

AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN LITERATURES

COURSE CODE: M21EG01DE

Postgraduate Programme in English
Discipline Specific Elective Course



SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

SELF LEARNING MATERIAL

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

Vision

To increase access of potential learners of all categories to higher education, research and training, and ensure equity through delivery of high quality processes and outcomes fostering inclusive educational empowerment for social advancement.

Mission

To be benchmarked as a model for conservation and dissemination of knowledge and skill on blended and virtual mode in education, training and research for normal, continuing, and adult learners.

Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

African and Caribbean Literatures

Course Code: M21EG01DE

Semester - III

**Discipline Specific Elective Course
Postgraduate Programme in English
Self Learning Material**



**SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY**

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

African and Caribbean Literatures

M21EG01DE

Discipline Specific Elective Course

Semester - III

MA English



**SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY**

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, by mimeograph or any other means, without permission in writing from Sreenarayanaguru Open University. Printed and published on behalf of Sreenarayanaguru Open University by Registrar, SGOU, Kollam.

www.sgou.ac.in

ISBN 978-81-967184-6-6



DOCUMENTATION

Academic Committee

Prof. Dr. Lal C. A.	Dr. Sreehari A. C.
Prof. Dr. K. Balakrishnan	Dr. Manoj S.
Prof. Dr. Kishore Ram	Dr. C. S. Biju
Prof. Dr. M. Devakumar	Dr. K. J. Vargheese
Prof. Dr. B. S. Jamuna	Dr. Indhu B.

Development of the Content

Dr. Aravind S. G.

Review

Content	: Dr. S. Subash Chandran
Format	: Dr. I. G. Shibi
Linguistics	: Dr. C. Ajayan

Edit

Dr. S. Subash Chandran

Scrutiny

Dr. Vincent B. Netto, Dr. Anfal M., Dr. Erfan K., Dr. Anupriya Patra, Dr. Sucheta Sankar, Dr. Aravind S. G.

Co-ordination

Dr. I. G. Shibi and Team SLM

Design Control

Azeem Babu T. A.

Cover Design

Jobin J.

Production

January 2024

Copyright

© Sreenarayanaguru Open University 2024



Dear

I greet all of you with deep delight and great excitement. I welcome you to the Sreenarayanaguru Open University.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University was established in September 2020 as a state initiative for fostering higher education in open and distance mode. We shaped our dreams through a pathway defined by a dictum 'access and quality define equity'. It provides all reasons to us for the celebration of quality in the process of education. I am overwhelmed to let you know that we have resolved not to become ourselves a reason or cause a reason for the dissemination of inferior education. It sets the pace as well as the destination. The name of the University centres around the aura of Sreenarayanaguru, the great renaissance thinker of modern India. His name is a reminder for us to ensure quality in the delivery of all academic endeavours.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University rests on the practical framework of the popularly known "blended format". Learner on distance mode obviously has limitations in getting exposed to the full potential of classroom learning experience. Our pedagogical basket has three entities viz Self Learning Material, Classroom Counselling and Virtual modes. This combination is expected to provide high voltage in learning as well as teaching experiences. Care has been taken to ensure quality endeavours across all the entities.

The University is committed to provide you stimulating learning experience. The Self Learning Materials have been drawn up with a very clear prescription. It recognizes the autonomy of an adult learner and a journey through the treasures of the curriculum structured with provisions for interactive learning, interrogative reflections on the content and didactic discussion through illustrative scenarios. The University takes a strong position that the learner is to be engaged in a dialogue with the content and the materials are shaped to elicit reflections in the form of questions. The questions of the learner are considered to be the vital milestones in the pedagogy of the system of the University as well as the trajectory of the learner's progression. I would like to request you to bestow your personal attention in generating questions after having an intense dialogue with the content, as it has connection with the internal assessment.

Feel free to write to us about anything that you feel relevant regarding the academic programme.

Wish you the best.



Regards,
Dr. P. M. Mubarak Pasha

01.01.2024

CONTENTS

BLOCK 1	Socio-Political and Literary Context	1
Unit 1	Race, Ethnicity and Colonial Legacies in African and Caribbean Literatures	2
Unit 2	Identity and Resistance Themes in African and Caribbean Literatures	11
Unit 3	Cultural Resistance in Post-colonial African and Caribbean Literatures	25
Unit 4	Exploring African and Caribbean Literary Landscapes	40
BLOCK 2	Poetry and Drama	53
Unit 1	Poetry	54
Unit 2	Drama	74
BLOCK 3	Prose and Fiction	88
Unit 1	Prose	89
Unit 2	Fiction	106
BLOCK 4	Critical Responses	148
Unit 1	Postcolonialism	149
Unit 2	Gender Identity and Displacement	159
Unit 3	Nationalism and Independence	169

Socio-Political and Literary Context

BLOCK-01

Block Content

Unit 1 : Race, Ethnicity and Colonial Legacies in African and Caribbean Literatures

Unit 2 : Identity and Resistance Themes in African and Caribbean Literatures

Unit 3 : Cultural Resistance in Post-colonial African and Caribbean Literatures

Unit 4 : Exploring African and Caribbean Literary Landscapes



Unit 1

Race, Ethnicity and Colonial Legacies in African and Caribbean Literatures

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ understand the rich and diverse literary traditions in Africa and the Caribbean
- ▶ analyse the profound effects of colonialism on African and Caribbean literatures
- ▶ explore the recurring themes of resistance and independence in African and Caribbean literatures
- ▶ gain insights into how themes of race and ethnicity are central to African and Caribbean literatures

Background

The impact of colonialism, race, and ethnicity on African and Caribbean literature is deeply intertwined with the socio-political context of these regions. Colonialism played a pivotal role in shaping the literary landscape, as it brought about a complex power dynamic between colonisers and the colonised. In Africa, the European colonial powers imposed their languages, cultures, and values upon the indigenous populations, leading to a clash of identities and the erasure of native languages and traditions. This cultural imposition created a fertile ground for resistance and the emergence of post-colonial literature. African writers like Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Wole Soyinka used their works to critique the colonial legacy, exploring themes of identity, cultural dislocation, and the struggle for independence.

Similarly, in the Caribbean, the legacy of colonialism looms large in the literature of the region. Caribbean nations were subjected to colonisation by various European powers, including Britain, France, Spain, and the Netherlands. The African diaspora and the transatlantic slave trade further complicated the region's racial and ethnic dynamics. This complex historical backdrop gave rise to literary voices like Derek Walcott, Jamaica Kincaid, and Edwidge Danticat, who grappled with questions of identity, hybridity, and the legacy of slavery in their works. The socio-political context of Caribbean literature often reflects the ongoing struggle for independence, self-determination, and the reclamation of cultural roots.



Keywords

Colonialism, Identity, Hybridity, Resistance, Independence, Linguistic imperialism, Decolonisation, Race and ethnicity

Discussion

► Tradition

In Africa, the rich history of oral and written creative traditions dates back to ancient times. Long before European colonisation and the introduction of European languages, African societies had their own bards, storytellers, scribes, poets, and authors who expressed their creativity in languages such as Kiswahili and Amharic. These indigenous traditions have not only survived but also thrived alongside the influences of European, American, and Asian literary traditions. Over the centuries, African authors have drawn inspiration from both their native oral and written traditions and those from other parts of the world, resulting in a diverse and dynamic literary landscape that continues to evolve in contemporary times. However, the influence of colonialism and the encounters between colonisers and the African and Caribbean societies has had a deep and intricate effect on their literatures. This has moulded the themes, storytelling techniques, and the sense of identity present in these literary traditions. The African and Caribbean regions underwent long periods of European colonisation, resulting in intricate socio-political and cultural dynamics that still hold significance in the works of writers hailing from these regions.

► Colonialism

1.1.1 Impact Of Colonialism/Colonial Encounters

Colonialism had a profound impact on Africa and the Caribbean, leading to the disturbance of established social systems and customary lifestyles. This disturbance became a prominent and recurrent theme in the literature produced in these regions. Authors frequently portrayed the turmoil and chaos brought about by colonial interactions, which encompassed the displacement of native communities, the gradual erosion of cultural practices, and the enforced imposition of European ideals and languages.

One of the central concerns of African and Caribbean literature is the exploration of identity in the wake of colonialism. The collision of different cultures and races



► Identity

during the colonial period led to the emergence of complex hybrid identities. The literature often explores the characters' quests for self-discovery and self-definition. Writers depict the struggles of individuals torn between multiple cultural, ethnic, and racial identities. This search for self often involves reconciling the past with the present and coming to terms with the effects of colonialism. Many characters in African and Caribbean literatures embody hybrid identities. These individuals are shaped by a mix of cultural influences, often resulting from intercultural marriages, migration, or the blending of indigenous and colonial cultures. Hybrid identities can be both a source of strength and a challenge, as individuals grapple with the complexities of belonging to multiple cultural worlds. Writers like Chinua Achebe, in *Things Fall Apart*, and Jean Rhys, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, address the struggles of characters caught between their indigenous cultures and the dominant colonial culture.

► Hybridity

Colonialism introduced European languages to these regions, but African and Caribbean writers have used these languages in innovative ways. They incorporate indigenous languages, dialects, and vernacular expressions into their works, creating a unique linguistic hybridity that reflects the cultural diversity of their societies. Cultural hybridity is evident in religious practices as well. Many African and Caribbean societies adopted Christianity or Islam during the colonial period, but they often fused these religions with traditional indigenous beliefs and practices. This syncretism is a recurring theme in literature, reflecting the spiritual and cultural diversity of these regions.

► Resistance

African and Caribbean literatures are replete with narratives of resistance against colonial oppression. Resistance and independence are recurring themes in African and Caribbean literatures, reflecting the historical struggles of these regions against colonial oppression, exploitation, and the quest for self-determination. Literature itself becomes a tool of resistance, as writers use their works to berate colonialism, expose its injustices, and inspire readers to resist oppression. Literature explores the psychological resistance of individuals and communities. Writers delve into the ways in which colonised people maintained their dignity, cultural identity, and sense of self-worth in the face of dehumanizing colonial practices. Most often cultural practices, oral traditions, and folklore become instruments of resistance, serving as a means of preserving cultural identity and heritage. Writers like Frantz Fanon (from

Martinique) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (from Kenya) wrote extensively about the psychological and physical violence of colonialism and the necessity of resistance. Their works underscore the importance of regaining agency and self-determination.

