A STUDY GUIDE TO A SILENT SONG AND OTHER STORIES

The summery guide covers all the following stories of the silence songs

1. A man of awesome power (Naguib Mahfouz-Egypt).
2. Incident in the park
3. Ninema – vrenika Pather
4. A silence Song – Leonard Kibera
5. Ivory Bangles
6. The sins of the Fathers
7. The truly married woman
8. Talking money
9. The Ghost
10. God sees the truth, But waits
11. The Neighborhoods watch
12. December
13. Boyi
14. Cheque mate

A MAN OF AWESOME POWERS

A man of awesome power is an intriguing story about Tayyib al – Mahdi, how he acquired and uses power and how the power changes Tayiid's life . The guide will also reveal what causes Tayyid to lose his incredible power and also the role of the media.

SYNOPSIS

A Man of Awesome Power is an intriguing story about Tayyib al-Mahdi, who lives acomfortable life after retiring from many years of service abroad. His current life ispeaceful and uneventful. He spends time watching television, reading newspapers or listening to the radio in the comfort of his apartment that he shares with his wife since his daughters are already married. The story captures how an individual who isempowered when least expected utilises the power given to him. His illusions of desire for a better country lead to his dream of power acquisition.

One night, Tayyib dreams of a visitation by a man of radiant appearance who speaks to him in a kind tone, informing him that God had willed him the power to order things to be and they would be. Although he dismisses the dream like any other dream, its frequent recurrence makes him give it more thought. Tayyib confirms its reality when he orders his television to switch channels, and it happens.Endowed with the newly acquired power, he sets out to reform his country and the entire planet as he had often wished.

He utilizes his power both for good and bad intentions. He starts by hitting back a taxi driver who ignores him by wishing him an accident. He also causes a man whohad physically attacked a woman in a bus to suffer stomach cramps. We see himengaging in meritorious deeds such as filing a gaping pothole, locking an electricbox and removing a pile of rubbish that he trips on.

The media does not escape his wrath as he causes one radio announcer to suffer massive sneezes after making an announcement that gave false hopes. As the storyprogresses, Sulayman Bey al-Hamalawi, a political leader who had evaded tax, is ordered by Tayyib to go and pay the tax that he had been avoiding for a long time.

An unfortunate incident occurs when Tayyib is busy planning to effectively utilise his power for the good of all sectors in the country. He notices a beautiful woman at the entrance of the tea garden and uses his ability to satisfy his desires for her. Theirintimacy costs him his incredible power. He pays this price for misusing the powerthat God had freely given him. The story ends with his sad realisation that he no longer has power. His attempts to order the television channels to change do not bear fruits. He experiences a tremendous sadness that will haunt him for the rest of his life.

CHARACTERS

A. TAYYIB AL-MAHDI

1. He is the main character in the story, and the story revolves around the awesome power that he miraculously acquires sometime after his retirement.
2. He does not reveal to his wife that he had been bestowed with such power. His initial intention is to use the abilityto change his country and the entire planet like he had always wished.
3. He is portrayed as religious, ambitious yet emotional and vengeful.

EPISODIC ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES

Man of Awesome Power' is founded on several pillars determined by the variousepisodes:

Tayyib's dream — pg 1-2

Utilising the awesome power -pg 2-4

Losing the awesome power- pg 5 Nide to a silent son and other stories

Key issues arise from the episodes:

Acquisition of power

How Tayyib acquires his power teaches several things:

One can gain power at any stage of life.

Tayyib believed that he had completed his mission in the world. Before acquiring power, he lives a peaceful life as he enjoys the fruits of retirement. The writer notesthat 'He had generous insurance and more than adequate pension' pg 1 which do not prevent him from being given power by God.

Power is God-given.

Tayyib's power is bestowed on him by God. As seen from his words, "All praise toGod, Lord of the Worlds", and listening to radio channels devoted to the Quran (pg1), his religious nature is one reason God willed to grant him power. The man who visits him in the dream tells him that starting that moment and as long as God willed, he had been bestowed with the power to order things to be and they wouldbe. (pgl)

Utilization of Power

Tayyib utilizes the power given to him in different incidents:

A. Encounter with the taxi driver (pg 2)
B. In the bus, to deal with the conflict between a man and a woman (pg 3).
C. Performing memorable services along his way to the cafe (pg 3).
D. The radio announcer (pg 3).
E. Tayyib's wrath on Sulayman Bey al-Hamalawi (pg 3-4).
F. The beautiful woman in the Tea Garden (pg 4).

Good utilization of power

The episode shows how a person bestowed with power should utilise it. Tayyib'ssoliloquy during his encounter with the taxi driver captures the need to use powerfor the well-being of others and to make things better. 'Whoever is granted withpower like mine must utilize it only for good.' (pg 2)

He uses the power to do several good deeds. Some of the outstanding services thatTayyib performs include filling a gaping pothole, locking an electric box that was open and hanging dangerously, removing a pile of trash and draining sewer waterthat was flooding an alley. Many people in the neighborhood appreciate these services. (p 3).

He also does a good deed of making Sulayman, who has been evading tax, go tothe taxi authorities and pay them millions of pounds he owed them. (pg3).

Misuse of power

Tayyib utilises the power given to him for vengeance- The act of causing the tireburst of the taxi since the driver had ignored him is vengeful. Tayyib ignores the noble voice that reminds him not to use power for wrong purposes and lets his anger get the best of him. (pg 2)

Tayyib causes harm/pain and suffering to the man who had slapped a woman on apublic bus. Severe cramps strike the man, following Tayyib's anger focused on the man's stomach. (pg3)

He uses power to satisfy his lustful desires when he sees a beautiful woman andmakes her notice him making them surrender to fate. (pg 4)

Role of the Media

The media is seen to fail in its role. It dwells more on giving false promises/hope instead of telling what had already been achieved. When Tayyib gets into the café, he listens to a radio announcer expounding on promising developments expected in the future (pg 3). Tayyib's fury is directed at the announcer, causing him to suffer massive sneezing, forcing him to end the announcement and play a song. The song-'Walk Around and See' is ironically used to satirise the media for highlighting and emphasising what is yet to be seen (prophesies) instead of dwelling on the reality that can be seen.

Immorality

Sexual immorality is seen when Tayyib utilises his power to make the beautifulwoman he notices in the Tea Garden fall for his advances. The woman barelynotices Tayyib when she gets to the garden, but Tayyib shifts her attention to himself through the power he has. He forgets his faith and his life (Lack of self- control) and surrenders to fate.

Tax evasion is another immorality that is seen in the story. Many leaders use their powerful positions to evade paying their taxes, such as Sulayman Bey al- Hamalawi.When Tayyib notices him, he commands, "Sulayman Bey, go straight to the tax prosecutor's office to repent and say you are sorry up the millions of pounds you owe." (pg 3)

Loss of Power

If power is not utilised for 'good', it will be lost. Tayyib loses his awesome power when he comes back to his senses and realises that he had made some mistake. Although he had been secretive about his power, his wife Haniya keenly observesthat he was not in his usual mood that evening. Tayyib's deceitful/ dishonest natureis depicted when he easily lies to his wife that he had a cold. Unfortunately, for Tayyib, he loses his power due to his mistakes. 'The miracle was gone — like a dream.' (pg5)

Change

Tayyib confirms that he has been bestowed with power by ordering televisionchannels to change. Changing the television channel from a religious one to aforeign one foreshadows the changes that happen to Tayyib once he acquires power.

He is initially described as 'A good man; his sins were forgivable he was a lover of virtue. ' (pg 2). However, power ones changes him. He becomes vengeful, lustful,
deceitful and inhumane. He forgets his faith and life and lets passion and lustcontrol him, which had never happened since he married Haniya. (pg 4)

Power also helps change the risky living condition of the people gaping potholesdangerously hanging an open electric box, Sewer flooding on alleys and piles ofrubbish on the way. All these are rectified through Tayyib power (pg 3)

INCIDENT IN THE PARK: Meja Mwangi

Episodes / sub-episodes

l. The description of the city park in August afternoon. (p6 - 7).
2. Two idlers' dialogue at the pond. - 10).
3. An ambush by two city constables in the park ending in violence.
4. The fruit merchant condemned unheard. (p 12).

SYNOPSIS

The incident in the park, by Meja Mwangi, is a contemporary episode set in the city park and its environs where most citizens, hustlers and workers, spend most of their time as an Outdoor recreation centre. We know it is the popular Uhuru Park in Nairobi through its vivid description.

Metaphorically described, the park is seriously affected by the drought in August.there is a dirty lake at its base, and to the west, up the hill, a cathedral, modern fortresses and ministerial Offices overlooking the park below, and across it is thecity itself. A highway, Uhuru highway, separates the park from the city, and on it, there is heavy traffic. In the east, parliament and two city clocks are seen.

Therefore, the park provides a relaxing haven (chilling point) and a source of solace for the misplaced, lost Or frustrated masses flocking the city daily. This has attracted many people. including peddlers trying to make ends meet and idlers killing time here. The city hungry office workers also buy cheap snacks during the lunch hour and return to their stations. Others rush down to River Road to buy chipsand roast meat as the loiterers watch the Spectre in a jiffy.

Soon, the park is left with a few idlers and peddlers. Under the slightest shade lie men sheltering from the scorching sun. Watchers watch rowers paddling, reactingto the maxim that spectating is the next best thing to participating. A loafer keepsdropping debris to the fish pond despite the warning inscription on a board.
Another man joins him, and a dialogue ensues, and they share a cigarette.

An incident erupts when two city constables demand to see the licence Of the ice cream man and a fruit seller. The Old man helplessly searches and realizes he doesn't have it. Worse. he has no identity card, so he offers the five shillings he has, for he fears the judge and going to jail. He begs for forgiveness, offering all the fruits in vain. On seeing they are unimpressed, he flees to find refuge in the crowded city, and the cops chase him. He is nabbed by a man on the highway andeventually falls into a ditch. There, the poor man is condemned unheard of for beinga 'thief'.

Title of the story

What is the significance Of the title Incident in the park?
What is ironic about the two constables' behaviour at the park?How else do the people spend time at the park?

Thematic concerns

With evidence from the text, discuss the urban problem that leads to the destitutionof the masses.
How does the city's jobless population escape their wretchedness?Compare and contrast the city

workers and the jobless masses.

What are the harsh realities of city life and the illusion of a better, promising life?

How does the rural-urban influx affect people's lives?

What does the presence of butts, used matches and stubs at the park tell you?How does the lack of identity cards

and license affect peddlers?

Juxtapose the kind of identification the police demand from the fruit vendor andone that awaits him at the mortuary.

Referring closely to the fruit-seller show how the mob and the legal systemadminister justice.

Why does the merchant resort to flight and fight for his life instead of overcominghis fright for the justice system?

Who is to blame for the death of the fruit-seller, the constables, the public, or thevendor himself?

What lessons can be taken from the incident at the city park?

What does the fruit seller's mention of the 'tyrant judge' tell us about the justicesystem?

Problems of urbanization

Urban population growth, driven by migration and searching for jobs, has become a significant issue in cities like Nairobi.

However, the masses end up frustrated due to a skills mismatch in the labourmarket, dwindling economy and poor governance. But every now and then, amisplaced person rose with a start... (p7).

In a few seconds, the thousand or so strong swarm had been swallowed up by theyawning concrete jungle... (p7).

Urban poverty is also witnessed as many remain loitering and idling reminding thepark loungers just how many hours they had wasted lying idle.' (p7). 'A shaggy thin man sat under a shrub...' (p7). ' hairy loafer' (p8). ' The idler seated on the bank...' (p8) torn trouser legs.' (p8) 'horny toes. (p9)

There is also evidence of poor hygiene. The park is littered with debris, cigarette ends and butts. (p8,9). The two gentlemen share puffs on the cigarette. One offers afull cigarette, and smoking in this zone could be a form of escapism from their poverty. (p10).

- The fruit seller has only ten shillings which he offers to the constables to spare him. He cannot afford to pay for the licence, or even the fine has on another case.(pl 1).

Conflicts between city authority and street hawkers

When the two constables accost and demand licences from the ice cream man andthe fruit peddler, they tell the merchant that he will only explain to the judge.

- The fruit seller already has a case and is trying to sell to afford a fine. (pl 1). The fruit seller pleads with the constables, who say nothing. 7hefruit seller cursed themand their wives and children... (PI 1).

- **Mob justice / Social injustice**

- The fruit seller is lynched unknowingly by the park people. By the time the constable ran up, the fruit-peddler lay like a broken and twisted ragdoll at thebottom of the ditch. (p12)
- He cries and pleads for mercy in vain. . had drawn thick red blood over the sparsely bearded face. Dead' was his verdict (p12)
- The word 'thief' hovered over the assembled crowd. mob universally condemns him, and it is impossible to tell from which mouth the condemnation is issued. (p12)
- Ironically the mob had had what was right. Justice fairly quickly and completely administered ... (PI 2).

CHARACTERS

The fruit seller

- He is a poor old man who sells fruits at the park. He has no licence or identitycard. (pl l)
- He is a responsible man as he remembers he has a family which depends on him when accosted. I have a wife and children and... (PI 1).
- He is hardworking because he sells fruits (two baskets) to earn his living despitebeing unable to afford a license. (PI l)
- He is afraid and fearful that he will be fined or be castrated by the tyrant judge. (pll)

- Style and language use

1. What figures of speech does the writer use to describe the park and events in thepark?

2. Why is it ironic for the fruit peddler to flee from the constables and lose his life?A comprehensive and detailed guide to a silent song and other stories

3. Explore the use of dialogue in Meja Mwangi's Incident in the Park.

1. Urban centres are riddled with frequent conflicts with innocent Citizens. Discuss the truth of this assertion based on Meja Mwangi's Incident in the Park. (20 marks).

NINEMA -Vrenika Pather- South AfricaAbout the Author Vrenika Pather

Vrenika Pather is mainly known for her acting prowess since she started her career as an actress at the age of eighteen. The Indian lady of South African origin has alsowritten a few short stories, one of them being Ninema. Her stories mainly tell the life that many Indian ladies live and their everyday's encounters.

Points to guide interpretation

1. Tough life of a market vendor:
    - Rising early
    - Poor meals
    - Poor/lack of proper grooming
    - Dealing with different customers
2. Caste and relationships.
3. Sexual harassment/immorality.
4. Need to remain principled and focused.

CHARACTERS

a. Ninema

She is one of the market gardeners who serves as the main character in the story.

She is focused, ambitious, organised and strong-willed. Her admirable trait is seenin how fond the other ladies are of her

A comprehensive and detailed guide to a silent song and other stories and howmany of her customers remain loyal.

b. Mr Chinran

He is a white man who is a loyal customer of Ninema.

He admires Ninema, but both know that their relationship is prohibited since theyare from different castes. While Mr Chinran is a wealthy lawyer from a Brahmin caste, Ninema is a poor girl from a low caste.

He supports Ninema's business by buying more than enough herbs from her.

c. Mrs Singh

She is a wealthy older woman who is a loyal customer.

She is known for haggling over prices, thus being difficult and troublesome. Shespends time negotiating with Ninema as a way of passing the time.

d. The strange man

He is the man who accosts Ninema on her way from the market.He is immoral, vulgar and

lascivious.

SYNOPSIS

Vrenika Pather's story Ninema', is about the harsh life of market gardeners as represented by Ninema and the other ladies. The story explores the hustles that Ninema goes through on a typical market day, starting from rising at the wee hoursof the morning to closure time which is late in the evening. Her home life is simple, suggesting the poor living conditions of such vendors. She has to prepare before going to the Indian market where she makes her sales.

She only washes her face and feet with cold water from an outside tap since she cannot afford running hot water. This affects her grooming as she takes a bath once a week. She puts on her Chumpal, symbolising the poor condition and the only source of protection for her feet while on the way to and from the market.

Ninema remains focused and does not let her beauty and attention from both menand women control her. Once in the market, Ninema organises her herbs appetisingly to attract customers.

The market condition is challenging as the weather is not favourable. It is hot, andNinema sweats until her Sari clings to her firm skin.

She handles different customers who buy her herbs with wisdom and respect. Herfocus in business enables her not to get carried away by Mr Chinran's attraction towards her. She does not encourage his infatuation with her but treats him like anyother customer. with respect and appreciation.

She firmly handles the troublesome and difficult Mrs Singh. Many customers whovisit her stall are served well and are satisfied as she takes a personal interest in them. Her doctor, Dr Seedat, visits too, and she takes time talking to him about hermother's ailment.

Having served her last customer,Ninema closes her stall after taking stock of the unsold herbs and her profit for the day. The rot in society is seen when a strange man sexually assaults Ninema on her way home. He pinches her erect nipple and laughs loudly before extending some invitation for Ninema to follow him. Ninemadoes not take this abuse lying down. She utilises the only weapon she has — her chumpal, that protect the soles of her feet and her whole self. She hits the man repeatedly with her sandals as the other women cheer her on. The man is too shocked to react and thus ends up being beaten by Ninema until he whimpers.

Feeling satisfied, Ninema continues with her journey home. She goes back to thepoor condition she left in the morning. She safely keeps her sandals under the kitchen table before washing her face and feet with cold water, just like she had done in the morning. She takes a rest that leads her to a dream of a better tomorrow.

The story ends with hopeful/optimistic Ninema, who dreams of having a home forherself, hot water and a kitchen inside the house.

QUESTIONS

1. Compare and contrast Ninema and other lady marketers
2. What is ironic about Mrs Singh's behaviour?
3. Ninema is a likeable and admirable character. Do you agree? Give evidencefrom the story.
4. How effectively has Vrenika Pather used description in the story?

EPISODIC ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES

I. Living conditions of Ninema - Pg13 and 16Il. Ninema's skill of trade - Pg 14-15

Ill. Journey home - Pg 16

Several issues are addressed in these episodes: She only wears her sandals when going to the market. The kind of meals she takespoints to the poor life she takes a few sips of tea she brought with her Page 14 (breakfast)

- Some sandwiches that she packed from home are her only meal for lunch Page 15.

