

**CHALIMBANA UNIVERSITY**

**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

**LBL 3201: AFRICAN NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES**

**FIRST EDITION - 2019**

**AUTHOR: HILARY HAMAUNDU**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

**Copyright**

© 2019 Chalimbana University

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrievable system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright owner, Chalimbana University.

Chalimbana University

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Social Sciences

Private Bag E 1

Chongwe

 Zambia

Acknowledgements

Chalimbana University wishes to thank Hilary Hamaundu for his contribution in the production of this module.

Study Skills

As an adult learner your approach to learning will be different to that from your school days: you will choose what you want to study, you will have professional and/or personal motivation for doing so and you will most likely be fitting your study activities around other professional or domestic responsibilities.

Essentially you will be taking control of your learning environment. As a consequence, you will need to consider performance issues related to time management, goal setting, stress management, etc. Perhaps you will also need to reacquaint yourself in areas such as essay planning, coping with exams and using the web as a learning resource.

Your most significant considerations will be *time* and *space* i.e. the time you dedicate to your learning and the environment in which you engage in that learning.

We recommend that you take time now, before starting your self-study to familiarise yourself with these issues. There are a number of excellent resources on the web. A few suggested links are:

<http://www.how-to-study.com/>

The “How to study” web site is dedicated to study skills resources. You will find links to study preparation (a list of nine essentials for a good study place), taking notes, strategies for reading text books, using reference sources, test anxiety.

<http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html>

This is the web site of the Virginia Tech, Division of Student Affairs. You will find links to time scheduling (including a “where does time go?” link), a study skill checklist, basic concentration techniques, control of the study environment, note taking, how to read essays for analysis, memory skills (“remembering”).

<http://www.howtostudy.org/resources.php>

Another “How to study” web site with useful links to time management, efficient reading, questioning/listening/observing skills, getting the most out of doing (“hands-on” learning), memory building, tips for staying motivated, developing a learning plan.

The above links are our suggestions to start you on your way. At the time of writing these web links were active. If you want to look for more go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and type “self-study basics”, “self-study tips”, “self-study skills” or similar.

Time Frame

One year comprising three residential schooling; two (2) weeks of contact sessions per residential school. You need three (3) hours for formal study per week and you are expected not to spend less than ten (10) hours per week for self-study.

Need Help?

Contact: Hilary Hamaundu/ Edith Sikota-Habwanda

Email: chabotah2012@gmail.com/ edithhabwanda@yahoo.com

Office: Tutorial Block 1, Room 6

Required Resources

Apart from this module, as you may be interested in learning more on this subject, we have provided you with a list of recommended readings; these are books, articles and websites.

**Assessment**

**Continuous Assessment 50%**

One assignment 20%

One seminar presentation 10%

One test 20%

**Final examination 50%**

**Final mark 100%**

References

Finnegan, R. (2012).*Oral Literature in Africa*. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.

**Background**

The course begins by a recap of Oral literature and written literature and brings out the elements of fiction. After that the course exposes students to real novels, short stories, drama and poetry and how to analyze them using the elements of literature and literary devices. In essence, the course brings to light the African philosophies expressed in literary works. The student will be required to read a lot of novels and short stories written by African writers, whether written in English or a Zambian language, and compare the themes and other literary devices employed. The course includes analyses of poems and drama, especially those written in Zambian languages.

**Rationale**

The course will equip learners with skills for analysing the different African short stories, novels, poetry and drama. These may later apply to real-life situations and therefore would help students to reflect upon their own lives and the problems of their society. As the students compare the themes in the novels and stories, they would develop a sense of creativity which they would in turn inculcate to the learners in schools.

**Aim**

The course aims at equipping students with knowledge and skills required to analyse African novels and short stories using the elements of literature and literary devices.

**Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the course, students will be expected to;

* analyse and show the significance of African novels.
* analyse novels, short stories, poems and plays using elements of literature and literary devices.
* expose the learners to various forms of literature.
* compare themes of selected African novels and short stories.

## UNIT ONE

## LITERATURE AND LITERARY CRITICISM

##  1.0 Introduction

As you still remember what you read in LBL2201, there are several definitions of the term literature. Literature in its broadest sense is any single body of written works. More restrictively, it is writing considered as an art form or any single writing deemed to have artistic or intellectual value often due to deploying language in ways that differ from ordinary usage. In other words Literature can be defined as written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit. This may also include imaginative works of poetry and prose which is distinguished by the intentions of their authors and perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution. It can be classified according to whether it is fiction or non-fiction and whether it is poetry or prose; it can further be distinguished according to major forms such as the novel, short story or drama; and works are often categorized according to historical periods or their adherence to certain aesthetic features or expectations (genre). (Simon and Delyse 2014). From many definitions learnt earlier, I hope you can come up with your own definition.

In dealing with the definitions of the term literature, you also need to take into consideration the theoretical definitions such as:

* the expressive theory
* The effective theory
* The imitation theory
* The objective theory

## 1.1 Literary criticism

What is literary criticism? This is the appreciation and judgment of a literary work after its systematic study. Not necessarily saying bad things about a literary work. This is very significant because without criticism, literature cannot live and be interesting and artists cannot be appreciated. Criticism involves many kinds of statement people make after listening, reading, or watching a piece of literary work. You can also revise on the approaches to the study of literature such as;

* Formalist Approach
* Structuralist Approach
* Historical Criticism
* Marxist Criticism
* Mythological Criticism
* Reader-Response Criticism
* Feminist and Gender Criticism .

## 1.2 Types of literature

**Oral literature**; oral literature has been highly embraced and appreciated throughout literary study. There are so many forms of oral literature such as:

* Myths; they explain stories that specify objects, or events in the natural world as resulting from some supernatural force or entity, mostly a god. These are found among all the ethnic groups in Zambia
* Songs; they are both religious and circular.
* Proverbs; these are traditional sayings with deeper teachings
* Parables; they are brief stories with a message intended to teach a moral lesson. They are expressions with an elevated thought comprising of figurative language.
* Fables; they are parables which are told often with an animal character.
* Epics; long poetic stories often told in verse involving heroes and gods. They are passed on orally and may have anonymous authors. They are grand in length and scope, and provides a portrait of legends, beliefs, values, laws, arts and ways of life of a people
* Legends; are stories based on past events, often historical and based on real life events. Sometimes they may have certain parts that are fantastic and unverifiable
* Tales; stories that deal with mischievous spirits and other supernatural occurrences, often in medieval setting.

Generally, oral literature is deemed as the repository of the critical knowledge, philosophy and wisdom for non-literate societies. This literature through narrative, poetry, songs, dance, myths, fables, and religious rituals provide a portrait of the meaning of life as experienced by the society at its particular time and place with its unique existential challenges. It encapsulates the traditional knowledge, beliefs, and values about the environment and the nature of the society itself. This literature portrays how one is to live a moral life and explains the nature of one’s relationship to divinity. It recounts the work of gods, and explains how the world and human existence came about while revealing the nature of human frailty. This literature communicates ideas, emotions, beliefs and appreciation of life. It also defines, interprets, and elaborates on the society’s vision of reality and the dangers in the world. It deals with the human adventure and achievement against all gods.

**Written Literature**; this is literature which is written and transmitted from one generation to the other through written materials. Examples are novels and written stories among others. It is easily stored and preserved.

