leaves the compound secretly just as he had come and no one knows where he is gone. Asemka fails to understand both Mr. Ainoo and Mr. Mensah because the former chooses to be hard and the latter chooses to be alone and hard.

## **THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE STORY**

### **I No man is an island:**

Mr. Ainoo chooses to live hard, selfish and proud life but this not benefit him because he fails to get the information about his daughter.

Mr. Mensah claims that he is happy to live alone but later on he begins to cheat on the daughter Mr. Ainoo.

### **II Pride:**

Mr. Ainoo does not greet Asemka

He does not allow her to do some house hold chores for him.

He is hard on her when she visits his daughter in hospital.

Mr. Mensah gives short responses to Asemka whenever she speaks to him.

### **III Selfishness:**

Mr. Mensah impregnates Essie and runs away from responsibility.

### **IV Self elevation/boastfulness:**

Both Mr. Ainoo and Mr. Mensah are pompous characters.

They consider Asemka as a low woman and do not wanted to associate with her.

### **V Provocation:**

Asemka is a provocative woman.

She shows much interest in other people's businesses.

She is so nagging and does not want to mind her own business.

**27. NOORJEHAN AHMED ESSOP (SOUTH AFRICA)**

In this story the narrator tells us the following about Noorjehan;

- She was an intelligent girl in his matriculation English class.
- She was not more than five feet in height.
- She had a smooth open forehead.
- Her hair was auburn shading to brown colour.
- She had dark eyes.
- She was always accompanied by a scent of perfume.
- She was filling him with happiness because of her literary sensitivity.
- She left school suddenly in October when her parents decided to keep her at home.

Noorjehan writes letters to the narrator who is also her teacher in which she says that;

- (a) She left school because her parents want her to prepare herself in anticipation of a marriage proposal.
- (b) She has no choice but to obey.
- (c) The go betweens of the boy/man came the previous month.
- (d) Her mother told her to prepare tea for the go-betweenes and this enabled them to scrutinize her.
- (e) Her father told her that she would be married before long.
- (f) When she protested, her mother declared that God punishes disobedient children.
- (g) The teacher should please come and speak to her father to dissuade him from forcing her into marriage.
- (h) She is sorry for troubling him.
- (i) She is to be engaged at the end of November.
- (j) The talk about her gives her frightening significance.

- (k) At her engagement, her future husband came with his family and friends.
- (l) The gifts which he brought are still in boxes unopened and the diamond ring on her dressing table will perhaps never be worn.
- (m) The future husband is a stranger to her and she can not love him.
- (n) She cried bitterly in her bedroom after her imposed engagement.
- (o) Her mother tried to comfort her by saying that she also did not know her father before they were married.
- (p) The mother also said that the future husband is from a wealthy family when her own father is just a shop assistant.
- (q) The marriage to a man she neither loves nor hates, would be a marriage of self- obliteration.
- (r) She has a terrible longing for her prince to rescue her.
- (s) The girl who meets her prince in the end is lucky.
- (t) Her wedding day is to be arranged the coming week-end and she is seized by strange indefinable fear.
- (u) She does not know what to do in order to escape her fate.
- (v) He should meet her at Park Station at 7 O'clock in the evening.

When they meet at Park Station in the evening, they discuss the following;

- i She says that only the teacher knows that she has left home.
- ii She explains that she is taking the 8:30 train to Cape Town.
- iii She tells him that she has an uncle who she hopes can help her.
- iv She believes that no one would want to marry a girl who runs away from home.
- v He suggests that she should tell her parents that she would not go through with the wedding.
- vi She says that her feelings do not count with them.
- vii She asks him when he intends to marry.



viii He explains that he does not yet intend to marry but to get engaged soon.

ix He asks her to write him.

x She promises to keep her teacher informed as a dutiful pupil.

xi He tells her of some people he knows in Capetown.

xii She says that she will be glad to meet them.

xiii He writes names and addresses of the people so that she can go to them in case she needs help.

xiv Giving him her hand she gives him a goodbye with an implicit rebuke.

It is only after she has left that the teacher feels guilty for being so blind to the romantic image which she had of him. Her words resonate in his mind as he goes home.

## **THEMES IN THE STORY**

### **I Violence against children:**

The parents of Noorjehan perpetrate violence against her by forcing her to get married at an early age to a man she does not know, love or hate.

The parents do not take any of her excuses or pleas.

### **II Different values:**

Noorjehan and her teacher value education while her parents value marriage.

### **III Exploitation:**

The parents of Noorjehan want to use her as a property in order to alleviate the family's poverty.

### **IV Evil traditional customs:**

It is according to the Indian traditional customs that Noorjehan is to be married off.

This is evident from the fact that the mother of Noorjehan was also married in a similar manner.

It seems that this tradition does not even value education for the girl child and this is why the father of Noorjehan said that he knew that marriage and not education was the best thing for his daughter.