► *The Black Jacobins*
(1938)

Another noteworthy example is the Trinidadian writer C.L.R. James, whose seminal work *The Black Jacobins* (1938) stands as a testament to the power of literature in the pursuit of liberation. This book is a historical account of the Haitian Revolution, a groundbreaking event in the struggle for freedom and justice. James’s writing emphasises the crucial role of historical consciousness in the fight against colonialism. *The Black Jacobins* not only chronicles the events of the Haitian Revolution but also underscores the importance of understanding one’s history in the broader context of resistance to colonial oppression. By meticulously researching and narrating the story of the Haitian Revolution, C.L.R. James demonstrated how literature can be a tool for bringing the past to life, ensuring that the lessons and legacies of historical struggles remain relevant for contemporary readers.

► Independence

African and Caribbean literatures frequently delve into the long and difficult journey towards achieving political independence. These literary works beautifully capture the dreams, sacrifices, and collective endeavours of individuals and communities who are determined to liberate themselves from the shackles of colonial rule. The struggle for independence is portrayed as a pivotal moment in the history of these regions, one that prompts a profound re-examination of national identity. Within these writings, authors grapple with profound questions concerning the essence of being a citizen in a newly independent nation, the influence of indigenous cultures in shaping national identity, and the hurdles of fostering a sense of unity among diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Renowned literary figures such as Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, and Aimé Césaire have produced incredibly impactful works that boldly challenge the prevailing colonial narratives and ideologies.

► Post-colonial
condition

In addition to examining the struggles that emerged following independence, literature also deals with the intricate aspects of nation-building, the formation of new political systems, and the complexities inherent in governing a newly independent country. These themes are explored in various literary works that thematise the post-colonial condition.



► Linguistic struggle

However, the linguistic imperialism imposed by the colonial powers on African and Caribbean populations has fundamentally altered the linguistic landscape of these regions. English, French, and Portuguese became the official languages of administration, education, and governance. Writers in African and Caribbean countries often adopted these colonial languages for their literary works. They used them subversively to convey their own cultural narratives and challenge the colonial discourse. This subversion took various forms, including satire, allegory, and symbolism, and allowed authors to critique colonialism while remaining within the linguistic confines imposed by the colonisers. Many writers in Africa and the Caribbean were torn between the use of colonial languages for wider readership and the desire to maintain their indigenous languages and cultural identities. This struggle became a recurrent theme in their literary works. Authors grappled with questions of authenticity and the preservation of their cultural heritage.

► Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o

A prominent example of the struggle to reclaim indigenous languages and identities can be seen in the case of Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. Ngũgĩ initially wrote in English but later decided to write exclusively in Kikuyu. His decision was motivated by the belief that language is not neutral and that writing in English perpetuated the colonial legacy. He argued that reclaiming indigenous languages was essential for decolonisation and the revitalisation of African cultures. Ngũgĩ's decision, as well as similar choices made by other writers, had a significant impact on the literary landscape of Africa and the Caribbean. It inspired a wave of literature in indigenous languages, fostering a sense of cultural pride and providing a platform for the expression of local narratives, traditions, and experiences.

► Decolonisation

In a larger perspective, the incorporation of colonial languages in African and Caribbean literature served as a powerful means of resistance and emancipation. It provided authors with a platform to confront and defy the dominance of colonial powers, ultimately playing a significant role in the process of decolonisation by reshaping their cultural and national identities

► Race and ethnicity

1.1.2 Race and Ethnicity

African and Caribbean literatures are profoundly shaped by themes of race and ethnicity. These themes are central to the narratives and literary expressions of these regions,

reflecting the historical, social, and cultural complexities that have characterised the experiences of African and Caribbean peoples.

► Racial hierarchies

The legacy of European colonialism in Africa and the Caribbean had a significant impact on issues of race and ethnicity as well. Colonial powers imposed racial hierarchies, which often involved the denigration and dehumanisation of indigenous and African populations. These hierarchies and the resulting racial prejudices are recurrent themes in literature, as authors explore the lasting effects of colonialism on identity and social dynamics. For instance, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe (Nigeria) explores the impact of European colonialism on Igbo society, particularly the clash of cultures and the erosion of traditional Igbo identity.

► Racial injustices

Many works of African and Caribbean literatures focus on the resistance to racial and ethnic oppression and the quest for liberation. Jamaica Kincaid's book-length essay, *A Small Place* (1988) reflects on the legacy of colonialism and resistance in Antigua, highlighting the power of individuals to confront racial and colonial injustices. Writers frequently depict individuals and communities who challenge racial injustices and work toward social and political change, highlighting the resilience and agency of marginalised groups.

► Literary Empowerment

African and Caribbean literatures play a crucial role in giving voice to the exploration of race and ethnicity, serving as a medium to challenge the lasting effects of colonialism and capturing the vibrant, varied, and intricate realities of individuals hailing from these regions. These literary works provide invaluable perspectives on the hardships, achievements, and ever-evolving sense of self experiences by people and communities as they navigate the aftermath of historical injustices and strive for social equality and cultural recognition.

Summarised Overview

The rich history of oral and written creative traditions in Africa predates European colonisation, with indigenous bards, storytellers, and authors expressing creativity in languages like Kiswahili and Amharic. Despite the influences of European, American, and Asian literary traditions, African and Caribbean literatures have thrived, shaped by encounters with colonialism. Themes of identity, resistance against colonial oppression, and



the struggles of achieving political independence are central. Authors, including Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, address the complexities of hybrid identities and the impact of linguistic imperialism. Literature becomes a tool of resistance, with works like C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins* showcasing the power of historical consciousness. The struggle to reclaim indigenous languages, exemplified by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, reflects the tension between wider readership and cultural preservation. African and Caribbean literature confronts issues of race and ethnicity, exploring the lasting effects of colonialism on identity and social dynamics. These works serve as a vital medium to challenge historical injustices and capture the intricate realities of individuals striving for social equality and cultural recognition in the aftermath of colonial legacies.

Assignments

1. How did African and Caribbean societies express their creativity in oral and written traditions before European colonisation?
2. Explore the impact of colonialism on African and Caribbean literatures, including themes, storytelling techniques, and identity.
3. Discuss the emergence of hybrid identities in African and Caribbean literature, considering the influence of different cultures during the colonial period.
4. Analyse the role of resistance and independence as recurring themes in African and Caribbean literatures, highlighting specific works and authors.
5. Examine the linguistic aspects of African and Caribbean literature, exploring how writers incorporate indigenous languages and challenge colonial linguistic dominance. er readership and the preservation of indigenous languages and identities.

Suggested Reading

1. Benítez-Rojo, Antonio. *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: Cross-cultural studies*. Netherlands, J. Benjamins, 1994.
2. Broten, Nick. *The Black Jacobins*. United Kingdom, Macat International Limited, 2017.
3. *Caribbean Literature in a Global Context*. Trinidad and Tobago, Lexicon, 2006.
4. Jeyifo, Biodun. *Wole Soyinka: Politics, Poetics, and Postcolonialism*. Switzerland, Cambridge University Press, 2003.



Reference

1. Abiola Irele, F., and Simon Gikandi. *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature*. National Digital Library of Ethiopia, http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/88320/1/%5BF._Abiola_Irele%2C_Simon_Gikandi%5D_The_Cambridge_His%28BookFi.org%29%20%281%29.pdf.
2. *Caribbean Literature: Introductory Reading*. University of Lucknow Digital Resource Center, https://udrc.lkouniv.ac.in/Content/Department-Content/SM_f9064a3b-ba63-411d-ab38-0731d323b5b3_6.pdf.
3. *African Literature*. Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/art/African-literature>.
4. Background to Caribbean Literature. Academia.edu, https://www.academia.edu/19789113/BACKGROUND_TO_CARIBBEAN_LITERATURE.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.



SGOU

Unit 2

Identity and Resistance Themes in African and Caribbean Literatures

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ understand African and Caribbean literary traditions
- ▶ analyse the profound effects of colonialism on African and Caribbean literature
- ▶ analyse the exploration of identity in post-colonial literature
- ▶ understand the recurring themes of resistance against colonial oppression and the struggles for independence

Background

The literary movement known as Negritude emerged in the intellectual milieu of 1930s and 1940s Paris. It was a response by black writers who sought to assert their cultural identity through the medium of the French language. Aimé Césaire, a pioneering figure in the movement, coined the term in his monumental poem *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (*Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*). In this poem, Césaire passionately declares that “my negritude is not a stone, its deafness hurled against the clamour of the day” but instead, his negritude “takes root in the ardent flesh of the soil.” Alongside Césaire, Léon Damas and Léopold Sédar Senghor also played significant roles in shaping the definition and essence of Negritude through their own poetic works. Some of the most renowned Negritude pieces include Damas’s *Pigments*, Senghor’s *Hosties noire* and *Chants d'ombre*, and Césaire’s *Cahier*. These poets were united in their creative endeavours through their collaboration on the journal *L'Étudiant noir*.

The themes of colonialism, nationalism, liberation, tradition, displacement, and rootlessness are intricately interwoven in African and Caribbean literatures that emerged during and after the Negritude movement. Colonialism serves as the backdrop, with writers shedding light on the destructive forces of European colonisation, the suppression of local cultures, and the degradation of indigenous peoples. Nationalism, on the other hand, becomes the rallying cry for the reclamation of autonomy and identity, with literature reflecting the desire for self-determination and resistance to colonial



powers. Liberation is a recurring theme, symbolising the aspiration for political and cultural freedom, drawing parallels with the broader struggle for civil rights and equality. Tradition is cherished and celebrated as a source of cultural strength, while displacement and rootlessness are depicted as the tragic consequences of forced migration, slavery, and the dispersal of communities. These themes are woven into compelling narratives that serve both as a form of protest and a means of preserving cultural heritage, allowing African and Caribbean writers to assert their identities and challenge the legacies of colonialism.

