



Manonmaniam Sundaranar University

DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

TIRUNELVELI - 627 012, TAMILNADU

M.A ENGLISH (FIRST SEMESTER)

African Literature

(From the Academic Year 2021 - 2022)

Prepared by

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M.A. ENGLISH – I YEAR

AFRICAN LITERATURE

Objectives:

- To familiarize with the social and political consciousness and economic crisis of Africa.
- To make learners aware of various African traditions and cultures through representative texts of African Literature in English

Course Outcomes:

C.O. No.	Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to	PSOs Addressed	Cognitive Level
CO 1	Understand the various genres and culture of Africa.	A, C	K1, K2
CO 2	Familiarize themselves with the basic concepts and assumptions conveyed in the texts.	B, D	K2
CO 3	Develop a realization that literature fosters humanistic awareness and attitudes.	B, C, D	K2, K5
CO 4	Analyse and comprehend Africa's reality through its narratives, protests against colonization, struggle for independence, African pride and hope for the future.	E, F	K2, K4
CO 5	Assess Africa through specific forms of literary expression from the continent and the diaspora.	B, C, E	K4, K5
CO 6	Demonstrate experience with, and increased confidence in, developing their own analyses of selected works of African literature and use this for developing their own research questions and hypotheses.	E, F, G	K6

K1 – Remember, K2 – Understand, K3 – Apply, K4 – Analyse, K5 – Evaluate, K6 – Create

UNIT I – POETRY

David Diop	:	Close to You
Rasaq Malik	:	Tonight in My Country
Ama Ata Aidoo	:	When the Bead Speaks
Lilian A. Aujo	:	The Eye of Poetry

UNIT II – PROSE

Frantz Fanon	:	On National Culture
Nelson Mandela	:	Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela. (Chapter 2)
Chinua Achebe	:	Colonialist Criticism

UNIT III – SHORT STORY

Nadine Gordimer	:	Some Monday for Sure
Oyet Sisto Ocen	:	In the Plantation
Ben Okri	:	What the Tapster Saw

UNIT IV - DRAMA

Athol Fugard	:	Master Harold and the Boys
Wole Soyinka	:	The Strong Breed

UNIT V - FICTION

Buchi Emecheta	:	The Bride Price
Ngugi WaThiong'o	:	A Grain of Wheat

Unit 1: Poems

Close to You

-David Mandessi Diop

About the Author:

David Mandessi Diop was born to a Senegalese father and a Cameroonian mother on 9 July 1927 in Bordeaux, France. He began writing poetry while still in school, and his poems began appearing in *Presence Africaine*. He made a name for himself writing Negritude while in Paris. His art is understood as a critique of colonialism and aversion to colonial control. Diop wanted an autonomous Africa, like many other Negritude writers at the time. He is known as the “voice of the voiceless” in the movement.

His work expresses his aversion to colonial rulers as well as his longing for a free Africa. He is known for his contribution to the Negritude literary movement. In 1960, at the age of 33, he died in an air disaster.

His only collection of poems, *Coups de pilon*, was published by *Présence Africaine* in 1956; it was posthumously published in English as *Hammer Blows*, translated and edited by Simon Mondo and Frank Jones (African Writers Series, 1975). David Diop has become the first French novelist to win the International Booker prize for translated fiction with *At Night All Blood Is Black*, his first novel translated into English.

Text:

*Close to you I have regained my name
My name long hidden beneath the salt of distances
I have regained eyes no longer veiled by fevers
And your laugh like a flame making holes in the dark
Has given Africa back to me beyond the snows of yesterday
Ten years of my love
And mornings of illusion and wreckage of ideas
And sleep peopled with alcohol
Ten years and the breath of the world has poured its
pain upon me
Pain that loads the present with the flavor of tomorrows
And makes of love an immeasurable river
Close to you I have regained the memory of my blood*

And necklaces of laughter around the days

Days that sparkle with joys renewed.

Essay:

David Diop One of the famous west African poet known for Negritude literary movement. Most of his works were related to condemnation of Colonialism and depend towards colonial rule. All this works mostly based on the anti- colonial thoughts. This poem ‘close to you’ was published on “coups de pylon” with fourteen lines. Here the poet tries to expose the protest against the colonist. There was a hope for freedom. In the past tradition of Africa. This poem was written parallel to” Africa”. Diop speaks about the people of Africa and their agonies under the control of colonist. He begins the poem with optimism that their land was about to get freedom for the nation He says that they are separated under the name the salt of distances. He exclaims that his nation has woken up and recovered from the fever of slavery and will enjoy the light of freedom. He says that the colonisers have made them sleep with the alcohol and the gap of ten years of gap or separation from the home land creates a strong pain in the heart of the narrator. He says that they spend their present time by hoping good about the future. He says love is like a immeasurable river. The poet says that only in his native land he could find and feel his real identity and feels complete. He says that one day or the other the people will wear the necklace of joy and happiness of freedom. He ends the poem in an optimistic view hoping that one day they will be free to breathe the air of freedom.

Tonight In My Country

-Rasaq Malik

About the author:

Rasaq Malik’s work has appeared or will appear in Salt Hill, Prairie Schooner, Crab Orchard Review, Rattle, New Orleans Review, Spillway, Poet Lore, and other publications. For his poetry “Elegy,” published in One, he received Honorable Mention in the 2015 Best of Net. His poems nominated for the Pushcart Prize by Rattle and Poet Lore in 2017. In 2017, he was a finalist for Brunel International African Poetry Prize. In 2018, he was a finalist for the Sillerman Prize for African Poets. He loves to write poems and so people called him hunter poet. His best known work is “In Another World”.

Text:

*The bird howling outside my window reminds me
of a city burning to cinders, a woman arranging
the tombstones on her child's grave in a town full
of crows feasting on the dead. Somewhere in a city
where the doors of empty houses are decorated with
the photographs of dead children, a man races on a
deserted street with his son on his shoulder after
a blast. Tonight in my country of birth I watch my
child sleep safely in bed while somewhere there are
children smuggled across borders to strange lands,
immigrant children hurried by the sea to their graves,
their mothers wailing a flood of tears on their little tombs.*

*It is hard being a mother when the only language that invades
your mouth bears the syntax of grief, when some days the
morning arrives in a cart crammed with bombed bodies
of children for us to bury, when some days the earth collects
our dead and gifts us an eternity of sorrow, when some days
the earth widens with the bodies of our dead occupying it
like air. It is a sad world on days when bullets quake my
son's classroom till the floor shifts beneath his feet;
on nights when my child watches me surrender to grief,
to everything that reminds me of the bird howling outside
my window tonight, mourning its child, the way there are
women mourning their children in places ruined by bombs,
the way there are women crying tonight in places bereft
of neither the light of the world nor the hope for the future.*

Critical Essay:

“Tonight In My country”, is the poem written by Razaq Malik. He worked in many newspapers and online journals including the Rattle, Michigan Quarterly Review and Poet Lore. His best known poetry is “In Another World.” Tonight In My country dwells on the grief and calamities of this century. He tries to feed us with the troubling tales of the people in the troubling world through this poem. This poem indicates the traumatic events that he either directly witnessed or seen in the news. This is the poem which attempts to navigate the

labyrinth of despair and the endless list of grief that defines the difficulties of daily life. The poem is in the first poem narrative and the poet indicates the suffering of the people he witnessed. Poem opens with the poet saying that when he opened the window he was reminded of the city burning to ashes. He picturizes the city which is covered with corpse and the crows feasting on it. The women are arranging the tombstones for their children. “

Somewhere in a city where the doors of empty houses are decorated with the photographs of dead children”. He sees the houses which are empty are decorated with the photographs of the dead children. He also witness all man carrying the wounded child in his shoulder after a bomb blast. Though some children are safely, sleeping the other parts of the nation is scared as children are smuggled for slavery. some are buried in the graves are the mothers are weeping an their tombs with tears flowing down like flood. The poet, says that it is hard to be a mother in such a nation where every day they bear only grief in their mouth. “morning arrives in a cart crammed with bombed bodies of children for us to bury”. Some days during morning the cart arrives with the dead bodies of these children to be buried. The poet says that there is no light in the world or there is no hope for future too. The darkness of violence and slavery covered the nation and the natives are longing for peaceful life with filled with happiness. The poet needs his nation to be free from the problems emanating from slavery, war and wrest. This is how the poem pictures the troubled state of mind.

“Where the bead speaks”

-Ama Ata Aidoo

About the Author:

Ama Ata Aidoo, or called as Christina Ama Aidoo (born 23 March 1942) is a Ghanaian author, poet, playwright and academic. She was the Minister of Education under the Jerry Rawlings administration. In 2000, she established the Mbaasem Foundation to promote and support the work of African women writers. Ama was appointed Minister of Education under the Provisional National Defence Council in 1982. She resigned after 18 months, realising that she would be unable to achieve her aim of making education in Ghana freely accessible to all. She has portrayed the role of African women in contemporary society. She has opined that the idea of nationalism has been deployed by recent leaders as a means of keeping people oppressed. She has criticized those literate Africans who profess to love their country but are

seduced away by the benefits of the developed world. She believes in a distinct African identity, which she views from a female perspective.