Time is limited for her — she only affords a weekly shower on Saturday afterboiling water on the open fire Page

Dealing with different kinds of customers

Mr Chinran admires her and can almost be said to be in love with her. 'The ladies teased her, saying he was in love with her. The writer also tells us that Ninema made Mr Chinran's day. He is almost always the first customer. Ninema handles himwisely and does not let this attraction control her. She does not encourage his infatuation but treats him with respect and appreciation like she does all her loyal customers. (pg14)

She also has to handle demanding customers such as Mrs Singh, who though rich, will always bargain to lower the prices. Ninema shows her masterful skills by firmlyand respectively handling her. (pg14)

She serves many affluent customers at lunch hour who steadily flow in to get herbsfor their evening meals. She pays personal interest to each as she has an ambition of living a better life just like most of these customers. (pg15)

• Time limitation allows her to consult with her doctor - Dr Seedat, only when he comes to buy herbs from her. The two talk about Ninema's mother's illness showingthat Ninema is equally concerned about her mother.

• She can entice a new customer by offering an extra bunch of mint for free. (pg15)
This generosity makes the customer happy, thus promising to always shop with her.

Class discrimination

The Indian society that Ninema hails from has a strong belief in the caste where those from the high caste — Brahmin Caste, are not allowed to inter-marry with those from the lower caste. This is seen in her association with Mr Chinran. 'As muchas Ninema dismisses the teasing of the ladies that Mr Chinran is in love with her, she is also aware that a rich lawyer from a Brahmin caste cannot be interested in someone like her — a poor girl from a low caste (pg14). Mr Chinran himself knows ittoo, and thus their relation can never go beyond early morning herb buys.He further understands that his mother will soon arrange a marriage for him, most probably to a person from his caste.

Hardwork/focus/determination

The writer emphasises the importance of hard work, focus and determination in anindividual's life. Through the main character Ninema, the benefits of the three traits are depicted.

Ninema's hard work is seen in how she rises early — four o'clock Monday morning,and goes to her garden to reap herbs. Her hard work in the garden has borne fruits since her crops are described as being healthy (pg13).

Her hardworking nature is also seen in how she ably attends to the many wealthy customers who flock to her stall, especially during lunchtime. Even though the stall is busy and Ninema is quite busy, she ably attendsto all customers and takes a personal interest (pg15).

Ninema's hard work does not go unrewarded. She has several loyal customers whovisit her stall daily. She has a steady flow of customers and feels she will need to sow more seeds to keep up with the rising demand (pg15).

She does not let anything distract her from her business. She remains focused, whichessentially aids to success

in her business. The writer points out Ninema's beauty that makes heads turn when she walks through vivid description. 'She is a beautiful woman... her hips sway from side to side as she moves Her thin, chiffon sari drapes effortlessly around her
perfect body as ifkept in place by her high, firm breasts. Long, toned arms and acinched waist cause men to stop and stare' (pg13).

Despite receiving this attention, Ninema keeps calm and focuses on her business.'Ninema does not take the attention she gets to the heart. Her concern is with earning a living' (Pg14).

Her focus is further seen where while other lady hawkers chat amiably with each other as they work, Ninema rarely talks back since she has no time to waste (pg14).

Sexual assault/harassment

The writer points out the sexual harassment faced by many women in society. The encounter between Ninema and the stranger on her way home shows how womensuffer sexual abuse even in public places. The man approaching Ninema grins lasciviously at her before extending his arm to pinch her erect nipple. As if this is notenough, he extends an invitation to Ninema — "If you liked that follow me." (Pg16). episode satirises men who assume women are sex objects to

be mishandled.

Ninema's reaction to the abuse is unexpected. The man is shocked when Ninemafollows him and hits him repeatedly with her Chumpal. She gives him 'a few extrahits on behalf of all the women.' (Pg 6) This shows that many women have been victims of sexual abuse but end up not fighting back. Ninema thus portrays a courageous personality as she fights for herself and even for the helpless womenwho had been or would-be victims of such abuse.

NB The story "Ninema' is a story of hope. Ninema has hope that her life will change at some point. As the story ends, Ninema dreams of the home that will be hers someday soon: The house will have hot water too, and the kitchen will be on the inside. She will also have her large garden to grow herbs and some fruits for herself(pg16).

QUESTIONS

a) To succeed in business, one must have the necessary skills to handlecustomers. Using Ninema in Vrenikas Pather's 'Ninema' support this.
b) "Hard work and determination pays", Using illustrations from Ninema showthe validity of this statement.
c) Women traders experience challenges in their lives. Show how Ninema dealswith these challenges.
d) Ninema is an admirable character. Support from the story Ninema.

A SILENT SONG -LEONARD KIBERA - KENYAABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leonard Kibera is a Kenyan novelist and short story writer. Kibera was born in Kabete, Kenya, attended high school at Embu and studied at the University of California and Stanford University. He taught at the University of Zambia and at Kenyatta University, Kenya, from 1976 until his death. His first publication was a book of short stories, Potent Ash (1968), which he wrote with his brother, Samuel Kahiga. The book explores the guilt, betrayal, and failure of the Mau Mau. Several ofthe stories have been anthologized, especially The Spider's Web, which points an accusing finger at Kenya's elite for the state of Kenya since independence. His only novel, Voices in the Dark (1970), uses dark humour to question why most Mau Mau soldiers who fought for independence were forgotten and left to beg and die alongthe roadside. Kibera has also written several articles of literary criticism.

EPISODES

1. Mbane's life of misery in the streets as a lame, blind beggar. (p17 - 19).
2. Mbanes's lonely self-versus the bubbly world around him. (p18 - 19).
3. Mbane's nostalgia. (p18).
4. Mbane's brother, Ezekiel, rescues him. (p19 20).

SYNOPSIS

A Silent Song by Leonard Kibera is a story about Mbane, a young, paralyzed, blindcity street beggar. He lives in destitution, begging from the passers-by while seething with pain and discomfort. His brother, a wealthy preacher, 'rescues' him from the barbaric city unto the 'light of God' after neglecting him for a long time.

Mbane painfully reminisces his street life with nostalgia at his brother's lonely hut.He is not as happy though he is now in a more serene environment. He remembers the bright weather, lovely morning and beautiful sunset as the city dwellers, pedestrians, dull and gay people during the day talk. At night, the good men and women turned drunk, pimps and whore galore have their turn to smile. He begs dayand night for a living.

He is nursed by Sarah, his brother's wife, who administers bitter fluid down his throat. He swallows it painfully, and she assures him of being well. His religious brother, Ezekiel, preaches to him about Christ, the saved ones and sinners. He askshim whether he knows where sinners go when they die and whether he accepts Jesus, and Mbane says he doesn't know. Before he saves him, Mbane's strength wanes, the pain goes, his head jerks down to the bed, and he is gone.

Title of the story

1. Discuss the relevance of the title of the story, A Silent Song.
2. Brainstorm about the paradox in the title, A Silent Song.THEMATIC CONCERNS

Explore the following themes as brought out in the story, A Silent Song.

a) Pain and misery of physical handicap
b) Religious hypocrisy
c) Prostitution and sexual slavery
d) Alcoholism and escapism

Pain and misery of Physical handicap

- In a sense, A Silent Song, an oxymoron, paradoxically echoes the momentsof soul searching and reflections that mbane has had over the period he stays on the street. This creates a more vivid picture of his life and a cathartic emotional impact.
- The miserable life on the street as a crippled, blind beggar seems less painfulthan in his brother's desolate hut, where he is lonely and suffering. (p18).

- He has been speaking to himself in his thoughts and for a long time on thestreet except for his mechanical plea of 'Yes?', he has no one else to addressbut himself. (p19).
- Mbanes undergoes much pain, agony, and suffering on the streets becauseof his life circumstances. Being blind and lame has impaired his ability to liveeveryday life. 'Sharp pangs', 'savage fury', pain tore his stomach'. (PI 7 - 19).
- He crawled on his knees and elbows... suddenly sharp pangs from his naveltore... He was paralyzed. Then the pain disappeared... but he knew it had onlyrecoiled for another attack. (PI 7).
- He has heard noises, songs, and sounds of different people, but he retires to solitude, and thoughts start going through his mind at the end of the day. It islike a dream, a song of hope, and he sings his happy song silently to himself, secretly. (p20).
- Mbane ponders the meaning of light to him... light mean to a blind man...(p19).
- At the point of death, as his brother urges him to get saved, with reticence,he ponders on God's place and meaning in his life.
- People despise him on the streets. Good Christian men and women would once again curse and call him able-bodied, only crippled more every day bythe idleness of leisurely begging. (p19).
- He sits there (street back lane) and waits for his journey's end. His body smells of sweat, unwashed except in the rain, which he could but feel. (p20).
- There is a wide gap between his beliefs and his brother's. His tortured bodyis already separated from his free soul when he dies. (p20).
- The soul has already communicated in his silent song, smiling, at peace withhis hosts, himself and everyone. (p20).

Religious hypocrisy/Pretentious piety

- Mbane's brother, Ezekiel, is so devoted to God a preacher but neglects himfor a long time till he realizes Mbane is nearing his death.
- He picks him up and brings him to his hut, claiming it is rescuing only for Mbane to feel lonelier and more miserable. "I rescued you from that barbariccity so that you can see the light of God. (p18).
- The desolate hut is not a habitable place for him. It has a flea-ridden floor. (PI7).
- He could tell that there was meaning in his brother's silence of late... (p18).
- Asked whether he knows a man called Jesus, he says "Yes", but whether he believes and accepts him, Mbane says, "1 don't know," and his brother says Mbane is worse than a Judas. This portrays hypocrisy, and Christians wouldnot talk like this.
- It is ironical and hypocritical for Ezekiel to tell Mbane, "Mbane — I want Christ to save you..." (p20) as though he has already judged him as a sinnerand that "Christ" will come down from heaven to do the good to him whilehis brother watches.
- There is a pretence in the way good Christian men and women curse and callhim names instead of bringing the
- excellent knowledge of Christ to him. '... able-bodied, only crippled moreevery day by the idleness of leisurely begging'. (p19).
- He could only yearn impotently beyond the reach of darkness and lameness.At times, self-pity overcame him. (p18 - 19).
- The God of the Gospel and religion are comforts beyond the reach of awretched cripple. His God is his only hope of
- deliverance from pain, destitution and despair. (p18 - 20).

Prostitution and sexual slavery

- There is evidence of such sexual evils as commercial sex and promiscuity.(p18).
- The blind man knows, sees, and recalls City Street with nostalgia. The noises,drum beating and rhythms which

Mbane calls the voices of good men and women turned drunk in the refuge of the night brothels, pimps and whores galore. (p18).

Alcoholism and escapism

- The street, especially the back lane, had taught Mbane a lot good men and women turned drunk in the refuge of the night brothels, pimps andwhores galore. (PI 8).

CHARACTERS

l. Cite evidence from the text on the existence of the following character traits asportrayed in A Silent Song.

a) Mbane:
   - observant,
   - patient
   - skeptical
   - Enduring...

a) Ezekiel:
   - Selfish
   - Cruel
   - hypocritical.

b) Sarah:
   - reserved,

2. How can you tell that Mbane 'sees' and knows a lot in the city street despitebeing blind?

STYLE AND LANGUAGE USE

1. Why is it ironic for Ezekiel to claim to rescue his brother Mbane from thebarbaric city?
2. Why is Mbane reluctant to accept Christ?

IVORY BANGLES BY ERIC NG'MARYO - TANZANIA

About the Author- Ng'maryo.

Eric Ng'maryo is a published poet who has written poems such as Escape and TheJourney of Us. Although he is a practicing advocate in Tanzania, he is also respectedfor his creative writings which include the short story 'Ivory Bangles'

Points to guide interpretation of the story

- The pebbles message to the old man.
- The tradition that demands wife battering. What happens to the old manwhen he fails to carry out the ritual beating?
- Polygamy and its value — The view of the old man regarding polygamy.
- The relationship between the old man and his wife
- The conflict that exists between humans and wildlife.
- Effects of failing to heed the advice given to an individual.

THE TITLE

'IVORY BANGLES'

The title captures the bangles that the wife wears- Twenty-four ivory bangles that were gifted to her by the old man on the day their firstborn and now only son wasnamed.

The Ivory bangles thus are a symbol of love that the wife enjoys from the old man.

The title also signifies the human-wildlife conflict that exists. For the old man to carve the bangles for his wife, he had to shoot an elephant with a poisoned arrow togetthe ivory he used.

CHARACTERS

a. The old man

He is the chief's councillor, a respected elder who is also a woodcarver and a bravewarrior.

He is married to only one wife. This causes some concern since it is unheard of for a chief to be monogamous. It portrays him as an alienated person who fails to follow the ways of his people.

He is expected to beat his wife to avert her death, as the seer's pebbles dictate butis hesitant to do so

b. The wife

She is an attractive woman who the old man much loves.

She treats him with affection making him return the favour by not molesting heruntil old age.

Her cunning attempt to evade catastrophe as prophesied by the seer leads to herdeath.

SYNOPSIS

'Ivory bangles' by Eric Ng'maryo portrays a society rooted in some traditional practices that whoever departs from them ends up suffering some calamity. The story begins with a troubled old man moving towards his house. Although his bodymoves, his thoughts are disturbed by the seer's words.

The old man had consulted the seer after noticing traces of blood in the goat's liverthat he had slaughtered. The people believed that such an occurrence was a bad omen, so the old man consulted the tribal seer.

The seer discloses that pebbles demand that he has to give his wife the ritual beating. However, the old man is hesitant to beat his wife, whom he much loves, asis seen from the fact that he had gifted her with twenty-four Ivory bangles that she adorns throughout.

We learn of the old man's life with his wife in the past through several flashbacks. We learn of his refusal to marry another wife even after he is made the chief's councillor, and the chief advises him to do so. The chief appreciates her attractiveness in another flashback as she is adorned in twenty-four ivory bangles.

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The old man tells the chief that he carved the ivory bangles for herself using theivory he shot from the elephant using a poisoned arrow.

When he gets home, his wife warmly receives him and his attempts to disclose theseer's message do not succeed until much later in the night. The wife asks him tohave his meal first, and after the two enjoy an intimate moment. When he later discloses the pebbles' message to his wife, she comes up with a scheme on how tocheat the pebbles.

The following day, the old man goes to work while the wife goes to the market, where she hears people talking about a herd of elephants approaching the plains.She strategizes on the things she would do before faking her beating and going back to her brother's home. On her way home, she hears cries from scouts who warn people to beware of the approaching herd of six elephants led by a giant bull.

After getting home, the wife prepares a meal for her husband and decides to go tilla piece of the grove that the husband had said was weedy. Unfortunately, she is killed by the bull elephant that catches her unaware. The people find her in a shallow grave after being crushed by the elephant. Her ivory bangles are also shattered. Her

foreshadowed death is a lesson that failing to heed wise advice can lead to a disastrous outcome.

EPISODIC ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES

Episodes

- A visit to the seer and pebbles demand - pg21-22
- Shared moments between the old man and his wife —pg 22- 23.
- The naming ceremony of the old man's son -pg 23
- The scheme —pg 24
- A visit to the marketplace -pg 24-25
- The wife's death- pg 25

The following are some issues that arise from the episodes:

TRADITIONS

Believe in the seer

The old man visits the seer, considered a priest of the people (Pg. 21).

He goes to the seer because of his superstitious nature. He had to consult the seer since he had noted blood specks on the liver of a goat that he had slaughtered (pg.21).

Ritual beating/molesting of wife

When the old man visits the seer, the pebbles disclose that the spirits were jealous of a happy wife, a woman unmolested by the husband until old age (pg. 21). It is not acceptable for a wife to enjoy a comfortable life with her husband in this community.

The husband is thus expected to molest his wife to ensure that she does not enjoyhappiness. Failure to do so would lead to a disastrous outcome as the pebbles foretell the wife's death.

The pebbles demand that the old man give his wife a thorough beating (ritual beating) and then send her back to her parents (pg. 22). Although the man tries toseek an alternative way to appease the spirits, like offering several goats, the pebbles insist that he must give a wife thorough beating and send her to her parents after the beating.

The tradition of wife-beating/molestation is further seen through the old man's son.Unlike his father, the son had embraced the culture of wife battering, something that bothers his mother moments before her death. She is weeding the weed- infested grove when she remembers they had weeded the same patch only three weeks before, together with her daughter-in- law Leveri. She reminisces how her son had beaten Leveri to 'a fingernail's distance to her grave' (pg. 25). This shows the violent nature of her son and how traditional he was since he embraced wife-beating.

Naming of children

The naming of children is seen as an essential practice. We learn that the twenty-four ivory bangles that the wife wears were gifted to her when their only son wasgiven a name (pg. 23).

The value of child naming is also seen because the old man's grandson is named after him. The writer refers to the young boy as her 'husband' (pg. 23).

Polygamy and its effects

The tradition of polygamy and its value comes out during the moments shared bythe old man and his wife. After serving him his evening meal, the wife patronises the old man by calling him the son of a chief. The writer explains the position held by the old man — the chief's councillor (pg. 22). This position makes him a respected man. It,

however, raises some debate as people talk much about him since he is monogamous. This is seen where the writer says, 'He still was the chief'scouncillor, much respected, but also much talked about because he had only one wife. ..... ' (Pg.22).

His monogamous status was a concern for the ageing chief, who told him to get another wife (pg.23). This shows that the old man's society values the tradition ofpolygamy, and one who does not engage in it is considered a failure.

The old man, however, holds a differing opinion about polygamy. His response tothe chief via a riddle shows his view of polygamy:

A woman went to the riverside Tie woman wanted to

fetch waterThe woman had one water pot

The woman arrived at the water pointThe woman found another

water potThe woman came back with a pot

The woman brought a water pot with potsherds, not water (Pg. 23The chief's interpretation of the

riddle:

"A wife, a co-wife, witchcraft and death" (Pg.23) explains that the old man considershaving more than one wife as witchcraft

LOVE

The moments shared between the old man and his wife (pg. 22-23) point to their love. The kind of reception the old man receives when he gets home shows how much the wife loves and cares for him. 'His wife come unstrapped his leather sandals and led him behind the house to the lean-to, bathed him and rubbed himwith sharp smelling unguent' (pg. 22). Her loving care is further seen when she askshim to have his meal first before they can talk about what the husband had heardthat day (pg. 22).