## 1.3 Elements of literature

These are components or parts that are found in literature such as;

* Allegory- characters are representatives of some larger humanistic trait and attempt to convey some larger lesson or meaning in life
* Allusion- a reference to something in history, culture or literature especially historical
* Antagonist-the force that work against the protagonist
* Characterization- the creation and development of characters in the story
* Climax- the point in the story where the conflict is at the peak
* Conflict- the struggle a character must overcome
* Connotation- implied or associated meaning
* Crisis- a significant turning point in the story that determines how it must end
* Diction- the author’s choice of words to imply some social or connotative meaning
* Exposition- the background information of the story
* Flashback- a strategy of plot sequencing where the author takes the reader back to events that occurred before the present time in the story
* Foreshadowing- the use of clues to suggest something that is going to happen
* Imagery- the author’s attempt to create a mental picture in the mind of the reader
* Suspense- the tension that the author uses to create a feeling of discomfort about the unknown
* Point of view- the angle at which the story is told
* Setting- where and when the action takes place
* Symbolism- a person, place, event or object that has a deeper meaning than its literal meaning
* Theme- the central idea or lesson about life that an author conveys
* Tone- the author’s voice or attitude about what he or she writes
* Mood- the feeling a reader gets from a story
* Motif- a recurring image or idea
* Structure- the way in which the writer arranges the plot of a story
* Plot- the events that occur in the story
* Protagonist- the character the story revolves around

## 1.4 Africa Philosophy

When we talk of African philosophy, what comes to your mind? Is there such a thing as African Philosophy? How can we learn about African Philosophy? Has the Zambian writers addressed this aspect adequately? What is lacking? There had been a number of thoughts regarding the environment and the people’s way of life. In this section, we are going to explore some of these thoughts.

## 1.4.1 African thought regarding land

There had been two ancient thoughts regarding land:

1. Land is owned by our chiefs on behalf of God. Other individuals can use it but not sell it. It is not theirs. The headmen administering the land on behalf of the chief can take away the land from individuals and give others.
2. One has claim to a piece of land from which you have your ancestors. This forms a title deed for all the family lineage.

From the two thoughts, which one are you familiar with? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these philosophies?

Compare your thoughts with these:

Thought 1:

Advantages

1. Land can be preserved in perpetuity for members in the chiefdom.
2. It is easy to get rid of dividends, witches and dagga smokers.
3. There are higher chances of fair distribution of land.
4. There is ability to preserve human life and protect citizens.

Disadvantages

1. The power of the chief or head man can evict mischievously.
2. Some members can be favoured by the rulers.
3. The whole community can conspire against you if you do better than everyone else.
4. It stops people from working hard, hence becomes a stumbling block.
5. It creates insecurity, leading to non-development.
6. An individual can be chased on unfounded grounds.
7. It encourages communalism. Members are asked to pull down an extra income for the chief. If you have more than the chief/ others in the community, then you are a witch.
8. It promotes mediocrity.

Thought 2:

The major advantage is that the idea can safely secure land for the clan just like a title deed.

Disadvantages of thought 2

1. It leads to mystical attachment to the land even when there are problems or no development. Members cannot move to another area.
2. It promotes tribalism. Only tribe mates would possess land in that locality.

**Reflection:**

*Reflect on the thoughts discussed above, how your community has treated land ownership. Discuss your view with that of other communities and cultures. What problems do you face concerning land in this country?*

## 1.4.2 African thought on the environment

African thought on the forest.

Bantu people believed a forest is a living thing and home to spirits. The denser the forest, the move powerful the spirits that lived in it. Therefore, to use the products of the forests you had to:

1. get permission from god.
2. get only what you need; no malicious destruction.
3. do not do things that are not permissible in the forest for example adultery.

The forest would be divided in two parts:

Forest around the village with surrounding parts was considered as part of the village. Mushroom, wood, animals could be trapped without permission from the gods. Beyond this area, one would not do certain things for example cutting of trees. Each god controls a part of the forest. So there was need to get permission to a particular god. Even the cutting of trees for example in Bemba was done in a way that they were not destroyed. The forest was home of gods, so no deforestation was to be done. A forest on the hill was the holiest. There was no cutting of trees. River sources were also homes of gods.

Reflect:

How is the forest, water sources and springs treated in your community? Are there areas that are prohibited than the others? Why?

Modernity has degraded the environment. Justify this assertion with reference to what happens in your area.

In every area where people settled, there would be destruction of the environment. Those who practiced *chitemene* cut trees and burnt the brunches and when the land was infertile, they shifted. As a result, there was no development:

There mentality was to replace the land if it was no longer yielding. They used regeneration by just abandoning it and go back to it later. Homes were not also of good architecture; they were made of grass which would be pulled and burnt. This did not encourage people to plan, so they were just like animals. Some people do not even plan for the child when a woman was pregnant. They were spoiled by ‘God’ as God gave the children of Israel manna. Even when the plan was there was no discipline as it was not followed. Plans are even changed in times of difficulties. Good plans stand and never change. Whenever there is hunger, people resort to wild fruits. Africans only take risks that lead to destructions. Everyone would like to see another person fail. Humans celebrate to other people’s calamities.

With examples from any circle of life, to what extent do issues raised above apply?

Many human beings have ‘Hunter and gatherer’s mentality; they never mind for tomorrow. Those who would mind for the future would save 10% of the earnings.

To what extent are people of this country responsible of the environment? Does this benefit the nation or just individuals? After organising your thought over this, you can discuss your views with those of a colleague on this course.

## 1.4.3 African thought on political power

In the African thought, power is given by God to a family he has chosen. Power is natural. Those with it will continue with it and those without it will continue without. Myths and legends were formulated in support of the leadership. Such kind of thinking has both advantages and disadvanges.

**Advantages**

* It would be a more stable society because of no struggle for leadership.
* This make the rulers more confident because they can’t lose power to anybody.
* It makes more people focused to development because of having a stable society.

**Disadvantages**

* The leaders are very dictatorial because they feel secure.
* The leader takes the whole chiefdom as if it is personal.
* They feel they own everything in the chiefdom.

They were extreme in disrespect for their subjects and life. Chiefs owned both persons and lives. Chiefs were representative of the royal deity hence they had power to give life and take it any time. That is why when a chief died, they buried him with live humans. People were properties of the chief hence people lost in this way were considered favoured and hence felt proud. There was also abuse of power. They had access to any woman, married or unmarried. The young men would rush to marry a young lady who lost her virginity to the chief because they did not think independently. Because of the abuse of power extending to the human life and lack of respect, this can lead to the whole nation into battle for personal reasons. For instance if the wife of the chief was taken away by subjects or by any another chief, the chief may involve his subjects to go for war, hence loosing lives of many.

Further, because of the chieftain mentality, every African leader thinks they shall rule forever. They have no respect for the people they rule except for themselves and their families, and personal issues will always take priorities over state issues. African leaders always chase for individual prosperity instead of state. Even subjects suit the same.

How do people in the communities created by the authors of the African novels you have read view political power? Compare this with leadership in your locality or nation.

Common people accept the chieftain mentality to be normal as leaders are ‘God given’.

Related to this idea is the belief that there is no better leader. This is because we do not prepare successors. African leaders and many people with good governance qualities do not share their ideas to others. Because Africans do not prepare successors, then they prepare dictators. It is important to help people to be better than you as a leader. We do not need to comprehend the world emotionally.

An African tries to comprehend the world emotionally. The emotion though at first it appears a failure of consciousness, he is on the contrary the ascension to a higher state of consciousness… A consciousness of the world, a certain way of comprehending the world. We must find a way of domesticating something, analysing it and understand it. When we do not domesticate the environment, we become victims of the environment. We submit to the cause of nature. We do not know how to harness nature but just know to live with nature.

*Cite incidents when people in some parts of this country have failed to harness nature.*

In many instances, we have victims of nature. How have the affected tackled the issues? What are the African thought on the following:

1. women
2. religion
3. prosperity
4. failure
5. death
6. marriage

**Activity 1.1**

1. Oral literature is wider than written literature in scope. Argue for or against this assertion.
2. Read any novel written in Zambian language and give a literary criticism.
3. Discuss any five elements of literature.
4. Discuss the various views on African philosophy.
5. What aspects of African philosophy have you found in the Zambian languages novels that you have ever read?