Keywords

Negritude, Harlem Renaissance, Colonialism, Liberation, Tradition, Displacement, Creolization

Discussion

1.2.1 The Negritude movement

The Negritude movement, that originated in the mid-20th century, was a literary and cultural movement primarily associated with African and Caribbean writers. It emerged as a response to the social and political upheaval brought about by colonialism and sought to celebrate and assert the cultural identity, heritage, and dignity of black people across the African diaspora. Léopold Sédar Senghor, a prominent figure in the movement, together with Aimé Césaire from the island of Martinique and Léon Damas hailing from French Guiana, conducted a thorough examination of Western ideals and undertook a profound reassessment of African culture.

The Harlem Renaissance, a literary and cultural flourishing among a group of Black intellectuals and artists (including novelists and poets) in the United States, in New York City, during the 1920s, had an impact on the Negritude movement. The foundation for black expressiveness was created by writers like Claude McKay and Langston Hughes. Senghor, Damas, and Césaire all took inspiration from one another's work. Other artistic influences were jazz and earlier fin-de-siècle poets such as Rimbaud, Mallarmé, and Baudelaire.

The Negritude movement emerged as a response to the marginalisation of the black people throughout history. It

► Negritude Movement Origin

► The Harlem Renaissance

► The Negritude movement

aimed to establish the distinct and independent identity of black individuals worldwide. Two prominent figures in this movement, Césaire and Damas, hailing from Martinique and French Guiana respectively, deeply understood the impact of the transatlantic slave trade on their cultural heritage. Their literary works vividly expressed their feelings of frustration and longing for their African motherland. Senghor, a Senegalese poet, focused more on the preservation of African traditions in his writings. While each poet had their own unique perspective, it was the combination of these diverse viewpoints that ultimately fuelled and nourished the Negritude movement.

► Criticism against the Negritude Movement

The movement of *Négritude* garnered support from various individuals such as French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and Jacques Roumain, the founder of the Haitian Communist party. However, *Négritude* also faced criticism from its opponents who accused the movement of promoting black exoticism or fetishization and even creating another form of racism. The movement faced significant opposition from Wole Soyinka. Soyinka argued that the movement's emphasis on openly expressing pride in their racial identity only perpetuated a defensive mindset among black individuals. He famously stated, "A tiger doesn't proclaim its tigerness; it jumps on its prey." In response to the criticisms, Senghor argued that *Négritude* was not about racialism or self-negation. Instead, it focused on rooting oneself in one's own identity and confirming one's existence. Senghor further explained that *Négritude* was akin to what some English-speaking Africans referred to as the African personality. Despite all the criticism, *Négritude* has maintained its relevance and influence from the twentieth century to the present day.

► Consequences of colonialism

1.2.2 The Themes of Colonialism

Themes related to the historical phenomenon of colonialism are widely explored and deeply ingrained in to the literatures of Africa and the Caribbean. These works serve as a powerful tool for authors to delve into the complex aftermath of European colonisation, examining its long-lasting impacts on culture, societal structures, and the resistance against oppressive systems. While delving into African and Caribbean literature, one frequently encounters narratives that vividly depict the devastating consequences of colonialism on indigenous cultures and societies. These narratives shed light on the profound loss of cultural identity, traditions, and social frameworks that occurred as a direct result of European imperial domination. Moreover, they emphasise how colonialism destroyed pre-



existing systems and established hierarchical structures that greatly favoured the colonisers. A prime example of this can be found in Chinua Achebe's renowned novel *Things Fall Apart*, which vividly portrays the destructive effects of British colonialism on Igbo society in Nigeria. Through his portrayal, Achebe effectively showcases the disintegration of traditional Igbo culture and the inevitable clashes that emerged as a result of colonial rule.

- ▶ Resistance and subversion against colonial power

The era of colonialism saw the imposition of European cultural values and norms on colonised regions, resulting in a constant struggle for cultural autonomy and preservation. The literatures originating from these regions delve into the consequences of this imposition, particularly Western languages, religions, and educational systems, which often led to the erosion of indigenous languages and customs. In the thought-provoking work *A Small Place* by Jamaica Kincaid, the author critically reflects on the overwhelming cultural dominance of British colonialism in Antigua, highlighting the erasure of indigenous culture and the imposition of colonial values and project them as major concerns. Moreover, numerous works of African and Caribbean literatures place strong emphasis on the resistance and subversion of colonial power. These authors skilfully depict the diverse forms of resistance witnessed during this period, ranging from subtle acts of defiance to active movements fighting for independence and self-determination. A prime example of this can be found in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's powerful novel *Petals of Blood*, which vividly portrays the arduous struggle faced by Kenyans as they fought to liberate themselves from the oppressive grasp of British colonial rule. Through his compelling narrative, Thiong'o effectively conveys the determination and resilience of individuals who were driven to overturn the unjust systems imposed upon them by their colonisers.

- ▶ Psychological effects of colonialism

Colonialism also had profound psychological effects on colonised populations. This psychological dimension of colonialism is a topic extensively explored in literature, delving into the deep-seated trauma, dehumanisation, and identity crises endured by individuals subjected to the oppressive racial and cultural prejudices imposed by colonial powers. A compelling example of this exploration can be seen in Jean Rhys's novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, where the narrative delves into the profound psychological torment experienced by Antoinette, a white Creole woman living in post-colonial

- ▶ The theme of colonialism

Jamaica. In her struggle to come to terms with her own sense of self and her displacement in a society shaped by colonialism, Antoinette's story serves as a powerful illustration of the psychological toll inflicted by colonial rule on the colonised.

Thus, the theme of colonialism holds significant importance in African and Caribbean literatures, serving as a prominent and ever-present motif that thematises the far-reaching effects of imperial rule and its lasting influence on the cultural, social, and political aspects of these regions. By means of their literary creations, authors illuminate the intricate nature, resilience, and adaptability of societies that have wrestled with the aftermath of colonialism, while also highlighting the crucial significance of resistance, identity, and the revival of cultural heritage in the face of oppressive structures.

1.2.3 Liberation

- ▶ The theme of liberation

The theme of liberation in literature not only calls on individuals, communities, and even entire continents to recognise and embrace the positive aspects of their heritage, but also motivates them to seek solutions to the challenges they face. Wole Soyinka, in addition to celebrating Yoruba culture, also emphasises the importance of liberation in his literary works. In his prison notes, titled "The Man Died," he asserts that the next step towards achieving self-liberation is the establishment of a common language across the continent, which would serve as a tool for ongoing struggle. Similarly, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a Kenyan writer, believes that the re-evaluation of Kenyan history is crucial for breaking free from the lingering effects of colonialism. In his novel, *Petals of Blood*, he uses characters like Karega and Joseph to illustrate that the pursuit of liberation is an ongoing journey that reflects the collective awareness and consciousness of society.

- ▶ Works on liberation

Ayi Kwei Armah is a Ghanaian author best known for his novels. Following Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka in the line of African authors, Armah is said to "epitomise an era of intense despair." In addition to their artistic allure, Ayi Kwei Armah's novels serve a dual purpose as powerful instruments of defiance and of emancipation. Specifically, his literary creations, namely *Two Thousand Seasons* and *The Healers*, are widely recognised as works of liberation. These remarkable pieces of literature offer a groundbreaking and revolutionary outlook on various aspects. Armah's ingenious



approach entails incorporating Africa itself as the central plot, character, theme, and circumstance within his novels, showcasing his unwavering commitment to freeing the continent from the shackles of historical slavery, colonialism, and the modern-day neo-colonialism that continues to exert its dominance.

► *Two Thousand Seasons*

Two Thousand Seasons offers a comprehensive examination of Africa's historical journey, spanning from ancient times to the potential future. It meticulously traces the experiences of African individuals as they grapple with the oppressive forces of cultural, religious, economic, and social enslavement. The book passionately implores for a collective effort to fight for their emancipation. In essence, this novel serves as a powerful battleground, seeking not only to restore Africa's tarnished reputation but also to free it from the shackles of slavery, fragmentation, misrepresentation, and the erosion of its distinct African cultural heritage.

1.2.4 Nationalism

► Nationalism

Nationalism is intricately woven into the fabric of African and Caribbean literatures, as it reflects the aspiration to build and define independent nations. Authors examine the processes of nation-building, the complexities of forging national identities, and the challenges of uniting diverse ethnic and cultural groups under a common banner. Nationalism also entails a critical evaluation of the historical and social forces that have shaped post-colonial societies. Aime Cesaire's *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* articulates the theme of nationalism in the context of Martinique's identity and its relationship with France. The poem celebrates Martinique's unique cultural and historical heritage, emphasizing the importance of self-discovery and national pride.

Aime Cesaire's *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, the book-length poem's French title, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* is variously translated as *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, *Return to My Native Land* or *Journal of Homecoming*.

► The sense of self in the face of a colonial force

Achebe's novel, *Arrow of God*, deals with the struggles faced by an African man as he grapples with his sense of self in the face of a colonial force that seeks to reshape his community and shatter his security. This story not only highlights the ongoing issues surrounding identity in Nigeria, but also serves as a cautionary tale for the entire continent. It raises important questions about the status of ethnic groups like the Iba and Yoruba within the framework of a nation.

- ▶ Complexities of post-colonial identity

Are they simply tribes or do they hold a more significant role in the nation's identity? African writers argue that until Africans fully understand and embrace their pre-colonial roots, and reconstruct their societies accordingly, true ethnic coexistence and national harmony will remain elusive.

Another point of contention among African writers is the use of colonial languages as national languages. Some argue that these languages perpetuate colonial dominance, while others see them as a practical means of communication and unity. Achebe's *Arrow of God* serves as a prime example of a narrative that explores the complexities of post-colonial identity, as it seeks to identify the pivotal moment when a society transitions from a pre-colonial identity to a national one.

1.2.5 Tradition

- ▶ The theme of tradition

The theme of tradition is a recurring motif in both African and Caribbean literature, as authors consistently emphasise the importance of preserving cultural heritage and ancestral customs. These literary works serve as a celebration of the endurance and continuation of traditional practices, even when faced with external pressures to assimilate or change. By delving into indigenous beliefs, rituals, and storytelling, these authors are able to highlight the cultural richness and resilience found within these traditions. In Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, the theme of tradition is intricately interwoven into the story of Janie Crawford, as she embarks on a transformative journey of self-discovery. Throughout the novel, Hurston explores the stark contrast between traditional and contemporary values within the African American community, underscoring the significance of honouring one's cultural roots.