How the husband addresses the wife also shows that he loves her. Despite her oldage, the husband calls her "girl" (pg. 22), a form of endearment. He also appreciates the meal she has cooked for him. "You cook, woman," he thanked, stretching himselfand yawning (pg. 22).

Their love is also seen from the intimacy they share once the wife joins the old manwhere he lay. rlhe old man tries to talk her about the demands of the seer, but she ignites his pas leading to an intimate moment. 'He unsprung slowly, when it came, it was like an intricate tattoo on a drum, coming unexpectedly and stopping suddenly, leaving the air quiet and pure.'(Pg. 23).

Tie twenty-four ivory bangles that the old man gifted his wife on the day of naming their son also show how much he loved her. Specifically, the eight bangles she woreon either hand were etched with mnemonic marks for a long love poem (pg. 23).

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

The flashback of the naming ceremony of the old man's wife 'As she moved the twenty-four ivory bangles she wore clanked like many castanets' (pg. 23). Elephantshad to be killed to obtain the ivory used to make the bangles.

The truthfulness of this observation is seen when the chief also noted how attractivethe old man's wife looked in the many ivory bangles she wore. The old man proudly explains to the chief that he made the bangles himself from the ivory he got whenhe shot an elephant using a poisoned arrow (pg. 23).

Towards the end of the story, people in the marketplace talk about the herd of elephants approaching the plains. They fear the destruction that the herd will cause.They hope that those who know how to use poisoned arrows will save the situation (pg. 24).

The ultimate sign ofthe conflict is the death of the old man's wife, who a woundedbull elephant kills. In an ironic turn of events, the old man's wife, whose husband had killed an elephant and used its ivory to make bangles for the wife as a sign oflove, ends up killed by a wounded elephant. 'After bashing her on trees and bananaplants, the wounded bull elephant put her on the ground and repeatedly stamped on her. They found her thus in a shallow grave: a mass of flesh and blood and shattered ivory bangles.'(pg. 25). The love is shattered by the same creatures whoseivory was used to make symbols of love.

FAILURE TO HEED ADVICE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The seer's advice to the old man who consulted him is that the pebbles demanded aritual beating of his wife to avert the death of wife. old man is hesitant and offers to give some goats, but the pebbles insist on the beating and send her off to her parents after beating. Instead of heeding the seer's advice, the old man and his wifedevelop a scheme on how to cheat the pebbles. The wife proposes putting up a show by pretending to have been beaten.

Their failure to follow the demands of the pebbles results in what the seer hadforetold-The death of the wife who the wounded bull elephant kills as she is weeding.

Although the wife's death is closely linked to the seer's warning, it can also be seento be due to the wife's recklessness and failure to heed the warnings of the scouts. The wife heard the scouts warning when they noted the elephants were approaching. 'As she slowly made her way home, she heard the cries. They came from scouts who were perched on trees, observing elephants and warning peopleof the beasts' movement... 'Beware! People Of Mtorobo's homestead! The five she elephants are now in your banana grove! The bull is on the path coming from thestream' (pg. 24-25).

The wife chooses to weed at the groove instead of heeding the warning and stayinghome. NB: The writer has extensively used flashbacks to help us understand the past life of the old man and his wife.

QUESTIONS ON STYLES

1) What is the effectiveness of flashbacks in this story?
2) What is ironic about the following?
    a) The wife being called "girl" by the husband?
    b) How the wife dies?
3) What has the writer achieved by extensive use of dialogue?
4) Using an oral literature device in the story communicates

THE SINS OF THE FATHERS CHARLES MUNGOSHI -S ZIMBABWE

About the author:

Charles Mungoshi was born in 1947and raised in a farming family in the Chivhu areaof Zimbabwe. After leaving school, he worked with the Forestry Commission beforejoining Textbook Sales. From 1975 to 1981, he worked at the Literature Bureau as an editor and at Zimbabwe Publishing House for the next five years. In 1985-87 he was Writer in Residence at the University of Zimbabwe, and since then, he has workedas a freelance writer, scriptwriter and editor. Charles Mungoshi has written novelsand short stories in both Shona and English and two collections of children's stories, Stories from a Shona Childhood and One Day Long Ago (Baobab Books, 1989 and 1991); the former won him the Noma Award.

He has also continued to write poetry and has one published collection: The Milkman doesn't only deliver Milk (Baobab Books, 1998). He has won the Commonwealth Writers Prize (Africa region) twice, in 1988 and 1998, for two collections of short stories: The Setting Sun and The Rolling World (Heinemann,1987) and Walking Still (Baobab Books, 1997). Two of his novels: Waiting for the Rain (Heinemann 1975) and Ndiko kupindana Kwa mazuva (Mambo Press, 1975), received International PEN awards.

Episodes / sub-episodes

1) lRondo's family in bereavement. (p26 - 31).
2) Rondos confusion about his personality and purpose. (p28 34).
3) Political tension/rivalry between Rwafa and Mzamane. (p31 - 36).
4) The story of the white farmer. (p38).
5) Rwafa's harangue and end. (p39 — 41).

SYNOPSIS

The Sins ofthe Fathers, by Charles Mungoshi, is a post-colonial story set in ruralZimbabwe. It takes place between Borrowdale and Bulawayo.

Rondo is the antagonistic character whose revenge world opens at the story's verybeginning. Rondo's father, Rwafa, is an ex- minister but still influential in the political world of Zimbabwe. This is evident from how a fraction of mourners justcome to take pictures with him, for such photos would soon 'open doors for them.

Rondo has a wife, Selina, daughter of Basil Mzamane, who is also into politics as an M.P. and a businessman. In fact, he's a political rival of Rondo's father, Rwafa. Rondo's two children, both daughters (Yuna and Rhoda), are in an accident as they are driving home from a birthday party with their grandfather, Basil Mzamane, where, Rwafa takes to the podium to condemn his son for marrying from his enemyBasil. This has all along created bad blood between him and his son that this accident makes Rondo believe that his father has a hand in it. In their many stories, a revelation of what his friend, Gaston, alludes to: "Have you ever wondered about the Second Streetaccidents?"

On their way to the birthday party, the trio - Rondo, Rwafa and Basil Mzamane - meets a group of youths (Chimurenga) chanting political songs. At a point, they meet a white woman whose car has broken down, and they charge to attack beforeBasil intervenes. Rwafa disappears, and Rondo remains confused about what is actually goingon.

Rwafa's speech leaves people surprised and shocked. They start going one after theother. This is where Rondo decides to send the children back with their grandfather as he remains with Selina. The two children and Basil, their grandfather, finally diein a crash. People are here to mourn. Then with utter suspense, Rondo and Selina come to finish Rwafa, who directs them out of the room, then a soft muffled plop is heard from Rwafa's room.

Questions for reflection on "Title of the story" and themes

1) Discuss the role and significance of the title The Sins of the Fathers.

Which sins do you think the father commits in the story?

2) "Because I'd like you to watch some 'duck-shooting today'. " What does this statement from Rwafa refer to?
3) Make inferences from the following:
   a) "Do you know what your father does?" (p33)
   b) "Rondo had not been used to living his life from deductive or logical thinking but now, the accumulation of events and the history behindthem had made him so numb, he was almost a zombie." (p33).
4) Brainstorm about 'Second Street accidents'.
5) What is the role of the family unit during bereavement and children's growth?
6) How are youths used to execute the selfish desires of the political elite?
7) Why are power and prejudice significant in the ex-minister's life ?
8) How does greed for material power affect the human character?

Thematic Concerns

The points of discussion and analysis include:

Identity Crisis

- Rondo suffers low self-esteem through the way his father treats him. Rwafaloathes and persistently frustrates his son. His first disappointment is whenhis father breaks his guitar and throws it into the fire when he is only four. (p30-31).
- Rwafa does not approve of or even attend his son's wedding. He purportedlyleaves town on state business for two weeks. (p34).
- Through flashbacks, Rwafa thrashes his son, Rondo, when he is only eight, for 'stealing a neighbour's mangoes'. This memory gives him an uncomfortable feeling and affects his self-esteem. He must have understoodwhat powerlessness meant (p40).
- This grows into his adulthood when his father refers to him as an effeminateson who wants to demean his family by marrying into an ignominious muDzvitifamily. (p31
- While Rondo admires and thinks his father is the greatest, his father, Rwafa, writes him off. Rwafa always gives Rondo "a little sad laugh" and labels him"Slob". (p28, 31, 32).
- His colleagues laugh at him at work, and Rondo doubts his mother and wife.He feels defenceless and resigns to accept being a fool. "Well, if you see meas a fool, I'll be one." (p28).
- Rondo has developed a stammer that makes him barely answer any of hisfather's questions. (p32).
- His wife Selina tells him she could do better in his pants, and his friend and colleague, Gaston, scolds him, "You can't be a child forever, Rondo". (p33).

Later, Rondo's father disparages him. With contempt, he enquires whetherone of Rondo's more intelligent friends has written for him the piece of paper he hands him. (p41).

- Both Rondo and Rwafa have psychological problem that needs psychosocialsupport. (p26 — 41).

Vengeance

- The author expresses the theme of vengeance in the story's beginning through the flash-forward as Rondo comes to his father with a gun. (p26, 41).From the death ofhis two children and how his father has been treating him, he believes that he has a hand in the deaths, and therefore, he's here to revenge. (p29,33,34, 41).
- Rwafa causes the accident as a form of revenge against the "traitors" or enemies. Furthermore, Rondo is not happy with what his father says abouthis marrying Basil - his enemy. (p31, 39).
- In his speech, Rwafa calls his son a 'traitor'. This is another reason forrevenge. (p38).

Political Bigotry and machinations

• Politics run the story from the beginning to the end of this story. Basil Mzamane -Rondo's father-in-law- a businessman and an M.P. and Rwafa - Rondo's father, are great political rivals that don't see eye to eye. There is always tension between thetwo. (p34)

This is the greatest reason behind the crash that kills Basil and the two children ofRondo to settle political scores. This is what he tells his son that he will thank himfor happening now and not later. (p28).

• Rwafa loves himself so much that he prepared to destroy his son in his endeavourto have an heir. (p32).

• The existence of Chimurenga and the Second street accidents are evidence Of machinations. (p34, 36, 38,39).

• Rwafa calls his enemies, looters and cattle thieves personal enemies and swears that .. no son of the Rwafa family would ever play second fiddle to anyone's lead..."(p39).

Racism/ colonial hatred

- On their way to the birthday party, the trio meets a white woman who needshelp. Ihe political youths want to descend on her because she's white. (p36).
- On the other hand, the white woman is already armed with a gun to shootthe blacks. (p36).

Again, from Mzamane's story about the white who lives in the Manhize mountains, we find out that he sends away the blacks who live there andtakes their ancestral land because they are helpless. (p38).

- Having alienated the lands from the blacks, the whites are the source of thehatred and envy that fills the Rwafa clan, and Rwafa has his eyes on the white farm in the Ruwa area. (p34).
- Consequently, his youth obey him and have an unashamed raw lust forblood. (p36).

Parental resentment /child discontentment

• Rondo has never been close to his father as his memories of his past him make him cry. (p31, 40).

At four, his father destroys his guitar, and at eight, he thrashes him without findingout what he has done. Rondo always feels more space with his father-in-law andwould choose him as his father. (p34).

• He carries many scars that thinking of his father as none other than a shadow hehas to live in becomes impossible. Rondo cannot think independently, and this reduces him to an object of laughter and ridicule among his friends. (p28).

Rwafa has no sympathy for his son as he despises him vehemently. He does notbother to answer when asked a question by his son. (p36).

• His mother describes her husband as 'one bombed-out battlefield of scars' whosedeepest scar is that he can't forgive not only his enemies but anyone. This clearly shows a rift in the family. (p30, 31).

• At the party, Rondo and Selina feel relaxed with their parents. (p39).

• Rondo could not look at his father. (p40).

Love and Friendship

- She takes her head during the mourning night and puts it on her lap. She callsher a great woman. (p29).
- Friendship is also evident between the two women, Selina and her mother-in-law (Rondo's wife and his mother). (p29,30)
- Selina, the daughter ofMzamane, stays with Rondo even though Rwafa disapproves of their marriage. He says that his son became a 'traitor' by marrying Selina, from Basil Mzamane's clan - his sworn political enemies. (p29,

30)

- However, Selina sticks with her husband, Rondo, until the end of the story. Shealso has a gun from the mother- in-law. (p41).
- He lets his head rest against her belly, his skull nudging the underside of herbreast. She makes him breakfast. She accompanies her husband to serve revenge. This is love. (P41)

- Ethnic tension / negative ethnicity

- Rwafa believes in maintaining rigid boundaries in establishing social andpolitical relations. (p34).
- In his tirade, he laments that he is hurt by the effeminate spineless sons of the family who marry into families of their enemies, poisoning the pure blood of theRwafa clan. 9p34 - 39).
- There has always been tension between Rwafa and Mzamane, a quarrel, a misunderstanding, but the episode at the party renders it dramatic. Their speeches turn sour. The two old men are crystal clearly, political nemeses. (p34).
- Rwafa cannot forgive and forget the effects of the war, once the Ndebele attacked them, and the pain of the scars remained in him more than the relief ofhealing. (p30 - 32).
- These adversaries contrast each other in character and demeanour. The formeris the villain in his very nature, and the latter is a gentleman.
- He belongs to the political elite who must fan clannism and ensure they remainat the top. (p39, 40).
- Primitive accumulation There is evident greed in the arch-nemesis, Rwafa, for hestrives to maintain the status quo by acquiring material power through underhand deals. He leaves in the morning and returns in the evenings. (p33).
- He is disappointed and bitter when Mzamane rescues the white woman fromirate Chimurenga warriors. He disappears and reappears from a bush two minutes after the white woman has driven off. (p34 - 37).
- This shows that he plans to have her lynched so he can proceed to acquire theproperty. (p36)
- Rwafa is preoccupied with the sudden beauty of the land they are drivingthrough. The land provides a breath-taking view of its immensity. (p36)
- Affluence, material power and lavish extravagance are explicit in the family asthey flock around him. He gains recognition from his generosity by squanderingthe accumulated wealth in the form of favours, money, advances. (p31, 32)
- Many use his name to get something from legal firms, financial houses, or creditstores at month-ends. (p32). Rwafa desperately needs a grandson from Rondoto whom he can leave all his cars, houses and money. (p31).

Death

- The fear of death also hangs/lingers in Selina's mind. She fears losing Rondoas well. (p30)
- Mysterious deaths rock the family, and according to Gaston, Rondo'scolleague, we know that a political hand is involved. (p33).
    - He asks Rondo, "Do you know what your father does?" (p33).
    - Selina's mother had died, and Mzamane marries again, but to the detrimentof his daughter, she alludes to the invitation to her father. (p34).
    - Assassinations could be the ex-minister's trade as he happens to control thepolitical group dubbed
    - Chimurenga, which also narrowly spares the life of Mrs
    - The old man had rambles (flashback) (p40). smoked out, flushed out, blastedout..."

CHARACTERS

Rwafa, Rondo, Selina, Mzamane, Gaston and Mrs Quayle

a. Mzamane

- Selina's father and Rondo's father-in-law. A peace- maker and crusader of tolerance. He takes a low profile,

although he has the opportunity and ability toshow off. This shows he is peaceful and humble.

- According to Rondo, nothing in his demeanour shows he is a man of opulence asa successful businessman and the M.P. of a constituency in northern Matebeleland.
- He is so liberal that even with his differences with Rwafa, he declares he is freeto think as he likes. (p38).
- His friendly and affable nature makes Rondo feel free around him. He is a helpful man as he gives a hand to the white woman whose car is stuck. (p37).
- He is tolerant, for he rescues her from being lynched by the angry youth. He tellsthem, .. Today is cancelled. Go home.. ." he tells Rondo to grow up and see people as individuals. (p37).
- Being rational makes him an embodiment of the voice of reason.

b. Rwafa

- The ostentatious antagonist, so to speak. He is the arch- nemesis of BasilMzamane and his son, Rondo. The
- villain in the story is a ruthless, intolerant influential former minister who cannotforgive anybody. (p31, 34, 35, 39, 40).
- He is contemptuous as he vilifies his son vehemently, affecting his self-esteem.(p28).
- The snobbish father is so selfish for none of the words he uses to address Rondohave any respect, and he loves himself so much (selfish) that he is prepared to destroy his son. (p32).
- He is proud, ssertive and aggressive as he talks of his prowess and declares, "Noson of the Rwafa family would ever play second fiddle to anyone's lead." (p39).Rwafa is bitter and vengeful, for his son terribly hurts him for poisoning the pure blood of the Rwafa clan. (p39).
- As they drive to Quayle's farm, Rwafa remains sullen and sucking as he can't laugh while having a robust dialogue. "He is a man who laughs little." This showsthat he is sadistic in nature. (p35).

c. Rondo

- A calm and modest son of Rwafa and husband to Selina. He is loving andcaring for loves his mother, his wife and his father-in-law. (p29 — 32).
- He is also apologetic for his father's wrongdoings which he perceives partlyresponsible. (p30).
- He is respectful as he reveres and honours his father.
- He is a gentle and friendly chap who has good relations with his colleagues atwork. Helpful for he could be called to help colleagues. (p33).

Questions for reflection on characters

1) Compare and contrast Rwafa and Mzamane as antagonistic characters in thestory, The Sins of the Fathers.
2) How does Rondos mother manage the psychological problems of both herhusband and her son at home?
3) What do you think could have happened if Rwafa had told his only son, "Youare an intelligent son".
4) Suppose Rwafa had had another son; could his attitude be different?

