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**ENGLISH FAL
SUPPORT MATERIAL
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**PAPER 2: LITERATURE
Teacher's Manual**

PREFACE

INTRODUCTION

The English FAL Support Material document was developed as a result of the KZNDoE mandate and has been produced through guidance and support of Grades 10-12 CURRICULUM DIRECTORATE.

The document has been developed as support material and must, therefore, be used in conjunction with:

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Grades 10-12

The Examination Guidelines (2014)

Prescribed Literature (Circular E39 of 2016)

2017 Annual Teaching Plans

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There are three rules for writing a novel. Unfortunately, no one knows what they are.

--W. Somerset Maugham



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NOVEL

A: Novel

Cry the Beloved Country

Alan Paton

Alan Paton's biography

Alan Paton is a South African writer. He served as the principal of Diepkloof Reformatory for young (black African) offenders from 1935 to 1949.

Introduction

1. Do you think it is right for the rural people to migrate to the cities to escape poverty?
2. If you were involved in the amendment of the South Africa Constitution, would you consider reintroducing the death penalty as a solution to the current high crime rate?

Pace setter: Term 1: Book 1

Term 2: Book 2

Term 3: Book 3

Things to look for in analysing the novel

In analysing the novel, one has to look for the following:

- **Characters:** What are the names and the roles of those who are involved in the story? Who is the main character? What kind of behaviour patterns do they portray? For example, compare the characters of Stephen Kumalo and his brother John in *Cry the Beloved Country*.
What kind of a person is Rev Theophillus Msimangu in the same story?

Rev Stephen Kumalo

Rev Stephen Kumalo, representing good moral values and Christian ethics (moral principles that govern a person's behaviour), is a quiet, humble man, with a strong faith in God. He travels from Ndotsheni to Johannesburg and begins a search for his sister Getrude and her son, his son Absalom who went to Johannesburg to look for Getrude and his brother John.

Rev Theophillus Msimangu

Theophillus is a warm, generous, and humble young minister of the Anglican Church in Sophiatown. He assists Kumalo with great sensitivity, trying hard to spare him pain when he can and arranging accommodation and time for him to rest. In general, he makes Kumalo's time in Johannesburg bearable. Msimangu explains to the reader the political and socioeconomic difficulties that the black population faces. He appears to have the clearest understanding of South Africa's injustices, and suggests Christian love as a solution. According to Msimangu, white South Africans oppress the blacks because they

fear their numbers and their power. Msimangu believes that only selfless love can counter the fear.

Absalom

Absalom, like most of the young people of Ndotsheni, left home to find work in Johannesburg; for reasons that are never made clear. However, he loses touch with his family and resorts to crime. Absalom carries a gun for protection, but when he fires the weapon in fear, he ends up killing Arthur Jarvis.

Arthur Jarvis

Arthur is murdered before the reader finds out about his writings that portray him as an opponent for South Africa's racial injustices. His motives are selfless and like Msimangu, Arthur Jarvis suggests possible solutions for South Africa's needs, and although he is murdered, his young son makes some of Arthur's hopes about South Africa live on.

James Jarvis

At the beginning, Jarvis, a white farmer at Ndotsheni appears ignorant of, or indifferent to the injustices of South Africa. He cares for his farm and his family, and is only shattered when he learns that his son has been killed. He goes to stay with his son's in-laws, the Harrisons, in Johannesburg, where he learns that Arthur had been valued by people from all racial groups for his speeches on social justice.

In an effort to understand his son better, Jarvis reads Arthur's writings about the injustices in South Africa, and he is moved by his son's ideas. Once he returns to Ndotsheni, he donates milk to the young children and arranges to have a dam built to irrigate the soil better. He also hires an agricultural expert to teach the farmers about good agricultural methods.

John Khumalo

John is Rev Stephen Khumalo's little brother. He owns a shop in Johannesburg. He is also a politician who gives speeches and enjoys the spotlight. In Johannesburg, John left his first wife Esther and is living with another woman outside of marriage which is morally shocking. He is portrayed as selfish. Even though John knows that his son Matthew was with Absalom the night of the burglary, he still hires a lawyer that will defend Matthew to convince the judge that he wasn't anywhere near his cousin Absalom when he shot and killed Arthur Jarvis.

- **The Plot:** This refers to the sequence of events in the development of the story. One looks at how the characters interact, how they are related or connected; why they behave the way they do, and why do the events play out the way they do?
- **Setting:** Where does the story take place? When? Is the setting significant in terms of providing historical or other information that is crucial to the story?
- **Organisation:** Does the story come full circle in that it develops chronologically?
- **Writing style:** Is the story detailed or does it maintain suspense? What language choices have been made? - The kind of tone, mood (feelings), figurative language etc. that are evident in words that are used in different sections of the story? What effect do those language choices have on the meaning of the story?

- **Symbolism:** Are there any words or phrases which represent something beyond what is said? E.g. the church in Ndotsheni represents, faith, humbleness and moral values.
- **Theme:** What are the main ideas?

1. Setting

The story is set in Ndotsheni (in Ixopo) and in Johannesburg in 1946. It is the time when tribal solidarity was broken as many black people from the rural areas migrated to the big cities to look for work. The book was written when the Land Act of 1913 was in force. At the time when this story was written, many rural people did not have enough land for their survival. The remaining land that they had was overgrazed.

2. The Plot

In the remote village of Ndotsheni, in Ixopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Reverend Stephen Khumalo receives a letter from a fellow minister asking him to come to Johannesburg. The letter says Khumalo's sister, Gertrude, is very sick. Gertrude went to Johannesburg with her child to look for her husband who had gone there to work in the mines and never came back. Khumalo undertakes the difficult and expensive journey to the city with the hope of helping Gertrude and finding his son, Absalom, who went to Johannesburg and never returned. In Johannesburg, Khumalo is warmly welcomed by Msimangu, the priest who sent him the letter, and given comfortable accommodation by Mrs. Lithebe, a Christian woman who feels that helping others is her duty. Khumalo visits Gertrude, who is now a prostitute and liquor-seller, and persuades her to come back to Ndotsheni with her young child.

A more difficult quest follows when Khumalo and Msimangu begin searching for Absalom. They visit Khumalo's brother, John, who has become a successful businessman and a politician, and he directs them to the factory where his son and Absalom once worked together. As Khumalo travels from place to place, he begins to see the gaping racial and economic divisions that are threatening to split his country. Eventually, Khumalo discovers that his son has spent time in a reformatory and that Absalom has a girl that is pregnant.

Meanwhile, the newspapers announce that Arthur Jarvis, a prominent white activist for racial justice, has been murdered in his home by a gang of burglars. Khumalo and Msimangu learn that the police are looking for Absalom, and Khumalo's worst suspicions are confirmed when Absalom is arrested for Jarvis's murder. Absalom has confessed to the crime, but he claims that two others, including John Khumalo's son, Matthew, aided him and that he did not intend to murder Jarvis. With the help of friends, Khumalo obtains a lawyer for Absalom and attempts to understand what his son has become. John, however, makes arrangements for his own son's defense, even though this split will worsen Absalom's case. When Khumalo tells Absalom's pregnant girlfriend what has happened, she is saddened by the news, but she joyfully agrees to his proposal that she marry his son and return to Ndotsheni as Khumalo's daughter-in-law.

Meanwhile, in the hills above Ndotsheni, The local police bring Arthur Jarvis's father, James Jarvis, news of his son's death, and he leaves immediately for Johannesburg with his wife. In an attempt to come to terms with what has happened, Jarvis reads his son's articles and speeches on social inequality and begins to reconsider his own prejudices. He and Khumalo meet for the first

time by accident, and after Khumalo has recovered from his shock, he expresses sadness and regret for Jarvis's loss. Both men attend Absalom's trial, a fairly straightforward process that ends with the death penalty for Absalom and an acquittal for his co-conspirators. Khumalo arranges for Absalom to marry the girl who bears his child, and they bid farewell. The morning of his departure, Khumalo brings his new family members back to Ndotsheni only to find that Gertrude has disappeared.

Arthur Jarvis's young son befriends Khumalo, and James Jarvis becomes increasingly involved with helping the struggling village. He donates milk at first, then makes plans for a dam and hires an agricultural expert to demonstrate newer, less devastating farming techniques. When Jarvis's wife dies, Khumalo and his congregation send a wreath to express their sympathy. Just as the diocese's bishop is on the verge of transferring Khumalo, Jarvis sends a note of thanks for the wreath and offers to build the congregation a new church, and Khumalo is permitted to stay in his parish.

3. Themes

3.1 Inequality and social injustice

Khumalo's search for his son takes place against the background of massive social inequalities, which, if not directly responsible for Absalom's troubles, are certainly facilitated by that situation. Because black South Africans are allowed to own only limited quantities of land, the soil of Ndotsheni is exhausted by over-planting and over-grazing, the land becomes sharp and hostile. For this reason, most young people leave the villages to seek work in the cities. Both Gertrude and Absalom find themselves caught up in this wave of emigration, but the temptation for longing for money in Johannesburg leads to danger. Facing limited job opportunities and separated from their family and tribal traditions, both Gertrude and Absalom resort to crime.

3.2 Reuniting family and the nation

Khumalo's effort is to reunite his family by bringing back his sister Gertrude and his son Absalom to Ixopo. A major theme that Paton develops is that family life in South Africa is broken. The novel contains numerous instances in which families are broken apart by migration to Johannesburg, such as the family of Sibeko, and the cumulative effect of this. The shift of the plot in book 3 of the novel from reuniting the family in South Africa to reuniting village life in Ndotsheni reflects this theme and enlarges it to encompass different families. Furthermore, Paton shows the theme of reuniting family and nation through the writings of Arthur Jarvis concerning a South African national identity. A major reason that Arthur Jarvis worked for social justice, according to his works, is to unite the nation as one cohesive whole, instead of a nation of various conflicting ethnic groups.

3.3 Kindness as a Cristian value

A major theme that Paton develops throughout the novel is the importance of always acting with a sense of kindness. There is a specifically Christian connotation to this value, as demonstrated by the dominant Christian influence of the characters, most specifically the pastors Stephen Khumalo and Theophilus Msimangu. It is also Khumalo's kindness to the small white boy that causes Jarvis to donate milk and by arranging for the placement of new farming methods in Ndotsheni.

3.4 Urban versus Rural life

The conflict between urban and rural life is best exemplified by Stephen Khumalo and his personality, while urban life is portrayed in the behaviour pattern of John Khumalo. Rural society comes to represent family, religion, morality and stability, while the chaotic urban life that Paton describes represents the breaking up of families, corruption, and atheism. Paton also illustrates this theme through the development of several characters in the novel: the literal move of characters such as the pregnant girl to rural life in Ndotsheni represents a change to a greater moral sense, while the most corrupt character in the novel, John Khumalo, is fully trapped in urban Johannesburg society.

3.5 Fear

When the journey begins, Khumalo experiences the fear of the 'unknown, the fear of the great city where boys were killed crossing the street, the fear of Gertrude's sickness. Deep down the fear for his son, Absalom. Deep down the fear of a man who lives in a world not made for him, whose own world is slipping away, dying, being destroyed, beyond any recall'. Absalom sites 'fear' as the reason for killing Jarvis's son. However, the novel concludes with the beginning of freedom from fear and poverty.

3.6 Journey/Quest

An assumption that Alan Paton makes throughout *Cry, the Beloved Country* is that numerous journeys are significant not in themselves but in what they represent. This is most clearly demonstrated through two separate events, the first in the journey from Ndotsheni to Johannesburg and from Alexandra back to Ndotsheni. In the first journey, a white man carries black men in his car in support of a strike, while in the second journey the young man from the reformatory exits the courtroom with the blacks. Paton uses this theme in order to show that public demonstration of support is an important step in gaining justice in South Africa.



DRAMA

B: DRAMA

My Children! My Africa!

Athol Harold Lannigan Fugard

1. The Playwright

Athol Fugard was born on 11 June 1932 in Middelburg, Eastern Cape. He is a White South African with English and Afrikaner parents. His family moved to Port Elizabeth where he did his schooling. Fugard is a director, actor, novelist and a playwright. Most of his plays are political and anti-apartheid. He studied Philosophy, Social Anthropology and French at the University of Cape Town. He dropped his studies and travelled throughout Africa. He is married to Sheila Meiring, an ex-University of Cape Town Drama student. The play, *My Children! My Africa!* was first performed on 27 June 1989 at the Market theatre, now the John Kani theatre. The idea behind writing this play came from a newspaper article in 1985 about a teacher who was *necklaced* after being suspected of being a government informer.

NB: For more information about the Author refer to page 5 of *My Children! My Africa!*

2. Title: *My Children! My Africa!*

The exclamation marks in the title show that the title is a **lament** (passionate expression of grief and sorrow). It shows emotions of Mr. Myalatyia (Mr. M) about the wasted future of the children in the whole of Africa. It is an expression of grief and sorrow especially at the waste of human life and potential.

Mr. M feels helpless and frustrated about the children leaving school and joining boycotts. He pities the youth of Africa especially the South African youth, where Bantu education was still in place. He feels that the world is wasting its children through wars, hunger, starvation and famine. Hence Mr. M says, “What is wrong with this world that it wants to waste you all like that... My Children...my Africa!”(p 96).

3. Background

This drama was written in 1984. It is set a year before the State of Emergency which took place from 1984 to 1989 in South Africa, (refer to (p8). 1984-1990 was a period when freedom fighters such as Nelson Mandela and other leaders were still in prison. However, there were ongoing negotiations to end apartheid. The intensity of the struggle for freedom was at its height, the resistance to apartheid was starting to become violent.

Township schools were at the forefront of violent resistance to apartheid and Zolile High School was amongst those schools. Apartheid was about to end in South Africa and Fugard attacks the ANC’s decision to boycott schools and the damage it would cause to the generation of Africans. It shows the suffering that black South Africans went through during the apartheid era.

Fugard indirectly attacks the South African Youth Movement for deciding to boycott schools as he realised the image and damage it would cause a generation of African pupils.

The play is a clash of ideas. He believes that dialogue and education, instead of violence, are the most effective tools for fighting against the apartheid education policy.

3.1 Important Aspects and Dates to Note before Reading *My Children! My Africa!*

3.1.1. *Apartheid*

Apartheid consisted of numerous laws that allowed the ruling white minority in South Africa to segregate, exploit and terrorise the vast majority, mostly Africans, but also Asians and Coloureds. In a white-ruled South Africa, black people were denied basic human and political rights. Their labour was exploited and their lives segregated. Under apartheid, racist beliefs were enshrined in law and any criticism of the law was suppressed. Apartheid was simply racism made law.

3.1.2. *Confucianism*

Confucius is a Chinese Philosopher and teacher who lived from 551-479 BC. The philosophy of Confucius emphasises humanness, loyalty to one's nature, morality, justice and virtue. He believes in the power of words.

3.1.3. *Ozymandias*

Ozymandias is an Egyptian Pharaoh, Ramesses II, known for enslaving the Israelites. He erected a lot of statues/ monuments in Egypt. He was oppressive and his rule left Egypt suffering from an incurable decline. Ozymandias is a symbol of political power.

3.1.4. *Kliptown, 26 June 1955*

On 26 June 1955, the Freedom Charter was signed in Kliptown, South Africa. The **Freedom Charter** is a statement of core principles of the South African Congress Alliance which consisted of the ANC and its allies (the South African Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Congress and the South African Congress of Democrats). It is characterised by its opening demand: **The People Shall Govern!**

The Freedom Charter, as a document, can be found on the following website: <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/charter.html>.

3.1.5. *Sharpeville Massacre, 21 March 1960*

On 21 March 1960 about 180 black Africans were injured and 69 were killed when South African police opened fire on demonstrators who were protesting against the pass laws at the township of Sharpeville.

The Sharpeville Massacre, signalled the start of armed resistance in South Africa and prompted worldwide condemnation of South Africa's apartheid policies. Today, *21st March* is a public holiday and has become known as **South African Human Rights' Day**.

3.1.6. Soweto Uprisings, 16 June 1976

When the 1976 school year started, learners refused to be taught in Afrikaans. On 16 June 1976, students assembled at different points throughout Soweto and then set off to meet at Orlando West Secondary School where the plan was to pledge their solidarity.

The Bureau of State Security sent a police squad to disperse the crowd. When the students refused, police dogs were released, and then teargas was fired. Students responded by throwing stones and bottles at the police. The official death toll was 23 and many hundreds of people were injured. Today 16th June is a public holiday and is known as **Youth Day**.

4. How the Story Is Told

4.1 Setting

The setting is the place and time in which action happens and any other situational or contextual elements that affect the characters. Setting is determined through direct information provided by the author as well as the language used by the author.

The setting of *My Children! My Africa!* is Eastern Cape, South Africa in 1984.

Most action takes place at Zolile High School in a black location/ township called Brakwater.

4.2 Characterisation

Characters develop the plot in a play. They reveal themselves in their words and in their behaviour.

4.2.1 Primary Characters (Main Characters).

Anela Myalatya (Mr. M)

Anela Myalatya (Mr. M) is 57 years old. He is a teacher and a Principal of Zolile High School. He is a bachelor and rents a backroom at Rev Mbopa's home. He decided to become a teacher at the age of 10 while in Wapadsberg Pass during a school trip (p 94-95).

Mr. M is a dedicated, determined, ambitious, respected and passionate teacher. He organises debates for his learners and also enters Isabel and Thami in a literature competition. He is passionate about teaching English language and the value of Education in general. Mr. M wants to get Thami a full university scholarship.

He believes that language skills can be used by learners to think independently. He believed in the power of words (pgs. 60-61 and 87-88).

He is working towards racial integration by inviting a white school for debates. He wants Blacks and Whites to work together. He is a symbol of unity. He believes that education and hard work can help Africans to end apartheid. He is anti-apartheid and hates Bantu Education although he is forced to teach it. He is full of enthusiasm and energy.

He refuses to accept and understand different political viewpoints (Thami's viewpoint p86-88) which is ironic because he believes in debates and power of words. He is authoritative, a dictator and a traditionalist. He believes in respect for authority. He says respect for authority is deeply ingrained in the African soul.

During the boycotts he is at school, ringing the bell and calling out names of his learners from the attendance register in an empty classroom. He is stubborn e.g. he refuses to run away from the comrades who were coming to kill him. He also continues to ring the bell furiously and he is killed (p 96). He is branded an “impimpi” (informer / sell out) for giving Captain Lategan names and addresses of the pupils who were involved in the boycotts and he is killed by the mob.

For more information refer to page 36.

Thami Mbikwana

Thami Mbikwana is 19 years old and doing matric at Zolile High School. His mother, **Lillian Mbikwana**, is a domestic worker and his father, **Amos Mbikwana** works in a railway. His parents live in Cape Town while he lives in **Brakwater** location with his grandmother and a married sister.

Thami is a traditionalist and respects African culture. Thami calls Women Liberation a foreign idea which came with Western Civilisation (p 42). He respects Mr. M and avoids conflict with him. He regards Mr. M as a parent and loves him although he never tells him [e.g. Thami tries unsuccessfully to protect Mr. M from the mob that wanted to kill him (p 96)].

He has a very strong personality and he speaks his mind. For example, he tells Isabel that what he does with his life has got nothing to do with Mr. M (p 50). He is eloquent, e.g. leading the debating team and chosen by Mr. M to take part in the literature competition. When he was young he wanted to become a doctor so he could serve his people.

He despises Bantu education and attends Comrades’ meetings. Later in the play he becomes a revolutionary (freedom fighter).

As the story progresses he is defiant. For example, he tells Isabel that Mr. M has old-fashioned ideas and has no authority over him (p 84). He is radical and wants an ‘all out rebellion’ against apartheid and an immediate change. Thami says there are quite a few Ozymandias in South Africa waiting to be toppled (p 72). In the end he decides to leave RSA in order to avoid jail and commit himself to the anti- apartheid struggle in exile.

For more information refer to page 36.

Isabel Dyson

She is 18 years old, doing matric at Cambedoo Girls High School and lives in Cambedoo.

She is a privileged young white English- speaking girl and her favorite sport is hockey.

Her father is a chemist who owns Main Street Karoo Pharmacy. Her mother and sister work at her father’s pharmacy.

Isabel is an extrovert. She is outspoken and direct. She is intelligent, vivacious and is an excellent debater. She is very opinionated and is regarded as the rebel in her family. She has a strong personality (p 47). Isabel is a feminist, she believes in Women Liberation (p 43).