Text:

*My uncle was the prophetic one,
throwing his beads this way and that,
diving, foretelling,
warnings galore, sweet promising.
One eye on the past, four to the future,
half a dozen or more for now.
He was good if the news was good;

for evil news we blamed the beads.*

*Made from bones
or fashioned glass,
cut out from stones
or beaten brass*

*It's the many human hours, Sister,
it's the sweat and blood, Brother,
which makes the bead a thing apart
from precious diamonds, opals, and gold.*

*Turn them this way, shake them that way,
see how they shine incandescent,
see how they glow
in a million hues.*

*Elegant and enchanting bead,
flowered flawed, folded, or fielded,
you are the true frame of our feasts,
your festivals, fetes, and fiestas.*

*Give me a bead that's wrapped in joy;
find me a bead to carry my grief.
We sing of beads, and sing with beads;
just see how well they show on us.*

*Beads are the zeze of our joyous trails,
the ziz of life when all else fails.
Beads are zany, zesty, zingy,
the greatest zaiku, a grief zapper.*

*Speak to me of beads, Grandma,
speak to me.
Talk to me of beads, Nana,
talk to me.*

*She brightened up immediately,
she looked at me with a welcome smile.
Grandma pulled up a stool and sat,
she listened well to me and asked:*

*"You want a tale on beads, do you?
You want a tale or two?
I'll tell a tale or two to you.
But to speak to you of every bead,*

*in words that sing and dance like them,
you and I shall surely need
more than my life in hours and days,
more than your life in weeks and years.*

*A million lifetimes is not much
if beads are the theme, the thought, the thing.
We dive for beads, we swim, we float,
we mine for beads, we comb the woods.*

*Koli beads for the infant
on his wrist and on her waist,
cascades of white beads for the mother,
a very fitting celebrant.*

*There are beads that are tame
like what welcomed baby here;
there are beads that are wild,
lion's teeth, lightning struck.
And there are beads around my waist,
For only my and my dot-dot's eyes!!*

*Have you seen my love tonight?
Asked the ardent warrior youth.
Light of step, curved like a bow,
her eyes were wonders to behold.
She was oiled and very clean,
she was powdered like a queen,
she wore a sarong of the purest silk,
her toes were nestled in their thongs.*

*Have you seen my love tonight?
She who wore gold beads in her hair?
Then the pretty maiden asked,
who has seen my love tonight?*

*Who has seen my warrior brave?
he had said no more to war,
he had buried his arrowhead.
His girdle was free of blood and sweat.*

*He was adorned in his very best,
he was oiled like a king,*

*with beads of silver in his hair.
Who has seen my love tonight?*

*They welcome us here in the palest white
and bid us farewell in black,
sometimes blue, and brown, and red,
metallic green, or indigo.*

*There are beads, by far the most,
that are polished, tarred, and feathered.
There are beads, worked over and under,
elegant hued, thin and narrow.*

*Beads are the zaffered, the zingiest,

the zenith of all great times.*

*Cool, calm, and forever collected,
clawed, clayed, or colored,
constantly changing, bead
you are the best, you are the greatest.*

*So don't talk to me of the chevron.
Don't ever talk of it.
Don't break my ears on the chevron.
Don't break my ears!!!*

*As barter for my life and yours,
no gem on earth could fit the bill.
Not gold, and if not even gold,
then what on earth is chevron?*

*I dread the chevron.
It was a weapon*

*of oppression,
and not at all . . . a bead.*

*Seven whole humans for one bead?
And what kind of trade was that?
A layer each of sand and mud
for the lives of our kinsmen?*

*So what if it was one and not seven?
One soul for a shiny piece of bead?
This sounds like the greatest greed,
this sounds like utter foolishness!*

*Don't talk to me of the chevron,
don't even mention it.
Don't break my ears on the chevron,
don't break my ears.*

*They say that cheap beads prattle,
rattle, and tattle,
but great beads never talk.*

*Yet if a string of beads is fine,
it sings,
it dances,
it jumps,
and sizzles.*

*If a string of beads is truly fine,
it can speak in a million tongues.
It will have something for all,
and say the most amazing things.*

And every now and every then

*every bead laughs out aloud.
There are beads that are smaller
than the hopes of a mean mind.*

*Though called bodom, as in a dog,
poochy pug, puggy pooch,
bodom beads, they are so big,
they are the elephants of the pack.
They lead the way
and announce the day.*

*The nature of beads is a mystery,
the how of it, the feel, the glow
of earthly gems: the least and most,
our first and true try to create, to beautify our human selves.*

*The best of doors to human hearts,
our spirit's window to the world,
beads clothe our woes in vivid color.
Beads like angels plead for us.*

*Beads can lift the heaviest heart.
And like tea and precious brews,
beads can warm us when we are cold,
and cool us when we are hot.*

*Blessed are the beads
that bring us peace.
Spare us, O Lord, in this lifetime,
beads of war, chaos, and strife.*

*No beaded strings of calamities,
earthquakes, floods, and famine.
No veritable tsunamis of woe.*

Keep us cool and keep us warm.

*For each color in the rainbow,
there is a bead, somewhere on earth:
a million years old, if a day,
or shy in its newsness, and done this dawn.*

*Blue beads, green beads,
yellow beads and grey,
black beads, white beads,
red beads and brown.*

*Your rise from heaps of your own ash
with more of you than ever were.
You, bead, are an awesome one,
you are the phoenix of the years.*

*Their making uses endless hours,
the how, the when, the what of it.
The wearing is by a billion souls
whichever way, however much, and everywhere . . .*

*Mined and molten
man-made wonder,
raw organic, or cooked, and dried,
forever treasured, forever prized.*

*Bettered and bartered,
broken and beaten,
burnt or badgered,
bruised and bloodied*

*you are the never-left-behind,
oldest, ordered, owned invention.*

*Pure and precious, polished pearl,
still safe, sacred, scraped, or scratched;*

*Traded, treated, tough in trouble,
unique, unmatched, unbreakable.
Verdant velvet, virginal as rain,
beads are virile, vestal, vain.*

Gilded and golden,

*there can be no palanquin.
If you are not sitting with the king,
you are the queen,
the soul, and spirit within.*

*Beads are deserving,
beads are worthy,
wash me some beads to warm my skin,
a token of love, a gift for my kin.*

*Hollowed and hallowed,
jingled, jangled, juggled,
you are our life's companion,
the closest friend until the end.*

*Don't tell me if there were no beads
something else could meet our needs.
Something what? Something where?
Please keep it there, even if it's rare.*

Essay:

The first line introduces the uncle of the poet who is a prophet. He throws the beads in a way that it dives and curls and he foretells the sweet happenings and also he warns a lot. The poet says her uncle is giving a prophecy by having an eye on the past, four to the future and six

to the present situation. The poet also states the mentality of the listeners. They consider him good when the news was good and if there is anything evil they will blame the beads. This is the traditional custom which prevailed in Ghana. Next the poet says about the preparation of these beads. It is a result of hard labour of the natives had strived hard to develop such kind of bead who is their own tradition of culture. The traditional culture is more precious like the bead than that of the western culture like diamond and gold. Even though the beads are turned and twisted they shine with a million of tad incandescent colour and shade. The poet again states that it is their culture which is giving them the chance to celebrate their nations important events and the poet asks to give a bead that can provide joy and carry away the grief in her.

The beads are the care of their joy and a grief, rapper when everything in their fails to prosper. The poet urges the grandmother and a grandfather to speak about the beads to her as to narrate the post glory of the nation. As beads plays an important role in the rituals of the natives the grandma narrates the kinds and purpose of the beads. "koli" beads are meant for the infant, the brides will be decked with golden beads in their hair. The beads used to welcome are white but for fare well it may be black, brown, red, metallic green and indigo which are worked over and under and polished, tarred and feathered Beads are considered to be greater than the chevron. The past states that all rank and position provided by the colonisers are nothing in front of the native's culture.

The bead conjointly symbolizes links amongst the peoples of African country a really advanced and ancient network to a stunning range of peoples the planet over. The bead also represents the link between heritage, creativeness and change. Beads employed in Ghana are made of a very wide range of materials.

These embody bone, stone, wood, coconut shell, ocean shells, clay, brass and glass. There are several stories on the origin and powers of beads. The elders say that the valuable stone and beads are to be found at the purpose wherever the rainbow meets the earth. Stone beads are related to thunder as they will be found once an important rain and are believed to own been rained down within the storm. No gold on nothing can replace the beads even in barter system. The post considers chevron as a symbol of oppression. The poet says that the nature of beads is mystery which is used to deck the humans of the native . The poet, prays to save them from war, it chaos and strife. The beads are like phoenix in which will come out with shining colours and awesome brightness.

Through the tradition and culture is hidden in the ashes of suppression and oppression it will triumph an time. The poet says that the western system has engulfed the native pillars and pioneers.

The Eye of Poetry

-Lillian Aujo

Author:

Lillian Aujo is a Ugandan author. In 2009, she was the first winner of the first BN poetry prize, from Babishai Niwe (BN) Poetry Foundation. In 2015, she was longlisted for, and won the Inaugural Jalada Prize for Literature for her story “Where pumpkin leaves dwell”.Aujo is a member of Femrite.

Her works “The Eye of Poetry” and “Getting Nowhere” were published in Suubi, a publication of the African Writers Trust She attended the Caine Prize workshop 2013, and her story “Red” was published in the anthology A Memory This Size and Other Stories: The Caine Prize for African Writing 2013. Her work has appeared in anthologies by Femrite, “Talking tales” and “Summoning the rains”.

TEXT

*Poetry is the school I will never graduate from
because no matter how hard – I try
I will never tell it all – the secret way of its patterns
And how the same letters form different syllables to form different words,
And how they fall – in front or behind one another, and if re-arranged would create a
whole different story...
It is how emotions run
High – Low – Calm – Serene
Vivacious, like the sun at noon, surreal like the fantasy it promises
You never know when poetry goes subtle or quiet. How even when there,
It grows deep like a river that bleeds
when the dry earth has sucked out her waters... poetry...

It is the bird song I cannot articulate
The trickle of the tap in a porcelain sink*

*The whoosh of the wind that makes my skin stand on end
That thing that knocks the breath out of my lungs
The music in you, unsung, yet so fervent you tingle within
The notes in the air unwritten on sheets. Tangible, intangible, whatever you please*

*It is useless to try to fathom how,
Without seeming to say much, it says so much,
How it clings to you like the little hand of a small child begging you to stay
Or, like the sticky filmy strands of the spider whose web you never see – but,*

You walk right into anyway...