### **V Ingenuity:**

Noorjehan plans her escape in a very creative and unemotional manner such that her parents do not suspect anything.

### **VI Desperation:**

It is out of desperation that Noorjehan falls in love with her teacher although she fails to express it clearly to him.

She considers the teacher as a better and safer choice because she knows him better than the suitor that she does not know.

### **VII Prudence and responsibility:**

The teacher does want to take advantage of Noorjehan's desperation and abuse her but he tries to help her genuinely.

He is self controlled, prudent and responsible.

### **VIII Betrayal:**

The parents of Noorjehan betrays her by forcing her into an early marriage against her wish, ambitions and aspirations.

### **IX Conflict between generations in a family:**

Noorjehan's parents represent the older generation which is trying to impose its will on the younger generation represented by Noorjehan and the younger generation is rebelling.

### **X Cruelty and insensitivity:**

The parents of Noorjehan, especially her mother does not consider her feelings of disapproval for the proposed marriage but continues to force her all the same even with religious threats.

### **XI Greed for wealth:**

It is because of their love for wealth that the parents are keen to force Noorjehan into early marriage as expressed in her mother's appreciation of the man's wealthy background.

## 28. THE GIRL WITH A TWISTED FUTUREMIA COUTO (*MOZAMBIQUE*)

This is a story which exposes the plight of poor people in society. In this story there is a poor man named Joseldo Bastante who works as a village mechanic.

He has twelve children and fails to take care of them. He hears the story of a contortionist who is engaged by an impressario in the city to be performing contortionism and make money. The lorry driver also tells him that through the shows the impresario has accumulated a lot of money that fills cartons, boxes and cooking pots.

Joseldo orders her daughter, Filomeninha to become a contortionist and she suffers in the following ways;

- i He forces her to practice bending to get the head backwards as far as the floor and vice versa.
- ii Her progress in gymnastics is too slow for the father.
- iii He ties her to a drum at night to curve her back.
- iv He pours hot water on her in the morning to soften her bones.
- v She is over bent backwards.
- vi Her blood flow is irregular.
- vii Her bones are disjointed.
- viii She complains of pains and dizziness.
- ix Her father does not allow her to sleep on the mat when she begs because of a lot of pains inside her body.
- x She fails to walk and suffer from bouts of vomiting.
- xi Her father warns her not to be a vomitist but contortionist.
- xii The father makes her put on a very big dress belonging to her mother on their way to the city.
- xiii He does not understand her when she shivers because of fever.

- xiv He tells her not to burst the stitches of his coat by her trembling.
- xv The impresario is not interested in her contortionism and he says that she is sick.
- xvi Joseldo becomes interested in her teeth when the impresario explains that he wants in guys with strong teeth to grind wood and chew nails.
- xvii She falls dead, twisted and weightless on her father's lap while in the train on their way back home.

## **THEMES DEPICTED IN THE STORY**

### **I The plight of poor people in society:**

Joseldo is trying different means to get out of poverty by gathering a lot of news that can help him.

### **II Exploitation:**

Joseldo tries to use his daughter in order to get his family out of poverty.  
The impresario makes a lot of money by the contortionist that he employs.

### **III Cruelty, ruthlessness and insensitivity:**

Joseldo does not take any complaints made by his daughter  
He does not understand her when she feels a lot of pain and when she falls sick.

### **IV Obedience and submission:**

Filomeninha takes all the orders of her father as a child;

- (a) To begin gymnastics.
- (b) To be tied to a drum.
- (c) To put on a big dress .
- (d) To travel to the city.

### **V Sacrifice:**

Filomeninha gives up her life because of the demand of her father who said "you can't wish for riches without sacrifices".

**VI Rumour mongering:**

Joseldo gets rumours from different drivers and uses these rumours to seek fortune in the city (he sets his ears as antennae in search of news)

## 29. THE MUSIC OF THE VIOLIN NJABULO S. NDEBELE (SOUTH AFRICA)

This story is set in urban South Africa, in the past when there is apartheid and segregation. In the story there is a boy named Vukani who is compounded in the following problems;

- He fails to concentrate on his homework because of the noise coming from his parents who are entertaining Dr. and Mrs Zwane in the living room.
- He fears that the parents will call him to play the violin for the visitors.
- The violin which his parents gave him is a source of both pain and pleasure.
- He is forced to carry the violin to school on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
- The violin is a source of wonder and ridicule among his friends.
- One day at school, his violin gets missing when some boys hide it.
- Topsana mocks him by calling on him to kiss her to soothe his heart for the missing violin.
- Sarah, Gwendolene and Manana laugh at him as he is mocked by Topsana.
- His mother is very angry with him when she finds the violin on the door step.
- The mother also calls him ungrateful for his well furnished bedroom which according to her is like that of a white boy.
- He is humiliated in the city by a gang of boys who call him “the music man”
- Bhukah the leader of the gang grabs him by his collar and the knot of his tie and jerks him violently.