She is welcoming and easily adapts in all situations. She is a non-racist. For example, she agrees to go to a township school and ends up being friends with Thami. Isabel is loyal to both Thami and Mr. M. and does not share whatever information she discusses with each one of

them. She admits that she is a bad loser (she despises losing and doesn't know how to handle losing).

She doesn't understand Black people's misery and suffering under apartheid until she visits Zolile High School and become friends with Thami. She even invites Thami to her home for tea. She is ambitious, loves English and wants to study journalism at Rhodes University.

She is the voice of hope. After Mr. M's death, she goes to Wapadsberg Pass to say farewell to Mr. M and promises that she will not waste her future (p 103).

For more information refer to page 37.

4.2.2 Secondary Characters

(We only know them through primary characters' conversations and monologues/soliloquies)

Rev Mbopa

Rev. Mbopa is a pastor at the Anglican Church of Saint Mark. He owns a house where Mr. M rents a backroom (Matchbox).

Miss Brockway

Miss Brockway is the school principal of Camdeboo Girls High School. She allows her students to go compete in Brakwater Township with a Black school.

Renee Vermas and Cathy Bullard

Renee and Cathy are learners at Camdeboo Girls High School. They are also in the debating team that goes with Isabel to Zolile High School.

Mr. and Mrs. Dyson

Mr. and Mrs. Dyson are Isabel's parents. Mr. Dyson is a chemist/ pharmacist, and Mrs. Dyson works at her husband's pharmacy.

Lucille Dyson

Lucille is Isabel's elder sister. She works at her father's Karoo Pharmacy.

Samuel

Samuel works for the Dyson family as a delivery man at the Karoo Pharmacy. He is a Zionist.

Auntie

Auntie is a Dyson's maid. 'Auntie' is a term used when referring to a helper or a domestic worker. She lives in the township in a two-roomed house without running water and electricity. She normally gossips with Isabel in the kitchen.

Mr. David Grobbelaar

Mr. David Grobbelaar is a school inspector of Bantu Education. He wants learners to call him "**Oom Davie**". He is a "motivational speaker" as he gives pep-talks. He says the standard ten learners are **shareholders** in the exciting **enterprise called RSA**.

Mr. Pienaar

Mr. Pienaar is a mayor of Camdeboo.

Mrs. Magada

Mrs. Magada is a teacher at Zolile High school.

Stephen Gaika

Stephen Gaika is a learner at Zolile High School and is Thami's classmate.

Sipho Fondini

Sipho Fondini is a standard 6 learner at Zolile High School. During the boycott he writes "**Liberation first, education later**" and asks Mr. M if the spelling is correct.

Mrs Makhathini

She sells vetkoeks on the street to people waiting for the bus.

Captain Lategan

He is a police officer who receives the names of students who incite violence from Mr. M.

5. Structure and Development**5.1 Themes**

The following are some of the themes evident in *My Children! My Africa!*

5.1.1 Negative effects of Bantu Education / Unequal Education

- The youth deems it necessary to boycott classes in order to bring an end to apartheid.
- Black people are given inferior, poor and sub-standard education.
- Other races' education is better than black people's education as it prepares them for a life of servitude in the outside world.
- White schools, such as Camdeboo, are well-resourced while black schools, such as Zolile, have poor infrastructure (pg52).

5.1.2 Generational clashes / Generational conflict

Young people and adults differ on how to fight apartheid. For example, Mr. M thinks dialogue is the only solution while Thami thinks violence and boycott is the best way to end apartheid.

5.1.3 Inequality during the apartheid era

- The difference in living conditions between blacks and whites in South Africa during Apartheid.
- Racial Segregation.

5.1.4 Gender Inequality

Differences between men and women (Great Debate topic p 42-44).

5.1.5 Race relations

- There is a relationship that is developing between Isabel and Thami as well as the relationship that Mr. M has built between Cambedoo High School and Zolile High School.
- In the play, both Isabel and Thami refer to the importance of their friendship, which develops over several weeks. Blossoming friendship between a black male and a white female despite all barriers. (Act 1 Scene 5 – Isabel talks about the importance of being open).

5.1.6 “Education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world” (Dr. Nelson Mandela)

- Words and dialogue are more powerful than throwing stones or resorting to violence.
- Debate opens people’s minds.

5.1.7 Wasted Opportunities

Mr. M sees boycotts as a waste of time and a waste of human potential. For him children soul remain in class. He does not wish to see school children being victims of what he calls the “country’s lunacy”.

6. Symbols

(The following are some of the symbols evident in *My Children! My Africa!*)

6.1 Brakwater

Literal meaning

It is an Afrikaans word which means **brackish water**.

It also refers to water that has high-salt content thus has a bad taste. This water cannot be used for crops and human consumption.

Figurative meaning:

The place is a terrible mess not conducive for healthy human dwelling. It is not nurturing or giving life to the people.

To read more about the location, refer to p 51.

6.2 Cambedoo

The word is derived from a Khoi word meaning “green hollow” symbolizing a space in the environment which is beautiful and green. It is nurturing and gives hope.

6.3 The school bell

The bell symbolises authority and order. Mr M *rings the school bell* even when the comrades are at school to kill him. It also shows his defiance to the boycotts.

6.4 “Matchboxes”

Literal Meaning

“Matchboxes” refers to the size of the classroom at Zolile High School as well as the size of the room Mr M is renting at Rev Mbopa’s yard. These rooms are small.

Figurative Meaning

“Matchboxes” symbolises the suffering and the misery black people are subjected to. It symbolises poverty, oppression, racial segregation and limited opportunities for Black People

6.5 Dictionary vs Stone (dialogue vs violence)

Mr. M says the dictionary contains **60 000 words** but the stone is just **ONE word**. (P 91). The dictionary symbolises words, logic negotiation, debate and reason while the stone symbolises action, violence, destruction and force.

7. Style: Literary Devices and Figures of Speech

7.1 Dramatic Irony

Dramatic irony is where the audience knows something that the character/s do not know.

Mr. M believes he still has a grip on Thami he has no doubt that Thami should study further (p 59), on the other hand Thami tells Isabel that he neither listens nor do what Mr. M says (p 50).

7.2. Irony

During the boycott Sipho Fondini writes, “Liberation first, then education” on the walls and asks Mr. M if his spelling is correct. This is *ironic* because one would not expect a child who believes in Liberation before education to concern himself about spelling. It would seem unlikely that Mr. M’s opinion would matter under the circumstances, but to Sipho, Mr. M’s opinion seems to matter (P 90). This also shows that despite what is happening, he still values education.

7.3 Simile

“Now I sit at my desk *like* an animal that has smelt danger and that has heard something moving in the bushes.....” (p 79).

- Thami compares his feelings of being in the classroom to an animal that has smelt danger, heard something moving in the bushes and knows it must be careful or do something to protect itself. He no longer feels safe in the classroom.
- This shows how Thami mistrusts Bantu Education.

Another example of a Simile is on page 41. “Enthusiasm for your cause is most commendable but without personal discipline it is *as* useless *as* having a good donkey and a good cart but no harness.”

Enthusiasm without discipline is compared to a good donkey and a good cart but without a harness. A harness is important to control or give direction to the donkey. Mr. M is disciplining the learners who are shouting at the opposition during the debate.

7.3 Metaphors

“I’ve got a zoo in here, a mad zoo of hungry animals...and the keeper is frightened!”(p62).

Mr. M compares his heart to a mad zoo of hungry animals. This shows how he feels in his heart about losing grip on his learners who want to join the boycotts. He is frightened of what is going to happen to the children in the streets (p 62).

“I don’t need to go to university to learn what my people reallytraditional old Xhosa remedy called ‘Inkululeko’ Freedom” (p 78).

Thami compares Freedom/ Inkululeko to medicine that black people need to get in order to be healed. He says black people do not need the pills and bottles of medicine to be relieved of pain and suffering but the healing is in getting freedom.

7.4 Combination of Metaphor and Simile

“They (the armoured vehicles) were everywhere, crawling around in the smoke like giant dung beetles looking for shit to eat” (p 89).

- The big police armoured cars are compared to dung beetles (inhuman insects).
- The rioting children / learners are compared to dung.
- The police have low regard for learners, they degrade learners.

- The first part “**they were everywhere**” is a metaphor.
- The second part “**crawling around in the smoke like giant dung beetles looking for shit to eat**” is a simile.

SHORT STORIES



SHORT STORIES

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Pace Setter for Short Stories

Short Stories			
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Characteristics of the Short Story:

The short story is prose fiction that is more compact and concentrated than the novel and the short novel (novella or novelette). It is therefore usually more intense. The plot, the creation of characters, the climax and the resolution are all dealt with economically using as few words as possible.

1. The short story has a limited length (that is, it is *short*).
2. It is a concentrated form of writing. Only details *essential* to the story (to the plot and to the creation of characters) are revealed.
3. The short story has a limited setting (or locale / location). It usually takes place in a single place. It is also usually more limited than the novel in terms of time.
4. It usually points out or emphasizes a truth about life. It usually enriches the reader's experience of life.
5. The number of characters in a short story is limited. Often, there is only one main character with minor characters who stand in some relation to the main character.

The short story has its origins in tales, myths and legends and in the oral tradition. It developed as a genre in the 19th Century in the United States and Europe with the rapid spread of magazines and newspapers which, for the first time, provided entertainment for the masses. In order to satisfy these largely unsophisticated readers, the short story needed to have a recognizable developmental structure: that is, its beginning, middle and ending had to be obvious to a general readership. Its narrative (story) base had to be strong and its subject matter familiar.

An important aspect of the short story is the point of view from which the author shows the characters and events. The short story always has a story teller or narrator. At all times, the narrator is in control of the unfolding of the story: the reader may be aware of the narrator's presence but sometimes the narrator is withdrawn (but he is *always* present). The narrator's presence may be classified into four main categories:

1. **The God-like narrator.** He is omniscient (all-seeing). He knows everything about the story which he is telling. He sees into the minds of the characters. He often explains things so that the reader has greater knowledge and insight into the meaning of the story.
2. **The direct observer.** He describes events rather like a journalist does. He records the events of the story exactly as he sees and hears them. He is only an observer. He is not in control of the events. He cannot look into the minds of the characters and cannot look either into their past or their future. He is usually impartial (objective), that is, he does not take sides and describes things fairly and accurately, leaving it to the reader to make his / her own conclusions. In instances where the reader perceives the direct observer to be subjective, the reader will have less faith in the accuracy or validity of the narrator's views.
3. **The First-person narrator.** This is the most common form of narration. The narrator is a character in the story and may even be the main character, or he may be

a friend or observer of the main character. He is usually very involved in the story. He brings the reader closer to the events and characters of the story. The reader regards the first-person narrator as a real person who can only tell what he knows or observes. His story is therefore subjective as he can only see things from his own standpoint. He is not an objective (neutral) observer.

4. **The Third-person narrator.** This narrator describes events from the outside, giving the reader a view into the main character's ideas and feelings. The reader can see the events and the reactions of all the characters to the events. This narrator can take the reader into the mind of the characters and describes their reactions, fears and hopes in relation to the event which is about to take place or is taking place (or which has already taken place). This form of narration (story-telling) is similar to that of the God-like overview, but the powers of the narrator are more limited than that of the all-seeing God-like narrator. This narrator's ability to understand and explain all is limited by being human.

Features (Aspects) of the Short Story

The pages which follow provide an opportunity for learners to summarize *the structure* of the short stories in a way that allows the stories to be compared and contrasted. **(In this booklet, the sort of response required has been provided. Teachers could use the suggested responses as a teaching focus by which, in discussions, comparisons could be made with learners' offerings. Please note that what is offered here are suggested responses and should not be regarded as model answers.)**

Each of the two sets of pages for notes lists the features of short stories and contains columns for summarizing aspects of four of the stories on each set of pages. Teachers have the option of:

- building up the notes together with learners as the story is being dealt with; or
- ensuring that the learners, individually or in groups, fill in notes as a 'summary' of the story while it is being dealt with in class or after it has been dealt with; or
- giving the notes to be written up as revision exercises *after* the story has been completed.

The format of the notes' pages allows for comparisons to be made between the stories, and, if the pages of one set are arranged side by side with the pages of the second set, the comparisons may be made across all eight stories.

The following aspects of the Short Story are dealt with:

The Theme
The Plot
Background
Type of Narrator
Setting
Atmosphere

Main Character
Rising Action
Intense Emotions
Climax
Denouement

The Structure of a Short Story

The Five Elements of Plot Structure

1. Exposition: The Beginning

Each and every story has a beginning. The start, or exposition, is where the characters and setting are established. During this part, the conflict or main problem is also introduced.

2. Rising Action: Introduction of the Problem or Conflict

In this part of the story, the main character is in crisis. This is the place for tension and excitement. The complication can arise through a character's conflict with society, nature, fate, or a number of themes. In this part of the story the main character is aware that a conflict has arisen and takes some kind of step to battle this crisis.

3. Climax: The High Point

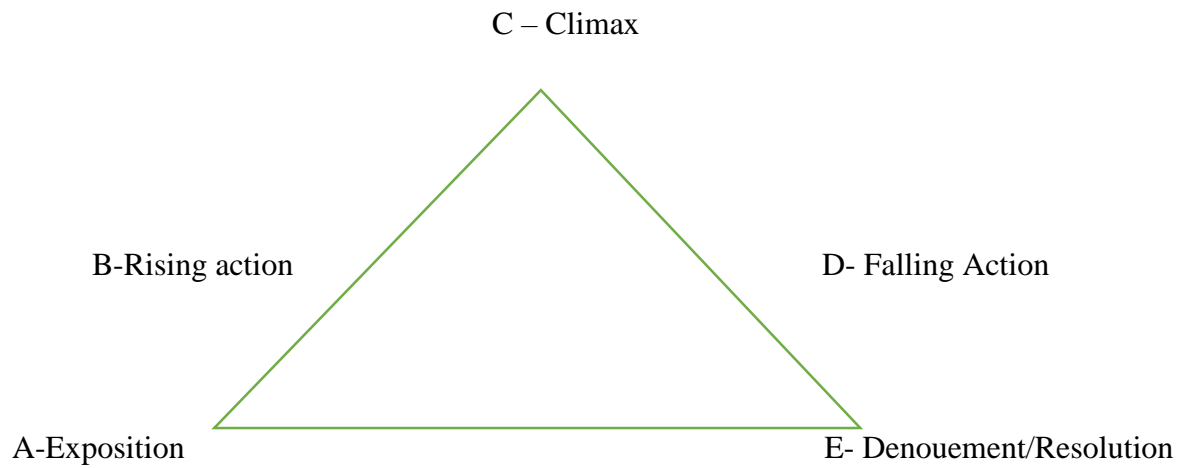
The climax is the high point of the story. It is the main event or danger that the character faces. This is the darkest moment, the worst challenge the character must oppose. At this point it looks as if the character will fail, and will never get what he/she wants. The turning point may be either physical or emotional. In a romance, the girl may turn the hopeful lover down, in an action story, the character may be surrounded by enemies with no chance of escape.

4. Falling Action: Winding Down

The falling action follows the climax. It is when the story begins to slowly wind down. The falling action shows the result of the actions or decisions the main character (protagonist) has made. This eventually leads to the final part of the novel, the crisis resolution.

5. Resolution: The End

The resolution, also often called denouement, which is French for "to untie" or "unraveling", is the conclusion of the story. Here, the conflicts are resolved, all loose ends are tied up, and the story concludes with either a happy or sad ending.



1

The Doll's House

Kathrine Mansfield



Pre-Reading Activities

The teacher can ask learners to discuss the following questions:

- Mention the kind of toys that you had when you were still young. Did you show off with your toys? Why?
- Do you think older people show off with their belongings? If yes, what kind of things do older people show off with?
- Do you think class distinction still prevails in South African communities? If yes, explain.

During Reading Activities

Title

The title of the story suggests the following:

- (a) Most of the events in the story are centred on the doll's house.

Setting

- (a) The doll's house is set in rural New Zealand in the early 1900s. It opens in the beautiful home of the two wealthy New Zealand girls. Other action happens at the rural New Zealand school the girls attend with children from all classes of society.

Plot

1. The Burnell's children receive a gift of a doll's house from Mrs Hay after she had stayed with their family for a while.
2. The doll's house is big and it looks beautiful. It is fully furnished.
3. Amongst the items in the doll's house, Kezia's attention is drawn towards a little lamp.
4. The doll's house, however, smells horrible because it has been newly painted so it is kept outside for a while.
5. The children can't wait to tell the other children at school about it.
6. It is Isabel, the eldest of the Burnell's children, who has the right to tell the children about the gift because she is the eldest.
7. All the girls at school, with the exception of the Kelveys, are invited to see the doll's house.
8. The youngest of the Burnell's children, Kezia, asks her mother for permission to invite the Kelveys to see the doll's house but her mother says they cannot be invited.
9. The children are not allowed to socialise with them because the Kelveys are of a lower class and they also look different.
10. As the Kelveys are walking past the Burnell's house, Kezia, who is sitting on the gate sees them and opens the gate so that they are also able to see the doll's house.
11. Before they are chased out of the yard by Aunt Beryl, the children had already seen the doll's house.
12. Coincidentally, like Kezia, Else, the youngest of the Kelvey's children, notices the little lamp.

Characters and Characterisation

Mrs Hay	She is generous/giving – gives the Burnell’s children a doll’s house
Mrs Burnell	She is conscious of her economic status. She looks down upon the poor/lower class – she would have preferred her children not to go to a local school where children of different social standings/classes were mixed. She discourages her children from socialising with those of the lower class She does not allow Kezia to invite the Kelveys to see the doll’s house
Isabel	She is bossy She is conscious of her age which gives her better privileges than her sisters
Kezia	She is attracted to the little lamp in the doll’s house. She views the Kelveys as equal to herself and other children – she asks her mother for permission to invite the Kelveys to see the doll’s house. She challenges class distinction by opening the gate for those of the lower social status (Kelveys) to enter.
Aunt Beryl	She has no respect for those less fortunate than herself. She is cruel – she treats the Kelveys in an inhumane manner when chasing them out of the yard.
Mrs Kelvey	She is very poor. She is a washerwoman. Her husband is in jail. Her family is prejudiced.
Lil	She is plump and chubby. Her face is freckled.
Else	She is so tiny that she has bones sticking out. She has big eyes and cropped hair. She looks frail. She always holds onto her sister’s skirt. She is observant because she notices the little lamp in the doll’s house.

Similarities between Kezia Burnell and Else Kelvey

KEZIA	ELSE
Kezia is the youngest of the Burnell's children.	Else is the youngest of the Kelvey's children.
She is limited in what she can say because of her age.	She is limited in what she can say because of her social circumstances.
She is attracted to the little lamp which is a symbol of hope.	She is attracted to the little lamp which is a symbol of hope.

Differences between the two Burnell sisters

Kezia	Isabel
Innocent, warm-hearted, sensitive	Cruel, mean and insensitive

Similarities between Mrs Burnell and Aunt Beryl

They are both:

- cruel
- mean

They see themselves as superior to others, especially the Kelveys.

Post Reading Activities

Analysis of the Story

Themes

The themes explored in the story, amongst others, are:

- class distinction
- prejudice
- hope

The Theme of Class Distinction

The theme of class distinction is prevalent throughout the story. The Burnell's family, with the exception of Kezia, consider themselves to be above others, especially the Kelveys.

When the Burnell's children receive the gift of a doll's house, they are allowed to invite all the children at school to see it except the Kelveys. On page 91, Kezia asks her mother to give her permission to invite the Kelveys as well. However, her mother refuses. When Kezia asks for a reason why they cannot be invited, her mother says, 'Run away, Kezia; you know why not.'

The actual reason why the Burnells, as well as the whole community, cannot socialise with the Kelveys is that the Kelveys are of a lower class/status. Mrs Kelvey is a working class woman. She is also so poor in such a way that she collects unwanted pieces of cloth from neighbours to make dresses for her daughters. Mr Kelvey is supposedly in jail. He is a repeat offender because he is called a "gaolbird" (pg. 90).

Not only are the Kelveys treated differently in the community, but also at school. Teachers have a different voice for the Kelveys. One would expect that a school is a place where children get to be treated equally regardless of their social circumstances; however, it is not the case with the Kelveys.

The fact that neither Lil nor Else speaks throughout the story (although Else does speak at the end) may also be important. By not allowing either child to speak, Mansfield may be suggesting that in life they do not have a voice i.e. they remain unheard. It is also noticeable that Kezia too, is limited in what she can say. It is left to Isabel to tell the children at school about the doll's house, based on the fact that she is the eldest of the Burnell's children.