*It is the sweet tangle between fantasy and realism
And metaphysics and apathy and breath and death
But do not worry if the opposites don't quite match or get criss-crossed right:
The rhythms do not always match...
see, there in disorder exists the same beauty eminent in order,
I have come to learn,
That free verse, sonnet, haiku, list, and lyrical when tweaked just right
Are like a violin in the hands of a skilled violinist: so many songs from the tip of one bow*

*I live, breathe, dream poetry, in syllables so sweet they tantalise my mind
Tie and untie my tongue so I have no choice but try to tell of its complexity,
Of all the stories that are spun like the silky strands of Ananse's tales
And the flighty cunning of a hare's escapades...
I laugh so hard tears kiss the corners of my eyes,
I learn lessons that might have remained unlearnt had they been in plain black or white
See, the twists are new with every turn
Like a child's wheel let loose and thrashing through bushes
Like heavy raindrops never knowing their mark –
Like the water in a lake that flows in itself and never knows where it ends and or where it
begins... yes it is that
meld...*

...the sublime, the divine... that you never touch
Yet you know how it feels...
It is the beauty you want to explain but words are always inept to describe
It is poetry... existent in as many exquisite and intrinsic patterns
As there are on a peacock's tail:
While she sits, her iridescent plumage dazzles us,

And when she fans her tail, we see her eye...
Hypnotically beautiful...spiralling into the magical chasm of poetry...
Do you see the eye of poetry

Essay:

The poem was published in the Suubi collection in 2013. This indicates the death of the poetry. The poet uses powerful images to describe the subtleties of poetry. Considers poetry as an eye which is hypothetically beautiful with all kind of inherited natural magic. Poem is in free verse. The poem is in first person narrative and the poet says that the poetry is a school from where she may never be graduated. It is hard to identify the secret ways a poem patterns itself. The poet is astonished to see the usage of the same letters to form different syllables and different words. The words are arranged in such a way to create a whole story which is exclusively the ability of the poet. The poetic lines express the emotions that run high, low, calm and at times very vivacious. A reader cannot identify when a person will become subtle or quiet. Though the poetry is seen to be silent it will grow like a river that will wet the dry land.

On reading certain poetries the reader will get a solace from the confused state of mind. Aujo compares the poetry to the song of a bird which she is not able to articulate. She says that like a trickle in a porcelain sink, the whoosh of wind, the creativity knocks the breath of the lungs to produce poetry. As the creative talent is inborn the creative writers will be prompted to produce the work of art. She says that even though the reader try to understand the hidden meaning of the poetry nothing can be seen but it says much more than what happened. Though it is hard to get hidden meaning it will make the readers to read again and stick to the mind as a child clings to stay and like walking through the spider Web which is not seen. Poetry is a confusion between fantasy and realism, abstractness and concern and the breath and death. These contrast and disorders bring out the eminent beauty.

She compares the different forms of poetry like free verse, sonnet, haiku, and lyrics to the different music form a violin. She compares the poet as a violin which produce different music as a poet produce different forms of poetry. As the poet is with a poetic mind she is willing to tell all the complexity prevailing in poetry. She tells that the stories are spun like the silky strands of Ananse's tale and are like great excitement or adventure. She says that she had learned the lessons which ate unlearned. The idea or the subject of the poetry is with more twists and turns which makes her eyes fill. Like the loose wheel or like raindrops the poetry with many exquisite and intrinsic patterns as in the tail of a peacock which cannot be explained in words. Like the beauty of the plumage of the peacock is hidden the hypnotic beauty and magical chasm of poetry is also hidden.

Unit 2: Prose

On National Culture

- **Frantz Fanon**

About the author:

Frantz Fanon was born on July 20, 1925. He was a French author and essayist who was born in Martinique. He was possibly the most influential thinker of the twentieth century on the subject of decolonization and colonial psychopathology. For more than four decades, his works have inspired anti-colonial liberation movements. Frantz Fanon's brief life produced two powerful and significant anti-colonial revolutionary statements: *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1954). As a result of his contributions to the subject of postcolonial studies, Fanon has become one of the most well-known figures in the field. Fanon engaged the fundamental issues of his day: language, affect, sexuality, gender, race and racism, religion, social formation, time, and many others. The reordering of the world of indigenous people was a crucial goal for colonialism to succeed, according to Fanon. Colonialism, he believed, was defined by violence. However, if violence was a weapon of social control, it could also be a cathartic response to colonialism's oppression and an essential tool of political engagement, according to Fanon. Fanon was a harsh opponent of colonialism's institutions, but he was also an early critic of postcolonial administrations that failed to free the newly emancipated population from colonial influences and build a national consciousness. The "mediocrity" of Africa's elite leadership class, according to Fanon, is to blame for the emergence of corruption, ethnic division, racism, and economic dependency on former colonial governments.

About the text:

In the essay “On National Culture,” which was included in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon sets out to establish how a national culture may evolve among the formerly and, at the time of its release in 1961, still-colonized nations of Africa. The essay is narrated by Fanon, who refers to the ‘colonized intellectual.’ Frantz Fanon initially delivered this chapter as a lecture at the Second Congress of Black Artists and Writers in Rome in 1959, according to the postscript. He presented reasons why a transnational black culture is not viable to an international community of artists and writers. In the end, he argues that only the struggle for nationhood can provide the foundation for culture.

In this essay Fanon says, while “national identity” is essential to the emergence of a Third World revolution, it paradoxically limits such efforts because it re-inscribes an essentialist, totalizing, fetishized, often middle-class specific understanding of “nation” rather than encouraging a nuanced articulation of oppressed people’s cultural heterogeneity across class lines. Colonialism, according to Fanon, not only disarms the colonized subject physically, but also deprives her of a “pre-colonial” cultural inheritance. Fanon rejects Negritude and similar efforts because they accept the colonial worldview. According to Fanon, rather than imitate European culture or promote a global black culture, native intellectuals must realize their culture is national.

Essay:

This chapter “On National Culture” began as a lecture, which suggests its ability to stand on its own. Indeed, this chapter and the next are, compared with the previous chapters, seemingly discrete and isolated. The previous three chapters moved chronologically, from colonialism to postcolonial nation-building, whereas this chapter and the next are more thematic. Within each theme—intellectuals here, psychology in the next chapter—Fanon moves across the colonial timeline in order to pick up trends throughout.

Fanon begins by examining the “colonized intellectual,” a person who has been educated by a colonist yet is hostile to him. Rather than depending on an Orientalized and fetishized knowledge of precolonial history, Fanon contends that national culture must be founded on a people’s material resistance to colonial dominance. The intellectual’s goal is to “racialize” culture in order to oppose the humiliating power of colonized culture, such as arguing for a “Negro literature” or “Negro art” that connects all of Africa. This is sometimes referred to as the “Négritude” movement. This, according to Fanon, is an overly reactive approach. It

basically engages colonists in a debate on their own terms. Colonists lumped all of Africa together, ignoring tribal or ethnic diversity as well as the diverse cultural histories of different regions. Intellectuals nowadays do something similar, but instead of saying that Africa is the source of evil values, they claim that Africa is the source of wonderful values. Negritude has stretched all the way to America, where the “black world” is formed by those from Ghana, Senegal, and Chicago. Those who live in the “dark world” have similar links and ideas. African intellectuals, on the other hand, regard African culture as a “dead end” rather than a national culture. Consider the African Society for Culture, which was established to prove the existence of African culture. The African Society for Culture swiftly becomes the Cultural Society for the Black World, which encompasses the whole black diaspora, including the millions of black people living in the Americas.

Fanon ultimately argues that precolonial culture cannot be reclaimed. Colonialism has largely erased it, and the world it initially existed in is no longer. Culture and intellect have long since been a way for oppressed individuals, especially those of color, to exert their right to exist. Colonialist racism assumes that the Third World does not have a culture, so the intellectuals desperately want to prove that they do. Fanon believes that the colonized intellectual must recognize that national culture is already present in today’s national reality, rather than being a historical fact waiting to be revealed in a return to precolonial history and tradition. Fighting for national liberation involves fighting for the territory on which a culture can flourish, because according to Fanon, a national culture cannot survive under colonial dominance. National culture, according to Fanon, is inextricably related to the struggle for the nation, the act of living and engaging with the present reality that gives rise to a diverse spectrum of cultural creations, which is best summed up in Fanon’s proposal of replacing the word “concept” with “muscle.”

Typically, colonized writers go through three stages of growth. The colonized must first demonstrate that they have adapted to white society. Symbolists and Surrealists abound on this stage. The colonized writer then returns to precolonial culture in the second stage. They are, however, strangers to their people and have little recollection of precolonial culture. The colonial writer becomes a fighter for the people in the third stage, writing combat literature, revolutionary literature, and national literature. Only the last of these three stages truly displays national identity.

The first stage is simply regurgitated white culture, whereas the second tries to embrace a postcolonial native culture that no longer exists. By focusing on the people, the writer more authentically reflects the people's struggle, which, according to Fanon, is where black culture truly resides. Fanon concludes this chapter by discussing contemporary calls for a supranational culture. Here is how Fanon sums up the recent calls: "Some argue that humanity has progressed beyond the stage of nationalist assertions. The moment has arrived to form wider political groupings, and as a result, traditional nationalists must correct their errors." What is wrong with these calls, according to Fanon, is that they fundamentally misunderstand what culture is. Culture is derived from national awareness, as Fanon has just stated. As a result, there can be no culture that is not national. National culture is the most advanced kind of culture, and any type of international or global culture must be based on it. It will not be able to surpass it.