THE TRULY MARRIED WOMAN ABIOSEH NICAL- SIERRA LEONE

The Truly Married Woman by Abioseh Nicol- Sierra Leone Abioseh Nicol was a Sierra Leone writer, poet and diplomat with a specialty in medicine as a physician. He died in the year 1994 having made great contribution to Sierra Leone literature. He was a writer of short stories, poems, academic literature as well as music. His works include Two African Tales (his first published work) and Creative Women (hislast published work).

Points to guide interpretation of the story

1) The difference between being together and being married.

2) Some factors that hinder people from getting married.
3) What parents want for their children compared to what they want.
4) Parenting styles and conflicts that can arise from them.
5) Missionary work — Is it a good thing or a bad thing?
6) Religious hypocrisy. Why Ayo takes time to put up a show by reorganisingtheir house and even borrowing a wedding ring when the missionaries visit.
7) Ajayi's change regarding marriage.
8) How marriage changes Ayo. (What is the value ofa marriage ceremony?)

Traditional practices before marriage, negotiation, giving of gifts to the bride.

TITLE

The truly Married Woman'

What is the meaning of the title?

A woman can live for long with a man (cohabit) and never be considered married —Ayo is not married, yet she has lived with Ajayi for twelve years. There must be a marriage ceremony (Church marriage) to be genuinely married.

A truly married woman changes in behaviour. She seizes to be dutiful and demandsmore respect. Ayo refuses to prepare her husband's morning tea after she is married.

CHARACTERS

a. Ajayi

- He is a government clerk who has lived with Ayo for over twelve years.
- He meant to marry her in church, but he procrastinated until Ayo gave up onthe dream of getting appropriately married.
- He is cautious about his health and takes various precautions to ensure heremains healthy.
- He is too strict and brutal as he beats his elder son Oju too much as a father.

b. Ayo

- She is a woman in her mid-thirties who has lived with her husband Ajayi fortwelve years, yet she is not married to him.
- She is thus considered a mistress to Ajayi. She loves him and even moves inwith him against her parents' wishes. She has hope of getting married, but the husband's attack of the spending involved during marriage discouragesher.
- She is seen as a good mistress who is dutiful, loving and kind to Ajayi. Her entrepreneur skills are noted because she does little buying and selling whenshe has free time. She is seen to live an ordinary life.
- She is modernised. She attends women's meetings and also speaks to themissionaries in English.
- Ayo is seen to be calculative/ cunning, where she visits the soothsayer beforeher husband and the sister did to try and fix things.

c. Oju

He is the eldest son of Ajayi and Ayo. He is ten years old and is frequently beaten byhis father for wetting his sleeping mat. The beating does not help but instead worsens the situation.

d. Ayo's father

He is seen as a father who wanted the best for his daughter, Ayo since he hadhoped that she would marry a high school teacher.

He is authoritative as he made Ayo move everything she owned to his house oncehe learned the planned marriage. He cautiously follows the traditional marriage preparations rites to ensure that his daughter is safe in her new home.

SYNOPSIS

Abioseh Nical's story, 'The Truly Married Woman,' is a contemporary story that merges both traditional aspects of marriage and modern marriage practices. storyemphasises the importance of valid marriage as compared to cohabiting.

Through this emphasis, the writer, however, satirises marriage as it is not onlyeconomically draining but fails to provide happiness that should come with it.

In the beginning, Ajayi and Ayo live together even though Ayo had always wantedto be married properly. While Ayo tries to coarse Ajayi to marry her indeed, Ajayi is hesitant as he feels that marriage involves some wild spending and the ceremony isunnecessarily costly. This view frustrates Ayo until she admits that it would never happen; thus, she stops talking him into it.

Their time together appears relatively amicable as Ayo performs her wifely duties faithfully. They enjoy an everyday family life punctuated with minor conflicts such asthe one that arises over Ajayi's beating of their son Oju. This conflict surprises

Ajayi as Ayo rarely ever disagreed with him. At this point, Ayo's modernised trait isrevealed as she discloses that she has been attending women's meetings where they learn modern ideas of oversea doctors.

Ajayi spends his day in the office thinking about this revelation which makes himadmire Ayo the more. As the closing hours approach, Ajayi receives an unexpectedguest — missionaries from World Gospel Crusading Alliance (WGCA).

He remembers that he had contacted them with the hope of getting free bibles,religious pictures and maybe some

magazines. However, the missionaries are set on enrolling him as one of them, butthe chief clerk saves him by explaining that it was prohibited for government workers.

He invites the team with the chief to his home, where the wife reorganises the house after learning that guests are on their way. She even borrows a wedding ring from aneighbour. After the missionaries' visit, Ajayi tells Ayo that he plans to marry her.

Although she is shocked, Ayo welcomes the marriage and thus starts preparing for it. Ironically, she turns down his sexual advances that evening, arguing that it wouldbe incorrect. She moves back to her parental home, where the traditional marriage preparation practices are carried out. Soon, the church wedding ceremony takes place. Ayo chooses to dress in a grey dress instead of the traditional white one as Ayaji had wished. The grey dress is symbolic of her impurity since she is already a mother of three. She also wanted a corset to ensure she did not look too massive.After the church wedding, a European ceremony is also conducted where a weddingcake is cut.

Ajayi notices that Ayo had been transformed after the wedding. He saw her proud head for the first time, and true to his observation, the following day, Ayo does not wake up early to prepare his morning tea like she always did. The story ends with Ayo's declaration to Ajayi that she was now a genuinely married woman who needed a little more respect and thus would not arise to prepare a cup of tea for thehusband.

Plot related Questions

1) Describe early morning activities of Ajayi before he goes to work
2) Compare and contrast Ayo's behaviour before marriage and after marriage.
3) What does Ajayi's beating of Oju for wetting his sleeping mat reveals aboutAjayi?
4) What preparations does Ayo make as she waits for the guests? What doesthis reveal about her?
5) Explain Ayo)s reaction when Ajayi tells her that he plans to marry her?
6) What does Omo's reaction to Ayo's disclosure about the planned marriagereveal about her?
7) Briefly describe the traditional marriage practices that take place beforeAyo's marriage.

8) What is Ayo's old aunts' advice to the newly married?

EPISODIC ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES

Episodes

- Life before marriage — pg. 42-45
- Preparations for marriage — pg. 46-47The marriage ceremony — pg. 48
- Life after marriage — pg. 48

Several issues arise from these episodes:

Cohabiting vs marriage

Despite living together for twelve years and having three children already, Ayo andAjayi are not considered married. The writer tells us that 'Ajayi and Ayo have been together for twelve years. They are not married. Ajayi had meant to marry Ayo, but the right moment never came. (pg.42).

It is no wonder that while explaining to his friends who Ayo is, Ajayi refers to her asnot a wife but a mistress (pg. 43).

Ayo is seen to have hoped that Ajayi would indeed marry her. During their first year of marriage, she kept telling Ajayi about their friends' weddings, hoping that he would get interested and marry her. She, however, ends up frustrated when insteadof showing an interest, he criticises the friends' spending due to the considerable costofthe ceremony (pg. 43).

The priest emphasises the importance of people getting married through his sermon. The writer observes that the priest would speak out violently against unmarried couples who lived together about two or three times in a year (pg. 43). These sermons would make friends of Ajayi and Ayo look at them sympathetically,leading to Ajayi keeping off from the church for a few weeks.

Despite not being married, Ajayi and Ayo enjoy some peaceful ambience in theirmarriage. Ayo performs her wifely roles dutifully. She would wake up at five toprepare his breakfast (pg. 48).

Ajayi would wake at six-fifteen and find his cup of tea ready just as he liked it — 'weak and sugary, without milk' (pg. 42).

Ironically, after Ayo is married, things seem to change. Instead of continuing with her wifely duty or making them better, Ayo is reluctant to serve her husband as she used it. The morning after the wedding finds Ayo comfortably beside her husband when his alarm goes off. Unlike other previous mornings, there is no tea ready for Ajayi. He is initially alarmed as he thinks she is ill. Still, her shocking reply confirms her deliberately intention not to do it — "Ajayi, my husband,.. .for twelve years I have got up every morning at five to make tea for you and breakfast. Now I am a truly married woman; you must behave towards me with some respect. You are nowmy husband and not a lover. Get up and make yourself a cup of tea" (pg. 48).

This strange turn of events raises concern over whether valid marriage helpsimprove the home environment or destroys the home.

Conflict due to parenting styles

Different parents adopt different parenting styles. Some parents are very strict withtheir children to the extent that they use excessive force to ensure their children behave as they wish. A good example is Ajayi, who beats his eldest son Oju for having wet his sleeping mat (pg.43).

On her part, Ayo feels that this is not right, and in one of the rare occurrences, she disagrees with Ajayi about it. She tells him, "Ajayi, you beat Oju too much. ..he has not stopped wetting although you beat him everytime he does. Infact, he is doing itmore and more now. Perhaps if you stopped beating him, he would get better." (pg.43).

Through their disagreement, we learn of Ayo's modernised and informed traits as she discloses that she has been attending women's meetings where they are taughtmodern ideas (pg.44).

QUESTIONS

l. What is the importance of tile traditional marriage preparation practices that recarried out before Ayo's marriage?

2. The institution of marriage should be treated with respect as it is of great value.Show how Ayo fails to do so after she is truly married.

3. Marriage is satirised in the story The Truly Married Woman„ Support this assertion.

TALKING MONEY STANLEY GAZEMBA – KENYA

About the author:

Stanley Gazemba was born in 1974 in Vihiga, Kenya. Stanley Gazemba haspublished three novels: The Stone Hills of

Maragoli (Kwani?, winner of the 2003 Jomo Kenyatta Prize for fiction, published in the U.S. as Forbidden Fruit), Khama (DigitalBackBooks), and Callused Hands (Nsemia). He has also published eight children's books, of which A Scare in the Village (Oxford Univ. Press) won the 2015 Jomo Kenyatta Prize for children's fiction.Gazemba's fiction has appeared in 'A' is for Ancestors, a collection of short stories from the Caine Prize (Jacana); Africa39: New Writing From Africa South of the Sahara (Bloomsbury); Ihe Literary Review (Fairleigh Dickinson Univ.); Man of the House and Other New Short Stories from Kenya (CCC Press); Crossing Borders online magazine; among other publications.

As a journalist, Gazemba has written for The New York Times, The East African, Msanii magazine, Sunday Nation, and Saturday Nation. Gazemba was the International Fellow at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference in 2007. Gazemba livesin Nairobi, where he is the editor of Ketebul Music.

Episodes

1. Mukidanyi dismisses his elder brothers. (p49 - 50).

A colli rchensive and dctailcd uidc to a silent son and other stories

2. The arrival of Galo and his lawyer for negotiation. (p50 52).

3. The disturbing night of evil spirits. (p53 56).

SYNOPSIS

Talking money is a story about Mukidanyi, a furious young man and a cattle traderwho ignores his elder brothers' warning against selling his land. The story is set inthe vast rural expanse of Kakamega, Kenya. Mukidanyi's brothers Ngoseywe and These traits are one of the triggers that make Ajayi marry Ayo after realising thatshe is a woman to be proud of.

We also see some conflict over what parents want for their children in relation towhat the children want for themselves. Ayo's living with Ajayi had not been accepted by her parents — 'When she firstcame to him-against her parents' wishes..' (pg. 43).

The writer further tells us what Ayo's father had hoped that she would marry a high school teacher. However, Ayo fell in love with Ajayi, a government clerk, and movedin with him (pg. 43).

Hypocrisy

There is a lot of pretence among people in society to portray a particular image. Ajayi wrote to World Gospel Crusading Alliance, pretending to be interested in some information from them after a friend gave him a magazine that contained aninvitation to join the missionary Alliance. However, his true intention was not to work with them, but he hoped to get free items such as bibles and large religious pictures that he would sell, give away, or use as wall pictures (pg.44).

The depth of his hypocrisy is seen when he appears relieved that the chief clerk saved him from a life as a missionary when he told the visitors that the governmentprohibited his workers from working as missionaries. So appreciative is Ajayi of the chief clerk that he presents a carefully wrapped bottle of beer to the chief clerk as apresent for having saved him (pg.45).

He hypocritically extends an invitation of the missionaries to his home. He lies to them that the roads are not suitable to prevent them from using a taxi. He intendsto give time to his wife to reorganise their home into an appropriate environment tohost the missionaries. Ayo also portrays high levels of hypocrisy. She changes the appearance of their home when she receives a message from Ajayi that he will be bringing white men to their home in half an hour. Ayo took down the calendars with pictures of lightly clothed women and replaced them withfamily photographs. She also replaced the magazines with religious books and hid the wine glasses under the sofa. In efforts to portray an actual

spiritual image, she goes ahead to borrow a wedding ring from her neighbour before putting on her Sunday dress (pg. 45).

The missionaries are impressed by the show that she put up. The writer uses this actto symbolise Ayo's hypocrisy even in her marriage. Ayo has been pretending to be adutiful wife for the twelve years before her marriage as she shows her true colours after the wedding. She refuses to prepare morning tea and breakfast for Ajayi (pg 48).

Her hypocrisy is further seen when she turns down Ajayi's advances on the eveninghe disclosed to her that he intended to marry her. She shyly says 'No' (pg. 45) and pushes him away, asking him to wait until after marriage. She argues that it would not be correct. This is ironic since the two have lived together for twelve years, andtheir intimacy has borne three children.

Agoya give up on him and leave. Obsessed with money in his mind, he refuses toheed his wife's counsel and instead flogs her.

When his clients arrive, he receives them warmly, showing them the fertile land andoffers to help where necessary. They then negotiate without a tussle, for they accept his first offer without haggling. He takes the huge amount of money without counting it and signs the papers with his thumbprint, for he had played truant andnaughty when his father, Kizungu, tried to take him to school.

Enthusiastic and excited about the money, he cannot sleep until he is attacked byvoices at night, which his wife tells him are evil spirits. He almost runs mad as his wife laughs at him. Overwhelmed by nervousness and fear of the demons, he returns all the money to the Galos and flees back to his house.

Questions for reflection on 'Title' of the story and themes.

1. How relevant is the title of the story, Talking moneym
2. Why do you think the money given to Mukidanyi "talks' only at night while in hiscustody?
3. Do you think the Galos are responsible for the talking ofthe money?
4. Explore and discuss the existence of the following themes in Talking Money.
    - **a)** Ethnocentric beliefs in spirits.
    - **b)** Primitive superstition on sources of wealth.
    - **c)** Obsession with money and the power of guilt.
    - **d)** Importance of consultation on family property.

THEMATIC CONCERNS

Ethnocentric beliefs in spirits.

The concept of social superstition rooted in people's culture is linked with belief in good and bad luck as a context-derived concept affects the people of that culture invarious aspects.

Although the concept of superstition is common, many of its features and aspectsare still unclear. Some questions about these beliefs remain baffling and unanswered. Engulfed with immense doubt, Mukidanyi decides to obey his wife's words and beliefs about the Galos. (p50).

• At night, the hour of witches, viganda haunt Mukidanyi. He hears voices speaking,and he believes they are not dreaming voices. (p54).

• Then his wife Ronika scoldingly tells him those are certainly viganda spirits speaking. (p54).

Ronika takes advantage of her husband's extreme fear and makes more fun of him. She reassures him that the Galos' money is speaking in the briefcase under the bed. (p54).

• Confident and sure that he is terrified, she shouts and scoffs at him to take the money out. "Go with your devil money this very minute and find somewhere else tokeep it but not in this house, you hear?" (p55).

Obsession with money and the power of guilt

- The tough speaking and abusive man is now humbled and reduced to a whispering weakling.
- Definitely, the warnings are ricochetting in his mind because of his guilt and failure to consult before beginning the process of selling his land.
- Scared by the unseen demons, Mukidanyi flees back to the Galos, returning all the money. (p55, 56).
- He changes his mind. He is only left with his wife to trust, and his house is the only refuge at this 'hour of witches'.

CHARACTERS

1. Using evidence from the text, describe the character traits of the followingcharacters.

a) Mukidanyi

b) Ronika

c) Ngoseywe

d) Galo

Style and Language use

1. How is sarcasm employed in Stanley Gazemba's Talking Money?
2. Examine the use of dialogue and native dialect in Talking Money.

GHOSTS CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE - NIGERIA

About the Author- Chimamanda Adichie.
Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi is an established Nigerian writer. She has written several novels, short stories and nonfictional works. Her major works include PurpleHibiscus, Americanah, The Thing Around Your Neck and Half of a Yellow Sun among others. Her story'Ghost' was published in The Thing Around Your Neck a collection of her short stories that was published in 2009.

Points to guide interpretation

- Suffering of retirees as they follow up on their pension.
- Corruption in government institutions.
- The University.
- How people deal with ghosts of the past to survive at present.
- War and its effects.
- Counterfeit, drugs and their effects.

Title 'Ghosts'

The topic is metaphorically used to represent several things: The terrible memories that most people are living with or haunted by. Most people have memories of horrible previous experiences that disturb them. For instance, Ikenna struggles withthe loss of his family and his failure to succeed in the Biafran Civil War. Prof James struggles with the loss of his daughter, the destruction of property, the loss of theUniversity's glory, and the loss of his wife.

Some people were thought dead but turned up alive such as Ikenna. The truly deadbut whose spirits visit their loved ones — Ebere -they offer consolation to the bereaved.

CHARACTERS

a. Pro James Nwoye

He is a seventy-one-year-old retired professor of Mathematics.

He is the protagonist in the story, and the story is told through his voice. He is thenarrator of the story.

He escaped Nsukka when the civil war broke in 1967 and fled to America.

He loses his daughter Zik in the war but gets another daughter (Nkiru) while still inAmerica when he was a lecturer at Berkeley.

He is currently following up on his pension, which is not forthcoming due to thecorruption in the University.

He is constantly visited by the ghost of his late wife and has not disclosed this to hisdaughter Nkiru.

b. Ikenna Okoro

He is a man who was thought to have died in the 1967 Biafran war. During his university lecturing days in the sociology department, he was a renowned activist.

He escaped the Biafran civil war on a Red Cross plane and went to Sweden, wherehe has lived since 1967.

He lost all his family in the war and never remarried. He returns to Nsukka years later to see how things are.

c. Vincent

He is the former driver of Prof James.