- ▶ Achebe's literary prowess

In sum, Achebe's literary prowess shines through in both *Things Fall Apart* and *A Man of the People*, as he skilfully weaves together narratives that probe into the intricate web of customs, traditions, and systems that govern societies. By immersing readers in these richly detailed worlds, Achebe prompts us to reflect on the enduring importance of social harmony and the struggle to safeguard age-old traditions in the face of modernity. Through his astute critique, Achebe challenges readers to critically examine the impact of contemporary politics on traditional societies, forcing us to confront the delicate balance between progress and preservation. In this thought-provoking narrative, Achebe

reminds us of the inherent vulnerability of cherished customs and traditions when confronted with the machinations of power-hungry individuals. Furthermore, Achebe delves into the multifaceted systems that govern the village, shedding light on the educational, religious, and hierarchical structures that underpin the society. Through his insightful exploration of these systems, Achebe offers the readers a comprehensive understanding of the village's intricate social dynamics, emphasising the interconnectedness of its members and the role each individual plays in sustaining collective well-being.

► A Man of the People

In a striking departure from the captivating world of *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe takes a satirical stance in his novel *A Man of the People*, exposing the exploitation of local traditions and customs by modern politicians driven solely by their self-serving agendas. With sharp wit and incisive commentary, Achebe unveils the manipulative tactics employed by these politicians, revealing how they cunningly manipulate the deeply ingrained beliefs and practices of the community to further their own personal interests.

► Ngugi wa Thiong'o

Ngugi wa Thiong'o attempts to elevate the cultural history of Africa in all of his works by outlining Kenyans' colonial servitude and examining what each Kenyan was, is, and is being led into. His book, *Petals of Blood*, depicts a traditional Kikuyu community and describes how the arrival of the Europeans ruined the Kikuyus' peaceful way of life. In this book, he depicts the life of a young guy named Waiyaki, who is unsuccessful in bringing Christianity and traditionalism together. This was not the problem of Waiyaki alone, it was a widespread socioeconomic issue that many nations and tribes experienced in the 1920s. The arrival of the Europeans disrupted the social life of the indigenous cultures that strove to foster collective consciousness. According to Ngugi, the general public's struggle to decide between traditionalism and Christianity has left them completely perplexed. He contends that it would have been preferable to combine the positive aspects of both faiths and thus to achieve a reconciliation of the two. However, the lack of social awareness among the populace had brought about disorder in society, which finally resulted in the collapse of traditional values.

Africa has a deep-rooted and renowned tradition of oral storytelling as well. One notable figure who delved into the poetic forms of the Ewe ethnic group in Ghana was Kofi Awoonor. His extensive research led to the publication

► Oral storytelling

of a remarkable collection titled *Guardians of the Sacred Wood: Ewe Poetry*. In this anthology, Awoonor presents his English translations of the captivating oral recitations that had been passed down through generations. Drawing a parallel to Awoonor's work, the poetry of Okot p' Bitek also reflects a connection between the traditional and the modern.

► The concept of displacement

1.2.6 Displacement

The concept of place and the experience of displacement play significant roles in African literature, and these themes emerged within the context of a complex history of colonisation and decolonisation. Displacement resulting from colonisation can manifest in various ways, such as physical removal from one's homeland or figurative displacement within the African literary canon. This canon has predominantly been shaped by white African writers, leading to a figurative displacement for black African writers. Additionally, displacement can be caused by the appropriation of land by European colonisers, forced removals under apartheid laws, imprisonment, or hostile political policies. Soyinka's novel, *Season of Anomy*, delves into the processes of displacement, elimination, and substitution.

► The sense of rootlessness

In the novel *A Man of the People*, Achebe explores the post-colonial state of a modern African nation that is in the process of breaking away from its traditional past. His storytelling, highlights the flaws and shortcomings that arise in a society that is losing its traditional values, as well as the opportunistic behaviours exhibited by the local politicians who are newly emerging in this changing landscape. These factors lead to a sense of disconnection from one's homeland and a feeling of rootlessness, which can be attributed to various causes such as displacement, exile, or other similar circumstances. A significant aspect that intensifies this rootlessness is the juxtaposition of the native traditions with the foreign traditions brought by the colonisers. The clash between these two contrasting sets of beliefs and practices, as well as the conflict between tradition and modernity, reality and the supernatural, further deepens the sense of rootlessness experienced by the characters in the novel. This theme of rootlessness is explored not only in *A Man of the People* but also finds its expression in African poetry, like Kofi Awoonor's "The Cathedral," where the poet delves into the complexities of this feeling of being uprooted from one's cultural heritage.



1.2.7 Creolization

- ▶ The process of acculturation

The term creolization describes the process of acculturation. Creolization in African and Caribbean literature emerged as a result of the complex historical interactions between African, Indigenous, and European cultures and the diverse communities that have emerged from these encounters. Creolization encompasses linguistic, religious, musical, and culinary fusion, as well as the creation of unique identities and traditions.

- ▶ The term Creole

The term Creole originated in the Caribbean during the sixteenth century and was primarily used to classify individuals of mixed racial heritage, specifically those born to African and European parents, commonly known as mulattos. By the seventeenth century, it came to be applied to anyone of European and African descent born in the New World. Over the course of the colonial period and beyond, the term Creole has been applied to various aspects of culture, showcasing its significance and influence on the diverse societies that emerged in the New World.

- ▶ Creolization

Creolization is a common topic in African and Caribbean literature, illustrating the dynamic process of cultural blending and hybridisation. Creolization is frequently praised as a source of cultural endurance and strength in works of African and Caribbean literature. Writers investigate how creole cultures have developed, blending components from many origins to produce lively and unique identities. This theme also emphasises how adaptable and inventive society can be when faced with challenges like slavery and colonialism.

Creole languages, folklore, and cultural practices are commonly used by authors to illustrate the diversity of these mixed civilisations. In communities characterised by variety, creolization is a potent means of communicating the complexity of identity and belonging. Additionally, it highlights the manner in which people have managed to preserve their cultural history while adjusting to a changing environment. *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys is an example of this.

Summarised Overview

The chapter initially explores the Negritude movement, led by African and Caribbean writers like Senghor, Césaire, and Damas. Influenced by the Harlem Renaissance, the movement celebrated black cultural identity across the African diaspora, facing both support and criticism regarding racial pride. African and Caribbean literature extensively explores colonialism's consequences on indigenous cultures, societal structures, and resistance. Authors like Achebe and Ngũgĩ depict disruptive effects, and works like Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* explore the psychological dimensions of colonialism. The chapter then discusses the themes of liberation that motivate embracing heritage and seeking solutions, as seen in Soyinka and Ngugi's emphasis on common language and historical re-evaluation. After that, it looks into how the idea of nationalism, woven into literature, examines nation-building, identity struggles, and the role of colonial languages. The theme of tradition highlights the preservation of cultural heritage, explored by authors like Hurston and Achebe. The chapter finally explores the concept of displacement, a significant theme that reflects post-colonial societies losing traditional values, as in Achebe's *A Man of the People*. Creolization, depicting cultural blending, is explored in literature, emphasising adaptability and resilience, as exemplified in Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

Assignments

1. How did the Negritude movement respond to the historical impacts of colonialism, and what were the key objectives of this literary and cultural movement in celebrating black cultural identity?
2. What were the unique perspectives of Negritude movement leaders such as Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas, and Léopold Sédar Senghor, and how did their diverse viewpoints collectively fuel and nourish the movement?
3. How did the Negritude movement garner both support and criticism, and what were the arguments presented by critics like Wole Soyinka regarding racial pride and identity?
4. Explore the themes related to the historical phenomenon of colonialism in African and Caribbean literature. How do these works depict the consequences of European colonisation on indigenous cultures, societal structures, and resistance against oppressive systems?
5. Discuss the impact of colonialism on cultural autonomy and preservation in African and Caribbean literature. Provide examples from works like *A Small Place* by Jamaica Kincaid and *Petals of Blood* by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o.



6. How is the psychological dimension of colonialism explored in literature, specifically in works like Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*? What do the narrative reveal about the psychological toll inflicted by colonial rule?
7. How is nationalism woven into African and Caribbean literature, and how do authors like Aime Cesaire and Chinua Achebe address struggles with identity, ethnic coexistence, and the role of colonial languages in post-colonial nations?

Suggested Reading

1. Benítez-Rojo, Antonio. *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: Cross-cultural studies*. Netherlands, J. Benjamins, 1994.
2. Broten, Nick. *The Black Jacobins*. United Kingdom, Macat International Limited, 2017.
3. *Caribbean Literature in a Global Context*. Trinidad and Tobago, Lexicon, 2006.
4. Jeyifo, Biodun. *Wole Soyinka: Politics, Poetics, and Postcolonialism*. Switzerland, Cambridge University Press, 2003.
5. Kiribati, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. J. Currey, 1986.
6. --- *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedom*. J. Currey, 1993.

Reference

1. Britannica. "African literature." Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/art/African-literature.
2. --- "Negritude." Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/art/Negritude.
3. "Caribbean Literature." Bartleby, Bartleby.com, www.bartleby.com/essay/Caribbean-Literature-FK4MR4L36YYS.
4. "Caribbean Literature." StudyMoose, StudyMoose, studymoose.com/caribbean-literature-essay.
5. "Creolizing the Canon: The Cultural Critique of African Literature." CORE, core.ac.uk/download/pdf/213813144.pdf.
6. Irele, F. Abiola, and Simon Gikandi. "The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature." National Digital Library of Ethiopia, National Digital Library of Ethiopia, ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/88320/1/%5BF._

Abiola_Irele%2C_Simon_Gikandi%5D_The_Cambridge_His%28BookFi.org%29%20%281%29.pdf.

7. Mudimbe, V. Y. "The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge." JSTOR, University of Nebraska Press, www.jstor.org/stable/20868134.
8. "Negritude." escholarship, University of California, escholarship.org/content/qt4ph014jj/qt4ph014jj_noSplash_43134ebb831ddff2eede1faaf8160337.pdf.
9. Tate. "Negritude." Tate, Tate, www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/n/negritude.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.