By limiting the voice of both Kezia and the Kelveys, Mansfield is connecting them to each other. She is allowing them to be equal, thus removing any class distinction that may exist.

The Kelveys are said to be always there "hovered at the edge" (pg. 91); this may mean that inequality will always be there however it is not a reason to treat those less fortunate badly.

The Theme of Prejudice

The theme of (social) prejudice is linked to the theme of class distinction. The Kelveys are shunned by the members of the community because of their social and economic circumstances. They are also described as different from the rest of the children in the community. By describing their physical appearance at length, Mansfield may be suggesting that it also adds to how people treat them.

The Theme of Hope

When the youngest of the Burnell's children, Kezia, asks for permission to invite the Kelveys to see the doll's house, it is a sign of hope that one day the Kelveys may be viewed in the same way as other children. This theme is further strengthened by the opening of the gate for the Kelveys to enter as well as the presence of the little lamp in the doll's house. A lamp is a source of light. In the discussion of symbolism, it will be revealed that light symbolises hope. The presence of the little lamp may thus suggest that darkness (class distinction and prejudice that comes with it) may one day be dispelled.

Literary Devices

Symbolism

The doll's house is used as a symbol in the story. It actually symbolises that the Burnells are the upper class. Mansfield is possibly suggesting that the Burnells are different to those people around them because they have a doll's house. Having a doll's house sets them apart from the rest of the community and are thus portrayed as the upper class. This view is further confirmed when Mrs Burnell says she sent her children to the local school, not because she felt it would be good for

them but because there was no other school available. This gives an indication that their parents did not like sending their children to a school where different social classes were mixed.

The smell coming from the doll's house is also some kind of a symbolism. The doll's house was earlier described as a symbol of upper class. The upper class have been portrayed as looking down upon those less fortunate than themselves (lower class). The smell may be suggesting that the attitude of the upper class towards the lower class is not good; it divides the community.

The gate that Kezia is sitting on, which she swings open for the Kelveys to enter may also be symbolic. It is possible that Mansfield is likening the gate to the social prejudice that Mrs Burnel and others have towards the Kelveys. By allowing Kezia to open the gate to Lil and Else, Mansfield may be suggesting that Kezia is removing the forms of social prejudice so that Lil and Else can be treated like other children in the story. The opening of the gate symbolises the possibility that children like Lil and Else may have equal opportunities as other children and thus be viewed as their equal.

The little lamp inside the doll's house. Mansfield may have used the lamp to symbolise hope. A lamp is a source of light, so in spite of all the class distinction and prejudice, Mansfield may be suggesting that there is a ray of hope that one day all elements of class distinction will be broken and people may one day be warm towards one another irrespective of their social circumstances. Light has the power of permeating through the smallest of the crevices to dispel darkness and bring warmth. Of all the children that have seen the doll's house, only Kezia and Else seem to be impressed by the lamp. The ending of the story is very interesting. Despite the continued social prejudice of Aunt Beryl by telling Lil and Else to go home and not come back again, Else appears to be unaffected. As she is sitting beside Lil, she tells her 'I seen the little lamp'. Mansfield is not only allowing hope into Else and Lil's life, but may also be connecting Else and Kezia thus tearing down any class barriers that may exist between them. Having seen the little lamp in the doll's house makes Else and Lil equal to the other children in the story whilst figuratively, it gives hope for barriers caused by class distinction to be broken.

Questions

Question 1

Match Column 1 and Column 2

Column 1	Column 1
(a) School teacher	challenges class distinction
(b) Mrs Burnell	Generous
(c) Kezia	instils class distinction in her children
(d) Mrs Hay	has a special voice for the Kelveys

Question 2

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow:

Extract A.

‘And I am to choose who’s to come and see it first. Mother said I might.’

For it had been arranged that while the doll’s house stood in the courtyard they might ask girls at school, two at a time, to come and look. Not to stay to tea, of course, or to come traipsing through the house. But just to stand quietly in the courtyard while Isabel pointed out the beauties, and Lottie and Kezia looked pleased

2.1 Who does the pronoun ‘I’ refer to? (1)

2.2 Provide a reason why this person is given the right to choose and explain the effect you think this may have on children. (3)

2.3 Refer to the lines “Not to stay for tea ... looked pleased”

What view of the Burnells do these lines give the reader? Discuss fully. (3)

Extract B

“And her little sister, our Else, wore a long white dress, rather like a nightgown, and a pair of little boy’s boots. But whatever our Else wore she would have looked strange. She was a tiny wishbone of a child, with cropped hair and enormous solemn eyes-a little white owl.”

2.4 Why do you think the writer calls her “our Else”? (2)

2.5 How is the title of the story relevant to the plot and to the characters? Discuss your view. (3)

2

Village People

Bessie Head

Title

- The title is about the village people.
- It explores the suffering of the village people.

Setting

Place: The story is set in Botswana. It is in the rural farming village.

Time: During heavy drought. The story takes place when very little development is evident in the rural areas.

FEATURES OF THE SHORT STORY	<i>Village People</i> <i>By Bessie Head</i>
<p>THEME (s): The message / moral which the author / narrator wants the reader to learn. The main idea of the story.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty: The villagers are poverty-stricken. The old woman's condition, her dress and hunger serves as one example of this extreme poverty. • Drought: The villagers have to endure the dry and hot weather in the desert as they wait for rain to come. • Humanity: Villagers have immense care for one another despite the poverty. They do not look at the torn clothes one could be wearing but they look into the eyes thus connecting with the soul. The narrator shows kindness to an old woman who collapses by giving her food. In return, the old woman's family sends a young woman with a pail of water to the narrator's family as a 'thank you' gesture as they do not have anything else. This also emphasises that water is a valuable resource in the village. • Hope: Villagers sit on the land and wait for the rain to come. The politician leads people up the hill to pray for rain. The narrator is convinced (by her cousin) that reading and learning English will bring about change in her life.
<p>THE PLOT: The series of events forming the action; this can be chronological / inverted / flashbacks, etc.</p>	<p>The story describes the poverty-stricken Botswana. People wear torn clothes and shoes. Villagers have adapted themselves to the conditions: eating millet porridge three times a day.</p> <p>Children die of starvation and malnutrition every day. Villagers try to live in peace with one another despite the poverty they endure. They have hope and they take good care and show kindness and humanity to one another. The narrator gives food to a collapsing old woman. The old woman's family thanks the narrator by sending a young woman with a pail of water; that is all the family could afford.</p> <p>The Villagers continue waiting for the rain to fall so they can plough their land and get food. The narrator starts reading Geography books in order to learn English and to improve her life. She fears that if she is not knowledgeable she might end up getting many illegitimate babies like her sister.</p>

	The families sit together and hope that each day brings new hope.
TYPE OF NARRATOR: Either: God-like narrator Direct Observer First-person narrator Third-person narrator	First-person narrator: The narrator uses ‘I’ throughout the story. She is the main character and a hero in the story of an old woman. She reflects on her surroundings and the future in story 3, the summer sun. She is a member of an extended family. She has first-hand experiences of poverty in the village.
SETTING: Place, time. Short Stories have a limited locale, i.e. the events are set in one place.	Place: Rural Botswana, the village and the farming land. Time: During heavy drought. The story takes place when very little development was evident in the rural areas.
ATMOSPHERE: General feeling created which is influenced by background / setting as well as by the action (what happens).	High level of hope, humanity and gentleness despite poverty and drought.
MAIN CHARACTER: The protagonist: the one who develops / changes (mostly for the better), due to experience. Sometimes, the main character is flawed and is someone who doesn’t learn from his / her experiences.	The narrator: A young woman who shows care and love for the village people. A hopeful individual who believes that education can improve her life and that of the villagers. She also believes that if rain comes it can improve the current situation; that of herself, her family as well as that of the villagers because they can be able to farm.
RISING ACTION: Development of action & characterisation resulting in problem / conflict / tension. Incident which causes character to change (mostly for the better); something which shows the character grows from experiencing the main incident.	There are THREE stories within this short story. 1. Essay: Bessie Head opens with an essay describing levels of poverty in the village. 2. The old woman: The story of an old woman, who collapses and the narrator gives her food serves to emphasise the level of kindness and humanity that still prevail in Botswana during this time. 3. Summer sun: This second story details the level of hopefulness the village people still have including praying for rain, believing in education and caring for one another.
INTENSE EMOTIONS: The intense emotions experienced: e.g. fear, horror, uncertainty, disappointment, anger, despair etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Kindness • Despair • Hope, etc.
CLIMAX: The moment of greatest tension; this leads to decision made by the	There is no real climax as there are three stories that are being told. However, the ending of this story portrays villagers who, despite being poor, are very hopeful about the future.

<p>protagonist which determines success / failure.</p>	
<p>DENOUEMENT: This is a French term for the final part of a play, film, or story in which matters are explained or resolved. Resolution of all complications. The tying up of all the threads of the story. (Note: some modern stories deliberately do not resolve all the issues, leaving it to the reader to decide on the probable outcome.)</p>	<p>The last story, <i>Summer sun</i>, ends with the family that continues to do what they can to survive, eating goat roast, feeding babies and talking and believing that the future might bring some change. In the meantime they believe in caring for one another.</p>
<p>LITERARY DEVICES Tools and techniques of language that authors use to convey meaning. Skilled use of literary devices brings richness and clarity to a text.</p>	<p>Personification – e.g. “Poverty has a home in Africa” Simile – e.g. P39 “like a quiet second skin.” “Her arms were as flat as boards.” Metaphor – e.g. “sit in heavy silence...”</p>

3

New Tribe

Buchi Emecheta

Pre-reading questions:

What are your feelings about:

- adoption and
- white people adopting black children?

Title

“The New Tribe” suggests that the old tribal system is changing. There is a move to a more global sense of identity. The story explores how this identity is discovered, adapted to and made peace with.

Features of the short story	<u>The New Tribe</u> by Buchi Emecheta
Themes	<p>Racial Integration: How the Arlingtons and the community of St Simon adapt to having the only black child living with them. Chester has to learn to accept that he is different and how to cope with being of a different race.</p> <p>Mixed race families: The Arlingtons have two adopted children, one of whom is black, and they have to learn how to deal with their son, Chester’s cultural and racial difference to them.</p> <p>Adoption: The process of adoption is a long and difficult one. There is always a concern that the biological parent may come to reclaim the child. Parents have to form a bond with a child who is biologically not their own and once the bond is formed, they have to deal with whatever problems that may arise with an adopted child</p>
The Plot	<p>Rev. Arthur Arlington and his wife, Ginny, are not able to have their own children. When a baby girl is abandoned at birth and brought to their doorstep by Julian (the local paperboy), they are happy to adopt her. The child, Julia is named after Julian. A Nigerian woman (Catherine Mba) hears about the story and unable to look after her son, Chester, she decides that the Arlingtons would be the perfect family to provide for him. Chester is the only black child in the community of St Simon. As Chester grows up, his sense of ‘unbelonging’ becomes clearer to him. Eventually he forces the Arlingtons to discuss who his and Julia’s biological parents are. Rev Arlington tells them the exact details of their adoption as he believed in telling the unvarnished truth. Deeply affected by the stark truth, the two children become withdrawn. Chester begins to have recurrent dreams about Nigeria, the country of his descent. At the end he accepts his difference and embraces the love his parents have for him.</p>
Background	<p>Buchi Emecheta, a Nigerian woman, uses her own experience of moving to England and working in Social Services as a background to how many black people who live in European communities adapt to their new environment.</p>
Type of narrator	<p>Third person narrator who is able to give us all sides of the story whilst allowing us to come to a conclusion of our own about how the characters deal with the themes and conflict in the story.</p>
Setting	<p>Modern day England. Small conservative, religious community of St Simon</p>

Atmosphere	Loving, supportive family, sensitive and uncomfortable in dealing with the issue of race
Main Character	Chester: Given up for adoption when he was 18 months old; of Nigerian descent; intelligent; intuitive – realises he’s different at the age of four; courageous – brings up the subject of his biological parents; not afraid to deal with conflict; outspoken; sensitive; loving – does not wish to hurt his parents. His character develops when he comes to terms with being a Nigerian living with a white family in a white community. Of all the characters, he is able to embrace his difference without disrupting his family. He shows signs of maturity beyond his years when, at the end, he gives his mother, Ginny, the gift of the diary because he doesn’t want to upset her because he refused to be the king in the Christmas play and yet, he is not worried about his dad, Arthur, because as he says, he is “The rock of Gibraltar”.
Rising Action	Chester gradually becomes aware that he is different. He realises that he is the only black child when he goes to school for the first time. When he cries the principal calls him a ‘little devil’ and his sister, Julia shouts out that he isn’t one. Later, he is given the role of the king in the Christmas play. He is told that the king is “King of the Orient”. He is also told “Africa’s in the East. Where your people come from” (p.172)
Intense emotions	Alienation, fear of rejection
Climax	Chester refuses to be the king in the annual Christmas play because he is made fun of and he is aware that he is different. He is teased as being “King of the devils”. His mother, Ginny is disappointed because she is proud to see her son on the stage.
Dénouement	Chester learns that “he didn’t have to allow people to tell him what to do.” When he is allowed not to be the king in the play, he tries to make it up to his parents by making Ginny an elaborate Christmas card and giving her a pretty diary with a cover of roses and violets. They make peace. He also realises that his father is the emotionally stronger parent.
Literary devices	Personification (p 168): “The room was frozen into silence”. The room is not silent. The people in the room are silent. This emphasizes the shock the Arlingtons feel when realizing that the baby will be a black child. Simile (179): “She clapped half-heartedly, wilting like a dying rose petal.” Ginny is being compared to a dying rose petal. This suggests her lack of enthusiasm because Chester is not a king. It is as if she has no energy and is fragile just as a dying rose petal has no energy to live. Metaphor (p 180): “Rock of Gibraltar” Chester compares his dad, Arthur, to the Rock of Gibraltar. This suggests that Arthur is emotionally strong and someone safe and dependable.
Relevance of the Title	“The New Tribe” suggests that the old tribal system is changing. There is a move to a more global sense of identity. The story explores how this identity is discovered, adapted to and made peace with.

Questions

Short Contextual Questions

Extract A: Pg 180. “To make it up to Ginny ... Rock of Gibraltar

1. Describe the incident that has led to Chester’s purchase of the gift in this extract. (3)
2. What do we learn about Chester’s character in this extract? (2)
3. Refer to the last line. Identify the figure of speech. Comment on its effectiveness. (3)
4. Refer to lines 14-15. “In Chester’s mind ... a little independence.”
 - 4.1 How has Chester gained his independence? (2)
 - 4.2 To what degree, in your opinion, has Chester gained independence? (2)

Extract B: Pgs176-177 “This particular day ... end of the world, after all”

5. List three quotes which suggest that this is not a normal breakfast. (3)
6. Refer to line 2. Why is Ginny finding it ‘hard to make conversation’? (2)
7. Refer to lines 3-4. “Chester was lost ... gazing the floor.”
Account for the behaviour of Chester and Julia. (3)
8. In your opinion, is Arthur’s reaction to Chester’s behaviour justified? Discuss. (4)
9. Refer to paragraph 7. “He could hardly contain the storm raging inside him”
Identify the figure of speech. Comment on its effectiveness. (3)
10. Refer to the last paragraph. “He didn’t mean ... tell on her. What do we learn about the relationship between Julia and Chester? (3)

Extension Activities

1. Imagine that you are Catherine Mba. Write a letter to Chester, explaining your decision to give him up for adoption.
 1. Write a newspaper report about how Julia was found and taken in by the Arlingtons.

4

Transforming Moments

Gcina Mhlophe

Synopsis

A young Xhosa girl at a boarding school in the Eastern Cape knows she is very clever but thinks she is ugly. The church minister takes her to watch a traditional praise-poet performing. That makes her decide to become a poet herself. The writer herself is that young girl. Read her poem entitled ‘In the Company of Word.’

Title

Transforming means change from one state to another. The story is about the narrator who changes from someone who has a low self-esteem to a confident female praise poet within a short space of time due to an encounter with a praise poet.

Setting

The story takes place in the boarding school where the narrator was schooling. It moves to the village where the minister was residing in Tsolo (Eastern Cape).

Themes:

- Self discovery
- Self actualization
- Talent Development

Point of View

This refers to the outlook from which the events are told, i.e. who is telling the story. The narrator is the person telling the story.

The first- person point of view is used in this story as the narrator is Gcina Mhlophe, who is a participant in the story. The narrator or the story teller may also be the main character, who is at the centre of the action. In the third- person point of view the narrator is outside the story.

Structure and Plot Development

Exposition

The most interesting thing in this story is the influence that the praise poet had on the writer. With this one event her whole life changed. The ugly duckling became a beautiful swan, and all of a sudden her whole perspective changed from being uncertain to being confident. ... 'I felt like jumping and laughing until I could not laugh any more, I wanted tomorrow to come.' In the beginning of the story she started by saying...' I thought I was very ugly' and after her encounter with the praise poet she says 'my face didn't feel so ugly – everything just felt fine. My voice sounded like it was a special voice'.... She started with a very low self-esteem and ended truly liking herself. In the first sentence we are introduced to the author as being a teenager who lacks confidence, and she is feeling very unsure of herself. The remainder of the paragraph is dedicated to the fact that she did exceptionally well academically; but this had no influence on the way she felt about herself.

Rising Action

Initially she experiences herself as being ugly but intelligent; with others only pretending to be her friend so that she could help them with their homework. She says some of the girls were forced to be her part –time friends. She describes her image as Miss- Ugly- Top-of-the-Class. She states in no uncertain terms that she does not love herself. 'I hate myself.' She felt great when Bulelwa could join her to study under the tree. The term 'coughing' was used at night when the writer recited chapters of the books that the girls were supposed to have studied. She described her voice as 'droning.' The writer's preoccupation with an upcoming event brought the realization that there were other people around. 'I suddenly realized that I was not alone in the world.' The emotions that the writer felt at the time she encountered the praise poet cannot, until today, be described. 'I was staring open-mouthed; even today, looking back; I still don't know exactly how to describe the feeling I had then.' 'Miss-Ugly- Top –Of – The –Class'. This self-chosen nickname was exactly how the writer felt about herself. She was intelligent, therefore at the top of the class, and she considered herself to be ugly.

Climax

It could be argued that he knew what effect the praise poet would have on her. The praise poet's performance moved the author in such a strong way that she was lost for words even years later. One could say that the writer had an epiphany the evening of the meeting, after watching the praise poet, when she said 'I made the decision there and then that I was also a praise poet. That was a beautiful moment for me, to think of myself in that way.' She felt baptized when she felt the poet's warm and sweaty hand, holding her own. One gets the impression that she felt as if she has given birth to a new creation, her first poem was the true beginning of her transformation. It is at this point that she truly fell in love with herself and when she said 'everything about me was just perfect.' She did not just dream about wanting to be like the praise poet. The transformation in this story is on an emotional level. Watching the praise poet that evening must have been so amazing. To think that someone that has the ability to write poems, still to this day, finds it difficult to describe the feeling she had that evening.

Resolution

The loud crow of a cock that is directed at her is interpreted as a form of agreement that the writer is happy. The story begins with the writer feeling unsure of herself. The description of the praise poet is very effective because the energy that flowed from him can be felt while reading those paragraphs. The second last paragraph that describes the writer's happiness is indeed so effective that it not only brings a smile to my face when I read it, but also manages to convince me that she is beautiful. The last paragraph is indeed a happy ending to a story. The writer has the capacity and the will to become the first female praise poet.

Characterization

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The narrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• She is a round character, she experiences inner conflict and is changed by it• She was emotionally weak• She lacked confidence and had a low self --esteem• She was intelligent• After the encounter with the praise poet she was transformed to be confident• She becomes determined to pursue her talent.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He is loving and caring.• He is able to recognize talent.• He can further develop the talent.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Praise Poet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He is talented and inspirational.

Activities

Contextual Questions

Extract A - Paragraphs 1, 2& 3

1 I was seventeen years old and feeling very unsure of myself. With my school work, I was doing exceptionally well and most of the teachers at the high school loved me – or they seemed to. My essays were the epitome of good work and they would be read to the whole class. I was probably proud of myself, even though I didn't really give it any serious thought. Somehow, my academic success did not do much for my confidence or give me any self-love. I thought I was very ugly and the fact that my hair was so hard to manage did not make things easier. I used to describe it as dry grass in winter. After a while, I even stopped combing it. I'd wash it and dry it, get dressed in my black skirt and white shirt, which were not as nice as those of the other girls, and off I'd go to school. To top it all, I had knock-knees and big feet! I was just so ugly and awkward – I hated myself. And, my God – I sat in the front desk! Miss-ugly-top-of-the-class.