Long Walk to Freedom

- Nelson Mandela

About the Author:

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was born in Transkei, South Africa on July 18, 1918. He is a Black nationalist and on 10 May, 1994, he became the first Black president of South Africa (1994–99). Mandela was born into the Madiba clan in the Eastern Cape hamlet of Mvezo. He dreamed of making his own contribution to his people's freedom struggle after hearing the elders' accounts of his ancestors' valour during the resistance warfare. Before working as a lawyer in Johannesburg, he studied law at the University of Fort Hare and the University of Witwatersrand. He became involved in anti-colonial and African nationalist movements there, joining the African National Congress (ANC) in 1943 and co-founding the Youth League in 1944. Mandela and the ANC pledged to remove apartheid, a system of racial segregation that favoured whites, after the National Party's white-only government created it. He was elected president of the African National Congress's Transvaal branch, and he rose to notoriety as a result of his participation in the 1952 Defiance Campaign and the 1955 Congress of the People. Mandela was a controversial figure for much of his life. He garnered more than 250 honours, including the Nobel Peace Prize, and is widely regarded as a global icon of democracy and social justice. He is revered in South Africa, where he is known as the "Father of the Nation" and is generally referred to by his Xhosa clan name, Madiba.

About the text:

Long Walk to Freedom is the autobiography credited to South African President Nelson Mandela. It was ghost written by Richard Stengel. The prose includes Mandela's inauguration ceremony and excerpts from his speeches which illustrates the struggles Mandela has to undergo as a freedom fighter. An important part of his speech in the prose stated that one man has two obligations in his life one towards his family and the other towards his mother land, country men and a community and as per their own interests and inclinations, man is able to fulfil the obligations. However, as a black man in a country like South Africa, Mandela found it difficult to do so. As he became an adult. Mandela saw freedom as an illusion for his community. In this chapter Mandela describes his childhood days and his village, Qunu which gives the illustration of social discrimination that prevailed in African society.

Colonist Criticism

- **Chinua Achebe**

About the author:

Chinua Achebe, in full Albert Chinualumogu Achebe was an author, poet, novelist, Brown University professor, and critic. He was born in 1930 on Nigeria. He is a graduate of University College, Ibadan, and was raised in the huge community of Ogidi, one of the first centers of Anglican missionary work in Eastern Nigeria. As a university student, he grew attracted by world religions and traditional African cultures, and he began composing stories. Things Fall Apart, his first novel, is the most widely read book in modern African literature, having been published in 1958. The novels of Achebe focus on Igbo society's traditions, the impact of Christian influences, and the clash of ideals during and after colonialism. His storytelling technique was significantly influenced by the Igbo oral culture, combining plain narration with portrayals of traditional tales, proverbs, and oratory. Achebe's writings have influenced how people think about Africa's history, culture, and place in the world. He was awarded the Commonwealth Poetry Prize in 1972 for his first collection, Beware, Soul-Brother, and Other Poems.

Works:

He wrote more than 20 books, short stories, novels, essays which includes Things Fall Apart (1958), which has sold more than 10 million copies worldwide and been translated into

more than 50 languages; *Arrow of God* (1964); *Beware, Soul Brother and Other Poems* (1971), winner of the Commonwealth Poetry Prize; *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction; *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (1989); *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (1989); *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essay* (2000). Achebe was also a well-published poet. His poetry collections include *Collected Poems* (2002), *Another Africa* (1997), and *Christmas in Biafra and Other Poems* (1973).

About the text:

Achebe's *Colonialist Criticism* sharply attacks Europe's failure to comprehend African literature on its own terms. Achebe exposes colonialist criticism's attitude of superiority and examines African literature on its own terms. Achebe dismisses universalism as a cynical attempt to write in the style of a Western author. Every work of literature, according to the author, should attempt to represent things that are important to its people and must be related to a certain location. He opposes universalism in favor of localization. Achebe challenges African and British commentators for touting universality while forgetting the uniqueness of the African experience. Honor Tracy, Iris Andreski, Charles Larson, and Philip Allen are among the critics who say that African literature lacks universality. He convincingly nullifies their biasness and prejudice and asserts the significance of localization in literature. He attacks on language; he says that writing in English does not imply that African writers are following the European model. Language is not a group country's or continent's property or possession. Language is both a common commodity and a de-ethicized commodity. The English language does not belong to the British or the Americans. It is not owned by anyone. African authors are writing in English to be heard. If they write in an African language, no one will notice them. They have a communication issue. African writers who wrote in English aspired to capture the attention of the rest of the world. All humans share a common legacy in the form of language. He critiques native writers near the end of the essay. European writers cannot be branded as horrible all the time.

Even native writers, he claims, have done nothing to improve the state of African literature. They are not in charge of their own people. He personifies the concept, claiming that the only way to improve the state of African writing is via sincerity, or "Eager-enough." Only then can African literature be given the respect it deserves; otherwise, it will be dominated. Achebe refers to the dominance of Europeans as "seduction." The national poets and critics are equally to blame for this seduction because they never try to break through the European canon's barricade, preferring instead to remain an appendage of it.

Essay:

Chinua Achebe wrote the essay "Colonialist Criticism." In this essay Chinua Achebe aims at attacking the remnants of colonialism in non-Africans' critique of African literature. In Colonialist Criticism, Chinua Achebe passionately criticizes European citizens' failure to grasp African Literature on its own terms. He effectively criticizes the imperialist critic's assumption of superiority in viewing African literature on its own terms. The modern colonialist criticism also loves big brother arrogance. Europeans, according to critics, are superior and big brothers, whereas Africans are inferior and small brothers. Achebe says that "Colonialist criticism is not always as crude as this but the exaggerated grassness of a particular example many sometimes prove useful in studying the anatomy of species". According to Achebe, Europeans have also done some good deeds to Africa. Europeans deliver the gifts of civilization by eradicating the ignoble past, such as the custom of wearing a raffia skirt, a leaf skirt, for which Africa returns ingratitude.

Achebe begins this essay by referencing Honor Tracy, a British woman who, according to him, wrote a bizarre review of his first work when it was released in 1958 (*Things Fall Apart*). He again mentions Tracy by presenting her vision of the Nigerian novelists in which he says that the Nigerian novelists whose stories are apparently charming but they themselves are those educated by the labors of these women who are shielded from the cruelty of these masters by the British administration. The barbaric Africans are civilized by Europe. The colonialist critic utilizes supremacy to restrict African writing in English by using knowledge. The pompous European claims that they are bringing the savage Africans into the civilized world. They have a wealth of information as a result of their superiority, and they have complete influence over African literature in English.

Achebe writes: 'To the colonialist mind it was always of the utmost importance to be able to say: 'I know my natives' a claim which implied two things at once. He, urges the colonialist critic to be purged of superiority and arrogance which history insidiously makes him heir to. He denies any notion of writing in the style of a western author, in other words, he opposes the universalist myth. He will always be committed to African history as an African writer. He believes that all literature must seek for the things that belong to its people and must speak of a certain location.

Achebe, who rejects the notion of universalism, advocates for localization. He believes that colonized peoples should begin writing their own history, disregarding what has already been mythologized. He expects the writer to be sincere about his period, circumstances, location, and historicity. Rejecting the myth of universalism, Achebe stands in favor of

localization. Chinua Achebe criticizes African and British critics of contemporary African literature for ignoring the uniqueness of the African experience and praising universality whenever they detect it: for praising fiction, in particular, that transcends African parochialism, although set in Africa, and deals with the universally human, even though its characters happen to be Africans. for praising fiction, in particular, that transcends African parochialism, although set in Africa, and deals with the universally human, even though its characters happen to be Africans.

African intellectuals who have been culturally colonized believe that western culture, art, and literature are superior to their own. He believes that the text was written with the goal of colonization, using African writers and African subject matter. They distribute power and generate certain truths for Africans through the literature. As a result, Europeans have influence over them, yet African writers remain blissfully unaware of their colonial status. African intellectuals who have been culturally colonized believe that western culture, art, and literature are superior to their own. He believes that the text was written with the goal of colonization, using African writers and African subject matter. They distribute power and generate certain truths for Africans through the literature. As a result, Europeans have influence over them, yet African writers remain blissfully unaware of their colonial status. For Achebe, evidence of the autonomy and uniqueness of African literature from its European counterpart can be seen, for example, in the very different role that the African writer must have toward his or her society. He takes issue with the idea that an African writer should adopt the Western Modernist attitude of the angst-ridden outcast. The African novelist has a responsibility to educate, to assist society in regaining faith in itself and putting the complexes of denigration and self-abusement behind them. In this sense, he criticizes universalism and advocates for African writers to be more socially conscious.

Unit 3: Short Story

Some Monday For Sure

- Nadine Gordimer

About the author:

Nadine Gordimer (20 November 1923 – 13 July 2014), a noble laureate, was born near Springs, Gauteng, an East Rand mining town outside Johannesburg, South Africa. She was the daughter of Jewish parents. But, she was raised in a very secular way, not pertaining to

any religion. Her views, which she expressed in her works, were shaped by her childhood days. Her interest in racism as well as the economic disparity prevalent in South Africa was shaped by her parent's influence. Most of Gordimer's works deals with the theme of racism and apartheid. She won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1991.

Works:

Novels:

- The Lying Days (1953)
- A World of Strangers (1958)
- Occasion for Loving (1963)
- The Late Bourgeois World (1966)
- A Guest of Honour (1970)
- The Conservationist (1974) –Booker prize (1974)
- Burger's Daughter (1979)
- July's People (1981)
- A Sport of Nature (1987)
- My Son's Story (1990)
- None to Accompany Me (1994)
- The House Gun (1998)
- The Pickup (2001)
- Get a Life (2005)
- No Time Like the Present (2012)

Collections of Short Stories

- Face to Face (1949)
- The Soft Voice of the Serpent (1952)
- Six Feet of the Country (1956)
- Which New Era Would That Be? (1956)
- Friday's Footprint (1960)
- Not for Publication (1965)
- Livingstone's Companions (1970)

- Some Monday for Sure (1976)
- No Place Like: Selected Stories (1978)
- A Soldier's Embrace (1980)
- Town and Country Lovers (1982)
- Something Out There (1984)
- Correspondence Course and other Stories (1984)
- The Moment Before the Gun Went Off (1988)
- Once Upon a Time (1989)
- Crimes of Conscience (1991)
- Jump: And Other Stories (1991)
- Why Haven't You Written: Selected Stories 1950-1972 (1992)
- Something for the Time Being 1950-1972 (1992)
- Loot and Other Stories (2003)
- Beethoven Was One-Sixteenth Black (2007)
- Life Times: Stories (2011)

Drama

- The First Circle, in Six One-act Plays by South African Authors (1949)

About the Text:

A young man who lives with his sister and her husband narrates the story "Some Monday for Sure." The husband's duty entails sitting on the back of the truck transporting dynamite to the mines and waving a flag to warn oncoming trucks to stay their distance. The reader is made to expect an explosion, but it never materialises.