He served Prof. James in the eighties when he was the faculty dean.

He is now retired and is following up on his pension, just like Prof and otherretirees.

He currently works as a cobbler near the university hostels. Although he is youngerthan Prof (In his late sixties), he looks much older.

He is seen as a concerned and caring person who always minded about the welfareof Prof.James' daughter.

d. Ebere

She is the dead wife of Prof. James Nwoye, who appears to him as a ghost. During her time, she portrays some generosity as she would give her daughters old clothesto Vincent for his children. (Satire - giving old clothes)

She has been a caring wife who encouraged James to care for his lovely skin.Her death is said to have been caused

by counterfeit drugs.

SYNOPSIS

Like the title suggests, Chimamanda's story "Ghost" mainly dwells on how peopleface and deal with past ghosts, thus informing their present and future. ProfessorJames Nwoye currently lives in a corrupt part of Nigeria where the medical fieldprovides people with counterfeit drugs.

When the story opens, the seventy-one-year-old Professor of mathematics iswalking the grounds of the University Bursary, where he is following up on hispension, which he does not get.

The many other retirees that he meets are equally frustrated.

They associate the failure to get their retirement benefits to the corruption of theeducation minister or the University's vice- chancellor.

Prof James chats for a while with his former driver Vincent who is to survive the harsh times serving as a cobbler around the university hostel. Vincent inquires about Nkiru (Prof. James' daughter who lives in America), and James informs him that she is well. The suffering of the people is highlighted in their appearance andhunger. One of the men gathered under a tree requests Prof to buy them bananas as hunger was killing them. Even as he buys them bananas, Prof ironically observesthat what they needed was some moisturiser to soften their skin. After leaving the group, Prof. James meets with Ikenna Okoro; a man thought to be long dead. rlhe encounter shocked Prof as he believed that Ikenna, a former colleague and a renowned activist, had died in the Biafran civil war on July 6 1967. When he initially saw him, he thought of throwing sand at him, which was what people do to ghosts. However, his education and the fact that he was walking on concrete grounds prevent him from doing it. The encounter between the two drives Prof down memory lane. He remembers their days at the University where Ikena rebelled when asked to put on ties.

He further remembers how Ikenna acted as an activist fighting for non-academic staff to have better conditions. a flashback, Prof recalls their evacuation from Nsukka on July 6, 1967, when the civil war began. On that day, Ikenna, who stubbornly insisted on going back to the University to get his manuscript, was saidto have died.

Ikenna discloses that he escaped Biafra that day on a Red Cross plane that took himto Sweden. He painfully explains that he saw no need to return after the war since all his family was killed when Orlu was bombed.

On his part, Prof James went to America with his wife Ebere but came back in 1970 when the civil war ended. However, they were devastated to find everything in theirhome destroyed, and their piano was missing. They thus returned to America and only returned to Nsukka in 1976. When Ikenna inquires about their daughter Zik, Prof painfully answers in Igbo that the war took her. He, however, tells him that theygot another daughter after the war—the two talk about life during and after the war, with each mentioning their worst moments.

Ikenna asks Prof James about his wife Ebere, and James replies that she died three years ago. He tells him that she visits him. Ikenna appears surprised at the disclosure, so James corrects himself and says that Ebere visited America quite often since their daughter works there as a doctor. Knowing that Ikenna is educatedjust like him, James knows that Ikenna does not believe in ghosts. He, too, never believed in them until his wife visited him three weeks after the burial.

The two talk about the situation ever since the war ended and how things have significantly changed. They point out at the rot in the University — where instead ofteaching, people are playing politics and instead of reading and working hard; students are buying grades either with money or their bodies.

The corruption in the university offices does not escape them. James reports howone Josephat Udeana, a vice chancellor for six years, ran the University like his father's chicken coop leading to the disappearance of money and favouritism inpromoting workers. James notes that the current vice-chancellor is not any different, thus why he is yet to get his retirement benefits.

He further explains how people are bribing to have their years before retirementadded since nobody wants to retire. Ikenna raises the sensitive topic about fake drugs. It triggers painful memories in James since his wife Ebere is thought to havedied because of counterfeit drugs. James dismissively says that counterfeit drugs are horrible in efforts to avoid this topic.

He parts ways with Ikenna after telling him how he has been 'resting' ever since heretired. He extends an invitation to Ikenna to join him in his home, but Ikenna turnsit down.

Once in his home, Prof. James turns on the TV and remembers how a man accused ofimporting fake drugs had justified this act through a TV interview on NTA. The man had explained that his drugs do not kill people but only fail to cure their illness.He wonders why news about Ikenna being alive never came up, yet there were various other stories of the 'living ghosts'- people thought to be dead but turned up alive. The tale ends with Prof. James in his study hoping that his daughter Nkiru will call to tell him about their grandson, and if she does not, he will go to bed and await the visit of Ebere.

EPISODIC ANALYSIS OF ISSUES

Episodes

- Prof James Nwoye's visit to the University Bursary -pg. 57-59
- Encounter with Ikenna Okoro- pg. 59-65
- Talk about the civil war on July 6 1967- pg. 60
- Talk about fake drugs -pg. 65
- Prof James back home-pg 66-67

Various issues arise from these episodes:

The retirees suffer frustration due to being denied their retirement benefits. Whenthe story opens, Prof James is at the University Bursary to ask about his pension, which he has been following up for some time.-"l was there to ask about my pension, yet again." (pg.57) He is, however, frustrated when the clerk tells him the money has not yet come.

Prof is not alone. Several other retirees are clustered under the flame tree, filled with similar frustration. Out of frustration, they curse the vice-chancellor who is saidto have stolen the money meant for their pension: "His Children will not have children He will die of diarrhoea." (pg.58).

We also see that these people suffer from poverty. The encounter between Prof andhis former driver, Vincent, points to the poor living condition of the people. Vincent has been forced to work as a cobbler to earn a living. He complains about the failure of the students in the hostels to pay him on time for mending their shoes (pg.58).

The description of Vincent's current physical appearance also shows that he has lived through tough times. Although he was younger than Prof, he looked older withonly a little hair left pg 58.

The plea of one of the men to Prof to buy them bananas shows the suffering thatthe people have gone through. The man tells Prof, "Hunger is killing us" (pg.58).

These people cannot afford decent meals for themselves. Ironically, Prof observesthat they need more moisturiser since their faces and arms look like ash (pg. 58).

The civil war also causes the suffering of many. Many people suffer trauma (ghostsof the past) due to the war. Prof James lost his daughter Zik to the war (pg. 61).

The people's suffering is further captured when Prof James wonders why he had notheard about Ikenna not having died. He notes that people evaded the topic of war and memories of what they had gone through during the war. "But we hardly talkedabout the war When we did, it was with an implacable vagueness, as if what mattered were not that we had crouched in muddy bunkers during air raids after which we buried corpses with bits of pink on their charred skin, not that we had eaten cassava peels and watched our children's bellies swell from malnutrition, butwe had survived" pg. 66

Corruption

The explanation why Prof James and other retirees have not received their pensionis due to corruption. Ihe men clustered under the flame tree say, "The Education Minister has stolen the pension money... it was the vice-chancellor who had deposited the money in high interest personal accounts." (pg.58).

In the University, corruption is further seen where James tells Ikenna about JosephatUdeana, the great dancer, who, once chosen as vice-chancellor, perpetuated corruption at the University's high office. "Josephat was vice chancellor for six years and ran this University like his father's chicken Money disappeared, and then we would see new cars coop stamped with the names of foreign foundations that did not exist." (pg.64)

He also dictated who would be promoted and who would not. The situation did notchange after Josephat left since even the current vice-chancellor is also said to follow the corrupt route faithfully.

corruption is also reported in the Personnel Services Department, where lecturers who do not want to retire bribe, someone, to have some years added to them (pg.64).

Further, corruption is seen among university students. Prof tells Ikenna that insteadof reading and working hard to earn fair grades, the university students have bought grades with money or their bodies (pg. 64).

War and its effects

The Biafran Civil war that the story highly relies on has significant negativeimplications on the people:

Loss of loved ones

Pro James Nwoye lost his daughter Zik to the war (pg. 61). Ikenna lost the whole of his family to the war, thus the reason he has lived in Sweden ever since. He tells Prof, "My whole family was in Orlu when they bombed it. Nobody left, so there wasno reason for me to come back." (pg. 61)

A great genius - Chris Okigbo, also died in the war Nsukka lost a great mind - a starwhose poetry moved everybody. His prowess is compared to that of a colossus; thus, a significant loss for the people page 62.

• Displacement of people and separation of loved ones When the civil war started on July 6, 1967, the people had to evacuate Nsukka in a hurry Prof James and his wifeEbere moved to America while Ikenna moved to Sweden using Red Cross planes (pg. 61).

Prof James and his daughter live separately due to the war. His American born daughter Nkiru is a doctor in America while James lives in Nsukka. He feels that the war has denied him an opportunity to teach his grandson the Igbo language and theculture (pg. 67).

Destruction/Loss of property

After the civil war ended in 1970, Prof James and Ebere returned to Nsukka from America. They were, however, disappointed to find some of their properties having been destroyed and others missing. "Our books were in a charred pile in the frontgarden. the lumps of calcified faeces in the bathtub were strewn with pages of my mathematical annals, used as toilet paper, crusted smears blurring the formulas I had studied and taught Our piano -

Ebere's piano was gone. our photographs were ripped, their frames broken." (pg. 61)

On their way home that day, Prof James and Ebere saw a landscape of ruins, blown-out roofs and houses riddled with holes, injuries, and physical pain (pg. 62).

The day Prof James and Ebere drove back to Nsukka, Biafran soldiers stopped themand shoved a wounded soldier into their car, and his blood dripped onto the backseat of their vehicle (pg. 62).

Counterfeit/fake drugs

fie selling of expired medicine is the current plague in the country Ikenna tellsJames that he has been reading about fake drugs in the papers (pg. 65).

The effect of fake drugs has been felt by James, whose wife Ebere's death is linked to the counterfeit drug deal. Prof James thinks that Ikenna must have heard of 'How Ebere had lain in the hospital getting weaker and weaker, how her doctor had been puzzled that she was not recovering after her medication how none of us knew untilit was too late that the drugs were useless' (pg. 65).

In addition, Prof James bitterly remembers how he had watched some broadcast of an interview on NTA. Through the interview, a man accused of importing fake drugs
- typhoid fever drugs, had defended himself by claiming that his drugs do not killpeople but only fail to cure illness (pg. 66).

Dealing with past ghosts

Prof James is presented as an individual struggling with ghosts from his past. The illusion of his wife's return like a ghost is one of the mechanisms he adopts to deal with his terrible past. It is an attempt to deal with the absence of Ebere and the devastating effects of war. The freshness of the memories of war is brought out through the many flashbacks used by the writer. One of the flashbacks captures the day the civil war arose (pg. 60). Another shows the return to Prof and Ebere to Nsukka in 1970 (pg. 61-62). By remembering these events, Prof James shows that the memories of the war are still deeply etched in his thoughts.

Essay Questions

1) Society today is filled with many evils that cause suffering to others. Supportthis from Chimamanda Adichie's 'Ghost'
2) War has devastating effects and thus should be avoided at all cost Usingillustrations from 'Ghosts' by Chimamanda Adichie
3) Many individuals struggle with ghosts from their past Show how true thisassertion is based on 'Ghosts' by Chimamanda Adichie.

Questions on styles

1. How effectively has the writer used flashbacks in the story 'Ghosts,

2. The dialogue between Prof James and Ikenna carries the critical messages in thestory. Is it true?

The higher learning education sector is satirised in the story. Show how this isachieved.

GOD SEES THE TRUTH, BUT WAITS LEO TOLSTOY RUSSIA

About the author:

Leo Tolstoy was born in 1928 in Tula Province, Russian. A master of realistic fictionand one of the world's greatest novelists, Tolstoy is best known for his finest novels: and Peace (1865 69) and Anna Karenina (1875 - 77). His shorter works include Ellie Death of Ivan Ilyich, The Living Corpse and The Kingdom of God is within You, in his last three decades, Tolstoy worked as a moral and religious teacher, an embodiment of nature and pure vitality. Though dead now, his soul livesas a living symbol of the search for life's meaning.

Episodes / sub-episodes

1) Aksionov's excursion for a Trade Fair at Nizhny. (p68 - 69).
2) Aksionov's arrest and 26-year imprisonment. (p69 71).
3) The coincidental encounter with the real killer. (p71 - 72).
4) Makar's confession. (p73 74).

SYNOPSIS

God Sees the Truth but Waits is a parabolic story about Ivan Dmitritch Aksionov, ameek young merchant with two shops in Vladimir, Russia.

Ivan bids his family and sets out on a Trade Fair in Nizhny despite his wife's premonition through a dream. Midway through the journey, he meets another merchant, and they put up at the same inn for the night. A rogue thug kills the merchant at night and flees, leaving his blood-stained knife in Aksionov's bag. Aksionov is arrested on suspicion and is sent to 'Siberia' for twenty-six years. Onenquiry about his character, Vladimir people say that Ivan is now good after hestopped drinking.

However, even his wife now doubts him! Coincidentally, the rogue murderer, MakarSemyonich, is brought to prison for a minor offence, and Aksionov is severely disturbed by his presence that he feels like killing himself.

Makar commits another offence in prison, and Aksionov finds him, but the man begs him to keep quiet and not betray him, or he will kill him. Aksionov tells him hehad killed him long ago, and he will do as God shall direct.

When the Governor implores Aksionov to tell him the truth about the prison offence, for he trusts only him, Aksionov refuses and tells him he can do what he likes with him as he is in his hands. At night the killer, Makar, confesses and begs Aksionov to forgive him.

As Makar sobs, Aksionov weeps, for he has no desire to leave the prison. When theorder for his release comes, Aksionov is already dead.

Title of the story

a) How relevant is the title of the story, God Sees the Truth, but Waits?
b) Why do you think Aksionov refuses to tell the truth about the prison incident?
c) Do you think the Governor is to blame for Aksionov's prolonged imprisonment?Explain.
d) What is the impact of Ivan Aksionov's faith in God on his life?
e) Why is Ivan reticent to go back home?
f) Explore and analyze the existence of the following themes in God Sees theTruth, but Waits.
    i. Mistaken identity.
    ii. Crime and Confession
    iii. Wrongful conviction and imprisonment.
    iv. The concept and context of truth.
    v. Justice delayed is justice denied.
    vi. Betrayal and Tolerance

vii. Coincidence

THEMATIC CONCERNS

Wrongful conviction and imprisonment.

The values of honesty, truth and justice are tested through this story.

• Aksionov comes out to question the essence of these values if he suffers in the prison caves of Siberia under wrongful conviction and subsequent incarceration fortwenty-sixyears. (p71).

• Mistaken identity runs through this story. Ivan Dmitritch is arrested for spending a night with an acquaintance a fellow merchant at the inn who leaves before dawn.

• This is because the merchant is killed during the night by a thug who hides the knife in Ivan's bags. This is what makes the police officer arrest him on suspicion.(p69, 70).

• At the story's beginning, Aksionov is characterized by dynamic character and setting. He is lost in liquor but later starts a business and owns two shops. (p68).

• He leaves and loses his home, family and his freedom. This story sends the message that none of these things matters in the long run.The concept and context of truth.

Aksionov learns the hard way that when the chips are down, nothing remainsexcept God at his side, who knows the truth. (p73).

• Truth depends on context. It is true that the bloody knife is found in his bags andthat he had slept close to a fellow merchant, but then it is not true that he kills him.(p69).

• By the end of the story, Aksionov has an opportunity to be free and return home,but he no longer desires to leave the prison but only hopes for his last hour to come. Ivan is a man who seems to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. He is unlucky, mentally strong, and religious. He is unfortunate because he is sentencedto prison for 26 years for a murder that he did not commit.

He is also mentally strong because he can endure many tragic events, such aslosing his home and business.

Faith and devotion

Finally, he displays a strong religious devotion by growing closer to God duringdifficult times.

• However, at the story's end, he only seems to care about his faith and being close to God.

• Ivan relies on God as he is the only constant in his life. At the end of the story, hehas no desire to return home. His only wish is to be with God.

At the story's beginning, Ivan and his wife don't have the best relationship as heleaves for Nizhny Fair even after his wife asks him to stay. Later, she doubts his innocence after he is convicted of murder.

• Faith keeps Ivan going after losing everything, being charged with murder and sent to prison in Siberia. He could have completely given up, but he instead leanson his faith in God.

CHARACTERS

l. Describe the character traits of the following characters.

a) Aksionov

b) Makar

c) The Governor

2. Focusing on their prominent character traits, compare and contrast theprotagonist, Ivan Aksionov, and the Makar.

3. Citing evidence from the text, describe the character traits of the followingcharacters.

The Governor

a) Aksionov's wife

Style and Language use

1. How is symbolism employed in Leo Tolstoy's God Sees the Truth, but Waits?

2. Examine the use of irony and paradox God Sees the Truth, but Waits.

3. What does Siberia represent in this story?

Essay question

1. The average human attribute is evile Discuss this assertion using illustrations fromLeo Tolstoy's God Sees the Truth, but Waits, (20 marks),

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH RERN'Y NGAMIJE RWANDA AND NAMIBIA

About the Author Rem'y Ngarnije.

Reni'y Ngamije is a writer and a photographer who is of Namibian origin but was born in Rwanda. He founded an organization that supports literary works and is also a chief editor of the first Namibian literary magazine- 'Doek'. His story Neighbourhood Watch' is a contemporary story that was recently published in theJohannesburg Review of Books. Streetlife — Crime and violence in the streets

The secret struggles/sufferingHarsh living conditions.

Inequalities / Class difference —

The rich vs poor

Desperation — suffered by those living in the streets.

Waste disposal — what is the ideal way to dispose of waste?