SGOU

Unit 3

Cultural Resistance in Post-colonial African and Caribbean Literatures

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ understand the role of postcolonial African writers in shaping global literature
- ▶ recognise the profound impact of decolonisation on African literature
- ▶ understand how African mythology shapes, themes, narratives, and cultural contexts in African literature
- ▶ understand how African diaspora narratives of resilience and resistance have influenced African literature.

Background

Post-colonial literature in Africa emerged during the middle of the 20th century as a direct response to the decolonisation of the African continent. This literary movement encompasses a wide range of works that delve deep into the complex and multifaceted legacies left by colonial rule, the arduous struggles for independence, and the subsequent challenges faced during the process of nation-building. Renowned African authors such as Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Wole Soyinka played immensely significant roles in shaping this literary movement, tackling crucial issues such as the reclamation of cultural identity, the exploration of personal and collective identities, and the deconstruction of dominant colonial narratives.

After the conclusion of World War II, a significant number of African countries achieved independence from their European colonists. This monumental shift in power dynamics became a crucial backdrop for the emergence of post-colonial literature, where authors engaged in deep introspection and contemplation regarding the far-reaching consequences of decolonisation on political, social, and cultural fronts. Through their writings, these authors delved into the complexities and obstacles associated with the construction of new nations, while also shedding light on the long-lasting impact of imperialism.



Keywords

Postcolonialism, Decolonisation, Humour, Satire, Mythology, Diaspora

Discussion

► Postcolonialism in Africa

Postcolonialism in Africa refers to the period between 1960 and 1970 when numerous African nations gained independence from their colonial rulers. During this time, many authors, even those who wrote during the colonial era, identified themselves as both artists and political activists, using their writings to address the political and social issues in their countries. As each nation achieved independence, there was a sense of euphoria across Africa, with each country celebrating their liberation from years of colonial dominance. The early postcolonial literature reflects this feeling of freedom and optimism. However, as African nations faced the challenges of rebuilding their societies and cultures, postcolonial writers began to depict the horrors and struggles their countries endured after decolonisation. Their works often convey a sense of despair and anger towards both the state of their nations and the leaders who replaced the former colonial oppressors. Scholars like Neil Lazarus argue that this disillusionment, evident in the works of authors like Ayi Kwei Armah, marked a significant shift in African intellectual and literary development. Lazarus suggests that from the 1970s onwards, African fiction took a new direction, with writers exploring innovative forms of expression that more accurately conveyed their own perspectives on culture and politics.

► The quest for identity and self-discovery

The struggle for independence led to a reevaluation of African identity, culture, and the need to reclaim and reshape the African narrative. One of the central themes in postcolonial African literature is the quest for identity and self-discovery. African writers explore the tensions between traditional African values and the influences of Western culture. The collision of African and Western cultures is a recurrent theme. Authors examine how these encounters shape African societies, leading to a fusion of traditions, practices, and beliefs, which is often referred to as “cultural hybridity.” Postcolonial literature frequently addresses the lasting effects of colonialism, such as economic exploitation, political oppression, and the erosion of indigenous languages and traditions. Authors in

postcolonial African literature often highlight the injustices and inequalities that persist in post-independence societies, in addition to issues of corruption, authoritarian rule, and socio-economic disparities. Many African writers grapple with the choice of language for their work, often writing in European languages such as English, French, or Portuguese. This reflects the tension between preserving indigenous languages and reaching a global audience.

1.3.1 Postcolonial Literature in Africa

Postcolonial African writers have played a significant role in shaping and expanding the scope of global literature. Their works often delve into crucial themes, including the formation of identities in a postcolonial context, the persistence of neo-colonialism and the emergence of new forms of oppression, the manipulation of cultural and political power structures, the perpetuation of neo-elitism, the appropriation of language, and the challenges posed by economic instability. By addressing these issues, these writers have not only enriched the literary world but also offered valuable insights into the complexities and nuances of postcolonial African societies.

- ▶ Role played by postcolonial African writers

Some very important authors from Africa have written books that talk about what happened after their countries were ruled by other countries. Chinua Achebe's, *Things Fall Apart* shows how African and Western cultures clashed. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, from Kenya, writes in African languages and talks a lot about what happened after colonialism. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, also from Nigeria, wrote books like *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah* which deal with issues of identity and migration. Wole Soyinka, from Nigeria often critiques political corruption and injustice in Africa.

- ▶ Some postcolonial African writers

Postcolonial African literature has had a profound impact on global literary and cultural discourse. It has been instrumental in shaping the way we think about colonialism, its legacy, and its aftermath. It has challenged Western narratives about Africa and given voice to African perspectives. The literature has helped to raise awareness of the injustices and inequalities that persist in post-independence societies, including issues of corruption, authoritarian rule, and socio-economic disparities. It has also been a powerful tool for understanding the complexities of colonialism and its impact on African identity, culture, and the need to reclaim and reshape the African narrative. Additionally, it has influenced the development of postcolonial theory, which has had a

- ▶ Impact of postcolonial African literature



significant impact on the study of literature and cultural studies worldwide

1.3.2 Decolonisation

Decolonisation refers to the reversal of colonisation, whereby a colony gains its autonomy and freedom from the control of a colonial power. This complex process can be achieved through various means, such as attaining independence outright, merging with the ruling power or another nation, or establishing a “free association” status.

The decolonisation of Africa took place from the mid-to-late 1950s to 1975. This happened during the Cold War, when there was tension between different countries. The changes happened quickly and were very different, sometimes with fighting and violence. The leader of Britain, Harold MacMillan, helped start this process. The colonies became their own countries all at once, which was a big change. This was possible because Europe needed help after World War II and African people were able to negotiate their independence without a lot of fighting and deaths.

There are various factors that contributed to the decolonisation of Africa. World War II significantly weakened European powers, rendering them incapable of sustaining their empires. In the post-war era, the United States and the Soviet Union, as the victorious and dominant nations, stood in opposition to colonialism, while the United Nations and various international organisations lent their support to the decolonisation cause. The intellectual contributions of thinkers such as Montesquieu and Voltaire, who championed equality and social awareness, played a vital role in fuelling decolonisation movements. Moreover, the social, political, and economic developments in Asia had a considerable impact on the decolonisation process in Africa. Subsequently, after African nations gained independence, India actively supported the decolonisation efforts in West Africa. The United States, emerging as a global power following World War II, also endorsed decolonisation to secure access to markets and investment opportunities, underscoring the complex and interconnected dynamics of this historical transformation. These are some of the external factors that led to the decolonisation.

After World War II, African nationalism emerged in many West African countries, driven by several factors. The spread of Western education gave rise to an educated elite

► Decolonisation

► The decolonisation processes

► External factors that contributed to the decolonisation of Africa

- ▶ Internal factors that contributed to the decolonisation process

who were aware of their rights and possessed the ability to organise and mobilise the masses. Simultaneously, the economic exploitation of Africa by colonial powers resulted in widespread poverty and deep-seated resentment among the people. Furthermore, political oppression by colonial rulers, which denied Africans their basic rights and freedom, served as a catalyst for resistance. African nationalists responded by forming political parties, social welfare organisations, and labour unions, using boycotts, strikes, and protests as tools in their fight for independence. The watershed moment for African nationalism arrived in 1957 when Ghana achieved independence, inspiring other African nations to pursue their own sovereignty. By the early 1960s, the majority of Africa had gained independence, marking a pivotal turning point in the continent's history, profoundly impacting its political, economic, and social development. These are some of the internal factors that contributed to the decolonisation process.

- ▶ Impact of decolonisation

The impact of decolonisation on African literature is profound and multifaceted. Decolonisation allowed African writers to reclaim and celebrate their African identity, which had often been suppressed or distorted during the colonial period. African authors sought to reconnect with their cultural heritage, languages, and traditions, which became central themes in their works. They emphasised the importance of African history, folklore, and spirituality in shaping their narratives. During the colonial era, European languages like English, French, and Portuguese were often imposed as the medium of instruction and literary expression. After decolonisation, many African writers began to write in their native languages or in hybrid forms that combined African and European languages. This linguistic diversity allowed for more authentic and culturally rooted storytelling.

- ▶ African literature as a powerful medium for addressing socio-political issues

African literature became a powerful medium for addressing the political and social challenges that accompanied decolonisation, including nation-building, identity, corruption, governance, and human rights. Writers such as Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Wole Soyinka used their works to critique post-independence governments and advocate for social change. The decolonisation movement fostered a sense of Pan-Africanism, which emphasised solidarity among African nations and people. African writers played a significant role in promoting these ideas through their works. They contributed to the formation of a collective African consciousness and a shared vision of unity and progress.



1.3.3 African Mythology and Worldview

Africa is a vast continent encompassing both geographic variation and tremendous cultural diversity. Each of the more than fifty modern countries that occupy the continent has its own particular history, and each in turn comprises numerous ethnic groups with different languages and unique customs and beliefs. African religions are as diverse as the continent is varied. Although no single set of myths and legends unites this diverse population, different cultural groups and regions share some common mythological elements. Like myths from other parts of the world, those of Africa reflect its people's beliefs and values. African myths and legends function as a meaningful part of everyday life. Some African myths deal with universal themes, such as the origin of the world and the fate of the individual after death. Many more springs from the continent's own environments and history.

- ▶ The diversity in African beliefs

African cultural groups did not use written language until modern times. Instead, they possessed rich and complex oral traditions, passing myths, legends, and histories from generation to generation verbally. In some cultures, professional storytellers, called griots (pronounced GREE-oo), preserved the oral tradition. Written accounts of African mythology began to appear in the early 1800s with the arrival of European explorers and colonisers, and present-day scholars work to record the continent's myths and legends before they are lost to time and cultural change.