Essay:

The narrator opens the story by recounting Josias, his brother-in-law's rough night. Josias worked for a company that transported dynamite. His job was to sit in the rear of the truck's little seat and wave a red flag at anyone who came too close, ensuring that no one was blown to smithereens. Josias describes the plot to kidnap the dynamite for the sake of civil disobedience on the night the story begins. Emma, the narrator's sister, has a negative reaction to it. She tells Josias that he will almost definitely die, and that he does not have to report to

work on the day of the demonstration. Josias does not heed his wife's words. His wife's objection, on the other hand, makes him even more eager to join the protest. The narrator lets his imagination go wild because Josias claimed the protest would take place on Monday. He makes informed estimates about how the demonstration will take place. He wonders if they intended to build roadblocks along the farm road. Because the protest is scheduled for Monday, the narrator understands that he will be unable to attend because he will be required to report to work. So the narrator goes to the farm road to gain a clearer idea of how and where the protest would take place. He engages with the locals and gains a good understanding of the issue.

The narrator reminisces about his childhood days. He thinks fondly of the time spent with his grandmother. He also remembers his sister, mother and father. At one point he even mentions that it was Emma and her husband who had taken care of him from his childhood onwards. Josias, in fact views him as a child for the longest time, only realizing that the narrator was long past his childhood, when he saw him in his work clothes.

The Narrator and Josias continue with the planning for the protest. But they make sure not to encroach upon the matter, fearing that it may upset Emma. Emma, on the other hand, pretends not to notice what the two were planning so intently.

Finally, the day for executing their master plot arrive. The protest starts with road blocks, Heavy fighting occurs and the protesters manage to steal the dynamite from the truck. The narrator too, despite his previous reasonings, ultimately joins the protest. He and Josias escape from the site of the protest. To make sure that they do not get punished, they flee from place to place. They go to Rustenberg, then to Bechuansland, then to Northern Rhodesia, then Mbeya. They travel further to Tanganyika. They finally find a refugee camp called Dar es Salaam in that town. Thus, they finally settle down in that town, after the long, weary days of travelling, or rather, fleeing.

The Narrator gets a job as a clerk in that town. But Josias was never able to find steady work there. Ultimately, Emma too comes and joins them there. Since Josias was unable to find a steady job, he opts to get sent for training. Thus, the Narrator and his sister live alone in a flat in the new land. Emma, who had been a nurse before the protest, starts working as a nurse in the new place too. She also gets a whole ward to her charge, which was quite the new experience for her.

Though Emma was able to establish a career in the new place, she was unhappy and longed to back to her native place. She wanted to be in a place where the people and the customs and the language were familiar to her. Because she did not know the language of the people here, she felt alienated and miserable.

The crux of the plot revolves around the road – block by the dynamite truck as a form of protest. But through this plotline the role of a woman in a family is explored. Emma’s feelings are given no heed and her warnings are consistently ignored. Thus, she was disempowered not just by being black and poor, but also by the men in her family.

This short story serves as a reminder of the agonies faced by the blacks of South Africa.

In the Plantation

-Oyet Sisto Ocen

About the author:

Oyet Sisto Ocen is a Ugandan writer who is on the rise. He holds a clinical medicine and community health diploma. He also worked with humanitarian organisations in South Sudan. He works with the Lamwo Rock Foundation for Children and Youth as a medical officer.

Chinua Achebe and Binyavanga Wainaina’s works, as well as their lives, strongly affected Oyet Sisto Ocen, and his works bear evidence of their influence.

About the text:

“In the Plantation” was published in the collection of selected short stories and poems called Suubi. It was published in 2013 by the African Writer’s Trust.

The innocence of youngsters is contrasted with the evilness of grown men in the story. It also touches on the subject of sorrow and the need for societal peace.

Essay:

The narrator’s name is Nakato, and the storey is told in first person. The story starts with Nakato remembering the flavour of the sweets brought from the city by Uncle Tom. In Mr. Mukasa’s banana plantation, Nakato and Kato are collecting Nsenene, a grasshopper. She remembers her aunt bringing sweets from Kampala, Uganda’s capital, and how they told Joe and Katumba, their buddies, about it. Kato shattered the sweet and gave half to Katumba, chastising him for his lack of teeth. They claimed that the sweet would help the kids’ teeth

grow. In addition, the narrator recalls stealing pawpaw fruit from the plantation despite their mother's warnings.

When they returned home, their aunt Janet was telling their mother stories about the city. Uncle, according to Aunt, has become the wealthiest person in the city. Aunt brought a metal for piercing ears, and Nakato's ears were pierced so that she could wear earrings. Aunt requested that mum pierce Kato's ear as well, but their father was opposed to boys having their ears pierced, so he was left out. Katumba, Joe, Kato, and Nakato went to the plantation to steal pawpaw fruit and had fun doing it. Whilst having their fun they all shared their dreams with each other. Kato wanted to be president, Joe wanted to be a driver, Katumba wanted to be a teacher like Miss John, and the narrator wanted to be a teacher like Miss John. Uncle Tom reappeared through the plantation road, and the kids all ran back the vehicle until it vanished into the distance.

Except for Kato, everyone went to school the next day. They noticed something crimson mixed together with the sand on the way back. It was blood, Katumba remarked, and pawpaw, Joe said. The narrator described how her mother prepares chicken and how adept she is at slicing off the chicken's head. They used to watch the chicken struggle with its neck dripping with blood. When they got close to their house, they noticed that there were people all over their compound. The narrator thinking that her parents were no more envisioned asking Uncle Tom to take her mother and with him because they were no longer alive. Everyone is in grief, and Mr. Mukasa has joined in from afar.

Aunt informed Nakato that Kato's head had vanished. The narrator reasoned that if the head was missing, it would have to be discovered and repaired. Her eyes welled up with tears as she realised Kato had been killed. Aunt said she'd seen a lot of posters urging parents to keep their children safe from witches who hunt children for sacrifice. Human sacrifice, the witches believe, will make them wealthy and promote their business. When the narrator wept, their mother screamed as if she was deranged, but she was mostly crying. Joe and Katumba came to see the narrator after hearing of Kato's death.

Joe claimed that his father told him that Uncle Tom was the one who killed Kato. The narrator was unable to tolerate Katumba and Joe criticising each other over the sacrifice of children. Katumba comforted Nakato by telling her that Uncle Tom will be apprehended and killed. They pictured the plantation children being transformed into chicken and nsenene when their heads were plucked off.

They pictured the plantation children being transformed into chicken and nsenene when their heads were plucked off. The narrator's father went to the city to find the criminal, and he was willing to bribe the cops to do it. The children walked into the plantation after a few days to steal pawpaw fruit. They moved to the centre of the plantation after plucking the fruit.

Joe's leg went down into the dirt when he was eating the pawpaw fruit. He yanked it out and motioned for the others to flee, but Katumba stood there and dug the ground. They assumed Mr. Mukasa had buried bananas in the area. Katumba discovered Kato's head and said that he was still alive and looking at them. They all dashed away from that location to alert someone, then entered Mr. Mukasa's hut. Katumba was the first to arrive, and he quickly went outside to inform the others that he had seen a bottle of blood in Mr. Mukasa's house. The narrator couldn't image her father holding the head or the bottle of blood, and she contemplated suicide. In bed, the narrator imagines that her father would repair Kato's head, and that they will be reunited once more. The storey comes to a close in this manner.

What the Tapster Saw

- Ben Okri

About the author:

Ben Okri is a Nigerian poet and novelist who was born on March 15, 1959. In the post-modern and post-colonial traditions, Okri is regarded as one of the most important African authors. Ben Okri is Urhobo by descent; his father was Urhobo and his mother was half-Igbo. Okri's fiction was inspired by his exposure to the Nigerian civil war and a culture in which his peers claimed to have experienced glimpses of spirits at the time. His reputation as a novelist was cemented when his novel *The Famished Road* won the Booker Prize for Fiction in 1991, at the age of 32, making him the prize's youngest ever winner.

Works:

Novels

- Flowers and Shadows
- The Landscapes Within
- The Famished Road
- Songs of Enchantment
- Astonishing the Gods
- Dangerous Love
- Infinite Riches

- In Arcadia
- Starbook
- The Age of Magic
- The Freedom Artist

Poetry, essays and short story collections

- *Incidents at the Shrine*
- *Stars of the New Curfew* (s)
- *An African Elegy*
- *Birds of Heaven*
- *A Way of Being Free*
- *Mental Fight*
- *Tales of Freedom*
- *A Time for New Dreams*
- *Wild*
- *The Mystery Feast: Thoughts on Storytelling*
- *The Magic Lamp: Dreams of Our Age*
- *Rise Like Lions: Poetry for the many*
- *Prayer for the Living: Stories*
- *A Fire in My Head: Poems for the Dawn*

About the text:

In this text, a brief death transports the protagonist to a wonderful world populated by bizarre animals. A healer ignores a tapster's dream, which turns into reality and leads the tale through weird scenes that are both magical and unreal. The third-person narrator of "What the Tapster Saw" solely gives insight into the tapster's thoughts and feelings. Throughout the story Okri employs a number of motifs and imagery that flow across the narrative like a common thread. The death motif is one of the most noticeable.

There are indications concerning war in this story, as well as other major topics such as the destruction of forests by oil firms. The story's creatures have gone berserk: a snake becomes the tapster's foe, and three turtles befriend him on the one hand while sneering at him on the other.