TITLE

'The Neighbourhood watch'

The title is a phrase used to refer to an organised group that engages in crime and vandalism prevention in a particular neighbourhood. While deviating from the idealimage of a neighbourhood watch that aims at reducing crime, Rem'y Ngamije ironically creates a haphazard group of five homeless people who scavenge and roam around different neighbourhoods/suburbs in Windhoek. The crew engages in minor criminal activities instead of working to curb crime in the neighbourhoods.

CHARACTERS

Elias

He is the oldest member of the Neighbourhood watch group and thus their leader.He mainly helps get food for the

group by working with Lazarus and Omagana.

Elias has had a tough past as he experienced the South African insurgency; thus isstrong and had suffered some loneliness in his first years in the streets.

Memories of the war still haunt him, as often in his slumber.

a. Lazarus

He is Elias's Lieutenant.

He is the eyes of the group and the source of protection, as his presence in any fightis believed to change the bookies' odds drastically.

He is an ex-convict though he does not like disclosing this information.

b. Omagano

She is the only female member of the group.

She works as a member of the food crew (Elias, Lazarus, omagana) that goes outlooking for food for the group.

c. Silas

He is a member of the group who likes risks.He steals from people.

Although Elias constantly warns him, he does not stop the stealing habit.

d. Martin

He is the newest and youngest member of the group.

He mainly works with Silas to look for essentials such as discarded blankets,mattresses, useable shoes, broken crates, trolleys and toothpaste tubes.

He faithfully follows Silas around, trying to learn a few tricks from him.

e. Old Mrs Bezuidenhout

She is an old generous and kind lady who lives in the wealthy neighbourhood ofEros.

She is considered as one of the pillars of the Neighbourhood Watch as she gives different gifts such as canned food, old clothes or blankets, old books and rosariesthat they use to pray at night.

SYNOPSIS

Set in the suburbs of Windhoek, Namibia, 'The Neighbourhood Watch' is a modern story of a street group made up of Elias Lazarus, Silas, Omagano and Martin. Thestory explores the daily life of this group, their struggles, crimes and desperation tosurvive in the harsh conditions that street life presents.

The story opens in the morning, where Elias wakes up the family members to prepare for the day's activity. The harsh living conditions in the streets are evident from the lack of breakfast and the single can of water that the group shares to cleantheir faces. Their "home" - below the bridge- which the author sarcastically calls precious real estate is their territory that is marked and safely guarded.

The group sets out early to the CBD, where the food crew (Elias, Lazarus and Omagano) go looking for food while the valuable crew (Silas and Martin) look for other essentials. They reunite later, and the food crew produces half a loaf of brownbread, some salt mashed potatoes, soft grapes and some water which the group shares for lunch. The valuable crew has brought a stack of newspapers, plastic piping and two battered, floppy poor boy caps, which Elias and Lazarus pick.

Elias orders the group to rest as they would be heading to Auasblick that night. Ausiblick is one of the nice suburbs as the bins there provide some bounty harvest as the people there still know how to throw things away. This is unlike Olympia andSuiderhof, which are already crowded.

The writer compares these neighbourhoods to old neighbourhoods that the crew used to scavenge. Through a flashback, the past life ofElias and Lazarus is brought out. In their earlier days, the two were not choosy on areas to frequent. They visitedthe poor neighbourhoods such as Katutura, Hakahana, Goreangab, Wanaheda andOkuryangava on Tuesdays and Fridays. While scavenging these neighbourhoods, the two found a baby, thus deciding to prepare a timetable and stop going to poor people's places.

Another flashback takes us to the way the crew used to visit Khomasdal on Wednesdays. On one Friday's visit to Khomasdal, Amos, a former crew memberwith Elias and Lazarus, gets killed. He fails to control his tongue and guts after getting drunk thus is stubbed by someone he insults.

Elias and Lazarus escape the scene of death just like everybody else for fear of being questioned and harassed by police. However, they are caught and are badlybeaten and injured before they are set free. They thus decide never to return to Khomasdal.

The crew spends their Friday and Saturday at the Headquarters. They consider it safe since those are the days that police patrols drive around looking for mischief. Silas, however, chooses to roam around, thus leaving the other four crew memberstalking about people who idle around waiting to get some specific jobs that are rarely forthcoming. Martin talks of the hope of getting a job for these people in the future. This raises the debate that leads to the crew's slogan that there is only todayand that every day is today.

Sunday is the best day for the crew since they visit the affluent suburbs such as Avis,Klein, Windhoek and Eros. These suburbs are associated with the rich and are close to the crew's home — Headquarters. One of the good things about Eros is the generous old Mrs Bezuidenhout who waits for the crew and gives them gifts such ascanned food, books and old clothes.

The story comes to an end with the crew worried of the day that Mrs Bezuidenhout will no longer be around to give those gifts, yet they will still want to take and havesomething to help them survive the harsh street life.

EPISODIC ANALYSIS OF ISSUES

Episodes

1. At the headquarters- pg 75-78
2. The past; poor suburbs -pg 78-80
3. Death of Amos-pg. 80-81
4. The wealthy suburbs —pg. 82-83

Various issues arise from these episodes:

Street life And Its Challenges

Living in the streets is shown to have several challenges:

Crime and violence

The neighbourhood watch must safely hide their valuable items at the headquartersto prevent theft. hidden stash is considered safe since they are a feared group — they have a fierce reputation (pg. 76).

Lazarus is considered the Lieutenant of the group and one of its pillars due to his violence (pg. 83) shows that life in the streets involves some violent acts. Violence isseen to be a necessary survival skill in the street.

The death of Amos after knife stabs also shows the level of violence faced in the streets 'The knife flashed quickly In, out, in, out and then slashed across.....Amos fell.' (pg. 80-81).

Silas, one of the crew members, engages in some crime. He is said to have had a habit of discovering things that have had previous owners. 'Silas steals' (pg. 77). Ifhe gets caught while stealing, he might be beaten or arrested.

Secret struggles

The Neighbourhood Watch has to struggle to ensure that the valuables are safelyhidden to prevent theft. After splashing water on their faces, the empty can is stashed away with other valuables in a hook under the concrete abutment of the bridge (pg. 75-76).

They also have to protect their territory — The bridge underside precious real estate. To achieve this, the abbreviations NW are sprayed onto the bridge's columnswhich communicate that it is marked territory (pg. 76).

The group must struggle to camouflage and appear like any ordinary person while roaming the streets to evade police. They have to look presentable, thus why Omagano struggles to straighten her kinky hair using her fingers. They also have to wear their best clothes. One of their greatest challenges is how to disguise their foulsmell. The writer notes, "But smelling bad is something they try to avoid as much as possible since a smelly man is despised everywhere." (Pg. 76).

Struggle to get food

The crew relies on waste food and leftovers to survive. It is said that 'Elias knows most city hotel's kitchen staff who leave the group some decaying produce or someleftovers when they feel kind from the previous night' (pg 76).

The struggle to get food forces them to use dubious means such as having Omagano satisfy the sexual needs of guards who deny them access to bins thatmight contain high yields (pg. 77).

The lunch that the group shares show that getting enough food for a meal is a real struggle for them 'The food crew shares the lunch: Half a loaf of brown bread, somesalty mashed potatoes, soft grapes and some water' (pg.78).

The group heavily relies on Mrs Bezuidenhout's generosity as she gives them canned food such as beans and peas, fruits and other valuable items (pg. 83).

Struggle with poor health conditions

Elias has a racking cough that worsens each day. It is so severe that, 'Sometimes there is blood in the gunk from his chest, but he waves everyone's concerns away'(pg. 76).

Inequalities/Class Difference

By splitting the city of Windhoek geographically into different neighbourhoods, Ngamije is able to use place as a marker of inequalities and class differences thatexist among the people.

The content of rubbish bins in the different neighbourhoods shows the differencesbetween the rich and the poor. The first suburb to be visited by the crew is Auasblick. It is described as a nice place since the people there still know how to throw away things The Neighbourhood Watch is assured Of scoring good thingssuch as 'broken toasters, blenders, kettles water bottles, Teflon pots or pans scrubbed raw screen television cardboard boxes, and maybe some food' (pg.78) This shows that the people who live here are well up and live comfortable lives.

The suburbs of the poor such as Katutura, Hakahana, Goreangab, Wanaheda andOkuryangava, are also described.

Using the flashback of the crew's Tuesday and 'Thursday visits to these poor suburbs, Ngaminje brings out the living conditions of the poor based on the contentof their bins. One day, Elias and Lazarus found a baby wrapped in some newspapers thrown into a big bin. Ihis encounter made them smart and move awayfrom poor people. They decided that on Tuesday and Thursday nights, they would stop going to poor people's places because poor people had nothing left to throw away but themselves (pg. 80)

Khomasdal is closely related to the poor people's suburbs. It is, however, a drinkingden. The neighbourhood watch never enters Khomasdal since it is crowded with other starving, roving cliques (pg. 80). It is also in the same neighbourhood where Amos was killed.

These lowly suburbs are contrasted to the suburbs ofthe wealthy such as Avis, Klein,Windhoek and Eros. Avis has complex apartments that bring a fresh crop of bins to the interlocked pavements. lhough made up of rich people,

Klein Windhoek portrays some meanness as they only put up their bins at the crackof dawn to dissuade the dustbin divers from perambulating through their streets (pg. 83). Eros is the best suburb for The Neighbourhood Watch due to the presence of Mrs Bezuidenhout, who waits for the crew and gives them some gifts. This showsthe wealthy nature of the old lady, the people living in this neighbourhood, and MrsBezuidenhout's generosity.

Desperation

Life in the streets is filled with moments of desperation. When Elias and Lazarus met, they would desperately flick through every bin they could find in every suburb they could reach. As the writer tells us, they had no room to be choosy as the writertells us, 'They were indiscriminate and desperate and always hungry.' (pg.78)

Elias shares these experiences with the other crew members and tells them, "When we started when you have to we weren't picky. We had to survive survive, you don't get to choose what you have to do." (pg.79).

We further see that the crew's desperation to get food and survive makes them useany possible means. Omagano is a precious survival tool for the group in such desperate times. This especially happens where the bins in some areas are fenced off and guarded by guards who threaten to beat the crew if they trespass. The guards have to be bribed to let the crew scavenge in these bins. When the crew hasmoney, Elias pays the guards.

However, when the crew has no money and needs to get food, Omagano is their only way out. She goes behind a dumpster with a guard and does what needs to bedone (pg. 77).

Waste disposal

Ngamije shows the actual situation around waste disposal in many urban neighbourhoods. The Neighbourhood Watch crew solely depends on the disposed waste for their survival. By describing the kind of waste found in different neighbourhoods, the writer communicates the need to ensure that waste is appropriately disposed off. The crew's appreciation of high-end suburbs such as Eros, Windhoek, and Eros emphasises the need to recycle and separate different waste products. These suburbs have people who recycle. Different bins containingdifferent wastes are also seen- 'The paper cardboard, plastic bottles, tins, cans and aluminum foil are sorted in separate plastic bags. Some people even wash the trashbefore they throw it away. Everything else that is of no use goes in the big green bins' (pg. 82).

This serves as an advantage to the crew as it saves time and prevents disappointment. The writer subtly advocates for waste separation and recycling toensure proper waste management. Other lowly suburbs such as Katutura, Hakakana, Goreangab, Wanaheda and Okuryangava display poor waste disposal where all sorts of waste are put in the same bin. The writer communicates the inappropriateness of this waste disposal approach through the grave voice adoptedby Elias as he shares their past experiences with the crew.

"Usually in a bin you have to be ready to find shit Old food, used condoms, womenthings with blood on them, broken things." (pg.79)

This waste disposal method is not just disgusting, but it makes proper waste management difficult and ultimately impossible. Similar waste disposal methods are seen in Ausblick, where everything — including electronic gadgets such as broken toasters, blenders and kettles- is disposed of together with water bottles,cardboard boxes, and even food wastes.

Questions

1. Proper waste disposal makes it easy for waste to be appropriately managed. Using illustrations from Rem'y Ngamije's "The Neighbourhood Watch" show howthis message is communicated.

Street life is not for the faint-hearted Show the truthfulness of this statementbased on the story "The Neighbourhoodd Watch." In every society, some inequalities exist that affect people's way of life. Usingillustrations from Rem'y Ngamije's "The Neighbourhood Watch" support this assertion.

DECEMBER FILEMON LIYAMBO - NAMIBIA

About the author:

Filemon Liyambo is a Namibian writer and former newspaper columnist for the Namibian Sun Newspaper. He has also contributed social commentary articles for the New Era Newspaper. A qualified geologist, he is now an educator. His work wasincluded in Erotic Africa, an anthology of short stories published by Brittle Paper in December 2018. He is currently working on a novel.

Episodes / sub-episodes

1. September's arrival from the U.K. (p84 — 86).
2. December's psychiatric condition. (p86 - 88).
3. Ezekiel Shikongo's dreams and taboos. (p85 - 90).

SYNOPSIS

December is a story about a girl named December, unconventionally, by her father,Silas Shikongo. The story is set in a town in Namibia.

December has a younger brother named September. According to their grandfather, Ezekiel, there are traces of idiotism in September, his grandson, for hetakes after his youngest brother, Josef.

December nurses September when he is young, but there is a mishap in which she injures the boy accidentally with hoe, and the boy bleeds. Flhe old man then forbidsher to eat chicken, saying that is how things are. September suspects that his grandfather is hiding something because he cannot explain the reason clearly.
However, the two siblings are academic geniuses.

Suddenly, just before joining a Teachers Training College, December develops a psychiatric condition and her grandfather, Ezekiel, insists that she is bewitched andthere are dark forces behind it. He takes her to the hospital and dumps her there.

September, who now studies in the U.K., visits his sister at the hospital, but the nurse intercepts him for being late. However, Tshuuveni, a supervisor, and a familiarface appears and begins talking with him. This light chat makes the nurse calm, and the guards are sent away to allow him some time. The nurse softens when shelearns that September is December's brother who studies abroad.

September finds his sister in a horrible condition, but they have a warm moment,and he hands her the gifts: a jersey, a pen and a book full of puzzles, a t-shirt, and yummy chips from KFC.

Meanwhile, Tatekulu, their grandfather Ezekiel, has dreamed of a pond where leopards drink and Josef is seated on the edge, eating. A search party is sent, andJosef is found at the exact place in Ezekiel's dream.

The next day, September buries his grandfather, with his secret, next to his father inthe village graveyard.

Questions for reflection on 'Title' of the story and themes

1) How relevant is the title of the story, December?
2) Does the Naming convention of Silas Shikongo affect his children?
3) Why do you think Ezekiel refuses to tell why he forbids his granddaughter toeat chicken?
4) Do you think Josef gets lost? Explain.
5) What does the Union jack symbolize in the story, December?

6) Explore and analyze the following themes in December.
   i. Mental illness and child neglect
   ii. Superstitious beliefs and taboos
   iii. Healthy living, eating
   iv. Hope/optimism

Thematic concerns

Consequences of superstition on mental illness

- December, the story's title, is also the central character's name. The name isgiven to her by her father against his own father's wishes, who calls it idiotism. Conventional or not, this naming creates confusion and distortion of facts simultaneously. (p85- 86).
- The story itself is mixed with a patched-up plot which renders the storyline unclear. The plot is not linear. Like in most Namibian, there was indifference towards those who didn't reside there. Sticking out was a serious crime: (p84 - 90).
- When Ezekiel Shikongo faces death and illness, anxiety, fear, and despair creep in, engendering adherence to delusions that have no logical or scientific explanation and lead to superstitious behaviours caused by a falsenotion of the causes. (p84 - 90).

It is rooted in human ignorance and significantly affects people's culture andhealth, prevents them from beginning restoration, and harms individuals and society. The mundane illogical beliefs derived from ignorance cannot beproven objectively and scientifically. Ezekiel forbids December to eat chicken due to the mishap. (p85 89).

- The extended family of Ezekiel grapples with hereditary ill patients (Josef andDecember), and the old man blames their mental illness on superstitious thoughts such as "evil eye" or "dark forces."
- This pandemonium is created by Silas, December's father, to show hisdivergent opinion and disbelief in his father's taboos. (p85).
- Their disagreement, therefore, gets complicated when December is born inSeptember and September in July. Then when September returns from abroad, his grandfather dies in October. (p86).
- Ezekiel refers to the naming as 'idiotism', and indeed his younger brother Josef exhibits traces of the problem when he starts to lose track of time inhis teens; days of the week are a blur to him. The fact that September is absent-minded at times complicates the matter more. (p84 - 86).
- Ezekiel's superstitious belief could be premised on an archaic generationaland cultural illusion that other forces cause problems. (p86).
- Josef eventually loses himself. He is lost for a month. In his dreams, Ezekiel tells where exactly to find him but does not say what he is eating until he exits the life stage. Ezekiel's death signifies the end of the old traditions andthe beginning of civilization. (p89).
- When September breaks the news to his grandfather that he will study abroad two and a half years earlier, Ezekiel is happy. September had cried."My sister..." (p88).
- The old man reassured him. "I will take care of her." "She's been at thehospital for six months. (p88).
- Superstition makes him believe that mental illness is caused by other forcesnot normal or conventional in nature. He takes her to a traditional healer, and she comes back looking skeletal as if the healer had tried starving outthe voices in her head. (p88).
- Ezekiel represents intensely superstitious African people who turn to indigenous treatments such as charms and witchdoctors to treat theirillnesses. Modern technologies have not been able to reduce their superstitious tendencies. (p88)
- "There is no brother listed in her file," the nurse said. "Only a grandfather."This is child neglect. (p88).
- Superstitious thinking becomes harmful when it enters the health domain, affects people's well-being, and

becomes part of the family's health beliefs.The values that society believes affect the quality of life and treatment choiceduring illness. Ezekiel's beliefs affect all family members. (p84 - 90).

Hope/optimism

Their life of hope begins when September arrives at the hospital from the U.K. December, who is at the hospital probably being discharged to start her life free ofher grandfather's superstitious interference. (p87).

Remember when September comes from Europe, he brings December a T-shirt withan imprint of the Union Jack, representing modernity or a form of enlightenment.
But still, this is confusion on ideologies: between

colonialism and civilization.