## 1.5 Summary

In this unit, we have looked at what literature is and you have been reminded of the methods of literary analysis. The elements of prose fiction as well as poetry have been looked at. We also looked at some of the African thoughts. You have seen that Africa has its own philosophies. There is much expressed in the texts than what can be seen in the communities that you live. It is therefore important to read as many African novels, especially those written in your respective local languages.

## UNIT TWO

##  POETRY

## 2.0 Introduction

Poetry can be defined as an oral or written composition in verse or an oral expression of feeling and moods. You can make your own definitions from your knowledge of LBL2201 course.

## 2.1 Types of poetry

Poetry is divided into several types such as;

1. Narrative poetry; they tell a story in poetry form
2. Lyric; tries to share an experience with the audience
3. Dramatic poetry; there is the speaker in the poem addressing an audience
4. Panegyrics; they are poems composed to appease chiefs, heroes, hunters, the soil and the nation
5. Elegies; sorrowful poems sung at funerals to console the bereaved as well as to remember the dead.
6. Epics; they follow the ancestry heroic dynamism, mainly sung and recited by ballads
7. Religious poetry; they are used to invoke spirits and gods and God
8. Sagas; heroic poems associated with heroic events usually serving as morale boosters

## 2.2 Elements of poetry

* Language and author’s voice; the language used in poetry should be poetic. Although both prose and poetry use language, poetry uses language in such a way that it constitutes a separate medium. Language use can either be denotative or connotative. Denotation is the core meaning of a word while connotation is the suggested meaning
* Imagery is another element of poetry. This is the ability by the speaker to create mental images or pictures in the minds of his listeners
* Poems also use figurative language; these are words or phrases that suggest a forceful truth to our imaginations. It is a rhetorical device that achieves a special effect by using words in a distinctive way
* Structural elements
* Speaker; the speaker should be involved in the poem and uses all the necessary elements of a poem
* Plot of thought; thought should be well arranged from the beginning of the poem to the end. The events should be in a chronological order
* Tone of voice (mood, rhyme, meter, figurative language). All these will help the audience to create mental images and have a feeling of attachment.

As a student, you need to read more on structural elements of poetry.

## 2.3 plot summary and commentary of Song of Lawino

**Objectives:**

* Identify Song of Lawino as a poem
* Investigate the poetic aspects of the poem
* Discuss the characters in the poem

**Introduction**

This is a poem by the Ugandan Okot p’Bitek. It was originally written in the Acholi language for performance and was first published in English in 1966. The poem is usually seen as a communication of Okot’s ideas about the remnants of colonialism. The characters of Lawino and Ocol demonstrate a larger societal struggle between indigenous African tradition and the new western traditions which had come with colonialism. Lawino in her monologue is sometimes thought of as a mouthpiece for such ideas. The setting of the poem is Lawino and Ocol’s marriage. The two have serious conflict because Ocol is educated and Lawino is not. Ocol despises Lawino now that he is educated and is contemptuous towards her. Lawino responds to this contempt by mocking him and showing us the merits of the traditional Acoli life which her husband has abandoned. She does not necessarily hate western lifestyle but her point seems to be that it is possible to take them up but not abandon tradition because it is part of one’s identity.

**Why Is Song of Lawino a poem?**

The work is a dramatic poem which is meant to be performed. It (The English version) is written in free verse form, meaning we do not get to see the use of regular rhymes but what sets it apart as poetry is its extensive use of figurative language, imagery, repetition, songs, symbols and so on. The poem is closely related to oral literature which is not a surprise for we are told that Okot’s mother was a composer of Acholi songs. In fact every part of the poem uses intensive figurative language to bring out ideas vividly.

 In the first part Lawino mocks Ocol’s contempt, and exposes us to the kind of insults he uses against her. She uses vivid similes and allusions to show how bitter his tongue is.

*My husband’s tongue*

*Is* ***bitter like the roots of the lyonno lily****,*

*It is* ***hot like the penis of the bee,***

***Like the sting of the kalang****!*

*Ocol’s tongue is* ***fierce like the***

***Arrow of a scorpion,***

*Deadly* ***like the spear of the***

***Buffalo - hornet.***

*It is ferocious*

***Like the poison of a barren woman***

*And* ***corrosive like the juice of the gourd****. (SOL P.35)*

In section two she introduces us to her rival Clementine who has won Ocol’s love. She contrasts Clementine’s methods of beautifying herself with the traditional way. By doing this Okot is showing us how some African women have abandoned their own ways to suit the western ways. She again uses vivid similes and imagery to describe and satirize Clementine:

*Brother, when you see Clementine!
The beautiful one aspires;*

***To look like a white woman****;*

*Her lips are red-hot;*

***Like glowing charcoal;***

***She resembles the wild cat;***

***That has dipped its mouth in blood;***

***Her mouth is like raw yaws;***

*Tina dusts powder on her face;*

*And it looks so pale ;...( SOL, P.37).*

In section three she mocks the western dances and the old missionary view of African dances. According to the missionaries and Ocol the traditional dances are immoral and only enhance immorality. Lawino says there is nothing immoral about dancing which is done openly and the use of anaphora emphasises the point:

*When the drums are throbbing*

*And the black youths*

*Have raised much dust*

***You dance*** *with vigour and health*

***You dance*** *naughtily with pride*

***You dance*** *with Spirit,*

*You compete, you insult, you provoke*

*You challenge all, (SOL, P.42).*

Lawino contrasts this with the western dances which she feels can lead to immorality:

***Each man has a woman***

***Although she is not his wife (ambiguity)****,*

*They dance inside a house*

*And there is no light*

*Shamelessly, they hold each other*

*Tightly, tightly,*

***They cannot breathe (hyperbole)*** *(SOL, P.44).*

Western dances are immoral because people embrace in public and dance with anyone, even close relatives. Apart from being immoral, their kissing and dancing are seen as grotesquely ugly:

*You kiss her on the cheek*

***As white people do****,*

*You kiss her open-sore lips*

***As white people do***

*You suck slimy saliva*

*From each other's mouths*

***As white people do****. (SOL, P.44*).

In section four, Lawino deals with ornaments and games to applaud traditional culture, Section 5-6 she continues uplifting African traditional ways of adorning themselves and their hairstyles and also moves to traditional cooking versus western cooking and food. Look at the figures of speech in this section;

*When the beautiful one*

*With whom I share my husband*

*Returns from* ***cooking her hair***

***She resembles***

***A chicken***

***That has fallen into a pond;***

*Her hair looks*

***Like the python's discarded Skin****. (SOL, P.54*

In these sections Lawino shows that no matter how much the African woman tries to be a white woman she can never become that, she uses images of the hyena, the graceful giraffe, the monkey; all common allusions:

*No leopard*

*Would change into a hyena,*

*And the crested crane*

*Would hate to be changed*

*Into the bold-headed,*

*Dung-eating vulture,*

*The long-necked and graceful giraffe*

*Cannot become a monkey.*

*Let no one*

*Uproot the pumpkin. (SOL, P.56).*

 Section 7 is about time and how Ocol’s reliance on time has made him adopt funny ways of doing things. Again we see metaphors (time compared to money and commodities):

***Time is money*** *(SOL, P. 67);*

*While for* ***Acoli time is not a commodity*** *that can be consumed until it is finished:*

*In the wisdom of the Acoli*

*Time is not stupidly split up*

*Into seconds and minutes*

*It does not flow*

***Like beer in a pot***

*That is sucked*

*Until it is finished. (SOL, P. 69).*

Section 8 and 9 is concerned with criticism of the way missionaries treated the converts and also their hypocrisy. She again uses similes to show how she unlike her sister ran away from missionary instruction:

*I ran away from shouting*

*Meaninglessly in the evenings*

***Like parrots***

***Like the crow birds***

*The things they shout*

*I do not understand (SOL, P.75).*

 In section 10 Lawino tells us that Ocol condemns all Acoli medicines, religion and tradition. In this section entitled “The last safari to pagak” (the title itself a metaphor comparing the process leading to death with a journey). Allegorically Lawino says that whether you use western or Acholi medication when death (personified) comes it comes:

*When death comes*

*To fetch you*

***She*** *comes unannounced*

***She*** *comes suddenly*

***Like the vomit of days****...(SOL, P.102).*

Section 11 is about the effect of politics on Ocol and the whole nation. She explains the fight for corrupt power with the symbol of a fallen bull buffalo each person wanting a share:

*Someone said*

*Independence falls like a bull buffalo*

*And the hunters*

*Rush to it with draw knives,*

*Sharp shining knives*

*For carving the carcass.(SOL, P.107).*

She goes on to explain how poverty and not genuine interest is the motivation for many politicians:

*The stomach seems to be*

*A powerful force*

*For joining political parties,*

*Especially when the purse*

*In the trouser pocket*

*Carries only the coins*

*With holes in their middle.(SOL, PP.108*)

In the last two sections Lawino finishes her argument by summarizing what has happened to Ocol and made him behave so badly, She feels that education has emasculated him, robbed him symbolically of the power to give life.

*Their manhood was finished*

*In the classrooms*

*Their testicles*

*Were smashed*

*With large books! (SOL, p.117)*

So she advises that the only way he can regain his manhood is to:

*Ask for a spear that you will trust*

*One that does not bend easily*

*Like the earth-worm*

*Ask them to restore your manhood! (SOL, P. 119).*

Furthermore Okot makes use of proverbs like the Acoli proverb which is used more than once and is a recurring motif:

*The pumpkin in the old homestead*

*Must not be uprooted (SOL, P.41).*

According to Okot (1972:6) pumpkins are a luxury food. They grow wild throughout Acoli land. To uproot pumpkins, even when you are moving to a new homestead, is simple wanton destruction. In this proverb, then, Lawino is not asking Ocol to cling to everything in his past, but rather not to destroy things for the sake of destroying them.

The author lastly uses a number of symbols and some that are archetypal and common to African literature catch our attention:

**The horn** is a symbol of manhood and identity as a man. Among the Acholi when a young boy became of age, he was given a horn which was to have a distinct sound such that a man could be recognised by the notes produced by his horn even in the forest. Lawino demonstrates that just as the horn announces a young man to those that cannot see him thus the name of her grandfather...still blows like a horn (128) though he is long dead. And Lawino’s name as chief of the girls blew as chief of the girls blew like a horn among the payira.

**The spear** is not only a symbol of manhood but also the penis as a phallic symbol. Lawino makes its sexual significance very clear when she talks about the separation of boys and girls by the missionaries causing their spears to rust (p.121). She uses the same image when she tells Ocol to ask the ancestors for *...a spear that you will trust, one that does not bend easily like the earth-worm ”* (P..195) to restore his manhood. The bull is a strong and determined fighter and Lawino likens her grandfather and Ocol by calling them *bull among men* and *son of the bull* respectively.

**Activity 2.1**

1. Discuss the philosophical aspects of this text
2. Explain on each of the symbols used in the text
3. Compare the themes found in this text with the ones found in a Zambian language book you have read.
4. Analyse the setting of this text
5. Discuss the poetic aspects of this text
6. Apart from symbolism, with reference to the text, identify and discuss any four literary devices used in this text
7. LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THINGS FALL APART-CHINUA ACHEBE
* ANALYSIS OF MAJOR CHARACTERS

OKONKWO, son of the effeminate and lazy Unoka, strives to make his way in a world that seems to value manliness. In so doing, he rejects everything for which he believes his father stood. Unoka was idle, poor, profligate, cowardly, gentle and interested in music and conversations. Okonkwo consciously adopts posit ideals and became productive wealthy, thrifty, brave, violent and adamantly opposed to music and everything else that he perceives to be soft such as conversation and emotion. He is stoic to a fault.

Okonkwo achieves great social and financial success by embracing these ideals. He marries three wives and fathers many children.

Nevertheless just as his father was at all odds with the values of the community, so does okonkwo find himself unable to adapt to changing times as the whiteman comes to live among the Umofians.

As it becomes evident that compliance rather than violence constituents the wisest principle for survival, Okonkwo realizes that he has become relic, no longer able to function within his changing society.

Okonkwo is a tragic hero in the classical scenes- although he is a superior character, his tragic flaw- the equation of manliness with rashness, anger, and violence brings about his destruction. Okonkwo is gruff, at times and usually unable to express his feelings (the narrator frequently uses the word inwardly in reference to Okonkwo’s emotions). His emotions are indeed quite complex as his manly values conflict with his unmanly ones such as fondness for Ikemefuna and Eznma. The narrator privileges us with information that Okonkwo’s fellow clan members do not have- that Okonkwo surreptitiously follows Ekwefi into the forest in pursuit of Eznma, for example- thus allows us to see the tender, worried father beneath the seemingly in different exterior.

**NWOYE**

* The oldest son of Okonkwo, struggles in the shadow of his powerful, successful and demanding father
* His interests are different from Okonkwo and resembles more closely to those of Unoka, his grandfather.
* He undergoes many beatings, at a loss on how to please his father until the arrival of Ikemefuna who becomes like and older son brother and teaches him a gentler form of successful masculinity.
* Nwoye conflicted though he makes a show of scorning feminine things in older to please his father.
* With the unconscionable murder of Ikemefuna, however, Nwoye retreats into himself and finds himself forever changed.
* His reluctance to accept Okonkwo’s masculine values turns him into pure embitterment toward him and his ways. When missionaries came to Mbanta, Nwoye’s hope and faith are reawakened and eventually joins forces with them. Although Okonkwo curses his lot for having born so effeminate a son and disowns him, Nwoye appears to have found peace at least in living the oppressive atmosphere of his father’s tyranny

EZINMA

Ezinma, Okonkwo’s favorite daughter and the only child of Ekwefi, has with her a bold character in the way she approaches and contradicts her father. She wins her father’s full attention, affection and respect, she builds with her father a kindred spirit. She grows into a beautiful woman who sensibly agrees to put off marriage until her family returns from exile in order to help her father liberate his sociopolitical power. Like Okonkwo, she puts strategy ahead of emotion.

MR BROWN

A representation of Achebe’s attempt to craft a well-rounded portrait of the colonial presence by tempering bad personalities with good ones. Mr. Brown’s successor Reverend Smith is zealous. Vengeful, small-minded and manipulative in contrast to Mr. Brown who is benevolent and beneficent. He succeeds in winning a large number of converts because he listens to the villagers’ stories, beliefs and opinions, accepts converts unconditionally.

The derisive comments Reverend Smith makes about Mr. Brown after the latter’s departure illustrate the colonial intolerance for any kind of sympathy for genuine interest, in the native culture. The Surname Brown hints at his ability to navigate successfully the clear cut racial division between the colonizers and the colonized.

THEMATIC APPROACH

THEMES, MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideals explored in a literary work.

1. THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN CHANGE AND TRADITION
* As a story about a culture on the verge of change, Things Fall Apart deals with how the prospect and reality of change affect various characters. The tension about whether should be privileged over tradition often involves questions of personal status. Okonkwo for example, resists the new political and religious orders because he feels that they are not manly and that he himself will not be manly if he consents to join or even tolerate them. To some extent, Okonkwo’s resistance to cultural change is also due to his fear of losing societal status. His sense of self-worth is dependent upon the traditional standards by which society judges him. This system of evaluating the self inspires many of the clan’s outcasts to embrace Christianity. Long scorned, these outcasts find in the Christian value system a refuge from the Igbo cultural values that place them below everyone else. In their new community, these converts enjoy a more elevated status.
* The villagers in general are caught between resisting and embracing change and they face the dilemma of trying to determine how best to adapt to the reality of change. Many of the villagers are excited about the new opportunities and techniques that the missionaries bring. This European influence, however, threatens to extinguish the need for the mastery of traditional methods of farming, harvesting, building, and cooking. These traditional methods, once crucial for survival, are no, to varying degrees, dispensable. Throughout the novel, Achebe shows how dependent such traditions are upon storytelling and language and thus how quickly abandonment of the Igbo language for English could lead to the eradication of these traditions.
1. VARYING INTERPRETATIONS OF MASCULINITY
* Okonkwo’s relationship with his late father shapes much of his violent and ambitious demeanor. He wants to rise above his father’s legacy of spendthrift, indolent behavior, which he views as weak and therefore effeminate. This association is inherent in the clan’s language-the narrator mentions that the word for a man who has not taken any of the expensive, prestige-indicating titles is AGBALA, which also means “woman”. But, for the most part, Okonkwo’s idea of manliness is not the clan’s. he associates masculinity with aggression and feels that anger is the only emotion that he should display. For this reason, he frequently beats his wives, even threatening to kill them from time to time. We are told that he does not think about things, and we see him act rashly and impetuously. Yet others who are in no way effeminate do not behave in this way. Obierika, unlike Okonkwo, was a man who thought about things. Whereas Obierika refuses to accompany the men on the trip to kill Ikemefuna, Okonkwo not only volunteers to join the party that will execute his surrogate son but also violently stabs him with his machete simply because he is afraid of appearing weak.
* Okonkwo’s seven-year exile from his village only reinforces his notion that men are stronger than women. While in exile, he lives among the kinsmen of his motherland but resents the period in its entirety. The exile is his opportunity to get in touch with his feminine side and to acknowledge his maternal ancestors, but he keeps reminding himself that his maternal kinsmen are not as warlike and fierce as he remembers the village of Umofia to be. He faults them for their preference of negotiation, compliance, and avoidance over anger and bloodshed. In Okonkwo’s understanding, his uncle Uchendu exemplifies this pacifist (and therefore somewhat effeminate) mode.
1. LANGUAGE AS A SIGN OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE
* Language is an important theme in Things Fall Apart on several levels. In demonstrating the imaginative, often formal language of the Igbo, Achebe emphasizes that Africa is not the silent or incomprehensible continent that books such as Heart of Darkness made it out to be. Rather, by peppering the novel with Igbo words, Achebe shows that the Igbo language is too complex for direct translation into English. Similarly, Igbo culture cannot be understood within the framework of European colonialist values. Achebe also points out that Africa has many different languages: the villagers of Umofia, for example, make fun of Mr. Brown’s translator because his language is slightly different from their own.
* On a macroscopic level, it is extremely significant that Achebe chose to write Things Fall Apart in English-he clearly intended it to be read by the West at least as much, if not more, than by his fellow Nigerians. His goal was to critique and emend the portrait of Africa that was painted by so many writers of the colonial period. Doing so required the use of English, the language of those colonial writers. Through his inclusion of proverbs, folktales, and songs translated from the Igbo language, Achebe managed to capture and convey the rhythms, structures, cadences, and beauty of the Igbo language.
1. MOTIFS
* Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, and literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text’s major themes such as the;
* CHI
* The concept of chi is discussed at various points throughout the novel and is important to our understanding of Okonkwo as a tragic hero. The chi is an individual’s personal god, whose merit is determined by the individual’s good fortune or lack thereof. Okonkwo’s tragic fate is therefore as the result of a problematic chi-a thought that occurs to Okonkwo at several points in the novel. For the clan believes, as the narrator tells us in chapter 14, a “man could not rise beyond the destiny of his chi.” In chapter 4, the narrator relates, according to an Igbo proverb, that “when a man says yes his chi says yes also.” Meaning individuals will their own destinies. Okonkwo therefore, seems either more or less responsible for his on tragic death. He himself shifts between these poles: when things are going well for him, he perceives himself as master and maker of his own destiny; when things go badly, however, he automatically disavows responsibility and asks why he should be so ill-fated.
1. ANIMAL IMAGERY
* In their descriptions, categorizations, and explanations of human behavior and wisdom, the Igbo often use animal anecdotes to naturalize their rituals and beliefs. The use of animals in the text reflects the environment in which they live-not yet modernized by Europeans influence. Colonizers however, view the Igbo’s understanding of the world as rudimentary, the Igbo perceive these animal stories, such as the account of how the tortoise’s shell came to be bumpy, as logical explanations of natural phenomena. Another important animal image is the figure of the sacred python. Enoch’s alleged killing and eating of the python symbolizes the transition to a new form of spirituality and a new religious order. Enoch’s disrespect of the python crushes with the Igbo’s reverence for it, epitomizing the incompatibility of colonialist and indigenous values
1. SYMBOLS
* Objects, characters, figures, and colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts such as;
* LOCUSTS: Achebe depicts the locusts that descend upon the village in highly allegorical terms that prefigure the arrival of the white settlers, who will feast on and exploit the resources of the Igbo. The fact that the Igbo eat these locusts highlights how innocuous they take them to be. Similarly, those who convert to Christianity fail to realize the damage that the culture of the colonizer does to the culture of the colonized.

The language Achebe uses to describe the locusts indicates their symbolic status. The repetition of words like “settled” and “every” emphasizes the suddenly ubiquitous presence of these insect and hints at the way in which the arrival of the white settlers takes the Igbo off guard. Furthermore, the locusts are so heavy they break the tree branches, which symbolizes the fracturing of Igbo traditions and culture under the onslaught of colonialism and white settlement. Perhaps the most explicit clue that the locusts symbolize the colonialists is Obierika’s comment in chapter 15: “the oracle…. Said that other white men were on their way. They were locusts….”

* FIRE
* Okonkwo is associated with burning fire and flame throughout the novel, alluding to his intense and dangerous anger-the only emotion that he allows himself to display. Yet the problem with fire, as Okonkwo acknowledges in chapter 17 and 24, is that it destroys everything it consumes. Okonkwo is both physically destractive-he kills Ikemefuna and Ogbuefi Ezeudu’s son-and emotionally destructive-he suppresses his fondness for Ikemefuna and Ezinma in favor of a colder, more masculine aura. Just as fire feeds on itself until all that is left is a pile of ash, Okonkwo eventually succumbs to his intense rage, allowing it to rule his actions until it destroys him.

SUMMARY AND CHAPTER(23) ANALYSIS

* During Okonkwo’s first year in exile, he already began to plan his grand return to Umofia. Now he is determined to compensate for the seven years he considers wasted. He is planning to build a bigger compound and huts for his two new wives. His plans for a triumphant return are momentarily disrupted when Nwoye joins the Christians as he gets depressed. He is confident that his five other sons will not disappoint him. He also takes pride of his daughters especially Ezinma, who has grown into a beautiful young woman. Her periods of illness are almost nonexistent. Many suitors in Mbanta have asked for her hand in marriage, but she has refused them all, knowing that her father wishes her to marry in Umofia, and she encourages her half-sister Obiageli to do the same.
* When Okonkwo returns to his village, he finds it greatly changed in his absence. The Christian church has attracted many followers, including prominent figures in society who have renounced their traditional tittles. The white men have established a government court of law in Umofia where they try those who break the white man’s law. They have also built a prison to punish law-breakers. They have even employed natives as court messengers. He now wonders why his fellow Umofians do not use violence to rise against white man’s orders. His friend Obierika narrates about the fate of one village, Abame which was destroyed by the whites for not following their orders, and the fate of one villager who was hanged by the government over a piece of land. Obierika further tells Okonkwo that men of his clan have joined the white man’s church, and any attempt to rise against the government is too late and will lead into more problems on the land. Okonkwo loses all the respect he accrued as no one seems interested any more on those traditional titles.
1. **GIRLS AT WAR**
* **COMMENTARY OF THE NOVEL**

 *Girl at War* performs the miracle of making the stories of broken lives in a distant country feel as large and universal as myth. The book begins with what deserves to become one of contemporary literature’s more memorable opening lines. The sentences that follow are equally as lyrical as a folk lament and as taut as metal wire wrapped through an electrified fence.” [Sara] Nović, in tender and eloquent prose, explores the challenge of how to live even after one has survived.”Powerful and vividly wrought . . . Nović writes about horrors with an elegant understatement. In cool, accomplished sentences, we are met with the gravity, brutality and even the mundaneness of war and loss as well as the enduring capacity to live.” The novel also deals with Intimate and immense. *Girl at War* is a superb exploration of conflict and its aftermath.