- Bhuka also insults him by saying that he wants his sister (Teboho) and asks him the tune which he will play when he (Bhuka) will be on top of her.
- Bhukah gives him a shove at the chest that he reels backwards and falls on his back.
- His mother does not understand his suffering in town because of the violin and calls it their ignorance (of the gang of boys)
- His parents force him to play the violin for Dr. and Mrs Zwane.
- His mother beats him for refusing to play the violin for the visitors.

## **THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE STORY**

### **I Conflict between generations in a family:**

This is clear in the relationship between Vukani together with her sister Teboho and their parents.

### **II Evils of apartheid:**

It is due to the apartheid that Vukani and his parents live in Soweto a suburb where their lifestyle can not be properly understood by fellow blacks such as Bhuka and the gang.

Due to the apartheid Vukani can not be wondered or ridiculed.

### **III Different values:**

The mother of vukani values the property more than the children. Vukani and Teboho value freedom more than property. Pride and boastfulness:

The parents of vukani elevate themselves so much so that they want to show off with whatever is in their house.

### **IV Oppression:**

The school curriculum in the story is bent at brain washing Africa pupils so that they should appreciate the coming of the Boers.

Mr. Maseko the teacher is sucked for telling the pupils the truth about the meaningful freedom.

**V Blind following:**

The parents of Vukani together with Dr. Zwane and his wife support the apartheid government which is ill-treating blacks.

For no apparent reason, Mrs Zwane supports the Jews who work with the Boers.

**VI Cruelty:**

- (a) The mother of Vukani beats him for refusing to play the violin.
- (b) She also slaps his sister Teboho for breaking a piece of china.
- (c) Bhuka manhandles Vukani.
- (d) Mrs.Yende the primary school teacher beats up pupils without proper reasons especially when she is wearing her red dress.
- (e) Vukanis father as the inspector for schools inspect Mr.Mabaso (a teacher) without giving him any notice.

**VII Enslavement:**

- (a) The parents of Vukani enslave him by forcing him to carry the violin.
- (b) His mother calls him ungrateful for his well furnished room.
- (c) She beats up Teboho because of the piece of china.
- (d) The parents force vukani to play the violin for their visitors even when he has some home work to do.

**VIII Insensitivity:**

The mother of Vukani cares much about property than the welfare of the children.

She fails to understand how Vukani is humiliated and suffers because of the violin.



### 30. GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM STEVE CHIMOMBO (MALAWI)

In this story there is a boy named Ndazona, the son of Mwaonekera who is irritated by the following;

- He fails to concentrate on his homework because of the conversations between his mother and his grandfather.
- He serves the octogenarian grandfather (Akunjira) with Kachasu, the home distilled gin and its fumes sting his mouth, nose, eyes and swirl into his lungs almost choking him.
- He dreads beings sent at night for refill or replacements of kachasu.
- He remembers how his he fell off the bicycle when previously sent to buy kachasu in the evening.
- He remembers how his father was beaten by Ndakulapa, the neighbour.
- His own mother is suspected to be in a lover affair with Ndakulapa.
- He also remembers how his father pushed his mother against the corner of the cupboard and injured her severely.
- Akunjira, the grandfather tells him that his father started drinking at his age.
- He remembers how his father hit his mother in the belly when she was pregnant leading to miscarriage.
- Akunjira offers him kachasu to drink.
- Nkhutukumve and his gang at school call him a coward and a girl.
- The grandfather also calls him a coward and a girl when he refuses to drink some kachasu.
- He fails to concentrate at his study after being confused by the grandfather.

## THEMES IN THE STORY

### **I Industriousness (hard working spirit) :**

Ndazona spends about four hours studying and he continues studying although he feels a lot of pain in the body due to fatigue.

He complains when he is interrupted.

Mwaonekera, the father of Ndazona dug a water channel from Mzimundilinde River into his Village.

### **II Courage:**

Ndazona accepts to go on night errands to buy kachasu.

He refuses to drink kachasu when Akunjira asks him to do so.

### **III Violence against women/Cruelty:**

Mwaonekera pushes his wife against the corner of the cupboard.

He hits her in the belly when she is pregnant.

### **IV Obedience:**

Ndazona accepts to serve his grandfather with kachasu.

He helps his mother with household chores.

He accepts to go on night errands to buy kachasu

He obeys his father when he says “Go back to your room” as he fights with Ndakulapa and when he is beating his wife (Ndazonas mother)

### **V Moral strength:**

Ndazona refuses to drink kachasu.

He refuses to drink and smoke with Nkhutukumve and his gang at school.

### **VI Spiritual mindedness:**

Ndazona takes the church programme on the following day seriously.

He reminds Akunjira of his own Sunday programme.

He reads the Bible before he goes to bed.