2 Our school was one of the biggest high schools in the Eastern Cape and we had a great school choir that simply collected trophies. I remember Bulelwa's voice every time I think of our choir. I used to close my eyes and enjoy listening to her sing. I don't know how many times I wished I had a tape recorder so that I could tape her voice and have the pleasure of listening to her for the rest of my life. I must say, I felt great on those rare afternoons when Bulelwa would come and study with me under the black wattle tree near the teachers' cottages. I loved that spot. And I also remember that Bulelwa would stand by me when some of the girls in our dormitory teased me about boys. They knew I was not very interested in boys and they would go on: 'But who would want to go out with her? She doesn't even try to look good!'

3 I remember this good-looking boy from Port Elizabeth who played rugby. It was halfway through the year and he still did not have a girlfriend. He was the star of our rugby team. I knew his name and I'd heard lots about how good he was, but I didn't really know him – I was not one to go to the sports field.

Section A: Contextual Questions

Refer to Extract A: Paragraph 1

1. The seventeen-year-old narrator feels unsure of herself. Quote **four consecutive words** from line 3 of this paragraph that suggest her self-doubt.
2. In which area of her school work did the narrator show a particular talent?
3. Did the protagonist's academic success result in a fulfilling life for her? Give a reason for your answer and substantiate your opinion with reference to the text.

Refer to Extract A: Paragraph 2

4. What do the words, “that simply collected trophies” imply about the school choir?
5. What is the protagonist’s opinion about Bulelwa? Substantiate your answer with reference to the text.

Refer to Extract A: Paragraph 3

6. Do you think that the narrator admires the “boy from Port Elizabeth”? Give a reason for your answer.

Extract B - Paragraphs 1, 2 & 3

And then the *imbongi* came to greet Father Fikeni. After their longish chat, I was introduced to him as a very good student – during which time I was frozen and dumb from disbelief and God knows what else. As I felt the poet’s hot, sweaty hand holding mine, I felt baptised as a poet too. I think I wanted to say something clever, but all I could do at that moment was smile and fidget with my button-holes. The poet went on to talk with other people, who called him Cira.

2 It was a Monday afternoon and I was lying on my stomach in my favourite spot under the black wattle trees when I wrote my first poem. I’d never had a child, but the great feeling that swept over me then was too overwhelming for words; I wondered whether that’s how people feel when they have their first baby. I sat up and read it out loud. I liked the sound of my own voice, and I liked hearing the poem. I put the paper down and ran my fingers over my face to feel my features – the smile that wouldn’t leave my face, my nose, my cheekbones, my eyes, my ears – including the pointy parts at the top that made my ears look like cups; I even felt my hair and I liked that too. For the first time, I liked the texture of my hard curly hair and my face didn’t feel so ugly – everything just felt fine. My voice sounded like it was a special voice, made specially to recite poems with dignity. Resonant – was that it? That’s the day I fell in love with myself; everything about me was just perfect.

3 I collected my books and the towel I was lying on, stood up and stretched my limbs. I felt tall and fit. I felt like jumping and laughing until I could not laugh anymore. I wanted tomorrow to come so that I could go and buy myself a new notebook to write my poems in. A woman praise poet – I’d never heard of one, but what did it matter? I could be the first one! I knew Father Fikeni would agree with me. I couldn’t wait to see his face when I

Refer to Extract B: Paragraph 1

7. What is an *imbongi*?
8. Why had Father Fikeni taken the narrator to meet the *imbongi*?
9. Why does the narrator find it difficult to express her thoughts while she is in the presence of the *imbongi*?
10. Why is her meeting with the *imbongi* moment of transformation for the narrator?

Refer to Extract B: Paragraphs 2 and 3

11. These paragraphs show how the narrator has developed as a person. Explain in detail how the narrator changes during the course of the story. Support your opinions with reference to Extract A: Paragraph 1 and Extract B: Paragraphs 2 and 3.

Section B

Contextual Questions

1. Refer to the following line:
“Some girls were forced to be my part-time friends.”(P 98)
Explain what this means. (3)
 2. Refer to the following line:
“He had chosen an unsuitable girl and has set the whole school on fire.”
 - 2.1 Identify the figure of speech used in the phrase “set the whole school on fire”. (1)
 - 2.2 Comment on the effectiveness of the figure of speech. (1)
 3. To what extent has the narrator’s behaviour at church helped in boosting her self-confidence? (2)
 4. Why did the narrator think the good-looking boy was crazy? (2)
 5. Is the narrator justified in wishing to be like Mrs Fikeni? (3)
 6. Refer to the following line:
“I felt very much at home.”
What does this tell us about the treatment that the narrator receives from the Fikeni family? (2)
 7. How did the narrator benefit from attending the meeting at the village? (3)
 8. Shaking the praise-poet’s hand felt like a baptismal to the narrator. Why do you think made her feel like being baptised? (2)
 9. Explain the relevance of the title by using examples from the story. (5)
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5

The Fur Coat

Sean O’Faolain

About the Author

Sean O’Faolain was born on 22 February 1900. He was an Irish short story writer. He married Eileen Gould, a children’s book writer, in 1929. They had two children. He published a number of books. Here are some of them:

The Irish: A Character Study (1947)

The Man Who Invented Sin (1948, short stories)

The Talking Trees (1971) short stories

(Source: Google search engine)

The Story

This is a short story with a setting in Ireland, in the Maguire's house. There are only two main characters in the story, Paddy and Molly Maguire. Molly is a housewife and has raised their children on her own while her husband was in and out of prison due to his activities in the IRA. Before Molly married Paddy she used to work in her father's shop. She is a plain woman, and does not have time to dress like the other loose women (**straps and painted jades that never lifted a finger for God etc.**) that Paddy refers to. Now Paddy has been promoted to be the Secretary to the Minister for Roads and Railways; and they are soon to be well to do.

She wants a fur coat. A mink, a sable, a broadtail – she mentions all these different types of fur coats. That indicates the conflict that she experiences in her mind and in her heart. Paddy agrees to her buying a fur coat on credit, especially since they can get a much higher credit because of his new position (**'Switzers will give us any amount of tick'**). Molly struggles to make a decision about whether she wants a fur coat or not. She gives reasons why she needs one: She doesn't have enough fancy clothes (**costumes**); so putting on a fur coat will cover the fact that what she wears underneath is cheap and plain.

In the end she decides she does not need a fur coat. After all that arguing with Paddy about the fur coat she ends up deciding she really doesn't want one.

Pre-reading activities

1. The following words appear in the story. Learners can look up the meaning of these new words:
Hankering; mink; sable; broadtail; quid; guineas; benevolently; a stoop; 'a handsome little woman'; dressing; poring
2. A 5 minute discussion based on this popular saying by men: 'Women do not know what they want.'
3. Learners could look at the following pictures of fur coats and discuss their thoughts on people who own fur coats.



The story will be read in class.

NB* After the short story has been read a detailed analysis of the story will follow.

The following aspects of a short story will be dealt with in this story:

<i>The theme</i>	<i>Setting</i>	<i>Atmosphere</i>	<i>Main character</i>	<i>Rising action</i>
<i>Intense emotions</i>	<i>Climax Denouement</i>			

Features of the short story	The Fur Coat	Notes
Setting Place, time.	Ireland. Inside Paddy and Molly Maguire's house. During the day.	
Atmosphere General feeling created which is influenced by the background, setting as well as the action.	There is a little bit of tension as Molly states that she wants a fur coat and yet points out that fur coats are very expensive. She wants this fur coat as compensation for having raised the children by herself and because Paddy got a promotion.	
Main character The protagonist: the one who changes/develops mostly for the better.	The main character here is Molly Maguire. She wants a fur coat and when Paddy agrees that she does need one, she points out advantages and disadvantages of owning a fur coat. She experiences inner conflict.	
Rising action Development of action and characterisation resulting in conflict. Incident which causes character to change.	Molly can't really make up her mind if she wants a fur coat or not. That causes the conflict in her heart and with Paddy, her husband. Paddy supports her in her decision to buy a fur coat.	

	She seems to resent the support that she gets.	
Theme	Keeping up with the Jones'	
Intense emotions Emotions experienced: e.g. fear, horror, uncertainty, disappointment, anger, despair, etc.	Molly gets angry when she thinks that Paddy feels indifferent to her buying a fur coat. Also the fact that Paddy agrees with her seems to anger her.	
Climax The moment of great tension. This leads to a decision made by the protagonist which shows failure/success.	Molly calls Paddy mean and says he didn't want her to buy a fur coat. She decides not to buy the fur coat and to wear a mackintosh when she attends the garden party.	
Denouement The resolution of all conflict and complications.	Molly decides not to buy the fur coat after all. She doesn't know why she doesn't want to buy it anymore when Paddy had written her a cheque for one hundred and fifty pounds.	

Post – reading activity.

Learners could be made to respond to questions like this:

1. What position was Paddy promoted to?
2. What does it mean to 'dress'?
3. Give another word for 'costume'.
4. How could one tell just by looking at Molly that she's had a hard life?
5. Mention the challenges that come with buying a black costume.
6. Molly has something against fur coats in the middle of the story. What does she dislike about fur coats?
7. Would you wear a fur coat made of broadtail? Why?

8. Why in your opinion does Paddy continue working on his project while discussing buying the fur coat with Molly?
9. Do you think that Molly ends up getting her fur coat? Why?

Meanings of difficult words:

Hankering – a strong desire to have or do something

Mink – dark coloured, semi-aquatic, carnivorous mammals

Sable – an antelope which inhabits wooded savannah in East Africa and Southern Africa

Broadtail –the fur of unborn Persian lambs

Quid – one pound sterling

Guineas – golden coins which were minted in Great Britain

Benevolently – expressing kind feelings

a stoop – a posture in which the head and shoulders are bent forwards

‘a handsome little woman’- a woman with the kind of refined beauty and attractiveness that requires poise, dignity and strength of mind and character.

Dressing – putting on clothing

Poring – to read, study or examine something carefully and attentively

Characters and Characterisation

Paddy Maguire	<p>He is Molly’s husband. He has just been promoted as a parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Roads and Railways. He has been in prison. He is a loving and supporting husband – when his wife says she wants to buy a fur coat he says she should buy two.</p>
Molly Maguire	<p>She is simple and plain. She is a good wife to Paddy and mother to her children. She raised her children on her own most of the time when Paddy was in prison. She is not a frivolous woman.</p>

6

A chip of glass ruby

Nadine Gordimer

Background

Nadine Gordimer comes from an affluent white family. In her literature, (Short Stories and Novels), she explores the effect of apartheid on the lives of South Africans and further demonstrates a strong moral and political dislike for the apartheid system and racial oppression in general. In this story we find her exploring the effect of apartheid on the Bamjee family as the mother of a brood of children is arrested for helping black people in their struggle against apartheid. This highlights the plight of the ordinary South Africans, who were not allowed to voice a different view from that of the nationalist government. In real life, Gordimer's different voice through literature was silenced through the banning of her literary works in South Africa.

Title

"A Chip of glass Ruby" refers to the jewellery that Indian women wear in their nose. This highlights the Indian traditional way of life. Mrs Bamjee is not a traditional Moslem woman because she is involved in helping black people in their struggle against the apartheid system. The title suggests that what some people may think is a piece of glass may turn out to be something valuable, in this case, a ruby. In the story Mrs Bamjee may appear to be a traditional woman but her behaviour says she is as valuable as a ruby because she goes out of her way to help those in need. She is not just any piece of glass.

Type of Narrator

Third person narrator (omniscient) – seems to be able to read into the characters' minds even when they have not uttered a word.

Themes

- Ordinary people's willingness to sacrifice their 'freedom', comfort and security to pursue a cause or an ideal.
- Sometimes people get into trouble for doing something good (doing the right thing). Mrs Bamjee gets arrested for supporting equal rights i.e., attempting to free South Africa from a cruel and bad government.
- The apartheid system and its effects on ordinary people – Mr Bamjee and Mrs Bamjee's children, who are not directly involved in the struggle against apartheid find themselves becoming victims when Mrs Bamjee is arrested.

Setting

Time & Place:

- The story is set in the Transvaal¹ between 1948 and 1994 (apartheid era). The system of racial segregation enforced by the nationalist government, (through the laws e.g. Group Areas Act which prohibited the mixing of racial groups)
- Bamjee's house – a three bedroomed house. This house is inappropriate for a family of 11. This kind of a house symbolises the economic status of the non-whites who had to live under conditions of inadequacy or poverty. There was no privacy for adults to discuss matters that were pertinent to them. Even the meals the Bamjees had were not varied. The children had to eat the food they did not like e.g. Jimmy's dislike for lentils.

Characters and Characterisation

Mrs Zanip Bamjee, Protagonist (Main Character)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• She is very caring, loves her family and she believes in equality amongst people of different races.• She is regarded as an anti-government rebel and thus imprisoned for owning a duplicating machine that she was using to help the political activists.• She is a humble and a proud woman who understands that beauty is more than the outward appearance.• Even though she is a woman, she is not afraid to voice out her opinion in order to make a difference.• Danger does not scare her. She is brave and courageous to tackle a subject that her husband feared. She further demonstrates bravery when the security forces come to arrest her, contrary to her husband who had gone pale. Women with her kind of attitude are frowned upon in the Indian society.
Yusuf Bamjee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He follows a routine lifestyle. He tends to his fruit cart even after the arrest of Zanip (his wife).• He is a loving and a dedicated father even though he doesn't show it, which is also the reason why he is on his cart all day no matter what.• The need to provide for his family is his priority. He is very conservative. Even though he may be viewed as a coward, his actions are informed by his beliefs.
Girlie	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• She is Mrs Zanip Bamjee's eldest daughter from her deceased husband (Pahad).• She takes care of her siblings while her step-father, Mr Bamjee, is at work and her mother is in prison.• She tries to get her mother out of prison by hiring a lawyer.

¹ Transvaal – one of the 4 provinces in SA before 1994. After 1994, Transvaal was renamed Gauteng province.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlike most Indian girls, she is portrayed as wearing a lipstick, which symbolises that she has adopted a modern way of life.
Jimmy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is Mrs Zanip Bamjee’s son from her deceased husband (Pahad). • He demonstrates maturity after his mother’s arrest. He requests Mr Bamjee, their step-father, to give money to Girlie so that she visits their mother in prison. • He is ridiculed in class because of his mother’s arrest. • He defends his mother’s position of being a political activist which suggests that he also supports his mother’s actions.
Mr Peterson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A coloured teacher who ridiculed Jimmy in class because of Mrs Bamjee’s arrest. • He is portrayed as a conservative coloured man who accepts the Group Areas Act (separation of racial groups). • He symbolises the apartheid system of education which sought to instil values of racial segregation.

Conflict

Mrs Bamjee recruits and mobilises black people to rebel against the apartheid system. She distributes pamphlets that encourage rebellion. The pamphlets are produced through the duplicating machine in her house. This results in her arrest by the secret service² (Special Branch).

Plot

The story is about an Indian/Moslem woman who assists the political activists during the struggle. She brings home the duplicating machine that she uses to help the rebels. Later on, she brings activists to her and help them more and more which eventually leads to her arrest. When she was arrested, her husband Mr Bamjee reaffirms his disapproval of her involvement when he blamed her saying “I had told you...” Upon her arrest Mrs Bamjee fought against a policeman who took the tome³ written by Nehru (while in prison) saying that it was for her children, showing that the book was of sentimental value to her. After her arrest her eldest daughter, Girlie, takes care of the family while her husband continues with his daily routine. Girlie lived nearby her parents’ home, in the Indian community this is considered as important for security reasons.

Intense Emotions

Sympathy – e.g. when:

- Jimmy was ridiculed in class by Mr Petersen.
- Mrs Bamjee’s children are left stranded when she is arrested.
- The reader sympathises with Mr Bamjee when his wife is arrested.

² Secret service – Special police who disguised in plain clothes used by the apartheid government to capture political activists

³ Tome – a large/heavy book or a volume (part of) such a scholarly book

Disappointment

- When Mrs Bamjee is arrested those women who depended on her for information are disappointed.
- The reader is disappointed that someone who is advancing a worthy cause gets arrested before achieving her objectives.

Fear/uncertainty

- Characters and readers become afraid of what will happen to Mrs Bamjee as she is categorized as a political prisoner.
- There is a lot of uncertainty about what was going to happen to Mrs Bamjee.

A brief Analysis

Gordimer tells the story of the Bamjees, a poor Muslim family who live in the suburbs of Johannesburg. With the help of the duplicating machine, Mrs Zanip Bamjee begins to make and print flyers denouncing abuses and stringent laws of the Nationalist government. The duplication of these flyers and pamphlets causes problems between the members of the family because Mr Bamjee does not understand how a traditional Muslim woman can be engaged in a radical act. Jimmy, Mrs Bamjee's eldest son, supports his mother because he understands the importance of the struggle and he becomes an activist in his school.

One night, Mrs Zanip Bamjee is arrested by the police and her duplicating machine is confiscated. The family is left devastated by her arrest. The pain and uncertainty of the Bamjee family grows when they learn that their mother has started a hunger strike in prison. Yusuf plunges into depression. He is angry at his wife and refuses to visit her. Girlie, the eldest daughter makes him understand that her mother thinks more for others before she can think of herself. Mr Bamjee begins to wonder why he even married his wife. Mr Bamjee later on visits his wife and brings her flowers (symbolic meaning – forgiveness, understanding & support) and the best fruits because he has realised that she is different. She cares for her family but over and above that, she wants everyone to live a better life.

During her arrest, Mrs Bamjee is taken to Pretoria, which is about fifty miles from her family. This was an attempt to detach and alienate her from her family and the rest of her community. Pretoria prison was a high security prison where prisoners who posed a threat to the community and government were detained. This action ridicules the apartheid system for having felt threatened by a woman who is an ordinary house-wife. It also depicts the excessive force that the apartheid regime used on people who were perceived to be its enemies.

7

Last Breath

Sam Kahiga

Author's Background

Sam Kahiga (Kenya) was born in Utbiru, Kenya in 1946. He studied art and design in Nairobi at the University College, and then worked for the National Broadcasters becoming a documentary film maker. He later turned to full time writing and has written short stories and novels. He has also been a musician and a painter.

Summary

There are four characters in this short story: the narrator, Eva, mother, and the father. The narrator is in love with Eva who is blind and the father is against the narrator's wishes. The narrator believes that because Eva is blind, his father regards her as an outcast. The father always interferes with the narrator's wishes and dreams.

There is conflict between the narrator and his father regarding Eva; he thinks that this girl is not the best for his son. They do not talk much because of the argument they had on the way home. Fortunately for the narrator his mother understood him and his feelings. She has met Eva two weeks ago and loved her a lot.

The mother is caught between the two opposing forces. When they reach home the mother confides to his son, saying that his father is sick and does not need to be stressed. His father has lung cancer. The way the narrators' mother is speaking shows that he is not going to make it.

Despite what the mother has said trying to manipulate the narrator not to marry Eva and the father's wishes, the narrator continues to propose marriage to Eva. He gives her a copper ring. Although Eva is blind, she can feel the ring. Eva responds by saying that they should rather wait for a while because the hospital has promised her a new cornea from somebody who is going to die soon.

The story ends when the narrator is looking at the grave of his father appreciating the kind heartedness of his father by donating a cornea to Eva. This act of kindness is done in his last breath.

Themes

- Parents' interference with children's choices.
- Organ donation.
- Prejudice; judging people because of their disabilities.

Setting

The story starts when the boy and the father are in the car driving back home from the school of the blind after seeing Eva. The rest of the story takes place in their family home.

STRUCTURE AND PLOT DEVELOPMENT

Exposition

At the beginning of the story it is clear that the father is against the narrator's wishes of dating a blind girl, Eva. The narrator's father is worried about the marriage because Eva is blind. The father always interferes with the son's wishes even before Eva came into the picture. He wanted to pursue a career in music but ended up working in the bank because his father denied him that opportunity.

Rising Action

There is rising tension between the father and the son as they do not agree on the marriage. There is contrast between what the mother wishes for the narrator and the father's wishes. She has met Eva and liked her a lot.

The mother confides to the narrator that his father is sick and has lung cancer. He must not worry him about his affairs. Despite what the mother has said, the narrator continues to propose marriage to Eva. He wants Eva to be his wife. One day he gave Eva a copper ring but Eva said they should rather wait because the hospital has promised her a white cornea from another patient who was about to die. Eva wanted the marriage proposal to be delayed by his lover until she gained sight. She wanted to see the ring.