*Girl at War* is an extraordinarily poised and potent debut novel, a story about grief and exile, memory and identity, and the redemptive power of love. What makes [*Girl at War*] unique is that it’s not concerned with unmasking the horrors of war, as many have repeatedly done. Instead, this book is an exploration of how humans grow, prosper and move on from unthinkable times “As Nović gradually reveals, you can take the girl out of the war zone, but you can’t take the war zone out of the girl. By the time Ana becomes a student at a New York university, all that violence has been bottled up inside her head for a decade. Thanks to Nović’s considerable skill, Ana’s return visit to her homeland and her past is nearly as cathartic for the reader as it is for Ana.” “An unforgettable portrait of how war forever changes the life of the individual.

**Biography**

Sara is the author of the novel Girl at War (Random House 2015), which won an American Library Association Alex Award, was an LA Times Book Prize finalist, and is available in thirteen more languages. Sara holds an MFA from Columbia University, where she studied fiction and literary translation, and lives in Philadelphia. The beauty of the writing makes the trauma experienced by a child growing up in a war zone even more horrifying than other works on similar topics. It should be a "must read" for all those considering American foreign policy on how war effects the lives of children and how lasting those effects can remain.

**The commentary of the Novel**
The novel follows the story of Ana, a 9 year old girl when the Croatian War of Independence breaks out. Ana's baby sister, Rahela is sick and has to be medivac'ed out of Croatia to America for kidney surgery. You are flashed forward to Ana living in America at the age of 20 or 21, at college in New York City. Despite the author having only lived in Croatia for a small period of time, she captures the feel of life there both before and after the war. The author gets the feel and mood of the psyche of the people who live there now, having survived a war and accompanying terrible atrocities. The way everyone seems to suffer from some form of PTSD but nothing is talked about, how the countryside continues to bear the marks of battle, how the war continues to color life.

The book also makes it brutally clear that peace is better than war. But not like John Lennon tried to do. This book makes the argument for real. As an American man, raised on TomCruise and Stallone movies, I knew intellectually that peace was desirable, but I never felt in bones how desirable it really was. The book put the feeling for peace into me deeply.

This is a promising subject, the wars in the Balkans when Yugoslavia broke into its constituent pieces. Sara Novic's approach, the experiences of a young girl during the bombing of Zagreb, starts the novel off and works. We must disregard the fact that Zagreb got off relatively lightly; it was Sarajevo where the bombs fell relentlessly. Alas, it's somewhat downhill from there, especially the parts set in the United States, where most characters are wooden and lack depth. And I do so wish that we had learned more of our hero's time as a child soldier. Now that would have been illuminating.

Based on the Yugoslavian war during the 1990’s, the story, captivating from the first page, is divided into four parts and moves back and forth through time. 1991: Ana leads the life normal life of a school aged girl until division comes and neighbors base friendliness on accents and ethnicity. Bombings and airstrikes change the pattern of their daily lives. Food shortages, black outs, gunfire and death become the norm. On the particular day Ana’s parents seek help to save their baby daughter, Ana’s sickly sister, tragedy strikes and Ana’s life changes forever. To survive and stay alive, Ana joins bands of warrior children.
2001: Ana lives a normal life in New Jersey with her family, has a boyfriend, and is a student of English Literature in Manhattan. Ana has everything that she wants except peace in that she cannot put the war and the atrocities behind her. Ana decides to return to Croatia and confront the ghosts of the past.
The novel, descriptive and succinctly written, offers the Croatian view of the war and is the author’s first novel. The author has lived in both Croatia and the U.S. and currently resides in Queens, NY.

**Activity 3.1**

* 1. From the above story, analyze the following;
1. Plot, setting, point of view
2. Themes
3. Characterisation

UNIT FOUR

4.0 Novels

* House boy
* The synopsis of a novel
* ***Houseboy*** is a novel in the form of a diary written by Ferdinand Oyono, first published in 1956 by in French as ***Une vie de boy*** (Paris: René Julliard and translated into English in 1966 by John Reed for Heinemann's African Writers Ser.

## Plot summary

* The novel starts in Spanish Guinea with a Frenchman on vacation, who finds a man named Toundi, who has been injured and soon dies. The Frenchman finds his diary, which is called an "exercise book" by Toundi. The rest of the story consists of the diary (exercise book) that the Frenchman is supposedly reading. There is no further discussion of the Frenchman after this point.
* The first "exercise book" starts with Toundi living with his family. His father beats him constantly, and one day Toundi runs away from home to the rescue of Father Gilbert, a priest who lives nearby. His father comes back for him, telling Toundi that everything will be all right if he comes back. He rejects his father's offer and after this point no longer acknowledges his birth parents.
* Toundi treats Father Gilbert as his new father. Father Gilbert teaches Toundi to read and write, and about Catholicism. Toundi believes in Catholicism, but as the story progresses he drifts from his beliefs until the end, when he does not believe in God.
* Father Gilbert dies in a motorcycle accident a few months after meeting Toundi. Toundi is eventually taken to live with the Commandant, the man in charge of the surrounding colony. Toundi serves as houseboy for the Commandant. It becomes very clear that the events that go on in the house are more important to Toundi than his own life.
* About six months after Toundi comes to live with the Commandant, Madame, the Commandant's wife, arrives from France. She initially is a warm and caring woman, who is very beautiful. She catches the eye of almost every man in town, much to the Commandant's dismay.
* Soon after Madame arrives the Commandant leaves to go on tour again. Toundi is left with Madame to take care of the house. As time goes on, Madame becomes more and more hostile and disrespectful towards Toundi. When the Commandant returns, she is portrayed as a ruthless woman. While the Commandant was still on tour, it becomes obvious that she is bored with her life. She begins an affair with M. Moreau, the man in charge of the prison. M. Moreau is perceived to be ruthless against the Africans. One of Toundi's first experiences with M. Moreau was him whipping two other Africans nearly to death.
* The Commandant returns from touring, and it is later discovered that he knew about his wife's affair and returns because of it. The Commandant has a terrible argument with her, but after a few days they are getting along again.
* Madame becomes very disrespectful towards Toundi, partly because she does not like being there anymore, but mostly because she knows that he knew about her affair. Sophie, the lover of the water engineer, is accused of stealing his workers' salaries with the help of Toundi. He is taken to prison, where he is tortured into confessing to a crime he has not committed.
* Toundi is held in a hut near the police headquarters. Fortunately he has a friend who works there named Mendim, who is described as a very muscular man. He is feared by most other people but he soon comes to be known as Toundi's ally. M. Moreau orders Mendim to beat up Toundi, but Mendim throws ox's blood on him to make it look like he is injured. They spend the rest of the day playing cards.
* Toundi becomes sick and Mendim takes him to the hospital. They have to wait a very long time to see a doctor because the black doctor is the only doctor there, the other white doctor having been promoted to captain. The doctor finds out that Toundi's ribs are broken and have punctured his bronchi.
* While Toundi is still at the hospital, in a dazed state, M. Moreau returns with the white doctor and talks about punishing Toundi some more. After M. Moreau has left, Toundi escapes the hospital and heads to Spanish Guinea, where he was first introduced in the beginning of the novel.