Okri clearly focuses on the contrast between dreaming and being awake in this story, and hence between a specific dream world and the real world.

On the surface, the story has no evident magical elements, and everything takes place in a real location; nonetheless, a figure like the tapster, and all that occurs to him, defies our real-world standards.

Essay:

What the Tapster Saw is a short tale by Ben Okri about a man who makes palm wine by tapping palm trees. He falls out of his tree one day and enters a coma for a week, during which he experiences vivid, violent dreams about his country's corruption.

In his nightmares, he sees a "roseate coloured" snake that slithers over everything and appears to govern the dream's parallel reality. The river turned "clear and brilliant" when the snake began swimming in a "viscous and motionless river." In his dreams, it's never dark. The Tapster occasionally comes across billboards advertising increasingly hostile messages from oil firms directed at local residents. Several times, oil firms are spotted blowing up or cutting down woods. They dissect the wood for the oil at one point, but then leave after cutting into the dirt, leaving oil and animal bones gushing from the ground.

Voices can be heard across the land conversing as if the Tapster isn't present. The Tapster is in danger of being punished with strikes to the head whenever he replies to the voices, but he can never predict them. When these voices finally seem to involve him, he gets hesitant to act. He attempts but fails to flee his surroundings; he tries but fails to destroy his surroundings and is punished by the voices. One of the voices tells him that the Tapster's thoughts were knocked out by the blows, such as "the greater mouth eats the smaller head." The Tapster expresses his gratitude to the voice after offering these remarks.

Faulty bombs from a previous war that were never detonated explode unexpectedly, destroying bridges and roads. Lone travels are dangerous, and the roads that remain are lined with skeletons. People Tapster knows are assassinated in private, with bullets bearing the names of their victims. He once passed a man who died while reading the Bible backwards, and when he passes him again, he realises it's himself.

Three turtles appear multiple times, one of them has the visage of his herbalist friend, and talk about ludicrous things like how many moons were in the sky that night and how many stars there were in the sky at the time. The turtles, it appears to Tapster, talk about things they don't understand yet have complete influence over. When the Tapster wakes up in his herbalist friend's home in the end, he notices two turtles in a shrine in the corner.

All of this is obvious symbolism to the reader: there is no storyline, simply drugged dreaming. Oil firms, such as Shell, destroy local forests and bodies of water in order to obtain their black gold, but their wealth continues to erupt from the ground. They post signs restricting the local people's and their cultures' freedoms and autonomy. The snake, which is

roseate in hue and reigns supreme, is most likely oil. Because the gas flares in the Niger Delta burn 24 hours a day, the dreams are never divided into night and day.

The voices are the government and oil firms, who talk about money and trade without the approval of the locals. The government and oil firms, like the turtles, have no idea what they're doing, but they have all the power. When local municipalities are involved in discussions, they are concerned that they will be taken advantage of or that the outcomes will not be permanent. Not only that, but the government and oil firms use the voices of the locals to spread propaganda, and the Tapster is given notions that they are "better" than the ones he had when he entered the dream world.

The Tapster has no control over the animals in his dreams, and none of the Niger Delta's native tribes have control over their territory. Famous people are assassinated with malice, or "felled by bullets bearing their names." As the Tapster discovers when he is found dead with an upside down Bible, Christianity is both difficult to understand and completely useless.

Authors are influenced as well as influence the events which happen around them. This short story was influenced by the Niger Oil Crisis of the time. The obvious reaction to the Oil Crisis is what the Tapster saw. The short story is a superb example of influencing literature because everything in it signifies something else. Its purpose is to alert readers who do not live in the immediate area to the issues at hand, and it succeeds admirably.

Unit 4: Drama

Master Harold and the Boys

-Athol Fugard

Author introduction:

Athol Fugard is a South African writer, playwright, actor and director widely regarded as South Africa's greatest playwright. He is best known for his political plays opposing the system of apartheid and for the 2005 Oscar-winning film of his novel Tsotsi, directed by Gavin Hood. Acclaimed as "the greatest active playwright in the English-speaking world" by Time in 1985.

About the Text:

It premiered on Broadway on 4 May at the Lyceum Theatre, where it played for 344 performances, and was initially performed at the Yale Repertory Theatre in March 1982. The drama is set in South Africa during the apartheid era, and it shows how institutionalised racism,

bigotry, and hatred can be internalised by individuals who live there. It is claimed to be a semi-autobiographical drama because Athol Fugard's birth name was Harold, and his childhood was very similar to Hally, with his father being crippled and his mother supporting the family by running a tea shop. Bond with his family's servants was similar to Hally's in that he thought of them as family members.

He sometimes considered them his friends, but other times treated them like subservient help, insisting that he be called "Master Harold", and once spitting in the face of one he had been close to.

Essay:

A rainy day, Sam and Willie are practising ballroom moves in preparation for the competition while Hally's mother runs her tea shop. Sam, on the other hand, is more worldly of the two. When Willie complains that his ballroom partner, friendlacks enthusiasm, Sam points out that Willie is the one who beats her. Seventeen-year-old Hally arrives home from school, and cheerfully asks after the dancing progress. Sam mentors the boy, wishing to guide him through adolescence into manhood. Willie is the "loyal black"; who calls the white Afrikaner boy "Master Harold".

The three talk about anything from Hally's schoolwork to an intellectual debate on "A Man of Magnitude," in which they examine numerous historical people of time and their contributions to society, to flashbacks of Hally, Sam, and Willie living in a boarding home. Hally fondly recalls the simple act of flying a kite fashioned out of garbage that Sam had made for him to cheer him up after he was embarrassed by his father's public inebriation.

The topic then shifts to Hally's five hundred word English essay. Transcending metaphor for life is the ballroom dancing floor, which is defined as "a world without collisions". Sam and Hally's father have been discharged from the hospital. Sam's father has been receiving treatment for complications from a leg he lost in World War I. The discharge is unofficial, so Hally remains hopeful that her father won't be discharged. Later, she receives a call from her mother confirming the discharge is official.

Hally is upset about this information, since his dad, who as well as being disabled, is uncovered to be an oppressive heavy drinker, and his being home will make home life insufferable with his drinking, battling, and need for steady treatment, which incorporates disparaging assignments of rubbing his stump, and void bedpans of pee. Hally vents to his two dark companions long periods of outrage, and agony, violently taunting his dad and his condition. However, when Sam chides him for doing as such, Hally, albeit embarrassed about

himself, turns on him, releasing vicarious bigotry, that he gained from his dad, making potentially long-lasting breaks in his relationship with both Sam and Willie.

Interestingly, aside from hints all through the play, Hally starts expressly to regard Sam and Willie as docile assistance rather than as companions or close friends, demanding that Sam refer to him as “Expert Harold” and spitting on him, in addition to other things. Sam is harmed and irate and both he and Willie are barely shy of going after Hally, yet the two of them comprehend that Hally is truly causing himself the most aggravation. There is a glimmer of hope for reconciliation at the end, when Sam addresses Hally by his nickname again and asks to start over the next day, harkening back to the simple days of the kite.

Hally, horrified about what he’s done, is barely able to face Sam, responding without looking up “It’s still raining, Sam. You can’t fly kites on rainy days, remember,” then asks Willie to lock up the tea shop, and walks out into the rain, as Sam mentions that the bench Hally sat on as he flew the kite said “Whites Only” but Hally was too excited to notice it, and that he can (figuratively) leave it at any time. The play ends while Sam and Willie console each other by ballroom dancing together.

The Strong Breed

- Wole Soyinka

About the Author:

Wole Soyinka, full name Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka, is a Nigerian playwright and political activist who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986. He was born on July 13, 1934, in Abeokuta, Nigeria. He wrote satirically about modern West Africa on occasion, but his serious aim and belief in the horrors inherent in the exercise of power were always there in his work.

Soyinka has received the Nobel Prize in Literature. He has written more than two dozen plays, a vast amount of poetry, several memoirs, essays, and short stories, and just two novels. As dramatist, Soyinka has been influenced by, among others, the Irish writer, J.M. Synge, but links up with the traditional popular African theatre with its combination of dance, music, and action. Soyinka was the head of the University of Ibadan’s Department of Theatre Arts (1969-72) and the University of Ife’s Department of Dramatic Arts (1975-85). Soyinka established another play troupe, the Unife Guerilla Theatre, in 1978. This troupe, based at the University of Ife, performed plays and sketches in parks, markets, and on street corners in order to expose corruption and political tyranny.

He bases his writing on the mythology of his own tribe-the Yoruba-with Ogun, the god of iron and war, at the center. Soyinka has been a vocal opponent of various Nigerian (and African) regimes, particularly the country's several military rulers, as well as other political tyranny, such as Zimbabwe's Mugabe regime. "The oppressive boot and the irrelevance of the color of the foot that wears it," he has written extensively.

About the text:

Wole Soyinka's drama *The Strong Breed* is one of his most well-known works. It is a tragedy that culminates in an individual sacrifice for the greater good. The drama is based on the Yoruba festival ritual of egungun, in which a village scapegoat is exiled from civilization after carrying out the community's wickedness. Eman, the play's protagonist, accepts the role of "carrier" even though he knows it will result in him being beaten and exiled. He does this in order to save a young simpleton from a similar fate. As Eman flees, the ritual takes an unexpected turn. His assailants set up a trap for him, and he dies as a result.

Summary:

"*The Strong Breed*," a classic play created by Wole Soyinka, tells the narrative of Emen, who lives in a remote village and must devote his life to rescue it. The drama is based on a folk tradition in which one person becomes the carrier of community evil and, in an annual rite, symbolically purifies the town. Through this play, Soyinka critically examines Nigerian culture. Eman's decision is at the centre of all dramatic action. The drama develops a complex framework through a succession of flashbacks. Omae is a traditional and devoted woman who dedicates her life to bearing Eman's child. Sunma, who is deeply in love with Eman, was very possessive about her love.