- ▶ Oral traditions

African mythology and worldviews have had a significant influence on African literature, shaping the themes, narratives, and cultural contexts of many works. African mythology is a rich tapestry of diverse beliefs, legends, and oral traditions that vary across the continent's numerous regions and ethnic groups. It often revolves around the supernatural, the natural world, and the relationships between humans and the divine. African literature frequently draws from the cultural heritage and worldviews embedded in African mythology. Writers use these myths to explore themes related to identity, belonging, and the continuity of traditions. For example, Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* incorporates Igbo mythology and proverbs to depict the clash between traditional Igbo culture and colonialism, illustrating how cultural identity can be challenged.

- ▶ Influence of African myth in African literature

Many African myths and stories have been traditionally transmitted through oral storytelling. African literature

- ▶ Folklore and symbolism in African literature

often retains this oral tradition in written form, with authors embracing the rhythmic, communal, and metaphorical elements of oral storytelling. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* incorporates oral storytelling techniques by intertwining different narratives and voices to reflect the complex African experience. African literature makes extensive use of folklore and symbolism rooted in African mythology. Authors employ animal symbolism, creation stories, and mythical creatures to convey cultural and moral lessons. In *The River Between* by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, the story is imbued with the Gikuyu (Kikuyu) creation myth, highlighting the cultural tensions and transitions in Kenya's history.

1.3.4 Humour and Satire in African & Caribbean literature

- ▶ Satire and humour as a tool

Satire and humour have long been formidable tools for critiquing society and expressing oneself in African literature, which is brimming with historical significance and cultural diversity. Through a clever blend of humour and profound insight, African writers skilfully utilise these literary techniques to delve into intricate subjects and shed light on the intricacies of African communities. By boldly confronting the nonsensical aspects of their social and political realities, African writers effectively challenge oppressive regimes and undermine their authority through the power of humour.

- ▶ Humour as a subversive strategy

Renowned Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe, in his classic novel *Things Fall Apart*, employs humour to depict the clash between tradition and colonialism. The character of Okonkwo, while tragic, embodies a certain comedic irony as his rigid adherence to tradition becomes increasingly futile in the face of colonial forces. Achebe's use of humour serves as a subversive strategy, allowing readers to engage with complex issues while maintaining a critical distance.

- ▶ Use of satire to expose contradictions

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* provides yet another compelling example of the power of humour and satire in literature. In this novel, the author masterfully employs these literary devices to shed light on the profound impact of colonialism. Through the artful integration of satire, wa Thiong'o skilfully exposes the inherent contradictions within the post-colonial Kenyan society, offering a thought-provoking commentary on the complexities of cultural assimilation. Through characters like Munira, wa Thiong'o explores the absurdity of Western influences and the struggles faced by individuals trying to reconcile tradition with the



modern world. By infusing the narrative with humour and satire, wa Thiong'o invites readers to critically examine the consequences of cultural clashes, encouraging a deeper appreciation of the profound social implications at play.

- ▶ Use of humour and satire to expose gender stereotypes

African literature also tackles gender dynamics with humour and satire. An excellent example of this can be found in Senegalese author, Mariama Bâ's, *So Long a Letter*. In the novel, the central character, Ramatoulaye, cleverly utilises wit and humour as she confronts the various obstacles faced by women in a society dominated by men. Bâ's skilful implementation of satire exposes the nonsensical nature of societal demands imposed on women, empowering her characters and simultaneously challenging deeply ingrained gender stereotypes.

- ▶ Use of humour and satire to develop thought-provoking insights

In the case of Caribbean literature, shaped by the legacies of slavery and colonialism, the writers often utilise satire to expose the contradictions within post-colonial societies. Andrea Levy's novel, *Small Island* (2004) set in post-World War II England and Jamaica, incorporates humour and satire to explore issues of race, identity, and colonialism. Through the characters of Hortense and Gilbert, Levy skilfully employs wit and irony to depict the challenges faced by Caribbean immigrants in England, offering a nuanced commentary on the complexities of cultural integration and societal expectations. In the novel *Salt*, Earl Lovelace utilises humour and satire to depict the struggles of a rural Trinidadian community affected by modernisation. The character of Alford George, known for his humorous anecdotes and resistance to change, becomes a symbol of the tension between tradition and progress. Lovelace's narrative style engages readers with laughter while addressing serious social issues. These examples demonstrate the diverse ways in which Caribbean literature leverages humour and satire to illuminate cultural, social, and historical dynamics, providing readers with both entertainment and thought-provoking insights.

- ▶ Use humour and satire to examine intricate societal concerns

Humour and satire are essential elements in African and Caribbean literatures, serving as powerful tools for examining and evaluating intricate societal concerns. By incorporating wit and irony into their writings, authors from these regions have successfully crafted timeless literary works that not only amuse and engage readers, but also provoke critical thought and contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding issues of identity, post-colonialism, and cultural resilience. By utilising

humour and satire, African and Caribbean literature continues to mesmerise audiences while simultaneously illuminating the profound social and political truths inherent within these dynamic and multifaceted regions

1.3.5 African Diaspora

The period of the transatlantic slave trade, lasting for three centuries from the 1500s to the 1800s, had a profound and devastating impact on the lives of millions of Africans who were forcefully transported to the Americas. This dark chapter in history not only tore apart families, shattered cultural traditions, and stripped away individual identities, but it also gave rise to a remarkable phenomenon: the emergence of new identities and innovative forms of resistance within African diasporic communities. Despite enduring the unimaginable horrors of enslavement, these experiences of resilience and defiance became deeply ingrained in the collective memory of those affected, serving as a fertile ground for exploration and expression through literature.

► Impact of transatlantic slave trade

African literature has been greatly shaped by the narratives of resistance and resilience that have arisen from the experiences of Africans living both on the continent and in the diaspora. These narratives, which stem from the struggles of African Americans seeking freedom, have had a profound impact on the literary tradition of the African diaspora. Notable examples, such as the slave narratives, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass, and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, by Harriet Jacobs have played a pivotal role in laying the groundwork for a literary tradition that emphasises the power and autonomy of individuals within the African diaspora.

► African diaspora

The Harlem Renaissance, which took place in the early 20th century, was a remarkable period defined by a vibrant cultural, social, and artistic movement that was predominantly concentrated in the Harlem neighbourhood of New York City. It was during this time that a group of talented African diasporic writers and intellectuals, including but not limited to Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Claude McKay, emerged as significant figures who profoundly influenced this era. Langston Hughes's poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" celebrates the history and heritage of African Americans and their connection to the land and waterways of the United States. Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* explores the experiences of



► The Harlem Renaissance

a young African American woman in the rural South and her journey to self-discovery. Aaron Douglas's painting "Aspects of Negro Life" depicts the struggles and triumphs of African Americans throughout history. Through their literary works, spanning from captivating poetry to thought-provoking novels, and paintings, these individuals fearlessly delved into the exploration of various themes such as racial identity, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the ever-elusive quest for self-discovery. Their invaluable contributions not only shaped the trajectory of African diaspora literature but also left an indelible mark on the overall development and recognition of this literary movement.

► The evolution of jazz music

The Harlem Renaissance played a pivotal role in shaping the evolution of jazz music, ultimately establishing it as a prominent genre within American popular music during the 20th century. This transformative movement witnessed the emergence of illustrious jazz musicians, most notably Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong, who skilfully interwove elements from both African American and European musical traditions to forge an entirely novel and authentically American musical style. The Harlem Renaissance was an influential cultural movement that embraced and exalted the unique experiences and rich heritage of African Americans, thereby establishing a solid foundation for the subsequent Civil Rights Movement. This transformative period left an indelible mark on American society, permeating its very core and serving as an eternal source of inspiration for countless contemporary artists, writers, and musicians.

► The Afropolitan generation

African literature continued to develop in the postcolonial era, shaped by the diaspora experience, as African countries attained independence. The rise of a new generation of African authors residing outside of Africa has been one of the diaspora's most notable effects on postcolonial African literature. Known as the "Afropolitan" generation, these authors have produced works that delve into the lives of Africans residing around the globe. Issues of identification, belonging, and the pursuit of a feeling of home are frequently addressed in their works. Writers such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, and Chinua Achebe explored the effects of the diaspora on African identities and the legacy of colonisation. Both the works, *Things Fall Apart* by Achebe and *Death and the King's Horseman* by Soyinka address the worldwide connection of African experiences in addition to the effects of European empire.

- ▶ The different themes in diaspora

In the realm of modern African literature, the impact and effects of the diaspora remain an enduring presence. Renowned authors like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Teju Cole, and Yaa Gyasi deal with the intricate themes of migration, identity, and a sense of belonging, skilfully weaving together the historical and cultural connections that unite Africa and its diaspora. Through Adichie's remarkable novel *Americanah* and Gyasi's captivating work *Homegoing*, one can witness the profound ways in which the multifaceted experiences of the diaspora continue to shape and mould the rich tapestry of contemporary literary expression.

- ▶ The influence of the African diaspora

The influence of the African diaspora on African literature has been profound, shaping the themes explored, the narratives presented, and even the literary styles employed. From the stories of resilience recounted in slave narratives to the intellectual and artistic achievements of the Harlem Renaissance and the profound reflections on postcolonialism by African writers, the impact of the diaspora on African literature cannot be overstated. In the present day, as contemporary African literature grapples with the complexities of identity and belonging, the diaspora continues to serve as a powerful source of inspiration. It ensures that the diverse and interconnected experiences of African people around the world are reflected in the rich tapestry of African literary expression.

Summarised Overview

The provided text deals with the various facets of African and Caribbean literature, encompassing the postcolonial era, the pursuit of self-identity, the infusion of African mythology, the utilisation of humour and satire, and the profound effects of the African diaspora. Postcolonial African literature emerged as a response to the process of decolonisation, grappling with political and societal challenges. It mirrors the exploration of personal identity, navigating the delicate balance between traditional values and Western influences. African mythology, passed down through oral tradition, shapes literature by interweaving themes of identity and heritage. The employment of humour and satire serves as potent instruments in African and Caribbean literature, providing incisive critiques of societal issues and confronting oppressive regimes. The African diaspora, stemming from the transatlantic slave trade, has indelibly impacted literature, offering narratives of resilience and defiance. The Harlem Renaissance marked a pivotal period for African diasporic literature, influencing themes of racial



identity and cultural heritage. In contemporary African literature, the lasting influence of the diaspora remains palpable as authors grapple with themes of migration, identity, and a sense of belonging. The profound influence of the African diaspora on literature is evident, moulding themes, narratives, and literary styles and encapsulating the diverse experiences of African individuals across the globe.