**ACTIVITY**

From the story, analyze the following;

* Plot, setting, point of view
* Themes
* Characterisation

UNIT FIVE

5.0 Plays

* Dedani Kimathi
* The synopsis of the play

**Dedan Kimathi Waciuri** (31 October 1920 – 18 February 1957), born *Kimathi wa Waciuri,* was the senior military and spiritual leader of the *Mau Mau* Uprising*.* Widely regarded as a revolutionary leader, he led the armed military struggle against the British colonial regime in Kenya in the 1950s until his execution in 1957.

Kimathi is credited with leading efforts to create formal military structures within the Mau Mau, and convening a war council in 1953. He along with Musa Mwariama and Muthoni Kirima was one of three Field Marshals. His capture in 1956 and execution the next year led to the decline of the uprising against the British colonial government. Before his execution, he wrote that he was "...so busy and so happy preparing for heaven tomorrow."

Kenyan nationalists view him as the heroic figurehead of the Mau Mau rebellion against British colonial rule, while the British government saw him as a terrorist Despite being viewed with disdain by the Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi governments, Kimathi and his fellow Mau Mau rebels have been officially recognised as heroes in the struggle for Kenyan independence since the Mwai Kibaki administration, culminating in the unveiling of a Kimathi statue in 2007. This was reinforced by the passage of a new Constitution in 2010 calling for recognition of national heroes.

**Early life**

Kimathi was born in Thege Village Tetu division, Nyeri District. His father died in September 1920, a month before Kimathi was born. Kimathi was raised by his mother, Waibuthi, one of his father's three wives. He had two brothers, Wambararia and Wagura, and two sisters. At the age of fifteen, he enrolled at the local primary school, Karuna-ini, where he perfected his English. He continued his education in the secondary school Tumutumu CMS School.He would later use his language skills to write extensively before and during the Mau Mau uprising. He was a Debate Club member in his school and also showed ability in poetry. Kimathi balked at any efforts to discipline or control him, and was constantly in trouble with his teachers, and as a result, to have drifted in and out of education.

In 1940, Kimathi enlisted in the British Army, but was discharged after a month, allegedly for drunkenness and persistent violence against his fellow recruits. He drifted from job to job, from swineherd to primary school teacher, from which he was dismissed after accusations of violence against his pupils.

## Mau Mau movement

Around 1947 or 1948, whilst working in Ol Kalou, Kimathi came into contact with members of the Kenya African Union (KAU). By 1950 he had become secretary to the KAU branch at Ol Kalou, which was controlled by militant supporters of the Mau Mau cause. The Mau Mau began as the Land and Freedom Army (KLFA), a militant Kikuyu, Embu and Meru army which sought to reclaim land, which the British settlers had gradually stripped away from them. As the group's influence and membership widened it became a major threat to the colonial government.

Upon taking the oath of the Mau Mau, Kimathi in 1951 joined the Forty Group, the militant wing2 of the defunct Kikuyu Central Association. As branch secretary, Kimathi presided over oath-taking. He believed in compelling fellow Kikuyu by way of oath to bring solidarity to the independence movement. To achieve this he administered beatings and carried a double-barrelled shotgun. His activities with the group made him a target of the colonial government, and he was briefly arrested that same year but escaped with the help of local police. This marked the beginning of his violent uprising. He formed the Kenya Defence Council to co-ordinate all forest fighters in 1953.

Thirty-two settlers and about 100 British soldiers were killed by the Mau Mau, but many of Kimathi's most brutal attacks were aimed at members of the Kikuyu tribe, the largest ethnic group in Kenya, who remained loyal to the colonial administration. The young son of a chief who refused to join was cut in two by Kimathi's men, who drank his blood before flinging the two halves of the body at the boy's mother who was then killed. Hundreds of others who defied Kimathi were hacked to death. Many who did join underwent horrific initiation ceremonies: After being forced to drink human blood, semen and urine, recruits would in some cases be ordered to eat human brains, sometimes of their relatives, as well as the flesh of recently exhumed or murdered babies. Kimathi's brutality to his own side caused a constant stream of deserters to inform on him to Ian Henderson, the officer in charge of the man-hunt, which only accelerated Kimathi's capture.

What some others thought of him is summed up in the words of a surrendered terrorist from Fort Hall who said, "Nobody has helped the government as much as Kimathi, and for that reason he should be given a salary. He has killed more Mau Mau than any member of the security forces." Of that there was no doubt.

Because of his leadership in the rebellion, Kimathi was the most important rebel and the subject of many man hunts. Ian Henderson, dedicated his work during the Emergency to capturing or killing Kimathi.

Henderson's hunt for Kimathi was aided by deserters from within Kimathi's force caused by his brutal enforcement of discipline, Kimathi executing dissenters from his own ranks then burying them in antbear burrows.

## Capture and execution

## Kimathi was shot in the leg and captured by an askari called Ndirangu on 21 October 1956. His capture marked the beginning of the end of the forest war. He was charged with possession of a firearm (a .38 Webley Scott revolver), and ammunition.

A court presided over by Chief Justice O'Connor and with an all-black jury of Kenyans sentenced him to death while he lay in a hospital bed at the General Hospital Nyeri. His appeal was dismissed, and the death sentence upheld.

The day before his execution, he wrote a letter to a Father Marino asking him to get his son an education "He is far from many of your schools, but I trust that something must be done to see that he starts earlier under your care." He also wrote about his wife, Mukami, saying "She is detained at Kamiti Prison and I suggest that she will be released some time. I would like her to be comforted by sisters e.g. Sister Modester, etc. for she too feels lonely. And if by any possibility she can be near the mission as near Mathari so that she may be so close to the sisters and to the church."

Before his execution, his wife was secretly driven to Kamiti prison. He told her that ""I have no doubt in my mind that the British are determined to execute me. I have committed no crime. My only crime is that I am a Kenyan revolutionary who led a liberation army... Now If I must leave you and my family I have nothing to regret about. My blood will water the tree of Independence."

In the early morning of 18 February 1957 he was executed by hanging at the Kamiti Maximum Security Prison. He was buried in an unmarked grave, and his burial site remained unknown for 62 years until 25 October 2019 when the Dedan Kimathi Foundation reported that the grave-site had been identified at the Kamiti prison grounds

## Personal life

Kimathi was married to Mukami Kimathi. Among their children are sons Wachiuri and Maina and daughters Nyawira and Wanjugu. The government constructed a three-bedroomed house for Mukami at her farm in Kinangop, Nyandarua County in 2009 and provided her with a double cabin pickup for private use in 2012. In 2010, Kimathi's widow requested that the search for her husband's body be renewed so she could give him a proper burial.

### Official registration of the Mau Mau

On 11 November 2003, the Kibaki government formally registered the Mau Mau movement, disregarding the colonial-era legislation that had outlawed the organisation and branded its members "terrorists". In his remarks during the handing over of the certificate, Vice President Moody Awori regretted that it had taken 40 years for the group to be officially registered despite the sacrifices the Mau Mau had made for Kenya's independence.

### The Dedan Kimathi statue

The Kibaki government erected a 2.1 metre bronze statue titled Freedom Fighter Dedan Kimathi on a graphite plinth, in central Nairobi. The statue is at the junction of Kimathi Street and Mama Ngina Street. Kimathi, clad in military regalia, holds a rifle in the right hand and a dagger in the left, the last weapons he held in his struggle. The foundation stone for the statue was laid by Vice President Awori on 11 December 2006 and the completed statue unveiled by President Kibaki on 18 February 2007 coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the day he was executed. In his remarks, Kibaki paid homage to Kimathi as a man who not only paid the ultimate price for Kenya's liberation but also inspired others to fight against oppression.