Climax

The narrator's father has passed away and he has donated a cornea to Eva. As the narrator collects oranges in the garden path and looks at the grave, he appreciates 'his last breath' which gives his wife sight. Eva and his mother were waiting for him in the room.

Resolution

The conflict is finally resolved as the narrator marries Eva. The father has donated his cornea to Eva and this proves the love he had for his son. The narrator sees his father's love through Eva's eyes.

CHARACTERISATION

Character	Characterisation
The main character The Narrator (Protagonist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong-willed. He forces his way all the time.
The Father (Antagonist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He is insensitive because he does not take his son's feelings into account.• He is judgemental and does not accept people with disabilities.
The Mother (Flat Character)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• She is maternal. She always supports her son's choices.• She is sensitive to other people's feelings.
Eva	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• She is confident in spite of her disability.• She is supportive to her boyfriend.• She is optimistic of receiving her sight.

TONE

Although the tone is uplifting, it rather creates tension in the story because the narrator does not respond positively to his father's wishes.

MOOD

The story makes one to feel happy for the narrator that at last his dream comes true, although his father was not there to witness the end. On other hand, the mother who is always on the boy's side is with Eva in the house whilst the boy collects oranges in the garden path.

ACTIVITY 1

Extract A

Suddenly, without a word Dad started the engine and drove furiously down the road towards the gate of the blind school. 'What will you do? You can't marry her like that! He shouted above the roar of the engine.

I looked at him swiftly. His eyes were steady on the road. Anger flooded through me. So the visit had been in vain. So he had seen nothing of the inner Eva.

'We've gone through all this before,' I said. 'Now you have seen her. My last word on the subject is this. When I come of age next August I am going to ask Eva to marry me.'

- 1.1 Why is the father insisting that the narrator should not marry Eva?
- 1.2 Who is always caught between the two opposing characters?
- 1.3 What was the mother's idea about Eva?

ACTIVITY 2

Extract B

She looked at me as if she could see through her dark glasses. She lay a little tender head on my knee.' You look sad,' she said.

How pretty she was 'she had a smooth oval face, and a dimpled little cheek. I often wondered what colour of her eyes would have been without the whiteness of her opaque cornea.

- 1.4 Mention one event in the story where the father interfered with the narrator's dream.
- 1.5 Why do you think the title of the story is called "His Last Breath?"
- 1.6 State whether the following statement is true or false and give reasons for your answer:
'Eva agreed to marry the narrator when he was proposing for the first time.'
- 1.7 Eva was a beautiful young girl, quote a phrase of not more than six words in the extract that describes her beauty?
- 1.8 'Then give her eyes'. How is the above statement fulfilled in the story?

1.9 Do you think it was fair for the father to judge Eva because of her disability? Motivate your answer?

1.10 ‘It seemed to me our ideas always clashed ever since.....there for a long time’

Identify and explain one theme evident in these lines.



SUGGESTED ANSWERS

The doll's house

Activity 1

- (a) School teacher – has a special voice for the Kelveys. (1)
- (b) Mrs Burnell – instils class distinction to her children. (1)
- (c) Kezia – challenges class distinction. (1)
- (d) Mrs Hay – generous. (1)

Activity 2

2.1 Isabel (1)

2.2 She is the eldest of the Burnell's children. This may teach them inequality. (3)

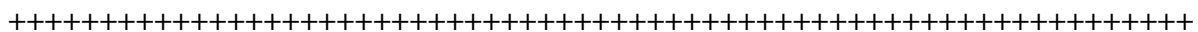
2.3 They are not generous people. They also do not like people/children.

The reason for them to allow the children to see the doll's house was purely to show-off. (3)

2.4 To evoke the readers' emotions of sympathy for the little girl. (2)

2.5 The doll's house symbolises the upper class. It is the arrival of the doll's house that reveals the true characters of Mrs Burnell, Aunt Beryl and the whole community. The doll's house is kept outside. This suggests the divisions in the community. The fact that it smells may suggest that class distinction is not a good practice.

(Words to that effect) (3)



The New Tribe

1. Chester refused to be the king in the annual Christmas play which upset Ginny because she felt so proud to watch her son performing in a key role. (3)

2. Chester has grown in maturity. He has come to accept that he is different from his family and has made peace with it. (2)

3. Metaphor. Arthur is being compared to the Rock of Gibraltar. This suggests that he is emotionally strong, dependable and safe. (3)

4.

4.1. He has gained his independence by realising that he did not have to allow people to tell him what to do. (2)

4.2. Open ended.

Chester may have gained independence in realising he has a say in his life, but he is still dependent on his parents for other things such food, shelter, etc. (2)

Extract B: Pgs176-177 “This particular day ... end of the world, after all”

5. “Ginny trying too hard to make conversation” (1)

“Chester was lost in his dream city” (1)

“Julia was gazing at the floor.” (1)

6. She is still upset and worried because they have told the children the details of their adoption and she has noticed a change in their behaviour. (2)

7. They have been told the details of their adoption and in order to cope and come to terms with this information, each of them has adopted a different coping mechanism. Chester escapes to an imaginary city and Julia has taken to staring into empty spaces. (3)

8. Open ended.

For Example:

No. This is not how he would normally behave. He has overreacted to a minor issue because he has no control over the big issue of the children being adopted. He failed to find out why Chester laughed. (4)

9. Metaphor. His feelings are being described as a raging storm. This suggests that his feelings are building up to a point where he has no control over them. (3)

10. They have a close, loving relationship in which they will protect each other no matter the circumstances. (3)

+++++

Transforming Moments

1. She was not accepted into their circles. They only came to her for help when tests were to be written or when they needed some assistance with their school work. (3)

2.1 Hyperbole/metaphor (1)

2.2 Hyperbole – It suggests an exaggeration of how quickly the news spread. /

Metaphor – It shows the extent to which the gossip spread at school amongst the learners; just like how a fire easily spread when set. (1)

2. She caught Father Fikeni’s attention. Father Fikeni later offered her a lot of guidance and assistance. He even introduced her to an Imbongi (praise-poet).

He encouraged her to sing in the church choir after she had been kicked out of the school choir, indicating that her voice was good and powerful (resonant). (2)

3. She was surprised that the most popular and handsome boy at school was in love with her (miss-too-ugly-top of the class).

She felt that she wasn’t worthy of his love since nobody at school wanted her in their circles. (2)

4. Open-ended.

Yes, because of how young she still was and how important looks were at her age. Mrs Fikeni represented everything she wanted; her looks, having a loving family and being respected in the community.

OR

No, because it was vain of her as someone who went to church, she could have known that God created her the way she was and should have accepted and loved herself irrespective of how she looked.

5. They had welcomed her warmly and had embraced her. They treated her as part of their family. (2)

6. The meeting inspired and motivated her. She was also empowered. She met the praise-poet which meant a true beginning of her transformation. It opened an opportunity for her to fall in love with herself for the first time. (3)

7. It was like being affirmed as a true poet by higher powers. She was filled with the spirits like when one is being baptised. (2)

8. Transforming moments refers to how the author grows/develops as a result of moments in her life.

Examples:

- When Father Fikeni encourages her to join the church choir and telling her that she had a good voice.
- When the Fikeni family welcomes and embrace her as one of their own.
- When the handsome boy/popular boy at school wants her as his girlfriend. She realises that she is worthy of love.
- Going to the village meeting and being introduced to the praise-poet. (5)

+++++

The Fur Coat

1. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Roads and Railways.

2. To wear beautiful clothes accompanied by accessories.
3. Clothes.
4. One could tell by looking at her hands especially her finger tips which were coarse and too pink from working hard.
5. One needs to buy shoes and a hat and gloves and fur and a purse to match it, to brighten it up.
6. She says that fur coats are vulgar and have no shape.
7. Open ended. No – unborn lambs are killed just for their fur and that is cruelty to animals. Yes – it would be a waste because they have been killed and fur coats made.
8. Open ended: Maybe he is pretty excited about his new responsibility and he takes it seriously and doesn't want to waste time chatting instead of working.
9. Open ended: Yes, after having dealt with her inner conflict she might end up deciding to get the fur coat after all.

No. She might decide to get beautiful dresses and accessorise, now that Paddy can afford to buy her what she wants.

+++++

The Last Breath

- 1.1 It is because Eva is blind/ he believes she is an outcast.
- 1.2 The mother.
- 1.3 Mother liked Eva a lot.
- 1.4 The boy wanted to pursue a career in music but he ended up working at the bank.
- 1.5 The boy appreciated his father's last breath (death) because his death gave Eva the corneas, although he did not accept Eva whilst he was still alive.
- 1.6 She said they should rather wait because the hospital has promised her the corneas.
- 1.7 'Smooth oval face dimpled little cheek'
- 1.8 The narrator's father donated the corneas for Eva.

1.9 Open ended question accept any answer that is grounded within the text. The answer must focus on the reader's view of the fairness or unfairness of the narrator's father's judgement.

1.10 Parents' interference with children's choices. The lines show that parents often decide what they think is good for their children. They do not consider the children's views or feelings. This is evident when the narrator's father stifled the narrator's dream to pursue a career in music and forced him to take up a career in the bank. Later on he does not want to accept the narrator's girlfriend because she is blind. This reveals the theme of parental control over children's choices. 2A



POETRY

Sonnet

Rhyme

Alliteration

Epic

PUN

Ballad

Lyric

Rhyming Verse

POETRY

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Introductory Notes

What is poetry? What is it usually about? How does it work?

Poetry can be seen as a construct, a human product, made with a view to affecting its reader in a particular way. The poet may be regarded as a craftsman who uses words to construct meaning.

Meaning relates to what the poem is about, i.e. its content. Poetry deals with everyday subjects such as love, death or nature. It may also concern itself with social comment or protest. There is a distinction between the way in which prose deals with such subjects, and the way in which poetry handles them.

In poetry, content is conveyed in a patterned and compressed form. Form, therefore, relates to how the poem works, to the way in which the poet conveys meaning. The characteristics of poetry are as follows: its metaphorical or figurative nature; its patterns, including its sound patterns; the tendency to be metrical; the use of stanza forms, such as sonnet; the broad division into narrative and lyric.

A poem can be discussed productively only if the student knows not only the meaning of, but also how to use, such terms as alliteration and assonance. The student should be warned that it is not sufficient merely to identify a device as being, for example, a simile or personification; the student must also be able to explain how such a device functions in the poem and how it adds meaning or value to the poem.

The poem's context, its relationship to specific socio-historical circumstances should be taken into account. This is important, for example in reading African poetry, much of which laments the effects of colonialism and apartheid. In African poetry, too, the influence of the oral tradition is significant: it is evident in the recurrence of devices such as repetition and parallelism. In studying a poem such as Serote's *Alexandra*, it should be noted that the poet speaks not so much for himself as for his fellow men and women.

The process of poetic analysis should not rest on the naïve assumption that a poem is a kind of parcel of words that simply need to be labelled by an 'objective' or 'neutral' reader. Just as socio-historical context of a poem should be taken into account, so, too, the influence of the reader's own perspective should not be ignored. Issues such as race and gender both of the writer as well as the reader may be considered during the course of an investigation into the meaning of the poem.

Guidelines on how to analyse a poem

The following guidelines may be used according to the demands of the individual poem.

Impression

- Read the poem aloud, preferably several times.
- Try to form a strong impression of the poem.

Analysis and Interpretation

1. Look up, in a dictionary, the denotation of unfamiliar words. Here, the historical context of the poem should be taken into account. (In sonnet 116, for example, the word 'bark' refers neither to the sound a dog makes, nor the outer layer of a tree-trunk, but to a ship).
2. Check up on allusions, i.e. references to people, places or events; are these people, places or events fictitious, historical or actual?

3. Underline words, phrases, images, contrasts, inversions, etc., which seem to be significant within the context of the poem.
4. Try to determine the content of the poem, what experience, emotion or idea is being conveyed by the poem.
5. Establish how the content is communicated. Look at the form of the poem, at the patterns, devices and techniques it uses to communicate the content.
6. In analysing the words on the page, it is useful to locate the poem in its socio-historical context, i.e. to examine the connections between a particular poem and the society and period in which it was written.

1

Sonnet No. 18

William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 at Stratford-on-Avon in England at the height of the English Renaissance, which was a period of renewed interest in the study of the arts, sciences and philosophy, after the Middle Ages. It was a time when great advances were made in the field of scientific discovery; the discovery of new lands expanded man's horizons, and there was a great deal of interest in the development of English drama and poetry.

Shakespeare was one of a number of dramatists and poets experimenting with new ways of presenting their ideas. The form of poem called the sonnet, for example, had traditionally been used for love poetry, but Shakespeare extended its use to include descriptions of the loved one, or declarations of love.

A sonnet consists of fourteen lines written as a single stanza, the lines being linked by a certain rhyme scheme. The English (or Shakespearean) sonnet is divided into three groups of four lines (called quatrains) which usually rhyme: abab cdcd efef, and ends with two lines (called a couplet) which rhyme: gg.

'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?'

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

5

And often is his gold complexion dimmed;

And every fair from fair sometime declines,

By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed:

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,

Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,

10

Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Structure

This poem reveals all the elements of the *Shakespearean (English) Sonnet*. In the first 3 quatrains, the poet repeats, though with slight variations, the main idea of the poem, i.e. that his lover is lovelier and more 'temperate' than summer. The final two lines (couplet) consists of an epigrammatic statement, in which the poet makes a short, witty, and surprising claim about the eternal nature/value of art. The sonnet immortalises his lover; instead of dying, she 'grows', as the poem is read by an ever increasing number of people.

The sonnet has qualities of an *Italian Sonnet* as well. The first 8 lines (octave) make a statement which is illustrated in a variety of ways, explaining how the speaker's lover is more beautiful than a summer's day. The word 'But' introduces the sestet; it suggests a shift in the argument ('volta').

Analysis

The poet looks at his lover and compares her to a summer's day.

Line 1: **Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?**

'thee' refers to the poet's lover. The poet starts to praise his beloved by asking whether he should compare her to a summer's day.

Line 2: **Thou art more lovely and more temperate:**

The poet identifies two positive features of 'a summer day', i.e. lovely and temperate. The poet suggests that his lover is constant, even-tempered, not fickle and moody. The word 'temperate' suggests moderation, self-control.

Line 3: **Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,**

The lover is not rough, i.e. harsh, and destructive in the way that the winds that damage the May buds are 'rough'. *Personification*: the wind is portrayed as having human qualities; it is violent towards the small, dear, delicate buds, whose vulnerability is contrasted with the harsh destructiveness of the wind.

Line 4: **And summer's lease hath all too short a date:**

Summer does not last very long. It takes a short period for the season to change; also nature, fate (chance), and time destroy ('every fair') beauty as nature pursues its course.

Lines 5-7: **Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometimes declines,**

Unlike the sun (*eye of heaven*) which shines 'too hot' one day and the next hides its warmth, her youth and beauty are not subject to change.

Personification: the sun has glaring eyes; there is suggestion of aggressiveness, or great passion. This contrasts with the wan, pale image of the sun in line 6.

Contrasts of mood and temperament are suggested; the sun is fickle and unreliable.

Line 5: 'eye of heaven' is a metaphor – the sun which brings light onto the earth is compared to an eye.

Line 8: **By chance, or nature's changing course untrimm'd;**

The passage of nature (time) is compared to the set course of a ship, whose course is not interfered with in anyway, for example, by trimming the sails to suit the wind. [To 'trim' the sails of a ship is to set them to suit the wind]. This suggests that the nature's destructive course cannot be altered.

Lines 9-10: **But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest,**

The poet suggests that his lover's beauty is eternal, it will never change nor fade.

Line 11: **Nor shall death brag thou wanderest in his shade,**

Personification: death is portrayed as a character who boasts about his power to destroy life and beauty. He is portrayed as an unpleasant, conceited, over-confident person. The use of the phrase 'death brag', evokes the feelings of dread, disgust and horror. The words are harsh and unpleasant in comparison to the fluid melodious-sounding words in the preceding lines. The word 'brag' is onomatopoeic; suggesting the unpleasantness and ugliness of death and its effect on life and beauty.

Line 12: **When in eternal lines to time thou growest;**

The 'eternal lines' refer to the timelessness of his poem; they ensure that rather than dying, she will continue to 'grow' as more and more people read about her in the lines of the poem through future ages. There is also a suggestion of a paradox, since 'lines' may be associated with the wrinkles that come with age.

Lines 13-14: **So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.**

The poet refers to the victory of the poem (art) over death. Even when the poet and the lover are dead but they will remain alive in the lines of this poem which will be read by numerous generations.

Questions:

1. Refer to the structure of the poem.
 - (a) What type of sonnet is this?
 - (b) Discuss the structure of this sonnet.
2. Using your own words, explain how line 4 contrasts with the beauty of the poet's lover.
3. Identify the figure of speech in line 5 and explain how it enhances meaning in this line.
4. Explain the personification in line 11.
5. Using your own words explain lines 13 – 14.
6. Explain the tone of the poet.

2

Spring

Gerard Manley Hopkins

This is one of Hopkins' bright sonnets, in which he celebrates the beauty of nature and the glory of God. This is a Petrarchan sonnet, consisting of an octave/octave which is primarily descriptive, and a sestet which is more reflective. The octave/octave describes the beauty of nature and Hopkins' appreciation of it shines through in his descriptive language. The sestet reflects upon the meaning of this wonderful nature. For Hopkins, there is a spiritual dimension of this physical landscape, and this is explored in the last six lines.

The poem:

Nothing is so beautiful as <u>Spring</u> —		a
When weeds in wheels, shoot long and lovely and <u>lush</u> ;	}	b
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and <u>thrush</u>		
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and <u>wring</u>	}	a
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him <u>sing</u> ;		
The glassy pear tree leaves and blooms, they <u>brush</u>	}	b
The descending blue; that blue is all in a <u>rush</u>		
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their <u>fling</u> .	}	a
What is all this juice and all this <u>joy</u> ?		
A strain of the earth's sweet being in the <u>beginning</u>	}	c
In Eden garden. — Have, get, before it <u>clay</u> ,		
Before it cloud, Christ, lord and sour with <u>sinning</u> ,	}	d
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and <u>boy</u> ,		
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the <u>winning</u> .	}	c

Summary

'Spring' is a sonnet. A sonnet is a rhyming fourteen-line poem. The poem is divided into two clearly different parts. The first part, of eight lines, is known as the octave/octave. The second part, of six lines, is known as the sestet.

Octave (the first 8 lines)

Line 1

Hopkins states that Spring is the most beautiful season with absolute conviction, which allows for no debate.

Line 2

A series of images follow, which try to capture both the beauty and vibrancy of Spring. This introduces two important concepts in the work of Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Inscapē: For Hopkins, every single thing in the universe is unique. Hopkins believes that God was responsible for each unique thing. For him, inscapē is the essence of each thing, that unique quality that sets it apart from everything else.

Instress: Hopkins also believes that each living thing has its own unique energy which is also derived from God. This unique energy signature is instress.

Hopkins immediately amazes readers by celebrating the beauty of weeds, a type of plant that nobody likes. He uses alliteration and metre/rhythm to capture both the essence (inscapē) and energy (instress) of these particular plants.

Lines 3-5

His focus turns to the thrushes in the next few lines. He uses another series of techniques to capture the inscapē and instress that define these wonderful birds. Ellipsis is used in describing the appearance of the birds' eggs. They are also compared to the heavens, as Hopkins subtly introduces a spiritual dimension to this poem. There are examples of sensuous imagery in evidence also, while the onomatopoeic "wring" further captures that elusive inscapē.

Lines 6-8

Further intense images follow, as Hopkins champions this particular season. We are told "that blue is all in a rush," as he tries to capture the instress, the energy that defines that season. The final line, with its rather old-fashioned, colloquial (localised dialect) language, is also designed to produce a similar effect. By the end of the octet/octave, the reader has been swept along by Hopkins in his description of nature. His use of rhythm and enjambment, coupled with the absence of any full-stops in the entire octet/octave, ensure that the reader is made fully aware of the beauty and vitality associated with spring.

Sestet (the last six lines)

Line 9

The poem becomes much more reflective in the sestet. Hopkins begins by posing a question: What does all of this beauty of nature actually signify? The reader is invited to slow down and contemplate the answer to this question. It is also a rhetorical question, however, Hopkins presents his own answer to the reader.