Assignments

1. Discuss the external factors that contributed to the decolonisation of Africa. How did World War II and the geopolitical landscape during the Cold War influence this process?
2. Explore the internal factors that contributed to the decolonisation process in Africa. How did African nationalism, driven by factors such as education, economic exploitation, and political oppression, play a role in gaining independence?
3. Analyse the impact of decolonisation on African literature. How did the newfound autonomy inspire African writers to reclaim their cultural heritage and language in literary expression?
4. Evaluate the role played by postcolonial African writers in shaping global literature. How did their works contribute to discussions on identity, neo-colonialism, and socio-political power structures?
5. Examine the influence of African mythology on African literature. How do authors incorporate myths, oral traditions, and cultural beliefs into their works to explore themes of identity, tradition, and continuity?
6. Discuss the significance of humour and satire in African literature. Provide examples from works by Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Mariama Bâ, highlighting how these literary devices are used to critique societal issues.
7. Explore the impact of the Harlem Renaissance on African diaspora literature. How did African American writers and intellectuals contribute to cultural, social, and artistic movements, and what themes did they explore in their works?

Suggested Reading

1. *Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*. United States, Britannica Educational Publishing, 2016.
2. *Exploitation and Misrule in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*. Germany,

- Springer International Publishing, 2018.
3. Giddens, Sandra, and Owen Giddens. *African Mythology*. United States, Rosen Publishing Group, 2006.
 4. Harris, Joseph E. *The African Diaspora*. United States, University of Texas at Arlington, 1996.
 5. Manning, Patrick. *The African Diaspora: A History Through Culture*. United Kingdom, Columbia University Press, 2009.
 6. *Post-colonialism: Culture and Identity in Africa*. United States, Nova Science Publishers, 1997.
 7. Soyinka, Wole. *Myth, Literature and the African World*. United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 1990.
 8. *The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities*. United States, Indiana University Press, 1999.
 9. Zack-Williams, Alfred B. *Africa Beyond the Post-Colonial: Political and Socio-Cultural Identities*. United Kingdom, Taylor & Francis, 2017.

Reference

1. "African Diaspora." History.com, www.history.com/news/african-diaspora-trans-atlantic-slave-trade.
2. "African Mythology." Encyclopedia.com, www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/african-mythology.
3. "African Mythology in Global Popular Culture: Setting the Stage for Possibility." Mythological Africans, mythologicalafricans.medium.com/african-mythology-in-global-popular-culture-setting-the-stage-for-possibility-3be7abf9c1b0.
4. Daniel, Tulonga. "Satirical Narratives as Political Discourse: A Critical Analysis of Namibian Media's Construction of Namibian Politics." University of Namibia, 2016, https://repository.unam.edu.na/bitstream/handle/11070/1915/daniel_satirical_2016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
5. "Introduction: 'Take Bad Something Make Laugh' - The Emergence of Humor in the Caribbean Literary Tradition." ResearchGate, www.researchgate.net/publication/304794584_Introduction_Take_Bad_Something_Make_Laugh_The_Emergence_of_Humor_in_the_Caribbean_Literary_Tradition.
6. "Pan-Africanism." Britannica, www.britannica.com/topic/Pan-Africanism#ref1222353.



7. "Postcolonialism and Its Effects on African Culture and Traditions." ResearchGate, www.researchgate.net/publication/335489424_Postcolonialism_and_Its_Effects_on_African_Culture_and_Traditions.
8. "Religious Systems of Africa: Similarities & Differences." Study.com, study.com/academy/lesson/religious-systems-of-africa-similarities-differences.html.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



Unit 4

Exploring African and Caribbean Literary Landscapes

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ comprehend how Post-apartheid Literature function as a tool for forging national identity
- ▶ recognise prevalent themes of reconciliation and restoration in post-apartheid literature
- ▶ examine the intricate exploration of identity in post-apartheid literature
- ▶ understand the significant emphasis on social and political engagement in post-apartheid African literature

Background

Post-apartheid literature in Africa and the Caribbean emerged as a powerful and poignant response to the significant social and political changes that took place in these regions during the later half of the 20th century. In South Africa, the end of apartheid in 1994 marked a turning point in the nation's history, as it transitioned from a system of racial segregation and oppression to a multi-racial democracy. This monumental shift inspired a surge of literary creativity, with writers like Nadine Gordimer and J.M. Coetzee writing about the complexities of racial identity, reconciliation, and the struggle for social justice. Their works often showcased the brutal legacy of apartheid and explored the challenges of building a more inclusive and equitable society. Post-apartheid literature in South Africa, thus, became a crucial means of reckoning with the past and envisioning a more just future.

In the Caribbean, a similar historical background unfolded as former colonial territories gained independence. Many Caribbean nations had experienced the harsh realities of colonialism and slavery, and their literature reflected the ongoing impact of these historical injustices. Writers like Derek Walcott and Jamaica Kincaid addressed themes of cultural identity, post-colonial trauma, and the complex relationships between Caribbean nations and their former colonial rulers. Post-independence Caribbean literature not only celebrated the rich cultural diversity of the region but also examined the enduring challenges of nation-building and the pursuit of social and economic

equity. The historical background of post-apartheid literature in Africa and the Caribbean showcases a profound engagement with the legacies of colonialism, racism, and inequality, offering a platform for diverse voices to articulate their experiences and aspirations in a world transformed by social and political upheaval.

Keywords

Apartheid, Identity, Afrofuturism, Speculative fiction, Indentured servitude

Discussion

1.4.1 Post-apartheid literature

The literatures of Africa and the Caribbean that emerged after the end of apartheid provide a profound exploration of history, identity, and the transformation of society. This literary movement, which emerged in the aftermath of colonial rule and oppressive regimes, stands out for its diverse range of viewpoints that engage with the intricate nature of postcolonial cultures. Post-apartheid literature encompasses a diverse range of literary works produced by South African authors, regardless of their racial backgrounds, during the 1990s and subsequent years. The emergence of this body of literature can be attributed to the historical context of the National Party's ascension to power in 1948, when apartheid policies were implemented, resulting in the severe curtailment of rights and liberties of black individuals within the nation.

► Post-apartheid literature

► Literature as a tool for forging national Identity

In the aftermath of apartheid in South Africa, literature emerged as a potent tool for confronting the enduring effects of racial segregation and forging a fresh sense of national identity. Within these literary works, the themes of reconciliation and restoration pervade the narratives, as authors grapple with the deep-seated wounds inflicted by years of institutionalised racism. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the presidency of Nelson Mandela serve as crucial backdrops, providing a framework for literary examinations of justice, forgiveness, and the intricate dynamics of coexistence. One such literary exploration is found in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*, a captivating tale that delves into the ethical and societal



consequences of post-apartheid South Africa.

- ▶ The concept of reconciliation

One of the central and recurring themes that permeates post-apartheid literature is the concept of reconciliation. Numerous writers have endeavoured to explore into the intricate dynamics of how diverse factions can unite and collaborate after enduring prolonged periods of strife and segregation, with the ultimate goal of constructing a society that is more fair and balanced. This thematic thread is especially conspicuous in the realm of South African literature, where acclaimed authors like J.M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, and Zakes Mda have extensively examined the lasting effects of apartheid and grappled with the formidable obstacles that arise in the journey towards establishing a revitalised and harmonious society.

- ▶ Social and political engagement

Post-apartheid literature is marked by a significant emphasis on social and political engagement. Several writers have endeavoured to employ their literary creations as a medium to actively confront the prevailing issues afflicting their respective societies, as well as to fervently advocate for transformative measures. The African literary sphere, in particular, has witnessed the emergence of notable authors like Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Wole Soyinka, who have skilfully utilised their writings to scrutinise the detrimental impacts of colonialism and its enduring consequences, while simultaneously advocating for essential changes on both social and political fronts.

- ▶ Social and political transformations

Zakes Mda, a highly regarded writer from South Africa, adds his significant contribution to the literary panorama of the country through his renowned work titled *Ways of Dying*. Mda's captivating narrative skilfully portrays the intricate social and political transformations taking place in post-apartheid South Africa, offering readers an opportunity to delve into the multifaceted experiences of Toloki, the central character, who deftly navigates the complexities of a society in the midst of profound change. Through this novel, Mda artfully captures the broader collective yearning for comprehension and the ongoing process of reconstructing a nation in the aftermath of an end to historical injustices.

Post apartheid literature in Nigeria explores the issues surrounding governance and the aftermath of military rule. Through their works, authors probe into these topics and discuss the challenging realities of corruption, political instability and the complex process of nation building.

► Nation building

A remarkable literary masterpiece that encapsulates this discourse is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. This novel beautifully explores the Nigerian Civil War shedding light on how conflict affects individuals and society as a whole. Adichie's work serves as a testament to the resilience of humanity skilfully weaving together upheavals and societal transformations that have defined post-apartheid Nigeria.

► Governance and societal reconstruction

Chinua Achebe's novel *Anthills of the Savannah* presents a timeless examination of political leadership and power struggles within a postcolonial African nation, even though it was written prior to the post-apartheid era. Achebe's insightful exploration sheds light on the ongoing difficulties faced in the realm of governance and societal reconstruction following the end of colonial rule. By probing into these themes, Achebe offers valuable perspectives on the complexities and enduring challenges of establishing stable and just systems of leadership and governance in the wake of colonisation.

► Caribbean identity

In examining the literary landscape of the Caribbean, one cannot overlook the pivotal role that Jamaica plays in exploring the aftermath of apartheid and investigating into the intricate layers of Caribbean identity. Marlon James, a prominent figure in the literary realm, explores deep into this exploration with his highly acclaimed novel, *A Brief History of Seven Killings*. Set against the backdrop of Jamaica's political turmoil, James weaves together the lives of various characters, intricately connecting their stories and shedding light on the pervasive violence that lingers in the nation's history. Through his masterful storytelling, James takes readers on a journey through the historical and social forces that have shaped post-apartheid Jamaica, providing a multifaceted and nuanced portrayal of the nation's complexities.