The statue attracted praise from Kenyans as a long overdue recognition of the Mau Mau for their part in the struggle for independence. This was in marked contrast to the post-colonial norm of the Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Arap Moi governments' regard of the Mau Mau as terrorists.

On 12 September 2015, the British government unveiled a Mau Mau memorial statue in Nairobi's Uhuru Park that it funded "as a symbol of reconciliation between the British government, the Mau Mau, and all those who suffered". This followed a June 2013 decision by Britain to compensate more than 5,000 Kenyans tortured and abused during the Mau Mau insurgency.

### Nelson Mandela

Kimathi was held in high regard by anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela. In July 1990, five months after his release from 27 years of imprisonment by South Africa's apartheid regime, Mandela visited Nairobi and requested to see Kimathi's grave and meet his widow Mukami. Mandela's request was an embarrassing moment for the Moi administration, which had largely ignored Kimathi, like Jomo Kenyatta's government before it. It was an awkward moment searching for her in the village where she and her family lived forgotten in poverty. Mandela's request was not met. During a public address at the Kasarani Stadium in Nairobi before he left the country, Mandela stated his admiration for Kimathi, Musa Mwariama, Waruhiu Itote and other Mau Mau leaders who inspired his own struggle against injustice. It was only 15 years later in 2005, during his second visit to Kenya, that Mandela finally managed to meet Mukami as well as two of Kimathi's children. From the story, discuss the following;

* Plot, setting, point of view
* Themes
* Characterisation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

#### Read also the following synopsis of African stories and compare the themes and analyse other literary devices. Note that these are not full stories, therefore, you are advised to find the stories in full, for better understanding.

#### Black Moses by Alain Mabanckou

It’s 1970, and in the People’s Republic of Congo a Marxist-Leninist revolution is ushering in a new age. But over at the orphanage on the outskirts of Pointe-Noire where young Moses has grown up, the revolution has only strengthened the reign of terror of Dieudonné Ngoulmoumako, the institution’s corrupt director.

So Moses escapes to Pointe-Noire, where he finds a home with a larcenous band of Congolese Merry Men and among the Zairian prostitutes of the Trois-Cents quarter. But the authorities won’t leave Moses in peace, and intervene to chase both the Merry Men and the Trois-Cents girls out of town. All this injustice pushes poor Moses over the edge. Could he really be the Robin Hood of the Congo? Or is he just losing his marbles?

Black Moses is a larger-than-life comic tale of a young man obsessed with helping the helpless in an unjust world. It is also a vital new extension of Mabanckou’s extraordinary, interlinked body of work dedicated to his native Congo, and confirms his status as one of our great storytellers.

 The Secret Lives of Baba Segi’s Wives by Lola Shoneyin

To the dismay of her ambitious mother, Bolanle marries into a polygamous family, where she is the fourth wife of a rich, rotund patriarch, Baba Segi. She is a graduate and therefore a great prize, but even graduates must produce children and her husband’s persistent bellyache is a sign that things are not as they should be. Bolanle is too educated for the ‘white garment conmen’ Baba Segi would usually go to for fertility advice, so he takes her to hospital to discover the cause of her barrenness.

Weaving the voices of Baba Segi and his four competing wives into a portrait of a clamorous household of twelve, Lola Shoneyin evokes an extraordinary Nigerian family in splashes of vibrant colour.

**No Place to Call Home by JJ Bola**

Jean starts at a new school and struggles to fit in. He develops an unlikely friendship with rowdy class mate James, who gets him into a string of sticky situations; fights, theft, and more. At home, his parents, Mami and Papa, who fled political violence in Congo under the dictatorial regime of Le Marechal, to seek asylum as refugees – which Jean and his star-student little sister, Marie, have no knowledge of – pressure him to focus on school and sort his act out. Jean is then suspended, and Marie, who usually gets on his nerves, helps him keep his secret, which draws them closer together.

As the family attempts to integrate and navigate modern British society, as well as hold on to their roots and culture, they meet Tonton, a sapeur, womaniser, alcohol-loving, party enthusiast, who, much to Papa’s dislike, after losing his job, moves in with them. Tonton introduces the family – via his church where colourful characters such as Pastor Kaddi, Patricia and Nadege congregate – to a familiar community of fellow country-people, making them feel slightly less alone. They begin to settle, but the reality of their situation unravels a threat to their future, whilst the fear of uncertainty remains.

With colourful characters and luminous prose, ‘No Place To Call Home’ is a tale of belonging, identity and immigration, of hope and hopelessness, of loss –not by death, but by distance– and, by no means the least, of love.

 **The** **Joys of Motherhood by Buchi Emecheta**

Nnu Ego, a Nigerian woman, is ceremoniously married only to be cast off when she fails to conceive. When she finally succeeds in becoming a mother in a second marriage, Nnu Ego gains the respect of her family and her people. But as her family of eight children grows, the values of her rive, her people, and her country undergo bewildering changes, ultimately leaving her bereft of the pleasures that traditionally would be accorded her as a mother.

 **Blackass by A. Igoni Barerett**

Furo Wariboko, a young Nigerian, awakes the morning before a job interview to find that he’s been transformed into a white man. In this condition he plunges into the bustle of Lagos to make his fortune. With his red hair, green eyes, and pale skin, it seems he’s been completely changed. Well, almost. There is the matter of his family, his accent, his name. Oh, and his black ass. Furo must quickly learn to navigate a world made unfamiliar and deal with those who would use him for their own purposes. Taken in by a young woman called Syreeta and pursued by a writer named Igoni, Furo lands his first-ever job, adopts a new name, and soon finds himself evolving in unanticipated ways.

Igoni Barrett’s Blackassis a fierce comic satire that touches on everything from race to social media while at the same time questioning the values society places on us simply by virtue of the way we look. As he did in Love Is Power, or Something Like That, Barrett brilliantly depicts life in contemporary Nigeria and details the double-dealing and code-switching that are implicit in everyday business. But it’s Furo’s search for an identity–one deeper than skin–that leads to the final unravelling of his own carefully constructed story.

**The Hairdresser of Harare by Tendai Huchu**

Voted an Observer Top Ten Contemporary African Book 2012 and nominated for The Guardian’s Not the Booker Prize 2011. Vimbai is the star hairdresser of her salon, the smartest in Harare, Zimbabwe, until the enigmatic Dumisani appears. Losing many of her best customers to this good-looking, smooth-talking young man, Vimbai fears for her job, vital if she’s to provide for her young child. But in a remarkable reversal the two becomes allies, Dumi renting a room from Vimbai, then inviting her to a family wedding, where to her surprise, he introduces her to his rich parents as his ‘girlfriend’. Soon they are running their own Harare salon, attracting the wealthiest and most powerful clients in the city. But disaster is near, as Vimbai soon uncovers Dumi’s secret, a discovery that will result in brutality and tragedy, testing their relationship to the very limit. The Hairdresser of Harare is a stylish, funny and sophisticated first-hand account of life today in Zimbabwe’s capital city, confounding stereotypes and challenging injustice with equal fearlessness. This is an upbeat, charming, but at times heart breaking, story of friendship, prejudice and forgiveness from the heart of contemporary Africa.

**Prescribed Readings**

Bukangile G.R. and Yogo, M. (2010). *Literature in English*. Dar essalaam: Nyambari Nyangwine Publishers.

Nyangwine, N. and Bukangile G.R. (2008). *Ordinary Level Literature*. Dar es-salaam: Nyambari Nyangwine Publishers.