Eman is of the powerful breed, intended to be carriers who purify the village on the last day of the year by receiving the sins of the latter. He refuses to carry out his duties as a carrier and flees his home hamlet. Eman had left his town for twelve years in quest of a better destiny. He will never work as a carrier again. Eman's father predicts that he will not be able to avoid his fate as a carrier and that he will undoubtedly carry out his duties in a different town. The carrier is not sacrificed in his village. On the day of the ritual, the carrier is anointed with oil and must transport a boat with the village's sins to the river, where it will be drowned.

Eman is unfamiliar with the customs of the new village because he is a stranger. The carrier in the new village is either an amebicide, a disfigured man/woman, or a stranger. He is beaten, humiliated, and eventually killed or deported because he symbolizes evil and sickness

that must be eradicated before the new year. When Eman learns that the unfortunate Ifada has been picked as the carrier, he agrees to take his place. As a result, he accepts his fate as a carrier and transforms into a rescuer. His sacrifice to atone for a village's misdeeds ultimately atones for his sin of betraying his own people by failing to fulfil his family responsibility. Despite his education, he could not break such worthless practices. Sunma, who is uneducated, despises her village because she believes it is backwards.

Analysis:

The play, *The Strong Breed* was based on the Yoruba New Year's festival and the tradition of sacrificing a 'carrier' of the previous year's evil. Soyinka incorporated traditional African modes of expression in his plays. The play is based on a traditional legend in which one person becomes the carrier of community evil and, in an annual rite, symbolically purifies the town. Eman's decision is at the centre of all dramatic action. The drama develops a complex framework through a succession of flashbacks.

The play's title, '*The Strong Breed*,' suggests that he is symbolically carrying the wickedness of his village. Eman resolves to play the part of the sacrificial victim, replacing the dumb youngster, Ifada. Sunma, who is madly in love with Eman, was possessive of her affection. These two personalities have vastly distinct behavioural tendencies. Because he is both a teacher and a healer, and because he loses his life for an insensitive village, Eman has been compared to Jesus Christ. The play's themes are heavily influenced by Yoruba culture. In this drama, Soyinka depicts a Yoruba New Year's Day tradition in which the people sacrifice a 'carrier.' It is a highly symbolic play. The play seems to suggest that death is a crucial marker in the struggle between individual will and community wholeness. The death of Eman, has some resemblance with the crucifixion of Christ. According to the New Testament of Bible, Christ was sacrificed his life for saving humanity. Like Christ, Eman in this play sacrificed his life in order to save the village. Finally, Eman, like Christ, dies due to the faults of others. Flashbacks between Eman's past and present, where he sees pictures of his father and his dead wife Omae, punctuate the play.

Unit 5: Fiction

The Bride Price

-Buchi Emecheta

About the author:

Florence Onyebuchi “Buchi” Emecheta (21 July 1944 – 25 January 2017) was a Nigerian-born novelist who resides in the United Kingdom from 1962, writing plays, an autobiography, and children’s books. *Second Class Citizen* (1974), *The Bride Price* (1976), *The Slave Girl* (1977), and *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) were among her more than 20 publications (1979). Emecheta’s themes of child servitude, motherhood, female independence, and education-based freedom received critical acclaim and awards. “Stories of the world,” she once said, “where women face universal problems of poverty and oppression, and the longer they stay, no matter where they go, the more oppressed they become.” Her art delves into the conflict between tradition and modernity. She has been called “The first successful black woman novelist living in Britain after 1948.”

Works:

Novels

- In the Ditch (1972)
- Second Class Citizen (1974)
- The Bride Price (1976)
- The Slave Girl (1977); winner of the New Statesman’s 1978 Jock Campbell Award
- The Joys of Motherhood (1979)
- The Moonlight Bride (1981)
- Our Own Freedom (with photographs by Maggie Murray; 1981)
- Destination Biafra (1982)
- Naira Power (1982)
- The Rape of Shavi (1983)^[4]
- Double Yoke (1982)^{[4][5]}
- A Kind of Marriage (1986)
- Gwendolen (1989)
- Kehinde (1994)
- The New Tribe (2000)

Autobiography

- *Head above Water* (1984; 1986)

Children's/Young adults' books

- Titch the Cat (1979)
- Nowhere to Play (1980)
- The Wrestling Match (1981)

Plays

- Juju Landlord (1975)
- A Kind of Marriage (1976)
- Family Bargain (1987)

About the text:

The Bride Price is a 1976 novel written by Nigerian writer Buchi Emecheta. It is mostly concerned with women's issues in post-colonial Nigeria. Alice Ogbanje Emecheta, the author's mother, is honoured in this work.

Characters:

Aku-nna Odia

When the story begins, Aku-nna, the protagonist, is thirteen years old and lives in the Nigerian city of Lagos. She is a bright young woman who recognises, without being told explicitly, that she is "too insignificant" in her parents' eyes. She is, after all, just a young lady. She's also frail and susceptible to illness at times. Her parents call her a "ogbanje," which means "living dead." Her mother frequently chastises her by telling her to decide if she wants to live or die. In regards to Aku-nna, it looks that the bride price, or the amount her future husband would pay for her, is the only thing her parents are looking forward to.

Ezekiel Odia

Ezekiel Odia, Aku-nna's father, appears only in the first few chapters of the story. Since serving with the British Army in World War II, he has had an aching foot. His death is the impetus for all of Aku-nna's drastic developments. Emecheta uses the funeral of the father to show how the Christian belief system's Anglican rites clash with the Ibo tribe's indigenous traditions.

Despite the fact that Ezekiel dies, his presence is felt throughout the novel, as Aku-nna wonders how her life would have been different if her father had lived. She would have grown up in Lagos if he had lived, a metropolis with a culture that is more modern than her country cousins'.

Ma Blackie Odia

Ma Blackie is a tall, black-skinned woman with a dark complexion. She is blamed for not having given her husband, Ezekiel, more than two children, one of whom is a son, as is customary for an African lady. Ma Blackie, the mother of Aku-nna and Nna-nndo, leaves her family at the start of the tale. She has returned to her native hamlet of Ibuza in order to improve her fertility. Ma Blackie is adopted by her deceased husband's older brother after her husband dies, and she is forced to return to Ibuza with her children. Ma Blackie is not this brother's only wife, but she joyfully accepts her place in his household and eventually becomes pregnant with his child.

Nna-nndo Odia

Nna-nndo Aku-younger nna's brother is Odia. Rather than being a character, his presence in this storey acts as a reference point. Emecheta employs Nna-nndo on multiple occasions to highlight the contrasts in male and female kid responsibilities in traditional Ibuza society. After their father passes away, one of Aku-aunts nna's observes that it is unfortunate that Aku-relatives nna's will marry her off as soon as possible to pay for Nna-nndo's education. As his father (Ezekiel) is being buried, his relatives turn to Nna-nndo, the "man" whom his father (Ezekiel) has left behind, and beg Nna-nndo to decide whether Ezekiel should go to heaven as a Christian or descend down into the earth to worship the Ibuza god. Nna-nndo, Aku-nna's younger nna' brother, seals his father's fate in the afterlife. Women were expected to display more emotion than men, therefore Aku-nna's primary function at the burial is to grieve longer than her brother.

Okonkwo Odia

Ezekiel Odia's older brother is Okonkwo. Unlike his younger brother, Okonkwo has resided in the community of Ibuza his entire life. In Emecheta's *The Bride Price*, Okonkwo is the personification of male dominance and tradition. When Ezekiel dies, Okonkwo adopts Ma Blackie and her children.

Chike Ofulue

Aku-nna finally marries Chike Ofulue, a young man. Chike is also a slave's descendant. Obi Ofulue, his grandmother, was a princess in one African tribe before being captured and sold as a slave by another. Slavery became prohibited when missionaries arrived in the area, and most slaves were turned over to the missionaries and educated. As a result, former slaves and their descendants became the village's educated population, serving as doctors, lawyers, and

teachers. The local villagers, despite their education and professional roles, never accepted these slave descendants into their culture. That was the case with Chike and his family as well. They were tolerated, but there were tight rules about how they may act.

Okoboshi Obidi

Okoboshi is a young man with a limp who battles over Aku-nna with Chike (Aku-nna's future spouse). Later, Okoboshi's family kidnaps Aku-nna, as is customary in the community, in order to marry her to Okoboshi. Okoboshi wants to "devirgin" Aku-nna after snatching her. Okoboshi makes an attempt to persuade Aku-nna to have sex with him. Although he is stronger than she is, she outwits him. She lashes out at his dignity with verbal assaults. The encounter between Okoboshi and Aku-nna is crucial to the plot. It's the first time Aku-nna takes a hard stance in defence of herself, using everything she has to claim the life she wants rather than the one her culture has tried to push on her. In this way, Okoboshi epitomises everything Aku-nna despises about her historically male-dominated culture.

Essay:

Buchi Emecheta's novel *The Bride Price* is set in Nigeria, specifically in Lagos. The Odia family is at the core of the events, which proceed swiftly at first. The father and mother, Ezekiel and Ma Blackie, have two children: Nna-nndo, a son, and Aku-nna, a daughter. *The Bride Price*'s protagonist is Aku-nna. Despite the fact that the story begins in a city, it follows the Odia family as they move back to their ancestral village.

Ezekiel is dying, but he keeps it a secret from Ma Blackie and their children. Before saying goodbye to his children, he waits until Ma Blackie has gone to Ibuza, a small community. A family without a father in Nigeria at that time had little to no means of support. In fact, without Ezekiel, the family would be regarded non-existent. Even Nna-name, nndo's which means "father is the shelter" in English, serves as a reminder of this concept.

Ma Blackie decides to remove her children from the city and return to an agrarian existence after Ezekiel's death. Emecheta informs the reader about the transition as well as key background details such as the bride price. Aku-nna means "father's riches," according to Emecheta, and it refers to a woman's status in Nigerian society. The clash of Nigerian and British customs is also emphasised early on as a major issue.