- The T-shirt is precisely the same as the one December had ripped up all those years before to stem September's bleeding. This implies that her ordinary life isrestored by her brother's hope and concern for her well-being. (p89).

- The two reminisce their puberty days when September got himself a puppy namedKali to keep off boys who pursued December when she was younger. Tshuuveni enquires whether September is bringing home an oshitenya from overseas, but he says he still hasn't found the right girl. (p87).

Professional medical practice should be relied on to guarantee the quality of life,control and treatment of diseases, and complications is not a secret to anyone.

The medical fraternity should fight these superstitious thoughts to lower their adverse consequences. will bring hope. Hope is also symbolized when it rains afterEzekiel Shikongo's burial. Then Josef is also found. (p89, 90).

CHARACTERS

1. Citing evidence from the text, describe the character traitsof the following characters.

a) December

b) September

c) Ezekiel Shikongo

d) Silas Shikongo

Style and Language use

1. What does the coming of September from Europe and the dying of Ezekiel inOctober symbolize?
2. How is sarcasm employed in Filemon Liyambo's December?
3. Examine the use of irony and paradox December.

Boyi

Gloria Mwaninga- Kenya

Gloria Mwaninga is a fictional writer from Kenya. Her story

'Boyi' captures the occurrences of the 2005 land war in Mt. Elgon.

points to guide interpretation

a) Land war and its effects:
b) Demand for land protection fee
c) Recruitment of young men into the militia
d) Murder/ killing of people- consider how the militia kills
e) people while the government forces the killing of militia members.
f) People are forced to flee their homes/ Displacement of people
g) Betrayal
h) The pain and suffering that the people face due to war and the rise of themilitia.
i) TraditionsTitle

The title of the story- 'Boyi' is borrowed from the main character's name, who is the brother to the narrator. Boyi is recruited into a militia group and ends up dead whenthe Armed Forces troops come to flash out members of the militia.

CHARACTERS

a. Boyi

He is the brother of the narrator- A fifteen-year-old boy recruited into a militia groupwhen his parents are unable to pay the land protection fee and the betray fee thatthe leader of the militia demands.

He grows and rises in rank to become the right-hand man of Matwa Kei, the militia'sleader.

He is presented as a jovial, sociable, and outgoing person who always engaged ingames and played tricks with his sister.

He is reportedly killed by Armed Forces troops sent by the government to flash outthe militia to end the war.

b. The Narrator

Boyi's sister, through whom the story is told, is keen and observant as she can notethe things that happen in her family and even outside the family and report them inthe story. She had a close relationship with Boyi thus is greatly affected by his recruitment to the militia and devastated once she learns of his death.

She senses Boyi's death when the huge Nandi flame tree at the front of their housefalls.

a. Baba

He is the father to Boyi and the narrator. He aided the government representative, who gave land to strangers by giving him a panga and makonge ropes, thus beingconsidered a traitor by the militia.

He hands over his fifteen-year-old son- Boyi, to the militia group leader when he isunable to raise the 40,000 fees demanded from him.

b. Mama

she is the mother to Boyi and the narrator, and the wife to Baba. She is deeplyaffected when Boni is handed over to the militia by Baba.

she remains hopeful that Boyi will escape the militia and come back home.

c. Matwa Kei

He is the leader of the militia group. He is presented as a ruthless, vengeful and brutal person who demands that Baba should pay 10,000 land protection tax and30,000 betrayal tax failure to which the militia would show Baba smoke withoutfire.

d. Chesober

He is Baba's friend who taught at Chepkurkur Primary School.

He delivers news that the militia had a long list of people who had aided thegovernment exercise to divide the people's land to strangers.

e. Chesaina

He is an old friend of Baba who works as a watchman in a grain depot, far away inChwele market. He brings news to Baba,s family that Boyi was now a marked mansince he was Matwa Kei's, right-hand man.

f. Simoni

He delivers a copy of the Nation newspaper, which contains news about Boyi'sdeath.

SYNOPSIS

Gloria Mwaninga's story, 'Boyi', is a contemporary story about forming a militia group to revolt against land allocation to strangers. The story heavily alludes to theMt. Elgon land war in Kenya that began in 2005. The Sabaot Land Defence Force militia group was formed to protect the land of the Sabaots from being invaded by strangers. Still, the militia ended up causing harm and suffering to its people. real
group was led by Wycliffe Matakwei hence the name of the militia leader in thestory- Matwa Kei.

Told in the first-person narration voice, the story 'Boyi' opens with the narrator remembering how their Baba pushed Boyi to the Matwa Kei when the militia leadercame to demand 40,000 land protection tax and betrayal tax which he could not raise.

Matwa Kei is the leader of a militia group formed to protect the people's land whenthe government decides to divide the peoples' land and give some of it to strangers. Baba, the writer's father, is considered a traitor by the militia since he lends the government's surveyor apanga and makonge ropes.

News breaks out that the militia has begun attacking government representatives. The narrator's family lives in fear of this attack to the extent that they block the sitting-room door with sacks of maise and beans. The narrator and Boyi laugh aboutit as they feel that the militia would not harm them. However, the narrator recalls how the militia came to their home and demanded money. Baba offers to give themeverything he owns; his savings, a hunting gun, Sony transistor radio and even promises to sell his bull to save his family. However, the militia group declines, forcing Baba to hand over his son, Boyi, to the militia.

After Boyi is taken away, Mama starts behaving like a mad person. She, however, lives in the hope that Boyi would return by escaping from the militia. The narratorrecalls how at first, neighbours would visit them often to console them, but later they stopped coming.

Later, Saulo visits the family to inform them the government had launched "Operation okoa Maisha" and had dispatched a troop of two hundred armed forcesmen to flash out the militia. next day, Baba and his cousin Kimutai dig a shallow grave at the back of the house to burry a banana stem wrapped in a green cotton sheet believing that his son is dead. Mama refuses to participate in escorting Boyi'sspirit away.

Seasons passed as the brutality of the militia rose. They would cut up people and throw the bloodied bodies in the rivers, pit latrines, and public wells. They would forcibly recruit boys as young as ten years and even started taking girls to go andcook for them. Cases of rape also increased. As a result, people lived in fear makingmany of them run away to Bungoma and Uganda.

After the army troops arrive, Chesaina, an old friend of delivers news that Boyi hadbecome a marked man since he was Matwa Kei's, right-hand man. news further devastates Mama and the narrator, who spends the night in Boyi's bed.

The following day, Simon visits the narrator's house. He delivers the Nation Newspaper, which bore the news "Ragtag militia leader killed by the Army forces" Itnow dawns on the narrator that her brother is no more.

She rushes to the parents' bedroom and hands over the newspaper to Baba to read.Upon reading the news, Baba crumples to the floor while Mama's laughter is heard piercing the morning dawn. Surprisingly, even after Simoni's description of how Boyi was thrown out of an aircraft by Sah-gent, Mama does not weep but speaks Boyi's name softly as she sits on his bed while Boyi's sister lets tear roll down her face. As the story ends, the narrator explains how she sensed Boyi's death when theNandi flame tree at the front of their house fell.

Styles and Plot related questions

1. How has the narrator used flashbacks in the story?
2. Briefly describe Mama's behaviour after:

a) Boyi is handed over to Matwa Kei

b) Baba and his cousin Kimutai dig a grave to bury a banana stem

c) Chesaina's news that Boyi was a marked man

d) News about Boyi's death.

3. What is the implication of the dream used in the story?
4. The narrator gives a detailed description of what happens when the long rainsfall (pg 94). Explain how symbolic the description is.
5. Explain the use of irony in the story.

EPISODIC ANALYSIS OF ISSUES Episodes

l. The demand of the Militia- pg 91-92ll. Life after Boyi left- pg 92 93

Ill. Operation Okoa Maisha pg 93-96

IV. Boyi's death pg 96- 97Thematic Concerns

Traditions

Belief in Djinnis- The community in the story believes in the presence of powerfulevil spirits known as Djinni. This is seen when Mama talks to the visitors who frequent their home once Boyi is taken away. She tells them, 'How Boyi saved her marriage by confirming that Djinnis did not tie up her womb.' Pg 93.

The people also practice the ritual of burying a banana stem to send death away where a person disappears and their bodies are not found. The narrator reports how Baba and his cousin Kimutai dug a shallow grave and buried a banana stemwrapped in a green cotton sheet. The father muttered, "Death, take this body. .. Take it, and do not bother

my home with your visits again." Pg. 93 This ritual is performed after Saulo's story that the government has launched Operation OkoaMaisha, where armed Forces troops are sent to flush out militia members. It showsthe fear of the people that the operation will lead to more deaths.

The people are also seen to hold on to some superstitions. The falling of the huge Nandi flame signifies something significant was bound to happen. The narrator seesthis as a bad omen while the mother thinks it means the end of evils for her family 'I knew it was a bad omen even though Mama came out of her room jubilantly declared that the evil which was to come to our house had been struck down and swallowed by the Nandi flame, pg 96.

Land War And Its Effect

The story is rooted in a revolt resulting from the government dividing land and giving it to strangers. Ihe revolt leads to forming a militia group to counter-attackthe governments' decision and fight those who collaborate with the government.

The militia has various effects:

They demanded the land protection tax. They had chopped off the heads of thefamilies if one did not give them money (pg.92).

The recruitment of young men to the militia. Boyi is recruited by force to the militiabecause Baba has given him out since he cannot afford to pay the money demanded: "Hold on to the boy until I find you forty thousand land protection tax, and then I will have him back" (pg. 91).

So many other young men had been recruited into the militia. Mama says, "Had hisears not caught stones of neighbour's son recruited by the militia?" (pg.92). The militia goes from house to house, forcefully recruiting boys as young as ten yearspage 95.

People living in fear- The villages of Kopsiro, Savomet, Chepkyuk all live in fear ..athick yellow fog of fear over them." (pg. 95)

People fail to work

Farmers did not clear their shambas for the second planting of the maize crop because the militia stole young crops from the fields and goats from their pens (pg.95).

The narrator's friend, Chemutai, said that the narrator's breast grew too fast because she had spent too much time outside instead of working chap chap
like a normal musaa tree girl (pg.95)

Murder/brutal killings

The militia cut up people and threw their bloodied bodies in rivers, pits, latrines,and public wells (pg. 92). The people say that they even cut off their necks.

The narrator overhears Baba being told that those recruited have to go back homeand kill a close relative so that their hearts are strong to kill others (pg. 95) Boyi is killed for being part of the militia (pg. 96-97).

Displacement of people from their land and homes

"People flee from their homes since there is a mass exodus to Bungoma andUganda' page 95

Lack of schooling

The narrator says nobody went to school anymore because of the war. She spendsher days under the Nandi flame tree with half-closed eyes (pg. 95)

Suffering

The writer points out clearly how society goes through suffering as a result of thewar:

Mama experiences emotional suffering when Baba gives out Boyi to the militia tobe recruited since the family could not afford the forty thousand land protectionfee. The writer says that madness had entered

Mama's eyes the day baba pushed Boyi to Mativa Kei. She tore off her kitenge and started shouting at Baba, telling him that he was sick in the head if he thought Boyi would return (pg. 91).

Mama did not eat her food and starved in the days that followed, muttering toherself. Her ugali would remain untouched until a gusty brown film formed. Thenarrator had to throw it away to the chicken coop. She also continued engagingherself in monologues (pg. 94).

The narrator also experiences pain and suffering. She felt queasy once Baba informed them that the militia would have killed them for not giving out the forty thousand land protection tax. The narrator felt as if someone had pulled her insidesout through her nostrils.' (pg. 92).

When they were informed of Boyi's death, she cried bitterly. She let the tears rolldown her face and soak her blue silk blouse and purple boob top (pg. 97)

Baba suffers when forced to hand over his son Boyi to the militia. He experiences agony when Mama questions him since he knew very well if he didn't, he risked hisfamily being killed by the militia. 'He sat there and held his rage firmly with his hands. He pulled his lips to a narrow thread like a line drawn on his dark face by a ruler.' (pg. 92)

When they are informed that Boyi is a marked man, Baba goes through some emotional torture. For the first time, the narrator saw her father crying "That day Isaw Baba's tears..." (pg. 96)

The community undergoes suffering because of the war as some of the people arebrutally murdered the militia cut the people and threw their bloodied bodies in rivers, pit latrines and public wells' (pg. 96).

Some of the militia are said to kill close relatives so that their hearts are strong tokill others. The militia forgets its initial objective of protecting the land. Instead, "Now they even cut off our necks" (pg. 95)

The militia also rapes their blood relatives who give birth to babies (pg.95)

Betrayal

The writer points out how some people betray others in society. Baba betrays hiscommunity by assisting the government representative with a panga and makongeropes when the government divides the people's land and gives it to some strangers (pg. 92).

The militia betrays the community it was meant to fight for by meting out evil on thepeople whose land they are fighting. The narrator overhears their neighbour Korostelling her father

"They forgot that they were to protect our land from being given to those lazystrangers. Now they even cut off our necks" (pg. 95)

The government betrays its people by dividing their land and giving it to strangersleading to the formation of the militia.

Questions

1. War leads to suffering. Using illustrations from the story show the validity of thisstatement.
2. How effectively is Imagery used in the story?
3. Describe the role of Baba inthe Story;

CHEQUE MATE KEVIN BALDEOSINGH - TRINIDAD

About the author:

Kevin Baldeosingh was born in1963 in the Caribbean Island of Trinidad. He is a newspaper columnist, author, and Humanist involved in many controversial socialissues. He has worked with the Trinidad Express, Newsday and the Trinidad Guardian. He worked for 25 years in the field of journalism.

Episodes /sub-episodes

1. At the bank, with the teller.
2. Back to her apartment.
3. At the company office, with Randall.

SYNOPSIS

Cheque Mate is a story about Sukiya (Ms Chansing), a poor damsel from Penal, the Caribbean island of Trinidad, and her boss, Randall A Credo, of the Amerindian tribe. She is on the platinum credit cards queue and intends to deposit thirty milliondollars (five million U.S. dollars), but there is a mistake that throws her into panic and dilemma.

Sukiya is an executive corporate secretary recently promoted, and her salary raisedtenfold. Fifty thousand dollars go into her savings account each month-end, but themoney does not show her actual income. She avoids the bank manager, for she hasaccumulated more and more, and her deposits are pretty frequent and high. Mr Randall makes these five million cheque payments for fear of cleaning by offshore accounts hacker's syndicate. The teller advises her to open a U.S. savings account and return the following day.

As she drives her posh car back to her apartment, she is Obsessed with the five million dollars but pleased and relieved that she has successfully handled an awkward situation. She has to check her private records before seeing her boss,Randall. She weighs all possibilities of legal investigations, discovery and embarrassment but finally convinces and assures herself there is no cause for worry. She romanticizes what she could do with such vast sums of money, especially her residential abode.

Randall has her as a corporate secretary who draws up contracts, studies conveyances and writes legal opinions. However, her critical role, for which she ishandsomely paid, is to create loopholes in such documents, including the sale of the methanol company to the Chinese government. Randall is also a major campaign contributor. Thriving in such an environment, the poor girl suddenly turned prosperous, is delighted that she has accumulated a lot.

After confirming that the sums and dates on the cheques are correct, she goes to see Randall for an explanation. Then the truth about the trick unfolds: the money is a fee for keeping her mouth shut on the Chinese methanol deal which Sukiya undervalues the shares by 50 percent. At a time when technology can be used to conceal fraudulent secrets in cryptographical codes, it now dawns on Randall that itcan also be used to reveal them. It is a fraud Sukiya has to deal with herself or together with her cheque mate, Randall, thanks to her cyberspace technology skills.

Title of the story

1. How relevant is the title of the story, Cheque Mate
2. Who are the cheque mates in the story?
3. Why are cheques preferred as their payment modes?
4. How do the cheque mates exploit contracts' complexity and detailed nature tocommit fraud?
5. Explore and analyze the existence of the following themes:

a. Corruption / Fraud/ bribery
b. Deceit and Betrayal
c. Loyalty chequesThematic

Concerns Corruption / Fraud/ bribery

The banks and government will surely unravel and nab the cartel's underhand dealsin cryptocurrency camouflaged in the cheque deposits and contracts. (p108).

The first eyebrows are raised when the bank teller repeats the question, "Ms Chansing,? Do you want the 'thirty million dollars' deposited in your savings accountor would you prefer to open a U.S. dollar account?" (p98).

The official deductible salary standard for top executives does not show in heractual income through platinum credit cards.

Sukiya has accumulated over ten thousand dollars, an amount she deposits five times every month. (p99). She avoids encounters with bank managers for a bank manager might wonder how a fifty-thousand-a-month salary becomes seven milliondollars in savings within six years. He would know enough to make some educated guesses. (p99).

The bank teller reminds Ms Chansing that the cheque is for five million dollars, U.S.equivalent to 30,242,000 Trinidad and Tobago dollars. (p99).

She is responsible for moving vast sums through various channels when the oil and gas boom starts and money flows into the company. Sukiya will need to provide thesource of funds, of course. (p101).

Randall had watched too many movies where unrealistically cunning criminalscleaned out businessmen's offshore accounts by hacking into them. (p100).

Ironically, when Sukiya, a lawyer, is hired as a corporate secretary to detect andclose financial loopholes in documents, she gets paid the largest cheques for creating such loopholes. (p103).

The five million cheques she gets she assumes is her fee for having drawn up for thesale of the methanol plant by Randall. It could be a surprise bonus. But now, according to Randall, it is her fee for keeping her mouth shut during that deal. (p101 — 107).

Then the truth about the trick unfolds: the money is a fee for keeping her mouth shuton the Chinese methanol deal which Sukiya undervalues the shares by 50 percent. (p107, 109).

• It is a deal that the Chinese considered protocol even with the bribe. (p103).

• It is clear that the frauds committed, both inadvertent and deliberate, are rewarding, but eventually, the perpetrators will have to pay dearly.

She is almost at the point of betraying herself, insinuating in her mind her readinessto offer herself unto Randall, for he is a man. Sukiya wants every advantage if the meeting turns into a negotiation. (p105).