Lines 10-11

The poet asserts that springtime is an image of what the world would have been like in the beginning, before mankind's sinning corrupted it.

Lines 12-14

In a series of complex images, Hopkins manages to suggest what is wrong with the world, provides a vision of the type of world he would like to see, and advocates a return to that time of innocence. He suggests our loss of innocence. He uses the image of fruit becoming overripe and decaying to suggest our loss of innocence. He proceeds to use different images of

innocence to present his image of the world he would like to see, and finally, he advocates a return to that world of innocence.

Themes

Hopkins praises the beauty of nature in springtime:

‘Nothing is so beautiful as spring’. He calls it ‘all this juice and all this joy’.

Hopkins celebrates energy in the natural world:

‘weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush’. Note how the ‘w’ and ‘l’ sounds are musical and add to the feeling of energy.

Hopkins celebrates colour in the natural world:

‘that blue is all in a rush with richness’. Note how the repeated ‘r’ sound deepens the meaning.

Hopkins regards nature’s beauty as a memory of Paradise:

‘ A strain of the earth’s sweet being in the beginning in Eden garden’

Hopkins feels despair at the way maturity spoils childhood innocence:

‘sour with sinning’. He worries for the future of innocent minds. He tells Jesus to preserve children’s perfect innocence.

Tones

In the octave the tone is happy and full of celebration:

‘Nothing is so beautiful as spring’

In line 9 the tone is questioning:

‘What is all this juice and all this joy?’

Sometimes, also as in line 9, the tone is full of energy:

‘What is all this juice and all this joy?’

In the sestet the tone changes and becomes urgent and anxious:

‘Have, get, before it cloy, before it cloud’

In the sestet there is also a tone of regret that contrasts with the joy of the octave:

‘Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning’

In the sestet the tone is pleading:

‘Have, get’

In the sestet the tone is prayerful:

‘Most, O maid’s child, thy choice’

Imagery

Hopkins uses many comparisons:

He compares the ‘eggs of a thrush’ to the speckled and cloud patterned sky. This is a simile, with the word ‘like’ omitted. He compares the song of the thrush to lightning, another simile. He compares springtime to the Garden of Eden from the bible. This comparison is a

metaphor. Notice how he compares the pear tree in the distance to a paintbrush colouring the sky, another metaphor.

Note how Hopkins uses contrast, especially between sinning and innocence. The whole poem contains a contrast between the joyful octave praising nature and the anxious sestet worried about sin and praying to God.

He uses images to capture beauty and energy:

‘What is all this juice and all this joy?’ and ‘weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush’ [these all have an appealing sound due to alliteration]. Find more yourself.

Hopkins uses various images of nature as examples of the beauty of spring:

‘weeds’, ‘eggs’, ‘thrush’, ‘lambs’ and ‘peartree’.

Hopkins uses images from the bible:

‘in the beginning in Eden garden’

The final image is an image of a prayer as Hopkins pleads to Jesus to preserve innocence:

‘Most, O maid's child, thy choice’.

Sound effects

Alliteration [the repetition of first letters].

Note the ‘j’ as follows:

‘juice and all this joy’; and ‘l’ sounds in ‘look little low heavens’ and ‘like lightnings’

Assonance [repetition of vowels]:

Note the ‘i’/‘ea’ sounds in ‘rinse and wring the ear, it’. Note also the long ‘ai’/‘ea’ of ‘strain’ and ‘earth’ at the start of line ten:

‘A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning’.

Note also the long and musical ‘e’ sounds that are repeated in ‘sweet’, ‘being’ and ‘beginning’ in the second half of this line.

Rhyming:

There is a strong rhyming pattern. There are only three different ending sounds in the entire poem. This makes the poem very musical.

The ‘ing’ and ‘ush’ sounds are repeated at the end of various lines in the octave in the pattern: **abbaabba**

Likewise ‘oy’ and ‘ing’ form a pattern in the sestet: **cdcdcd**

3

Still I Rise Analysis

Maya Angelou

Pre-reading activity:

Look at the title and predict what the poem is about.

During-reading

Background

Why the poem was written: to be the voice of the unheard/voiceless/degraded/put down/unnoticed

Period: 1950s and 1960s

Maya Angelou (1928-2014) is an African-American woman poet. She was sexually abused by her mom/s boyfriend. Her poetry thus addresses two kinds of oppression – both **racial oppression, and sexism**. 'Still I Rise' was first published in Angelou's 1978 collection of poetry entitled 'And Still I Rise'. The words "still" already emphasizes **the black woman's ability to stand up for her rights again and again**, as and when required, but the "and" in the title of the poetry collection works to further reinforce that sense of defiance among the sisterhood that Angelou identifies herself with.

History is said to bear testimony to the events of the past and the character of a person. Nevertheless history is quite often produced from the biased view of the individual historian, and most of the time is distorted. Indeed, the pen is mightier than the sword. However, Maya Angelou declares that she will rise from history that may "pin her in coruscating prose." Though she is subject to bitter, twisted lies, and though she is trampled in the dirt, she will rise like dust. She endeavours to touch everything with her personality, just as dust touches everything on its way, by its presence. She reminds one of the celebrated Uzbek poet Boborahim Mashrab who asserts: "From the dust of my shirts edge there will rise hundred thousand gods".

Stanza 1

You may write me down in history

With your bitter, twisted lies,

You may trod me in the very dirt

But still, like dust, I'll rise.

In this stanza, Angelou says that the **oppressors** (You) of black women have presented a distorted (twisted) view of them throughout history by means of vicious lies informed by racial prejudiced hatred. The use of –"you"- is important. It is not simply a private, lyric meditation. Maya Angelou gives of her heart and soul to declare that nothing and no one could oppress her or keep her down. This is a black woman that is willing to speak up for herself. The first kind of oppression the speaker mentions is an oppression rooted in writing: "You may write me

down in history, with your bitter, twisted lies...” The poem itself is a direct response to this kind of oppressive writing. She doesn’t care what the history books saw. First reference to physical subjugation is in line 3 (“You may trod me in the very dirt”), but the phrasing is more metaphorical than literal. Metaphorically, to tread another person into the dirt is to treat that person with enormous disrespect. She will not let it bother her that others “trod” her “in the very dirt”. She proclaims that if she is trodden in the dirt, that she will rise like dust. The reference to “dust” is effective. It implies that something normally seen as merely bothersome can actually possess a kind of resilience and strength. Angelou as an individual, and black women as a collective, will not be pushed into the dirt any longer. Instead they will all dislodge themselves like dust rising in the wind. They will defy their oppressors to raise their heads, and make their presence felt.

Stanza 2

Does my sassiness upset you?

Why are you beset with gloom?

‘Cause I walk like I’ve got oil wells

Pumping in my living room.

In the second stanza, she asks a question. This is an interesting question, as she refers to her own tone as “sassiness” and asks the hearer if her sassy tone is upsetting. She notices that the people around her in her society are “beset with gloom” when she succeeds. This could be referring to the fact society is obsessed with her being a black woman which blinds them from seeing her success. Then Angelou goes on to define exactly how her sassiness looks to the outside world, and in doing so, she evokes an amusing image – that of oil wells pumping in her living room. Angelou implies that her oppressors sought to bring her down by emphasizing her poverty. She questions this. She knows that she is succeeded in life, in her writing, and as a woman. The “oil wells pumping in [her] living room” symbolize her success.

Stanza 3

Just like moons and like suns,

With the certainty of tides,

Just like hopes springing high,

Still I’ll rise.

In this stanza, Angelou switches to future tense to show that she and all other African-American women will continue to rise inevitably. And just how inevitable will this be? As surely as the movement of the moon and the sun, and consequently, the occurrence of high tides and low tides, black women will stand up for the respect they deserve unswervingly. She compares herself to the moon and the suns as they are affected by the tides. This gives the reader the understanding that the speaker has no other choice but to rise up out of her affliction. Try as society might to keep her oppressed, it is in her nature to rise up and stand against oppression just as it is the nature of the tides to respond to the moon.

Stanza 4

Did you want to see me broken?

Bowed head and lowered eyes?

Shoulders falling down like teardrops,

Weakened by my soulful cries?

The speaker's questions in this stanza are direct, pertinent, and appropriately accusing. She knows that her own success is received with bitterness by the racist people in her society. So she directs these questions at the society that has long tried to keep her oppressed. She asks them if they want to see her broken, oppressed, depressed and bitter. She asks these questions knowing that this indeed is what many in society wanted. They did not want to see a black woman rise up out of the oppression of her society and succeed. They expect her to bow her head down and lower her eyes, looking at the ground with shoulders drooping in despair. They expect her to speak in a weakened voice. The speaker knows this and she draws attention to it with this revealing, yet cutting questions.

Stanza 5

Does my haughtiness offend you?

Don't you take it awful hard

'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines

Diggin' in my own backyard.

The fifth stanza again asks a pair of pointed questions, like the second stanza. Slowly, the reader sees a pattern emerging in the structure of the poem. Angelou asks whether her pride offends her detractors (oppressors). The speaker continues in a sarcastic tone as she pretends to comfort the hearer. She says, "don't you take it awful hard". This is her sarcastic way of pretending to care for those who resent her success. Once again, Angelou follows up her questions with a humorous image – this time of gold mines dug up in her own backyard. She continues, however, to in a sense "flaunt" her success before the society that has always oppressed her. She claims that she has "gold mines" and that she laughs at the success she has found.

Stanza 6

You may shoot me with your words,

You may cut me with your eyes,

You may kill me with your hatefulness,

But still, like air, I'll rise.

In this stanza, she outlines the various violent methods (**shoot, cut, kill**) adopted by Angelou's oppressors to bring her down – whether it is their harsh words, their cruel looks, or their hatred for black women. She lets society know that no matter what it does to oppress her, it will not succeed. She proclaims that society cannot prevail against her even if it managed to have her

killed because of its hatefulness. She has an invincible strength that is invisible to the oppressor. She claims that she will still “like air” rise.

Stanza 7

Does my sexiness upset you?

Does it come as a surprise

That I dance like I’ve got diamonds

At the meeting of my thighs?

The speaker continues her questioning of society, using rhetorical questions. By this time in the poem, it becomes apparent that the speaker has placed society on trial and is now in the process of cross-examination. She knows the answers to these questions, but to ask them is to incriminate the offender. While she asks incriminating questions, she simultaneously reveals incredible self-confidence as a woman despite the oppression of society.

Stanza 8

Out of the huts of history’s shame

I rise

Up from a past that’s rooted in pain

I rise

I’m a black ocean, leaping and wide,

Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

In this stanza, the speaker finally refers to the past- the reason that she is oppressed and resented to this day. She calls slavery “history’s shame” and she proclaims that she will not be held down by the past, even if it is “rooted in pain”.

Stanza 9

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear

I rise

Into a daybreak that’s wondrously clear

I rise

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,

I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

I rise

I rise

I rise.

The final, longer paragraph consists of Angelou giving readers an introduction to her identity. It does not come as a surprise that one an almost tongue in cheek affirmation of the speaker's identity and the celebration of her blackness. Angelou says she is a black ocean, holding in all the "shame" and "pain" of her race and her gender within her tide. However, all is not black in her world. She is able to emerge out of dark nights into the brightness of day, carrying within her the legacy of her ancestors, and their hope of finding a new life in America when they arrived in that country as slaves. Seven out of the fifteen lines of this last stanza consist of the two pivotal words of the poem as a whole: "I rise." Thus, right till the end, Angelou maintains her tone of proud defiance, while speaking up for the rights of African-American women all over the United States of her time and celebrating her African heritage.

Message/Theme

The poem's literal meaning is a sarcastic response towards the people who look down on the speaker. To the narrator, the poem metaphorically describes her strength to always survive the battle against people's criticism of her and her ancestors. Globally, this poem delivers the message of the human's incredible strength and ability to overcome hurt. However, the main and most important message this poem provides is the narrator's strength to retaliate against discrimination of races and gender; which offers hope for others who suffer from the same ordeal. *It is about resilience and determination when facing oppression.*

The Speaker

The speaker in the poem is a **woman**. This is proved where the speaker says: "Does my sassiness upset you?" (5), "Does my sexiness upset you?" (25), and "That I dance like I've got diamonds/ At the meeting of my thighs?" (27, 28) Sassiness and sexiness is a quality normally attributed to females, also diamonds are often given to women as gifts.

Tone

The speaker uses the second-person pronoun "you" which grabs the reader's attention with an accusatory tone, causing the reader to acknowledge that they may play a part in oppressing others in their own lives. This makes the poem all the more personal and the tone she uses throughout the poem to express her feelings and opinion on the matter supports the accusatory tone of the "you". For instance, although at times the speaker's tone is playful and humorous, it is also very strong and powerful. This transpires when the tone of the stanzas varies from being serious and grave to patronizingly, and confidently playful. For example, in stanzas 2, 5 and 7, the speaker's tone is humorous and patronizing. However, in stanzas 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 the speaker's tone is more serious and prideful.

For instance, in stanza 2 she asks: "Does my sassiness upset you? Why are you beset with gloom? "Cause I walk like I've got oil wells", and "Pumping in my living room." (5, 6, 7 and 8) The first and second questions seem to be rhetorical, and as though the speaker is amused that her confidence and brazenness is so upsetting. Also, the imagery of "oil wells/ Pumping in my living room" (7, 8) adds another amusing effect because of her enormous self-confidence and sarcasm, as though she were rich enough to own oil wells at home. Then in stanza 5, the same rhetorical question technique as well as peculiar imagery is used to create a sense of patronization. In the seventh stanza, once again, rhetorical questions are used to patronize like they were used in stanza 2 and 5.

However, in stanzas 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 the significance and severity of her tone overpowers the humour. For example, in the first stanza the speaker says: "You may write me down in

history” (1). This gives a feeling of determination, as though the speaker is accepting a challenge; that despite the difficulties, she will still rise. Then in stanza 3 and 4, the tone is once again proud and serious. The third stanza carries the same confident tone, assuring that she will overcome her troubles, "Just like the moons and like suns/ With the certainty of tides" (9, 10). The same rhetorical device from previous stanzas is used in the fourth stanza but in this case, it creates a more dramatic tone, the speaker knowing that her bullies want to see her "broken" (13), with "Bowed head and lowered eyes" (14). In the sixth stanza, the same tone of pride and strength present in the previous stanzas is also present here, the determination the speaker possesses shown through her promise to always rise. In the seventh stanza, although the speaker uses sarcasm, the stanza also conveys a sense of pride; this shows that the speaker of the poem associates her sexuality as something valuable, as though she has "diamonds/at the meeting of my thighs" (27, 28), which upsets her tormenters. In the last couple of stanzas, 8 and 9, more seriousness is added to the tone by using historical imagery and the statement that she is "the dream and the hope of the slave" (40).

Structure

The structure of the poem’s stanzas is almost completely regular. For example, the overall pattern of the stressed and unstressed syllable is a trochee (a metrical foot consisting of an accented syllable followed by an unaccented syllable), except for the last couple of stanzas, which are mostly a trochaic Pentameter. Also, all the stanzas of the poem have four lines, except for the last two stanzas. The rhyme scheme of the stanzas throughout the poem is A, B, C, B; except for the last two stanzas, where it is A, B, A, B, B, B, C, B C, B, D, D, B, B, B. Likewise, with the exception of the last two stanzas, you can see the lines of the stanzas are quite clean, rhythmic, clear, with a range of 5 to 8 words in each line of stanzas, however in the last two stanzas is not as rhythmic and doesn’t follow a certain pattern. I think this is the case because it signifies a change in persona or voice. She goes from being challenging and pomposity to making a statement with a much deeper meaning. For example, how she begins speaking as a group rather than an individual; when she refers to wider concepts like the ocean, her ancestors, past, history and being the dream and hope of the slave. Also that fact that in the last couple of stanzas she says “I rise” (30, 32, 36, 38, 41, 42, 43) not “I’ll rise” like she did in all the previous stanzas, which means that she used present tense instead of future tense. This gives the reader the impression that the narrator is metaphorically saying that now is the time for action. In contrast with this tone of strong determination, the poet’s voice while saying the poem was always gentle and amused as she chuckled halfway through her poem. I think this is the case because she was taking on the personality of the narrator of her poem and telling by her amusement and laughter, she did as she had promised others, and most importantly, herself. She rose despite all the obstacles, and now she’s at a place where those obstacles are just a laughable memory.

Poetic Devices! In this poem... the main seven poetic devices used are:

Repetition, Rhyme, Symbolism, Imagery, Hyperbole, Metaphor, Rhetorical Question.

1. Repetition

Repeating word, stanza, phrase, sound, syllable, sentence, or line

Same things over and over throughout the poetry

For example

Throughout the poem, the poet repeats the word, “I rise”

★This is a repetition because it is using the same phrase over and over.

★This repetition is emphasizing “I rise”, therefore, giving the reader the importance of standing up again and trying over and over.

2. Rhyme

Usually placed in the end of each line

Correspondence of sound between words or the ending part of words

Gives the reader clues of the meaning of the poem

For example

“You may write me down in history

With your bitter, twisted lies,

You may trod me in the very dirt

But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?

Why are you beset with gloom?

'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells

Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,

With the certainty of tides,

Just like hopes springing high,

Still I'll rise.”

★If read carefully, you can easily find whether it is a rhyme or not. ex) lies & rise gloom & room tides & rise eyes & cries hard & yard eyes & rise

3. Symbolism

An object or an action that stands more than itself, representing something beyond

For example

Example 1

“Out of the huts of history's shame I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear I rise”

★“I rise”

★Rise originally means to move upward or to stand up.

★In the text, this word shows that no matter how down you might feel, you can always stand up again and get back on the road.

Example 2

“Cause I walk like I've got oil wells’
“I’ve got oil wells pumping in my living room”

★Oil wells are very valuable -> rich

★Represents confidence the poet has in herself

4. Imagery

Visually descriptive about a scene

Purpose: create vivid image of descriptions

For example

“Cause I walk like I've got oil wells”

“I’ve got oil wells pumping in my living room”

★Oil wells are very valuable -> rich

★Represents confidence the poet has in herself

The speaker uses the imagery of nature to emphasize invincibility. E.g. moon, sun and air.

5. Hyperbole

Exaggerated statements or claims

Not meant to be taken literally

Used for emphasizing

For example

“You may shoot me with your words,

You may cut me with your eyes,

You may kill me with your hatefulness,

But still, like air, I'll rise.”

The poet mentioned shooting, cutting, and killing and related to words, eyes, and hatefulness.

★Used these powerful words to describe how brutal “you” were treating “me” and how “I” still endure it.

★emphasize the brutal treatment

6. Metaphor

A word or a phrase that is applied to an object or an action using “is”

Directly compares two objects that seems unrelated

A=B

For example

“I’m a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.”

The poet is comparing “me” and “black ocean”

★Just like how the black ocean is full of fear and terror, “I” spent her life enduring all the rough times.

7. Rhetorical Question

A question asked for an effect that doesn’t require an answer.

For example

“Does my sassiness upset you? Why are you beset with gloom? Did you want to see me broken? Does my haughtiness offend you? ; . . Does my sexiness upset you? ”

The following five questions shows the poet’s agony towards “you”.

★It sounds like the poet is asking if “you” are jealous of her or not.

★The question adds more emotions in each stanza. It adds more effect.

Other poetic devices:

Personification e.g. ‘1st three lines of stanza six.

Post Reading Activities

Comprehension questions

1. Find at least two words you are unfamiliar with in the poem and write the words and their definitions below.
2. Who do you think the speaker is directing this poem at?
3. What do you think it means to “rise” in this poem?
4. In the last stanza, what is the “huts of history’s shame” referring to?

Analysis

Tone: What is the speaker’s tone? How do you know?	
Mood: What kind of mood does this poem create? How do you feel after reading it?	

<p>Theme: What is the theme of message of this poem</p>	
<p>Identify as many examples of figurative language as you can in your poem (3 examples <i>minimum</i>).</p>	
<p>What do you visualize when you read this poem? Write down any images that come to mind.</p>	
<p>What questions do you have about the poem? What is still unclear?</p>	

4

Death

Anonymous

Pre-reading Activities

Discussion

General understanding and dictionary meanings of words

- What is the meaning of *Doom* or *Fate*?
- Discuss their interrelationship.
- Use them in sentences.
- Discuss their relationship with *Predestination*

TV Series Introduction

“Death is everywhere. Most of us try to avoid it. Others can’t get out of its way. Every day we fight a new war against germs, toxins, injury, illnesses and catastrophe. There are a lot of ways to wind up dead. The fact that we survive at all is a miracle. Because every day we live we face a thousand ways to die”

Discuss the series introduction and what it means to learners.