As Emecheta explains, a woman's worth is not primarily determined by her bride price, albeit it is a vital source of revenue for any Nigerian household. The children she is supposed to bear her husband are regarded her contribution to the family's wealth and well-being once she is

married. Although it is preferable if she has sons, daughters represent the possibility of receiving a bride price in the future and are thus regarded a source of wealth.

When Aku-father nna's passes away, her family arrive, and she defers to her aunts and uncles for funeral arrangements. Despite her curiosity regarding his death, she refrains from inquiring because nice children are not meant to be nosy. She knows that by sharing stories about her father, she will eventually learn what happened to him. For fear of upsetting any deities, Emecheta uses Ezekiel's funeral to explain how the Ibo people of Nigeria blend both their traditional beliefs and Christian conceptions of heaven and hell.

When Ma Blackie comes to Lagos as a widow, she realises she won't be able to stay in the city. She is preparing to return to Ibuza with her children. Ma Blackie and her two children are taken in by Okonkwo, Ezekiel's brother. Ma Blackie marries Okonkwo and becomes one of his several wives. Aku-bride nna's price would now be diverted to Okonkwo. His desires drive him to want more money so that he can claim the title of Obi with it.

Chike Ofulue, Aku-nna's future husband and soon-to-be instructor, is introduced to her. Because Chike's ancestors were slaves, friendship, much alone a match, is illegal between them. According to legend, such a link would contaminate not only Aku-nna, but also Okonkwo's entire family. The grownups in her life warn her against getting too close to Chike, which only fuels her desire to do so. Aku-nna is lonely and alone, so she turns to Chike, who feels compelled to protect her, especially once she has her first menstrual cycle, which signifies she is old enough to marry. He is aware that young men and their fathers will begin to give Okonkwo a bride price. When Chike confronts Okoboshi, his protection turns fierce. Okoboshi's family kidnaps Aku-nna in retribution. This is regarded as a legitimate method of converting a girl into a man's wife.

When Okoboshi tries to rape Aku-nna, she informs him that she has already had a relationship with Chike, thus outwitting him. Okoboshi is so enraged by the falsehood that he doesn't even bother to question her about it. With the help of Chike and Nna-nndo, Aku-nna manages to flee Okoboshi's family.

Aku-nna and Chike live together outside of the village at the end of the novel. They live in a furnished home and each of them works in a career that they enjoy. Aku-nna is expecting a child soon. Despite their joy, not everything in their life is perfect. Despite his numerous, charitable attempts, Okonkwo refuses to accept Chike's father's bride price. According to tribal legend, this signifies Aku-nna will be cursed and die while giving birth. Aku-nna realises that she will only be free via death because she is unable to entirely abandon her people's traditions.

Chike takes her to the hospital later when she becomes ill and screams. Aku-nna dies in childbirth there, thus conforming to her tradition in a roundabout manner. Chike names his child Joy.

A Grain Of Wheat

- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o

About the author:

Ngugi wa Thiong’o, born James Ngugi on January 5, 1938, is a Kenyan writer and intellectual who mostly writes in Gikuyu but also writes in English. His works range from literary and social critique to children’s literature and include novels, plays, short stories, and essays. Mtiri, a Gikuyu-language journal, is his creation and he is its editor. His story “The Upright Revolution: Or Why Humans Walk Upright” has been translated into over a hundred languages.

Works:

Novels

- Weep Not, Child (1964)
- The River Between (1965)
- A Grain of Wheat (1967, 1992)
- Petals of Blood (1977)
- Caitani Mutharaba-Ini (Devil on the Cross, 1980)
- Matigari ma Njiruungi, 1986 (Matigari, translated into English by Wangui wa Goro, 1989)
- Mũrogi wa Kagogo (Wizard of the Crow, 2004)
- The Perfect Nine: The Epic of Gikũyũ and Mũmbi (2020)

Short story collections

- A Meeting in the Dark (1974)
- Secret Lives, and Other Stories, (1976, 1992)
- Minutes of Glory and Other Stories (2019)

Plays

- The Black Hermit (1963)

- This Time Tomorrow (three plays, including the title play, “The Rebels”, “The Wound in the Heart” and “This Time Tomorrow”) (c. 1970)
- The Trial of Dedan Kimathi (1976) (with Micere Githae Mugo and Njaka)
- Ngaahika Ndeenda: Ithaako ria ngerekano (I Will Marry When I Want) (1977, 1982) (with Ngugi wa Mirii)

About the text:

The historical novel *A Grain of Wheat* by Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong’o was initially published as part of the prestigious Heinemann African Writers Series. It was composed while he was a student at Leeds University and first published in 1967 by Heinemann. The title is taken from St. John’s Gospel, John 12:24. The story weaves together several occurrences from Kenya’s battle for independence from the United Kingdom (1952–59), focusing on Mugo, a quiet man whose life is ruled by a terrible secret: he was the one who betrayed Kihika. The story revolves around his native village’s preparations for Uhuru Day, Kenya’s national holiday. Former resistance warriors General R and Koinandu want to publicly execute the traitor.

Characters:

Mugo: He is a loner who rose to fame after leading a hunger strike in a Mau Mau detention camp and intervening to prevent a village guard from killing a pregnant woman. Throughout the book, he is portrayed as a hero, although he is the traitor who betrayed Kihika to the colonial administration in the hopes of receiving a prize.

Gikonyo: He is Mumbi’s husband, an aspiring carpenter and businessman. He admitted to taking the resistance oath in a concentration camp and getting an early release only to discover that his wife had given birth to a kid with his loathed rival Karanja while he was gone.

Mumbi: She is Gikonyo’s wife and Kihika’s sister. Gikonyo slept with Karanja, who had been appointed village chief by the colonial power, while he was imprisoned.

Karanja: He is a Kenyan collaborator commonly suspected of being the traitor by the others.

Kihika: He is a resistance fighter who took control of a police station and assassinated District Officer Robson. After being betrayed by Mugo, he was apprehended and hanged.

John Thompson: He is a white settler and Thabai administrator who believes in the colonial “civilising mission’s” objectives and despises Africans.

Essay:

The novel is set in the months leading up to and on the day of Uhuru, Kenya’s independence from colonial rule in 1963. The narrative also includes flashbacks to the Kenya Colony’s past, especially the 1950s villagization. Mugo, a shy Thabai peasant, refuses to give a speech at Uhuru, despite town elders’ requests. He is regarded as a hero in the hamlet for his stoicism and heroism when imprisoned during Kenya’s State of Emergency, but he harbours a dark secret: he betrayed their beloved Mau Mau soldier, Kihika. He is restless, and he is unable to bring harmony to the village. Kihika had joined the Mau Mau as a young man and gained acclaim for taking the Mahee police garrison and killing the brutal District Officer (‘DO’) Robson, but he was captured and executed after Mugo betrayed him in private. Kihika was hanged. Those who are preparing Uhuru want to pay tribute to him. Mugo betrayed Kihika because he was disturbed by the young man’s zeal and the price given for his head, but he felt regret as soon as he did so. The majority of people, including two Mau Mau soldiers, General R. and Koina, believe Karanja was the one who betrayed Kihika. They intend to execute him in Uhuru.

Mugo was not the only Thabai resident who had to spend time in a correctional centre. Gikonyo, a well-known businessman and former carpenter, was also detained and transferred to a detention centre. He was over over heels in love with his lovely wife Mumbi, Kihika’s sister, before the camp. Despite the fact that many others, including Kihika’s friend Karanja, had also sought her love, he had won her heart. He had dreams about her while he was away, and he was shocked to learn that Mumbi had given birth to a kid by Karanja while he was imprisoned. He doesn’t feel they’ll ever be able to mend their relationship, so he focuses on his profession.

Karanja is employed by the colonial government’s Githima Forest Research Station. He tries to win the approval of John Thompson, the DO, who is stationed there with his wife Margery. Thompson had a promising future ahead of him, but it was cut short by a hunger strike and violence at Rira, the camp where Mugo was imprisoned. Thompson is currently in Githima, but he plans to leave Kenya permanently because he does not want to be present when whites no longer rule. Karanja did not join the liberation struggle but instead began working for the white man, first as a member of the Kikuyu Home Guard and later as Chief during the

Emergency. People were enraged, but Karanja was merely seeking for something to do and at the same time protect himself.

Mumbi comes to meet Mugo, upset that her husband no longer loves her. She tells him about how she and Gikonyo met and how depressed she was when he was away in camp. When she heard Gikonyo was returning, she became deliriously joyful and fell for Karanja's advances. She begs Mugo to come to Uhuru on a second visit; she begs him again on a third visit. Mugo grows enraged and accuses Kihika of betraying him. Mumbi is taken aback, but she does not want any more blood to be shed in the name of her brother.

Uhuru arrives, the day beginning with rain and ending with sunshine. People are ecstatic, and they all want to see Mugo, even though he has stated that he would not be present. There are talks and games. There's also a spontaneous running race, in which Gikonyo and Karanja find themselves racing against each other (much like they did in a long ago race for Mumbi's attention). However, they collide, and Gikonyo breaks his arm, necessitating hospitalisation.

Instead of Mugo, General R. delivers a speech in which he calls for the traitor to come forward, assuming it will be Karanja. Mugo emerges from the crowd and claims responsibility; at first, he feels a sense of liberation, but this is swiftly replaced by panic. No one approaches him, and the befuddled crowd disperses and allows him to leave. Later, General R. and Koina arrive to arrest him and inform him that he will be tried in private. Mugo accepts his fate and decides to face his penalty. Some local elders believe that Uhuru did not go as planned and that something is wrong.

Karanja decides to go back to Githima. He is depressed and contemplates suicide by jumping in front of a train. But in the end, he decides against it. When Gikonyo wakes up in the hospital, he is determined to make amends with Mumbi. When she pays him a visit, he says he's ready to talk about the child he's been avoiding since he returned. She informs him that they'll have to wait until they can have a genuine and heartfelt conversation about their wishes and needs. He's content, and he's planning to carve a stool with a picture of a pregnant Mumbi on it.