Deceit and betrayal

Eventually, Ms comes to terms with the reality that all this time she has worked for the company under Mr Randall A Credo was a disguised syndicate for which she willface the force of the law.

When investigations are done, she will have to defend herself as to how she has accumulated all this wealth over a very short period since she started working as a poor young girl from Penal. Now she swims in opulence, affluence and prosperously apparently does not need money as millions of dollars accumulate ina desk drawer. (p104-105).

When she examines the cheques, the sums and dates are all right, signed byRandall and countersigned by herself. (p105).

She could put various clauses into contracts to achieve certain ends or prevent theother party from attaining certain ends. (p106).

However, she has been duped and used as a conduit for Randall's fraudulent deals.Ihrough the valuation report, Sukiya signs the document without reading it properly or because Randall tells her to do so. Further, Randall himself forges his signatureusing Sukiya's pen. This form of deceit and betrayal sharply undercuts her. (p107 -- 108).

Margaret, Randall's executive assistant, is paid more than most managers in the company's subsidiaries. She knows more about Randall's dealings than anyone elsein the company, including Sukiya. (p106).

Loyalty cheques

It seems everything throughout the story is conducted in terms of cheques. Asked about the cheques' amounts, the figure runs automatically through her head. (p101).

Sukiya has to fly from Trinidad to Grand Cayman to deposit cheques to her accountevery two months. (p 104). She keeps both her Us and T. T. cheques in the same drawer, which is how the mix-up occurs. (p105).

CHARACTERS

Citing evidence from the text, describe the character traits of the followingcharacters.

a) Sukiya
b) Randall

STYLE AND LANGUAGE USE

l. How is sarcasm employed in Cheque Mate?

2. How symbolic is the title, and how does the duo execute their corrupt syndicate?

3. How is dialogue used to achieve revelation of the rotten ills of the cheque mates?

4. Why should corruption be made unattractive to perpetrators?

Sample answered essay QuestionsQuestion 1:

Ninema is an admirable character. Support this from Vrenika Pather's 'Ninema'20marks.

Ninema is an outstanding character who is liked by many of the people she associates with. We see many good traits that she portrays in the story "Ninema".

To start with, Ninema is presented as a principled person. She does not let the behaviours and traits of others change what she believes in. Her business manner isunique only to her, and she does not change it to fit or be like others. Although she was one of the traders, something about her was different.

She ran her business with an iron fist which made some people like her while othersdisliked her, -Tie people's reactions do not affect her as she remains herself. 'The ladies in the stalls admire _her mainly because they had gotten compromised at work and home.

In addition, Ninema is admirable since she is organised. She plans her work earlyenough, making it easy to run her business.

She wakes up early in the morning to reap the herbs that she takes to the market forthe day. She organises her herbs in an appetising way, which draws many customers to here She does not chat with other ladies aimlessly, which would wasteher time. She plans to ensure the stall is organised before she takes her breakfast.
Once her stall is ready and only when ready, she takes sips ofthe tea she had brought. Her meals are packed early in the morning, which points to this organisedpersonality. She packs tea and some sandwiches that she takes for lunch.

Nlnemaås also admirable since she is skilful wise, She handles different customersmasterfully, thus making her earn their loyalty. She can handle Mr Chinran, infatuated with her, by treating him with respect and appreciation instead of encouraging his infatuation. She also handles Mrs Singh firmly but respectively, thus winning her even though Mrs Singh is difficult and troublesome. Ninema's ability to entice a new customer by offering an extra bunch of mint for free shows that she is skilful in business, thus making her admirable as a trader.

Lastly, Ninema is seen to be courageous, making her admirable. When a man sexually harasses her, she does not let him go scot- free. She follows the man who pinches her erect nipple and hits him with the only weapon at hand — her Chumpal,which makes the man too astounded to react. The other women hawker jeer and cheer as Ninema repeatedly hits the man. She even gives him extra hits on behalf of all the women, thus depicting her as the fighter of her rights and those for others.
By following the man and hitting him with her sandal, Ninema shows her courage.

From the story, Ninema is genuinely seen to be admirable due to her courageous,skilful, organised and moral nature.

Question 2

When one is given power, he/she should use it onlyforgood but more often than not people use it for wrongpurposes. Support this statement basing yourargument from Naguib Mahfouz's 'A Man of Awesome Power'

Many people who are in powerful positions or who have been gifted with some sortof power tend to abuse it. Instead of utilizing it for improvement of the society at large, they use it for their own selfish interests or to punish those that have wronged them. same scenario is seen in 'A Man of Awesome Power through a number ofillustrations.

We see Tayyib al- Mahdi utilizing the power given to him for revenge. This is not a good a way of power utilization as it causes harm to others. Tayyib realizes that he has power to order things to be and he sets out to utilize the power to change' hiscountry. However, the first episode where he utilizes this power shows that he is utilizing it to hit back at a person who offends him. The driver of the taxi that he hails suffers his wrath for refusing to stop. When Tayyib is on his way to the heart ofthe town, he hails a taxi but the driver simply waves a hand at him in haughty refuses. Tayyib's irritation makes him stare at the rear wheels of the taxi and the two explode suddenly.

He ignores the voice that reminds him that he should only use his power for good and lets his anger control him. This act of revenge was deliberate since as Tayyib bypasses the driver he feels that he has taught the man a lesson. By utilizing his power to hit back at the taxi driver, Tayyib shows that people with power use it forwrong purposes.

We further see wrong utilization of power where Tayyib causes the man in the bus to suffer stomach pains. Although the man had physically attacked a woman, causing him to suffer stomach cramps not justified. Tayyib encounters a confrontation between the man and a woman in a public bus and the man ends upslapping the woman. Just like the

incident with the taxi driver, Tayyib lets his angercontrol him where he focused it on the man's stomach and immediately the mansuffers severe cramps that cause him to moan and scream in pain. The pain is so intense that an ambulance had to be called to fetch him•

Allowing his anger to control him and causing pain to the man who had slapped a woman is a vengeful act which is wrong thus showing how people with power use itfor wrong purposes.

Beside, Tayyib uses the power bestowed on him to interfere with the radio presentation by causing the presenter to start sneezing. While seated in the café, hehears a radio announcer expounding on the developments that were to be expected in the future. Tayyib feels that the announcer should report on what has been achieved yet instead of giving false hopes to the people. Tayyib thus decidesto cause some sneezing to attack the announcer since it was the only way to stop him.

Soon after, the announcer develops massive sneezes that prevent him from carrying on with the presentation. Tayyib feels happy and victorious after the unexpected conclusion of the announcement. Although his desire is to purify the broadcasting sector, the approach of causing massive sneezing to the presenter isharmful and thus wrong.

Lastly, Tayyib is seen to use the power given to him to satisfy his sexual passion anddesires. Tayyib utilizes the power to make a woman that he is attracted to notice him. While he is seated at the tea garden planning how to effectively use his power,Tayyib notices a beautiful woman approaching the entrance of the garden. The woman does not notice him at first and Tayyib thinks of how through his powers he can cause her to be head -over-heels with him. He then sends her a hidden messageand she responds to him. He sees nothing wrong with satisfying his desires as a way of repairing himself. He closes his note book and they surrender to fate, This is an immoral act since Tayyib is married to Haniya whom he had remained faithful to throughout their marriage.

People gifted with power should strive to use it only for good purposes and not tocause pain and suffering to others or for immoral deeds like Tayyib did.

Question 3

Some cultural practices do not add value hence should be done away with.Show the truthfulness of this assertion basing on Eric Ng'maryo's 'Ivory Bangles'. (20 marks)

Culture keeps people together and governs their way of life thus is important. However, there are some traditions that are of no benefit and in some cases suchtraditions cause harm to people who continue to embrace them as is the case in Ivory Bangles]

For this reason, such traditions should be discarded. Polygamy is one such cultural practice that has continued to be embraced yet it has no value. We realize that the community in the story holds in high esteem this practice. As such, a man who doesnot ascribe to it is seen to be a topic of discussion:

This comes out clear where the old man who is a respected Chief's councillor is talked about because he had only one wife. According to the story, it was unheard-of for someone as powerful as the old man- a small chief, to have only one wife,

However, this value is seen to have no value since the old man is happy in his marriage and he really loves his wife to the extent that he gifted her twenty-fourivory bangle Besides, the riddle used by old man when responding to the Chief'sdemand that he marries another wife shows that polygamy causes harm. The riddle's interpretation A wife, a co-wife, witchcraft and death points to the harmfuleffects of the practice. As such, polygamy should be abolished as it causes harm and adds no value. Another cultural value that has no value is believe in the seer and the act of seeking his guidance. The old man goes to seek the advice of the seer after noticing some blood specks in the liveat he goat that he slaughtered, He does this since his people, believed in him as their tribal seer and their priest. We also see how valued he is when the old man'swife dismisses his demands. The old man harshly rebukes her telling her

that the seer is the mouthpiece of their departed fathers, we however {see that this belief does not add value since some of the advices given are bound to cause harm. The advice given to the old man by the seer supports this as the seer tells him 'That thepebbles demand that he beats his wife and send her back to her father's home.

According to the seer, the pebbles are jealous of a happy wife- a woman unmolested by her husband. This shows that this believe in the seer is of no benefitbut rather causes harm.

The superstitious belief that having blood specks in a goat's liver is a sign of something bad about to happen does not add any value, Tris is not based on any proven basis but is just a traditional belief. The old man goes to consult the seer since he had noted some blood specks in the liver of the goat he had slaughtered.The belief is so strong that the man does not agree with the wife's dismissal of the seer's demands. According to the wife, the seer was hitting back at her for turningdown his marriage proposal. This argument that had been used previously does notappear believable at this time as the old man reminds the wife that the seer did notput blood specks on the goat's liver.

Wife battering is another cultural practice that the people hold in esteem yet it causes more Karm than good. When the old man consults the Seer about the bloodspecks in the liver of the goat he had slaughtered, 'the seer's pebble disclose that awife was going to die since the spirits were jealous of a happy wife, a woman unmolested by her husband until old age. This (Shows the value attached to wife molestation. To avert the death, the old man is asked to give his wife the 'ritual beating before sending her back to her parent's home. Although the old man offersto give a number of goats to avert the catastrophes, the pebbles keep demandingfor the ritual beating forcing the old man and the wife to come up with a plan of tricking the pebbles. The harmful effect of the ritual beating is seen through Leveri, the wife to the old man's son. The wife remembers how her daughter-in-law had been beaten to a fingernail's distance to her grave by the son. This shows that the ritual beating can almost cause death hence the reason it should be discarded.

Although culture is a glue that holds people together, some of the outdatedpractices should be gotten rid of as the cause more harm than good.

Question 4

War causes a lot of harm and thus should be avoided at any cost. Validate thisstatement basing your illustrations from Chimamanda Adichie's 'Ghosts' (20 Marks)

Whenever parties engage in some form of fighting, there are grave implications that follow as is seen in Ghosts' where the civil war that happened in July 6, 1967 cause suffering and pain to the people.

To start with, war is seen to cause displacement of several people. Many people are forced to run away from their country and their homes when the civil war broke.

Prof. James and Ikenna's meeting takes James down the memory lane where he recounts how they were forced to evacuate Nsukka in a hurry in July 6, 1967 when the war began. Through their conversation, we learn that Ikenna has lived in Sweden ever since the war began and has only come back to Nsukka recently. Hediscloses that he was flown out on Red Cross planes just like many other children had been airlifted to Gabon. Prof. James did not escape the displacement since heand his wife, Ebere had to move to America when the war broke out. Many peopleare seen to have been forced to leave their motherland as a result of the civil war.

secondly, we see that war leads to loss of lives. Several people had their lives cutshort due to the civil war that broke out. The return of Ikenna comes as a surprise toProf, James since Ikenna was thought to have died in the war. It is no wonder that Prof initially thought of throwing a handful of sand at him just like his people did to ensure that it was not a ghost. Actual loss of life is seen through Ikenna's family.

While explaining to prof the reason why he never returned to Nsukka after the war, Ikenna tells him that his whole family was killed when Orlu was bombed during the war thus he had nobody to come back to. It is not just Ikenna who

lost loved onesbut Prof too. His first daughter Zik died in the war. He tells Ikenna that the war took Zik. It is no wonder they named their second daughter Nkiruka which means: what isahead is better.

Thirdly, war is seen to cause massive destruction and loss of properties. When Prof James and his wife first returned to Nsukka when the war ended in 1970, they noticemajor destructions that had occurred. Prof recounts how they found their house anditems destroyed. His books were lying in front of the gate, his Mathematical Annals torn and used as tissue paper, the bath tab used as toilet and their photos ripped and their frames broken. The massive destruction of their house was too much that they had to be assigned a different house in a different street to avoid seeing their old house. In the process of their house being destroyed, they lose their Piano that belonged to Ebere. Prof also remembers the landscape of drove back to Nsukka after the war. The massive destruction a recounted by Prof shows how destructivewar is.

Lastly, war causes psychological and physical suffering o live with nightmares thevictims. Those who experience war and sad memories of it. Prof James is seen to have lived with the memories of the war. He easily remembers every detail of thewar as he recounts it to Ikenna. Ikenna has suffered psychologically as is seen fromthe fact that he lost all his family in Orlu hence the reason he does not return to Nsukka.

His psychological suffering is further seen from the fact that he never remarries after the war took his wife. Further evidence o psychological pain is seen where Profobserves how his people avoided the topic of war and if they engaged in it, it was with some vagueness. The naming of their second daughter Nkiruka- what is ahead is better, also shows the pain that Prof and Ebere: were trying to avoid. The peoplealso suffer physical pain. Prof.James remembers how a wounded soldier was shoved in their car on the day they returned to Nsukka«

War causes loss oflives, displacement ofpeoplej and destruction of properties among other effects. People should thus strive to live in harmony and avoid it at allcosts.

Question 5

Lack of courtesy between the police and civilians leads to lethal conflicts. Justify the validity of this statement using illustrations from Meja Mwangi'sIncident in the park. (20 marks).

Across the world, over centuries, the behaviour of some of the police officers has caused dire repercussions. Sometimes this happens due to excessive use of force orsimply wrongful application law and policies, but majoriy this occurs as a result of impolite

Incident in the Park shows how city dwellers, hawkers and loafers find themselvesin conflicts with the police over flimsy and petty reasons often ending unpleasantly.When the two constables accost the fruit peddler, he gets startled and confused.
They demand for his licence and identity card which he obviously doesn't have. Then he offers five shillings which doesn't seem good enough as one constableshrugs. This means that at times if the offer were attractive, they would have accepted it and left him.

The police refuse to listen to the fruit merchant and harshly shove him along the street to the city telling him he will explain to the judge. This complicates matterseven more because the fruit- seller fears the judge more. It throws him into more panic as he has a case that is coming up the following week and the judge is a "tyrant". He explains further that he is selling this time so that he can afford of mebut all his entreaties fall on deaf ears. They remain unimpressed saying nothinguntil he breaks away and flees into the crowded city.

The situation escalates when the constables chase the fleeing man shouting for helpfrom the passers-by. They actually betroth him unto the mob. A city man intercepts him and another man lunges for him as shouts increase. Tossed here and there as a suspect, the desperate fruit peddler stumbles and falls into a ditch. No one seems to care to find out

what really is happening before taking action. No one listens as he pleads for mercy. 7his is where he meets his 'verdict' which is death. According to the crowd, 'justice' is administered. The mob universally condemn him without plausible evidence.

By the time the police arrive at the scene, it is too late. Their action is irreversible and fatal. Flie mob has already killed him for being a "thief". They who are supposed to ensure public safety an security have aided the killing o/a hardworking hawkerby their silly mistake. This should not have happened if they had treated

the man Politely. An innocent life is so unnecessarily lost. This makes the public loseconfidence in the police. after investigations the truth will come out and it will be hard to trust the police.

In a nutshell, wanton conflicts and deaths of innocent citizen could be averted if thepolice handled matters with courtesy and sobriety.

Question 6

A Silent Song — Leonard Kibera.

Action speaks louder than words. Discuss the truth of this saying usingillustrations from Leonard Kibera's A Silent Song. (20 marks)

The character of an individual tells more than what they actually say. Mbane's brother, Ezekiel, preaches water and takes wine. He is so devoted to God as a preacher, but neglects Mbane, to agonize in the streets for a long time until he almost dies.

When he brings Mbane to his hut claiming to rescue him from the barbaric city in order that he can see the light of God, the blind beggar starts to feel more lonely and miserable in the desolate environment. lhe desolate hut is not a habitable placefor him as it has a flea-ridden floor. One wonders why he cannot live with his own brother in his own house! This action tells that the preacher does not love his brother.

It ironical for Ezekiel to keep preaching to his blind brother about Christ and salvation instead of first saving him from the harsh street beggary. Ezekiel seems tohave already judged him as a sinner and that "Christ" will come down from heaven to do the good to him. Mbane dies miserably without much help from his brother.
This is least expected from a man of God who should Have preached to his brotherthrough actions of care and concern.

Ezekiel portrays religious hypocrisy since Christians would not throw insults and abuses to God's people when they don't agree with them on some issue, or when they do not show that they believe in Jesus Christ. When Mbane shows no interestin Christ, his brother tells him he is worse than a Judas. EIT1is lack of patience for aChristian, especially a preacher, is not morally acceptable.

Another action that tells of the preacher's action is the meaning in his silence later as Mbane nears his death. Christians, good men and women on a Christmas morning, also display pretence in the way they curse and call him names instead of bringing the good knowledge of Christ to him. They claim, in his hearing, that he is an able-bodied person, only crippled more daily by the idleness of leisurely begging. He could only yearn impotently beyond the reach of darkness and lameness. At times, self-pity overcomes him. To him, the God of the Gospel and religion are comforts beyond his reach as a cripple. His God is his only hope of deliverance from pain, destitution and despair. The people's actions discourage himabout Christianity which they profess but not practice.

In conclusion, the true gospel is the action of an individual because it is morepractical than mere words. Actions work and satisfy the heart more than proclaiming the word ofGod.

Question 7

Incident in the Park -- Meja Mwangi.

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