During Reading

Death

Anonymous

One night as I lay on my bed,
And sleep on fleeting foot had fled,
Because, no doubt, my mind was heavy
With concern for my last journey:

I got me up and called for water, 5
That I might wash, and so feel better;
But before I wet my eyes so dim,
There was Death on the bowl's rim.

I went to church that I might pray,
Thinking sure he'd keep away; 10
But before I got to my feet,
There sat Death upon my seat.

To my chamber then I hied
Thinking sure he'd keep outside;
But though I firmly locked the door, 15
Death came from underneath the floor.

Then to sea I rowed the boat,
Thinking surely Death can't float;
But before I reached the deep,
Death was captain of the ship. 20

1.1. Analysis of the Poem

Death is a simple song (Ballad) with rhyming lines.

Death is personified and referred to as 'he'

The poet/ speaker uses a 1st person to give us first-hand information and the poet's thoughts.

There is a consistent rhythm throughout the poem.

There are different activities the poet engages in. This reinforces the notion of "...whatever we do and wherever we are..."

Stanza 1

The speaker is at home in bed, but he cannot sleep because he is thinking about his last journey. In line 2 sleep is personified: "Sleep on fleeting foot had fled". Sleep is compared to a person who is quickly moving/ running away on foot.

"...my mind was heavy" in line 3 refers to the speaker being preoccupied with thoughts.

In line 4 the speaker uses euphemism to describe death, i.e. '...my last journey'.

Stanza 2

The speaker has decided to wake up to wash himself so he can feel better, but he cannot stop thinking about death. Death is personified. He can see death on the edge of the bowl he is using to wash himself/ he also sees death on the edge of his washing basin.

Stanza 3

The speaker goes to church to pray so he can keep death away (or so he can stop thinking about death). Death (personified) accompanied him and sat with him at church. This suggests he cannot stop thinking about his death.

Stanza 4

The speaker decides to hurry back to his bedroom (line 13: To my chamber then I hied) with the hope of escaping from death. Although he had locked himself inside, making sure that death is locked out; death still finds a way to come inside. Death comes in '*from underneath the floor.*'

This means he, still, cannot stop thinking about his death.

Stanza 5

In another attempt to escape death, the speaker decides to go to the sea and row a boat. He goes further into the sea thinking Death cannot find him there, but in line 20 Death becomes the captain of his ship. This signifies that, again, he is preoccupied with the thoughts of death. There is no hiding from death and he cannot stop thinking about death. Thoughts of death will always linger as Death always hovers above him. One cannot run away from death and death cannot be avoided.

Summary and Literal Interpretation

'*Death*' is a simple poem addressing the most-dreaded and taboo subject, death. Death is personified and seems to follow the poet everywhere. This is because the poet is old and has started thinking about his own death, referred to as the 'last journey' in Stanza 1 (line 4). Euphemism is used because the subject is taboo and some other words are normally used when referring to death. The poet tries by all means to avoid thinking about death but the thoughts seem to be hovering around him. Thoughts of death follow him everywhere. They are with him at home washing, in church praying, in his bedroom and even at sea.

Post-reading Activities

Figures of Speech

Personification

Death is personified throughout the poem. The use of a Proper Noun Death and adjective 'he' is evidence that death is personified.

Sleep is referred to as a person fleeing from the narrator in *line 2*.

Euphemism

Sleep is referred to as my *last journey* in *line 4*. Some cultures respect and, therefore, avoid using the word '*death*' in their conversations.

Questions

Contextual Questions

1. Quote two words from paragraph 1 showing that the poet does not always have thoughts about death.
2. Why do you think the poet is old?
3. Why is the poet's mind heavy? Refer to line 3.
4. What does the phrase 'called for water' (line 5) mean?
5. Is the poet's visit to church honest and justified? Motivate.
6. Write the commonly used English version of 'hied.'
7. What is the meaning of 'captain of the ship' in line 20?
8. What conclusion can you make about Death? Refer to the poem as a whole.
9. All people are destined to die at some point. Do you think it is wise (and possible) to try and avoid death?

Integrated Activities

Diary Entry

Pretend you are the speaker in Poem titled 'Death' and you wish enter your thoughts in a diary. Write a **one-day** diary entry covering all your thoughts about all the events of the day.

Dialogue

You have been preoccupied with thoughts of death lately and you have decided to visit an elder that you trust. You have told the elder about what these thoughts are doing to you.

Write out the dialogue between you and the elder.

5

Captive

FRANCIS Carey Slater

Francis Carey Slater (1876-1958) was born in Alice in the Eastern Cape. He grew up amongst farms in Alice where he learned to speak Xhosa. He schooled at Lovedale in Alice. Slater wrote in English but was acknowledged as a poet who attempted to "Africanise" the South African English idiom. He tried to portray the South African experience through poetry written in English. The South African situation was his main poetic concern. He captured the harsh South African conditions be they natural or human in his poetry. He saw himself as an authentic spokesperson for the Xhosa people. In "Captive", the mine worker is not only being held captive by fever, but it suggests that he is being held 'captive' by the alien city in which he is compelled to work. For example, ".....migrant labour is the underlying cause of the mine-worker's illness, and the fever is merely a symptom. This is borne out by the subsequent image, where the mine-worker describes his home as the "Brightest tooth in the jaws of distance".

Captive

Lament of a sick Xhosa mine-labourer in a compound hospital

As a wild bird caught in a slip-knot snare-
The plaited tail-hairs of a dun-coloured cow,
Almost invisible-
So, tethered in the toils of fever, do I lie
And burn and shiver while I listen to the buzzing
Of flies that flutter vainly
Against cold, hard, deceiving window-panes:
Like them I would escape, and escaping hasten
To my home that shines in a valley afar,
My home-brightest tooth in the jaws of distance.

There, now, the cows I love are feeding
In some quiet sun-washed vale;
Their lazy shadows drink the sunlight
Rippling on the grasses;
There, through the long day, girls and women
Among the mealies chant and hoe,
Their swinging hoes are like the glitter
Of sunshine on water;
There, now, shouting, happy herdboys,
While they watch the cattle browse,
Are busy moulding mimic cattle
From clay moist and yellow.

There, when the sun has folded his wings that dazzle
And has sunken to his hidden nest beyond the hills,
All shall group together gaily, around the crackling fires,
And chew the juicy cud of gathered day;
And greybeards shall tell stories of ancient battles,
And cattle-races of the days of old,
Of hunters, bold and fearless, who faced the lion's thunder
And stalked the lightning leopard to his lair.
-But here I burn and shiver and listen to the buzzing
Of the flies against deceiving window-panes.

Analysis Title

Captive means a person whose ability to move or act freely has been taken/ a person who has been taken prisoner. Being a captive means that what is happening is against one's will.

Subtitle

Lament of a sick Xhosa mine-labourer in a compound hospital.

A lament is a passionate expression of grief. The subtitle gives a clue on what motivated the poet to write his thoughts at that time. The speaker is in hospital, in a mine compound. He feels like a captive. He does not like being hospitalized. Migrant labourers who work in mines are far from their homes. The title and subtitle of the poem shows that the speaker is homesick as he is hospitalized far from home.

Speaker

The speaker is not addressing anyone in particular. The poem uses sense imagery instead of depending on rhyme. The main intention of the speaker is to lament.

Structure

There are 3 stanzas. Stanza 1 and 3 have 10 lines, while stanza 2 has 12 lines. It has no definite shape as the length of sentences has no definite shape. The numbers of words in sentences vary from 2 word sentences to 12 words sentences. In the first stanza the speaker explains his immediate location. He is lying on the bed with the fever and has a delusion of being back in his homeland. He is 'captive' and wants to 'escape'. In the 2nd and 3rd stanza he is reminiscing about his home.

Tone

The tone is nostalgic. Regret can also be identified in the tone (the speaker regretting that he is far from home).

Figures of Speech

Simile: In the first 4 lines the speaker compares himself to a wild bird caught in a snare.
In lines 17-18 the hoes are compared to the glitter of sunshine in water.

Metaphor: In stanza 1 line 10, 'My home- brightest tooth in the jaws of distance'.
Distance is compared to a set of jaws with home being the brightest tooth.
In stanza 3 lines 23 – 24 the setting sun is compared to a bird settling down in its nest.
In lines 25 – 26 the speaker compares the talking about the events of the day (remembering talk) to a cow chewing the cud.

Onomatopoeia: In lines 5-6... 'I listen to the buzzing....that flutter vainly'.

Personification: In line 13-14 the shadows of the cows are said to be drinking the ripples of sunlight in the grass.

Intention of the Speaker

The speaker has clearly shown that he detests being hospitalized. The best way to escape the negative feelings is to think about his home. The moment he starts thinking about his home all positive thoughts flood his mind. The thoughts about his home are an escape from being a captive.

Symbolism

The poem does not depend much on rhyme but on the use of sense and imagery. The poet uses the image of a bird caught in a snare to emphasise that when one is kept against his will, one has no way of escaping and i.e. there is no freedom. The image of the flies who are unable to leave the hospital room as they cannot see the transparent window emphasises the sense of captivity.

Stanza 1

The speaker feels trapped in a hospital ward due to fever. He compares himself to a bird that is trapped in a snare made of plaited tails hairs from brown coloured cows.

In lines 1-3 the speaker uses clear images of entrapment. He compares himself to a bird that is caught in a trap. He is so tied ('tethered') in the net ('toils') of fever as he lies in bed.

In lines 4-5 the speaker introduces a persona (mine labourer) who lies in a mine compound hospital ward and feels trapped by fever.

In lines 6-8 the speaker paints a picture of a hospital ward that is not clean, by referring to flies that the miner listens to. The idea of entrapment and an illusion of possible freedom is evident as flies flap into the transparent window panes. The flies cannot see the transparent (invisible) window panes thus constantly hit it while they try to get out (escape).

In lines 9-10 the speaker uses a simile (line 9) as the miner compares himself to the flies. The miner's strong desire to get out of hospital leads him to imagine what his home is like. He feels nostalgic as he thinks about his home in a positive way. The speaker uses a metaphor 'My home-brightest tooth in the jaws of distance'.

Stanza 2

The focus of the poem shifts from the hospital ward to the miner's home. 'There, now...' refers to the miner's home and the activities that take place.

In lines 11-14 the miner reminisces/ imagines cows that are feeding back in the valley. The speaker personifies the cow's shadows to emphasise the intensity of the miner's imagination.

Lines 15-18 shows the idea of girls and women of the village singing while removing weeds in the mealie field adds to the positive thoughts that keep the miner optimistic despite being trapped.

In lines 19-22 the miner continues to visualize life back home by thinking about the shouting, happy herdboys. The boys keep themselves busy by creating toy-cattle from moist clay.

Stanza 3

In this stanza, the miner still imagines life outside the hospital ward but is quickly reminded that he is in a hospital ward.

In lines 23-30 the speaker details events that take place back home, which are being imagined by the miner. As the sun sets, the villagers sit around fires and share the day's experiences.

The elders (grey beards) tell stories that happened back in their days about battles they fought, cattle-races and hunters who were brave to face lions and leopards.

In lines 31-32 the miner comes back to reality as he is still burning with fever and continues to listen to the flies buzzing in the hospital ward.

Questions

- 1.1 Identify the figure of speech in lines 1- 4 (**'As a wild bird caught....do I lie'**) and explain this image in context of the poem. (3)
- 1.2 Identify the figure of speech in lines 5-8 (**I listen to the buzzing.....and escaping hasten**) and explain how it contributes to the message of the poem. (3)
- 1.3 In line 8 **'I would escape, and escaping hasten'**, is this meant literally or figuratively? Give a reason for your answer. (2)
- 1.4 Give one word which shows that the flies were unable to fly out of the room. (line 6) (1)
- 1.5 Explain how the metaphor in line 10 depicts the speaker's longing for home. (2)

6

Mid-Term Break

Seamus Heaney (1939-2013)

Seamus Heaney was born on his family's farmhouse in Northern Ireland on the 13th of April 1939. He was the eldest of 9 children.

As a child he attended Anahorish Primary School and St Columb's College before moving on to study English Language and Literature at Queen's University in Belfast. After graduation, he joined the Teacher's Training Institute in Belfast.

He had three children with wife Marie Devlin, who was a school teacher. During the course of his career, he lectured at Queen's University, the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge and Harvard University. He died 30 August 2013.

Heaney's work was influenced by his childhood in the countryside. Most of his poetry is based on the traditions and events of Northern Ireland. As he grew, he witnessed the growing industrialism around him, which he incorporated into his work.

Heaney wrote with a lyricism and simplicity that gave him critical acclaim while resonating with the common man. He has numerous awards, including a Nobel Prize for Literature. 'Death of a Naturalist' was published in 1966. Based on the experiences of a young child, it helped cement his place in the literary world. 'Mid-term Break' is part of this collection.

Mid-Term Break

I sat all morning in the college sick bay
counting bells knelling classes to a close.
at two o'clock our neighbours drove me home.

In the porch I met my father crying-
He had always taken funerals in his stride-
And Big Jim Evans saying it was a hard blow.

The baby cooed and laughed and rocked the pram
When I came in, and I was embarrassed
By old men standing up to shake my hand

And tell me they were 'sorry for my trouble'.
Whispers informed strangers I was the eldest,
Away at school, as my mother held my hand

In hers and coughed out angry tearless sighs.
At ten o'clock the ambulance arrived
With the corpse, stanced and bandaged by the nurses.
Next morning I went up into the room. Snowdrops
And candles soothed the bedside; I saw him
For the first time in six weeks. Paler now,

Wearing a poppy bruise on his left temple,
He lay in the four foot box as in his cot.
No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked him clear.

A four foot box, a foot for every year.

Vocabulary

1. Sick bay: a room at a school (college) where in the learners who are too ill to attend classes can sit out the lessons.
2. knelling: sound made by a bell rung slowly, especially for a death or funeral
3. porch: a veranda
4. cooed: the sound made by the baby sounds like that of a dove
5. sigh: a long sound made by breathing out heavily when you are sad, tired(or relieved).
6. stanced: cleaned by nurses (bleeding has been stopped)
7. Snowdrops: white Spring flowers
8. Poppy: red flower (British emblem of remembrance worn in honour of those who fell in the first world war

Analysis

Mid-term break is about childhood memories. An elegiac tone is established at the beginning of the poem. An elegy is a poem written to commemorate a dead person. The poem is about the death of Seamus Heaney's younger brother, Christopher who was killed by a car at the age of four.

The title might make one think that the poem is about time off school, holidays and fun, however, it is **ironic** that once you finish the poem, you realize that it is in fact a break in the family, i.e. fractured family unit. **“Break”** is a reference to the cutting of ties between the speaker and his younger brother who has died .

Structure

The equal three-lined stanzas (tercebs) represent a sense of order.

The poem seems to be split into two sections. The tone of the poem in stanza 1-5 is sombre, hence the use of depressing words that have negative connotations such as **“knelling”**, **“funerals”**, **“corpse”**.

In the last two stanzas (6-7), the mood /atmosphere is calm / serene. (Note the use of light/ colour and words with positive connotations such as **“Snowdrops “**, **“candles”**, **“Paler now”**

Stanza 1

The sombre mood of **‘Mid-Term Break’** is established in the opening lines as the speaker (fourteen year old Seamus Heaney) sits in the college sick bay with nothing to do but count the bells **“knelling classes to a close”**.

The speaker uses the word **“knelling”** instead of ringing, this gives us a hint of the mood. Classes normally close with the ‘joyful’ ringing of bells but the speaker makes it sound like classes close with a dong, dong, dong of a funeral bell. Plainly the speaker is thinking about death to such an extent that all bells that he hears sound like funeral bells to him. This gives the reader a clue that there might be a death in the speaker's family. He later gets picked up by neighbours from school and this confirms that something is wrong.

Stanza 2

The second stanza begins with the stark, **sad image** of the speaker's father waiting for him to return. The patriarchal image of the father-figure in the 1950s is torn down; here as we see his father crying, this indicates that something terrible has happened. The father is presumably crying in the porch because he does not want to weep in front of his family. It is a strange moment for the speaker when he sees his father crying. This was totally out of character since the father has never been bothered by funerals before, he is apparently always strong at other funerals. This appears to be a close-knit community hence Big Jim Evans, (a neighbour /family friend) says it was a **“hard blow”** (terrible blow).

The phrase **“hard blow”** has a figurative and literal meaning. The literal meaning is that the car hit the baby quite hard. The figurative meaning is that the child's death or passing was an extremely hard / tragic experience for the family as well as the neighbours.

There is an **extreme contrast** between the father's behaviour in stanza 2 and the baby sibling's behaviour in stanza 3. The father is crying because he is experienced and he understands what has happened. The baby sibling (stanza 3) is detached, unaware and innocent, she "**cooes**" (the sound of a dove) because she is happy and she does not understand what has happened.

Stanza 3

Inside the house, the speaker notices his baby sister lying in her pram "**cooing and laughing**". The baby is happy because she is too young to understand what has happened. The baby is the only one who is happy in this house. She does not even realise that the house is filled with strangers. What has happened forces the speaker to grow up. As the eldest in the family, he is treated as an adult by neighbours. Old men stand up to shake his hand as the young speaker enters the room, treating him as a mature male member of the family and he feels embarrassed. He is not used to the idea of being taken seriously by old men because children are normally ignored. The neighbours even refer to him as the "**eldest**" which makes him question whether he now has some kind of responsibility or even some unknown expectations that the elders might have of him

Stanza 4

The speaker hears whispers, people in the room mention that he is the eldest and is still at school. The speaker does not appear severely grief-stricken like his mother, he emerges as the strongest character in his family. The neighbours' behaviour is strange (ironic), they view the speaker as a solution to the problem at hand since the father and the mother are severely grief-stricken. On the contrary, despite losing a child, the mother is not blind to the fact the speaker is still a child and needs to be comforted. The mother holds the speaker's hand.

Stanza 5

She is too upset to cry, instead she "**coughed out angry, tearless sighs**". In this stanza we learn the cause of the tragedy in this family: an ambulance arrives with the bandaged body of the speaker's four year old brother who was killed by a car. The corpse had been "**stanced and bandaged**" by the nurses (cleaned by the nurses to stop bleeding). This is representative /symbolic of the failed attempts to save the child.

The speaker refers to his dead brother as a "**corpse**", this symbolizes the speaker's detachment and refusal to accept the situation, he is in a state of denial and disbelief.

Stanza 6 & 7

We learn in the sixth stanza that the speaker had not seen his brother for six weeks having been "**Away at school**". In the last two stanzas, the speaker goes to the room where his brother's body is laid out. The calm mood is shown in the serene picture of "**Snowdrops / And candles soothed the bedside**". Snowdrops are small white early spring flowers, in this case they symbolise life after death. The imagery used in these two stanzas shows a state of transition from being numb to being at peace with his brother's passing. This is evident because he no longer refers to his brother as a "**corpse**", instead he uses phrases like "**I saw him**", "**He lay**",

“knocked him”. This signifies acceptance of the whole situation. These two stanzas also clarify to us the gender of the dead child.

This is an encounter that the whole poem has been moving towards, the climax. The words “**Paler now**”, hang at the end of the stanza causing a sad pause before the sentence continues and describes how little changed in appearance the boy is in death, the difference being his paler complexion and ‘poppy bruise’ on his left temple. The dead child has “**no gaudy scars**” (he was not disfigured). There is a great tenderness and intimacy as the speaker looks at his dead brother for the last time lying in his coffin. The dead boy is lying calmly, it looks like he was not scared by death in any way. In the last line, the speaker compares the small size of his brother’s coffin with the shortness of life. The shortness of the last line also signifies the child’s life was cut short.

Note that the speaker says that his brother is “**Wearing a poppy**” to indicate that his brother is bruised. The speaker feels that the bruise is foreign, it is not a part of his brother. He sees him as **metaphorically** wearing a poppy as though it is something that can be removed. The use of the word **poppy** is an excellent choice since it symbolizes remembrance.

In the last line the speaker uses sound devices like **alliteration, assonance, repetition** and a caesural pause to emphasize the age when his brother died. The deliberate stress of “f” sound in the final line indicates that the speaker is justifiably angry and bitter at the waste of life that has occurred.

Literary devices used

Onomatopoeia	baby “cooed” (the sound made by the baby imitates the coo sound made by a dove.
Euphemism	“sorry for my trouble” is a euphemism for the death of his brother.
Contrast	stanza 2-crying father(experienced) stanza 3 -happy baby (ignorant)
Alliteration	“A <u>f</u> our <u>f</u> oot box, a <u>f</u> oot <u>f</u> or every year.” <u>C</u> ounting... <u>c</u> lasses to a
Assonance	“ A <u>f</u> our <u>f</u> oot box, a <u>f</u> oot <u>f</u> or every year” Line 14-15 : <u>a</u> t , <u>a</u> mbulance, <u>a</u> rrived, <u>s</u> tanch <u>e</u> d and <u>b</u> andag <u>e</u> d (The short ” a” sound could suggest the abrupt end to his brother’s life)
Repetition	“A four <u>f</u> oot box, a <u>f</u> oot for every year.
Rhyme	“clear” and “year” (this rhyme serves to stress the tragedy in the reader’s mind.
Enjambment	(line 9& 12) could suggest the confusion surrounding the death and the speaker’s arrival at home.
Caesura	i.e. a pause near the middle of a line, e.g “With the corpse, stanch <u>e</u> d and bandag <u>e</u> d” (The comma forces the reader to stop and revise the pain)

Themes

1. Loss /death : This poem forces us to ponder on the pointlessness of death.
2. Childhood Memories : The memories of our childhood are forever engraved into our memory .We carry them into adulthood.

Questions

Refer to stanza 1

1. What mood is set in this stanza ? (1)
 2. Use your own words to substantiate your answer in question 1. (3)
 3. Refer to stanza 3
- (a) Identify the sound device in line 7 (1)
- (b) Using your own words, explain the baby sibling's behaviour. (2)
4. Of what are the snowdrops (line 17) symbolic? (1)
 5. Identify the figure of speech used in stanza 6, line 17. (1)
 6. Do you think the title is appropriate to the content of this poem?
Discuss your view. (3)

7

Alexandra

Mongane Wally Serote

Mongane Wally Serote was born in 1944 in Sphiatown, Johannesburg. He was educated in Alexandra, Leribe (Lesotho) and Soweto. He received a degree in fine arts from Columbia University, New York.

Serote's chief concern, as a poet, is to get to the 'root' causes of the social maladies which afflict the Black community, and in his pursuit of this goal he has been more penetrating, more profound and intense, more reflective and consistent than many of the poets to emerge from South Africa during the revival period of the late sixties.

Serote is not only a poet, but also a novelist, political activist and later a Member of Parliament. He is currently the chairman of the 101 ANC stalwarts.

Alexandra

Were it possible to say,
Mother, I have seen more beautiful mothers,
A most loving mother,
And tell her there I will go,
Alexandra, I would have long gone from you.

5

But we have only one mother, none can replace,
Just as we have no choice to be born,
We can't choose mothers;
We fall out of them like we fall out of life to death.

And Alexandra, 10
My beginning was knotted to you,
Just like you knot my destiny.
You throb in my inside silences
You are silent in my heart-beat that's loud to me.
Alexandra often I've cried. 15
When I was thirsty my tongue tasted dust,
Dust burdening your nipples.
I cry Alexandra when I am thirsty.
Your breasts ooze dirty waters of your dongas,
Waters diluted with the blood of my brothers, your 20
children,
Who once chose dongas for death-beds.
Do you love me Alexandra, or what are you doing to me?

You frighten me, Mama,
You wear expressions like you would be nasty to me, 25
You frighten me, Mama,
When I lie on your breast to rest, something tells me
You are bloody cruel.
Alexandra, hell
What have you done to me? 30
I have seen people but I feel like I'm not one,
Alexandra what are you doing to me?

I feel I have sunk to such meekness!
I lie flat while others walk on me to far places.
I have gone from you, many times, 35
I come back.
Alexandra, I love you;
I know
When all these worlds became funny to me
I silently waded back to you 40
And amid rubble I lay,
Simple and black.

About the Poet

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Analysis

Structure

It is in an open form with no formal conventions to a specific genre. The diction used is simple and well understood.

Stanza 1

Line 1: **Were it possible to say**

As a sign, of protest in this line the speaker rejects the grammatical laws of one of the dominant languages in our country.

In the first stanza the persona expresses his disappointment on his 'mother' – Alexandra. He says if it was possible to disown a mother he would do that, but unfortunately he cannot do that. The poet brings to the readers' attention that it is not possible for him to leave Alexandra...the apartheid laws have made it impossible. If leaving Alexandra was a choice he could make he would leave, but unfortunately he cannot.

Stanza 2

The persona gives his reasons for not disowning his 'mother' – Alexandra. In line 6 **But we have only one mother, none can replace**, it's made clear that mothers are irreplaceable.

Lines 8 and 9 the persona emphasises the fact that children cannot choose their mothers.

**We can't choose mothers;
We fall out of them like we fall out of life to death**

Line 9: Simile – being born is compared to dying.

Stanza 3

In line 11 the speaker uses an image of a knot. The word 'knotted' signifies attachment. Lines 11-12 the speaker's life will always be attached to Alexandra.

Lines 13 – 14 express the pain he feels deep inside.

Line 17 *Metaphor* – the shackles compared to nipples.

Line 18 *Metaphor* – the streets are compared to breasts.

Lines 18 – 22 there is dirty water running on the dusty streets. Blood of people who are killed by the apartheid policemen is also running through the streets. These are people who ran away from their homes to hide from the police and they end up being killed in the streets. In line 23 the persona asks a question: **‘Do you love me Alexandra, or what are you doing to me?’** He wants validation and reassurance.

Stanza 4

There’s a repetition of “You frighten me, Mama (lines 24 and 26). This signifies a sense of uneasiness in being a resident in Alexandra. The cruelty that ordinary citizens experience makes them fearful and even lesser human beings, e.g. lines 27- 31.

Stanza 5

In the beginning of this stanza the persona feels that he has now become compliant to the rules of the country – **‘I feel I have sunk to such meekness!’** The question mark expresses his disbelief on how he has accepted what is going on as his reality.

He is aware that people of other race groups are advancing in life, but he has reached a point of stagnation where he cannot advance in life – **‘I lie flat while others walk on me to far places.’**

He has tried to move away many times, but he came back home to Alexandra – his ‘mama’. When people in other countries (‘worlds’) mistreated him (‘became funny’), he silently came back home. The walk back home was not easy – he **‘waded’** back.

In the last 2 lines of the poem, the persona has accepted the lies of the apartheid government. He no longer sees himself as deserving a better life.... He lies amid the junk/dirt/filth. He has accepted that he is simple and black as the apartheid regime would want him to believe.

8

Poem

Barolong Seboni

We do not need
these jagged words
that dig a trench between us
each time they are uttered

those epithets
sharp like spokes
that pierce the heart when spoken

there is no room in my cup
for these acidic words of sarcasm
that corrode my sensitivity

these cold and icy terms tossed
to deaden the heart
venomous words
from your serpentine tongue
that infect the feeling ...

Let us speak, love
in gentler tones
timid as the lamb
is soft
woolly words
worn to stand strong against the
cold-bitterness of the world.

Better still
let us search in our speech
for words deep as the soul is still
that will spell our thoughts
in the silence of our smiles.

Background

The Poet: Born in Botswana in 1957 and lived in America and England, *Barolong Seboni* is a teacher and university academic

Structure

- Seboni's poem follows protest writing style and does not follow grammatical rules. It means the writer is complaining and, therefore, rebellious.
- Punctuation is not properly used.
- Sentences do not follow the traditional sentence structure but sentences are combined forming only 3 long sentences.
- Lines are uneven (Line 3 has 6 words while line 5 has two and line 24 has 8).
- Stanzas are uneven (stanza 1 has 4 lines while stanza 2 has 3 and stanza 5 has 7).

Tone

- The poem is a complaint.
- The problem is presented in the first 4 stanzas.
- The solution or suggestion is presented in the last 2 stanzas.

Imagery

The speaker uses strong words and imagery throughout the poem, e.g. 'jagged', corrode, venomous, serpentine.

Stanza 1

In lines 1-2 the speaker refers to something present, the use of the pronoun 'these' indicates that he is referring to an argument that is taking place. The use of the present tense in these lines indicates that the argument is presently taking place.

In lines 3-4 the phrase 'dig a trench' *personifies* the words, suggesting that each time they are spoken they create a barrier between the two people who are arguing.

Stanza 2

The word 'epithet' means words that are used to describe someone or something, often insultingly. In line 4 the *simile* compares the insultingly descriptive words, to spokes from a wheel used as a weapon, stabbing the heart. The stabbing of the heart shows the involvement of emotions in this argument.

Stanza 3

The speaker refers to his heart as a cup that cannot accommodate the 'acidic words'. This *metaphor* in line 9 clearly shows the comparison of the words spoken during the argument to acid (which has a sour taste and can burn things it comes to contact with). This shows how sarcastic, bitter and hurtful these words are. These hurtful words gradually destroy (corrode line 10) the speaker's sensitivity.

Stanza 4

During the argument there is an exchange of ruthless and unfriendly words which drain the heart of all emotions and makes it weaker. In line 13 the speaker refers to the words as 'venomous' meaning that the words are poisonous. It's people who are harmful to society who find pleasure in uttering these words.

In line 14 the speaker uses a *metaphor* ('serpentine') to compare the tongue that utters the hurtful spoken words to a snake like curving and twisting.

There's a change in tone in stanzas 5 and 6. The speaker is proposing a solution to the problem.

Stanza 5

The speaker requests that they speak love instead of hatred, he suggests that they use gentler tones which would be a direct contrast to the tones that were used in stanzas 1- 4. The speaker uses the image of a lamb '...soft woolly words....' Which symbolises warmth and is a direct contrast to 'cold and icy terms' in line 11. The repetition of the w sound suggests the warmth that the speaker is longing for.

Stanza 6

In this last stanza the speaker proposes a better option to resolve the argument. He suggests they look for words that are as intense as the soul, those words will be able to produce the necessary result of peaceful thoughts which would be evident in their silent smiles. The repetition of the letter s suggests the peace and quiet the speaker is hoping for.

9

To learn how to speak

Jeremy Cronin

About the Poet

Jeremy Cronin was born in Durban in 1949, and grew up in Cape Town. He went to university both in Cape Town and Paris. He was arrested for his activities against the apartheid government, and spent seven years in prison. His first book of poems, *Inside*, reflects life in prison, and is also a looking inwards, and a looking into the land. He has been involved in worker politics for most of his life.

To learn how to speak

To learn how to speak
With the voices of the land,
To parse the speech in its rivers,
To catch in the inarticulate grunt
Stammer, call, cry, babble, tongue's knot
A sense of the stoneness of these stones
From which all words are cut.
To trace with the tongue wagon-trails
Saying the suffix of their aches in –kuil, -pan, -fontein,
In watery names that confirm
The dryness of their ways.
To visit the places of occlusion, or the lick
In a vlei-bank dawn.
To bury my mouth in the pit of your arm,
In that planetarium,
Pectoral beginning to the nub of time
Down there close to the water-table, to feel
The full moon as it drums
At the back of my throat
Its cow-skinned vowel.
To write a poem with words like:
I'm telling you,
Stompie, stickfast, golovan,

Songololo, just boombang, just
To understand the least inflections,
To voice without swallowing
Syllables born in tin shacks, or catch
The 5.15 ikwata bust fife
Chwannisberg train, to reach
The low chant of the mine gang's
Mineral glow of our people's unbreakable resolve.
To learn how to speak
With the voices of this land.

Analysis

This poem is an expression of an eagerness by an individual to learn the language of a particular place or country. The poem uses an extended metaphor of land and attempts to gain understanding through listening the sounds and observing the sights peculiar to this place and then to learn how to speak with them too.

As the poem begins it is clear that the speaker or persona is perhaps a foreigner to this land. He wants to learn by listening to the “voices” (line 2) of the land. This is an example of *personification* as obviously, land cannot speak it is an inanimate object. The voices (line 2) refers to the people who are inhabitants of the land and their languages. In line 3 the speaker talks of breaking down what he hears in the flow (rivers) of their speech and attempting to understand the separate parts of their sentences. He goes on to use the word “catch” in line 4 implying that while he is learning, no one is teaching him. He is simply placing himself near the speakers and picking up bits of speech which are at times incomprehensible; “inarticulate grunt, stammer, call, cry, babble, tongue’s knot...” describing the way it sounds to his foreign ears.

In line 6 the speaker acknowledges that all languages or “tongues” come from one rigid (stone) and are cut as seen fit by different nationalities. Line 6 is also an example of *sibilance*, i.e. a speech sound that sounds like hissing - (the repetition of the “s” sound).

Wagon-trails (line 8) refers to the roads or journeys perhaps taken by the people that one must follow to learn their history and language. Wagons are traditionally known as the transportation method of the Afrikaans people with which they made the Great Trek. The suffixes he mentions are also part of the Afrikaans language, “-kuil, -pan, -fontein”. Their names are fluid “watery”

while their ways or perhaps traditions, are rigid; “dryness”. This is another reference to water giving a picture once again of land and the landscape.

From line 10 there is a use of words that refer to what is hidden; occlusion, bury, pit of the arm. Perhaps at this point the speaker realises that some aspects of language are not obvious or clear and require deeper searching and involvement to understanding. The word “vlei-bank” (line 13) is a compound word using both Afrikaans- vlei and -bank which is English. The speaker talks of burying his mouth in the armpit of the land, a place where secrets are tucked away perhaps, a place that is a “planetarium” understanding time and the times using the stars. The speaker uses *alliteration* linking the “p” words (pit, planetarium, pectoral).

The reference to the drums may be the start of revealing the location of the land, as Africa. He hears it at the back of his throat as he makes the sounds like cow-skinned vowels. The speaker uses a *metaphor* to link the cowhide drum of African culture with a vowel formed in the back of the throat. These are African sounds made from African instruments. He then quotes colloquial phrases commonly used in South Africa at that time (in lines 23-24).

In line 21 the poem begins to take a more modern, and specifically Johannesburg time and place. It seems to move from nature and the outdoors to township lingo and occurrences during heated political times in South Africa. The name Stompie is of a boy who died having been suspected of being a police informant and went missing mysteriously. The word though is also slang for the last part of a cigarette. He speaks of the rise and fall (inflections) of the voice and tone as the speakers enunciate.

The speaker has made it clear that he not only wants to learn the language but specifically to speak with the same voices that are of this land. This may even refer to speaking to the same issues that are pertinent to the land, perhaps to even stand with those voices on those issues. He goes to speak of the resolve of the people thereby placing the context of the poem in the time of the struggle against the oppressive system of apartheid. He refers to the people as “our” people as if including himself or aligning himself with them. The poem closes with the same words for emphasis and reiteration of his resolve and determination. This time though the poet replaces the word “the” land to “this” land. This is specific. It is a land he is present in, almost invested in.

Figures of Speech

Personification: In line 3 the speaker suggests that the land itself speaks.

Sibilance: In line 6 the repetition of the hissing sound

Alliteration: In lines 14-16 the speaker links the 'p' words using alliteration

Metaphor: In lines 19-20 the speaker uses a metaphor to link the cow-hide drum of African culture with a vowel formed at the back of the throat.

10

Everything has changed (except graves)

Mzi Mahola

About the Poet

Mzi Mahola was born in 1949 and grew up in Lushington, beneath the Amathole Mountains, in the Eastern Cape. While involved in the struggle against apartheid he had a book of poetry destroyed by the security forces. His poems celebrate aspects of the post-apartheid country, but frequently point to areas of disappointment.

Everything has changed (except graves)

I stood at the ruins
of my former school
where i was patiently moulded;
wild plants own every space now;
my soul was paralysed.
what happened to the roofs
the doors and windows?
can the dumb lonely walls
still recognise me?
everything has changed;
the ground where we ran and laughed
and the corner of the playground
where I pummelled a schoolmate almost to pulp
are scarfed with wattle
to conceal my shame.

a short distance away
stands a renovated Church
(a Dutch Reformed formerly,
now a Methodist)
embraced by a mute little cemetery
that claims the past
(the dividing fence has vanished)
though growth strangles it to near extinction;
cold names of departed whites
who were part of this community
and made monumental contributions
are etched on the headstones.

Sometimes whites come here
to clean and put flowers
on their family graves;
a voice whispers next to me
but I do not recognise its face
because Lushington has changed
except the graveyard.

Analysis

In this poem, the speaker looks at the place in which he grew up reflectively. He compares it with what it was in the past and he is not happy about the state of neglect the place is in now.

In lines 1 and 2 the speaker uses the words 'stood' and 'former' to clearly indicate to the reader that this poem is reflective. The speaker is standing at the remains of the school he attended when he was young.

The speaker's character was shaped and developed in this school (line 3). The phrase 'patiently moulded' (line 3) means that the process of building and developing the speaker's character was undertaken with great tolerance.

In lines 4-5 the speaker clearly paints the picture of how the place looks like. The school yard has overgrown weed and trees. In line 5 the speaker is heartbroken by what he sees; ('my soul was paralysed').

In lines 6-7 the speaker asks a rhetorical question, it's as if he is thinking out loud.

In lines 8-9 asks another rhetorical question where he has also personified the derelict building.

In line 10, the speaker echoes the title of this poem: everything has changed. This repetition indicates the state of disbelief that the speaker finds himself in.

In lines 11-15 he looks at the playground where he once had joyful experiences and specifically looks at the playground corner where he had a fist fight with a school mate. The speaker reflects at this bullying incident shamefully; (lines 13-15).

In lines 16-20 the reader is given an image of a beautiful church building which has been renovated. This church building stands in stark contrast to the dilapidated school building. In line 20, the quietness of the cemetery has been personified. The fence that divided the church yard and the school yard has disappeared.

The speaker subtly mentions that this church cemetery is for whites only. In line 24 'cold names of departed whites' the reader is given a clear indication that it is white people who are buried in those graves. The speaker uses the phrase 'cold names' to emphasise that it is names of dead people. The people whose bodies are buried in that church cemetery had made huge positive contribution to the community.

In the last stanza the speaker imagines someone whispering to his ears as he recalls that the only thing that has not changed in Lushington is the graveyard. The white people still carry out their ritual of going to the grave yard to clean their family graves and put flowers on them.

Figures of Speech

Rhetorical question: Lines 6-7 the speaker asks what happened to the roof, the doors and the windows. He is not expecting to get an answer from anyone. He is just thinking out loud.

Personification: Lines 8-9 the walls which are inanimate objects have been given human qualities of loneliness, recall and recognition.

Euphemism: In line 20 refers to the cemetery as 'mute', i.e. quiet. This is a subtle way of referring to the cemetery as being a place of death.

Hyperbole: Line 13 'pummelled a...to pulp'. In explaining the extent of the damage caused during the fist fight, the speaker exaggerates as he compares the school mate's beaten face to soft remains of something that has been processed ('pulp').

Metaphor: Lines 14-15 the overgrown school playground is compared to someone wearing a scarf, hiding himself from the cold. The weeds and wattle in the playground are compared to a scarf.

Suggested Answers

Sonnet 18

1. (a) Shakespearean/English or Italian/Petrarchan
(b) **Shakespearean sonnet:** In the first 3 quatrains, the poet repeats the main idea of the poem, i.e. his lover is more beautiful than summer. In the final 2 lines (the couplet) the poet makes a short and surprising claim about the value/nature of art. The poet immortalises his lover, instead of dying she ‘grows’, as the poem is read by an increasing number of people.
Italian sonnet: The poem has an octave and a sestet. The octave makes a statement which is illustrated in a variety of ways. In the sestet there is a shift in the argument.
2. Summer does not last very long, but the beauty of the poet’s lover lasts forever.
3. Metaphor – the comparison of the sun to an eye shows the importance of light both in nature and in human beings.
4. Death is seen as an arrogant person who brags about his power to destroy life.
5. Death will never be victorious over art; even when the poet and his lover are dead they will live on the pages of this poem as it will be read by many people.
6. The tone is confident (and forceful).

Mid-Term Break

1. Sombre mood
2. He is sitting in the sick bay, the bells are knelling instead of ringing, he was driven home by their neighbours – all these three aspects are indicative of something potentially being wrong.
3. (a) Onomatopoeia
(b) She is happy and she’s playing, because she is too young to understand and therefore be affected by the tragedy that has fallen upon the family. Her behaviour shows that she is completely ignorant to the situation, as any young child would be.
4. They are symbolic of life after death.
5. Personification.
6. Yes, because it alludes to there being a break in the family.

OR

No, because a Mid-term break is supposed to be an enjoyable time away from school, but instead he is taking a break from school to go home for his younger brother’s funeral.

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