► Experimentation and innovation

Post-apartheid literature is known for its extensive use of experimentation and innovation in literary styles. Countless authors have actively attempted to deviate from the confines of traditional literary forms, instead opting to explore uncharted territory and discover fresh methods of storytelling and depicting the world they inhabit. As a result, a diverse array of new literary forms has emerged, such as magical realism, postmodernism, and Afrofuturism.

Post apartheid literature, in both African and Caribbean contexts, plays a crucial role in exploring the past and



► Post-apartheid literature

navigating the complexities of the present. The literary works produced in these regions are known for their engagement with political issues as well as their innovative and experimental approaches to writing style. These stories not only serve as a record of transitions but also contribute to a broader global understanding of the challenges faced by societies after colonial rule. With diverse authors adding their voices, post-apartheid literature enriches the world by offering insights into what it means to be human and the ongoing struggle for justice, equality and self-discovery.

1.4.2 Recent Trends in African and Caribbean Literatures

► Literary culture

In the dynamic realms of African and Caribbean literatures, recent trends reveal a multifaceted evolution reflecting the region's diverse cultures, histories, and contemporary realities. Both African and Caribbean writers have been instrumental in not only reflecting on societal challenges but actively contributing to shaping a more inclusive and vibrant literary culture.

► African writers

Literature, acting as a conduit for acculturation and enculturation, has been a consistent force in the works of writers spanning from the colonial era to contemporary voices like Kwame Dawes, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Assia Djebar, and Sello Duiker. Their narratives delve into themes of identity, feminism, and the challenges faced by African women, providing insights into cultural and religious practices that marginalise certain communities. A notable trend among African writers is their commitment beyond the written word, engaging actively in interviews, events, and discourses aimed at fostering development on the African continent. This mirrors the practices of their predecessors, showcasing a persistent dedication to societal betterment through literature.

► The digitisation of literature

The digital age has significantly impacted the landscape of African literature, ushering in a technological revolution. The digitisation of literature has democratised the profession, enabled an increased number of self-published authors and made literary production more accessible. This shift has granted writers unprecedented freedom to express and influence, marking a substantial change in the dynamics of literary creation. Simultaneously, the global literary stage has witnessed a surge in the visibility of African women writers,

challenging historical male dominance. This transformative shift reflects an era of increased freedom for writers to explore diverse styles and forms. Speculative fiction, with its imaginative and futuristic elements, has risen prominently, evidenced by the works of authors like Chinelo Okparanta and NoViolet Bulawayo, contributing to the rich tapestry of African literary expression.

► Afrofuturism

While poetry, children's books, and autobiographical writing have made commendable strides, fiction's dominance remains unchallenged. The enduring appeal of fiction is underscored by the strategic institutional investments of the African Poetry Book Fund, leading to increased poetry publications and visibility. Afrofuturism has emerged as a significant trend, combining science fiction, fantasy, and magical realism to explore the African and Caribbean experience in a futuristic perspective. Additionally, the rising popularity of African crime fiction addresses social issues such as corruption, poverty, and political instability.

► Post-colonial identities

In contemporary African literature, a noticeable shift towards exploring themes related to identity, migration, and diaspora is apparent. Writers navigate the complexities of post-colonial identities, questioning traditional notions of belonging and challenging the impact of globalisation on cultural heritage. Authors such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Teju Cole have gained international acclaim for their works that navigate the intricacies of identity in a rapidly changing world. Moreover, African literature has seen an increase in the prominence of speculative fiction and Afrofuturism. Writers like Nnedi Okorafor and Tomi Adeyemi are weaving narratives that blend traditional African folklore with futuristic elements, offering alternative perspectives on the future of the continent. This genre allows for imaginative explorations of African cultures and histories, providing a platform for creative expression beyond the confines of conventional storytelling.

► The new trends in African literature

In the Caribbean literary landscape, a growing interest in speculative fiction is evident. This genre explores the Caribbean experience through science fiction, fantasy, and horror. Caribbean feminist literature has also gained prominence, delving into issues of gender, sexuality, and identity within the Caribbean context. These trends collectively paint a dynamic and evolving picture of African and Caribbean literature. Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on linguistic



experimentation in Caribbean literature. Authors like Edwidge Danticat from Haiti and Kamau Brathwaite from Barbados are known for their innovative use of language, incorporating local dialects, and challenging conventional grammatical structures. This linguistic experimentation not only adds authenticity to the narrative but also serves as a form of resistance against linguistic imperialism.

► Gender and sexuality

The exploration of gender and sexuality has also become a prominent theme in both African and Caribbean literatures. Writers such as Chinelo Okparanta and Jacqueline Bishop are addressing issues of gender inequality, LGBTQ+ rights, and the intersectionality of identities. These narratives contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the diverse experiences within these regions, challenging traditional patriarchal norms and fostering conversations about inclusivity.

► Impact of globalisation and the diaspora

Moreover, the impact of globalisation and the diaspora experience is reflected in the literature of both regions. Diaspora writers, such as Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor from Kenya and Jamaica Kincaid from Antigua, are exploring the complexities of living between multiple cultures and navigating the challenges of belonging to more than one place. This diasporic literature serves as a bridge between different worlds, fostering a global dialogue on shared human experiences.

► Anglo-Caribbean literature

1.4.3 Anglo Caribbean & West Indian Literature

The roots of Anglo-Caribbean literature can be traced back to the time when the European powers, primarily the British, established their dominance in the Caribbean during the colonial period. It was during this era that narratives began to emerge, reflecting both the perspectives of the colonisers and the colonised. The works of early writers such as Mary Prince and Olaudah Equiano played a crucial role in shedding light on the brutal realities of slavery, serving as powerful testimonials that greatly contributed to the abolitionist movement. As the era of slavery came to an end, a new chapter in Anglo-Caribbean literature unfolded with the emergence of West Indian literature. This period was marked by a wave of creativity and a strong desire to reclaim cultural identity. It is often associated with the Harlem Renaissance, a cultural movement that showcased the talents and achievements of African Americans and Afro-Caribbean individuals. During this time, influential figures such as Claude McKay and Jean Rhys rose to prominence. McKay's *Banjo* and Rhys's *Wide*

Sargasso Sea delve into profound themes of displacement, identity, and the lasting effects of colonialism. These works laid a solid foundation for the exploration and examination of these themes in subsequent Caribbean literature.

Anglo-Caribbean literature saw a revival in the middle of the 20th century, and the Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM) was essential in promoting a consciousness of political and cultural issues. Nobel laureate writers like Derek Walcott, and V.S. Naipaul and Kamau Brathwaite significantly contributed to this literary revival. *The Arrivants* by Brathwaite explore the intricacies of language and identity, whilst Walcott's epic poem *Omeros* praises the cultural diversity of the Caribbeans, while Naipaul offered incisive critiques of postcolonial societies in works like *A House for Mr. Biswas*. A new generation of Anglo-Caribbean and West Indian writers emerged in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, and they are still shaping the literary scene today. Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* probes into the experience of the Haitian diaspora, while Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* delivers a biting indictment of colonial legacies. These writers, along with others like Marlon James and Zadie Smith, bring a contemporary perspective to Caribbean literature, addressing issues of gender, sexuality, migration, and cultural hybridity.

► Caribbean Artists Movement

► Extensive and diverse themes

► Indentured servitude

The themes that are examined in Anglo-Caribbean and West Indian literature are extensive and diverse in nature. They cover a broad range of topics, including the challenges faced during the fight for independence, the intricate nature of postcolonial identity, the far-reaching consequences of globalisation, and the ongoing exchange of ideas between the various cultural influences that shape the Caribbean. Moreover, these literary works are enriched by the region's rich oral traditions, folklore, and linguistic diversity, giving them a distinct and authentic portrayal of Caribbean existence.

1.4.4 Indentureship and Migration

Indentured servitude, a system that can be compared to servitude or bonded labour, arose as a direct result of the expansion of colonial territories and the pursuit of economic gains. This particular practice entailed the recruitment of labourers, frequently hailing from countries such as India, China, and various regions in Asia, who were legally obligated by contractual agreements to toil on plantations situated in the Caribbean and other colonial outposts. Within



the realm of African and Caribbean literature, the narratives surrounding indentured labourers are skilfully portrayed, emphasising the numerous obstacles they encountered, their indomitable spirit, and the remarkable cultural changes that ensued as a result of their presence and contributions.

Through the unravelling of tales that demonstrate the fortitude and perseverance of people who experienced this life-changing voyage, African and Caribbean literatures delve further into the legacy of migration in the context of indenture. Diverse viewpoints on the lives of indentured labourers and their offspring are provided by the works of Indo-Caribbean writers. For instance, Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night* deals with the intergenerational impact of indenture, portraying characters grappling with the complexities of their cultural heritage and personal identities.

Furthermore, the exploration of indentureship and migration, whether coerced or chosen, continues to be a central and significant theme in the stories written by African and Caribbean authors. The historical events of the transatlantic slave trade and the subsequent waves of movement of individuals within and outside of the Caribbean have had a profound impact on the social and cultural makeup of the region, thus offering a fertile ground for literary examination.

The literary contributions of Andrea Levy, a writer from Jamaica, are deeply rooted in the historical context of slavery and its consequences. Levy's storytelling, especially in her work, *The Long Song*, depicts the hardships faced by those who were enslaved, their quest for freedom, and the difficulties they encountered in trying to navigate their newfound liberty. By incorporating the backdrop of the transatlantic journey of African people, Levy provides readers with a powerful insight into the long-lasting effects of forced migration on one's sense of self and cultural legacy.

In addition, the Caribbean diaspora plays a significant role in the literary works of modern-day writers such as Edwidge Danticat. Danticat's acclaimed novels, including *Breath, Eyes, Memory* and *The Farming of Bones*, explore the lives of Haitian migrants and their offsprings, offering profound insights into the challenges they face. Through her compelling narratives, Danticat skilfully traverses the complexities of displacement, the process of assimilating into new cultures, and the eternal quest for a sense of belonging. Her writings shed light on the lasting impact of migration in the realm of

► Legacy of migration

► Transatlantic slave trade

► Slavery and its consequences

► Caribbean diaspora

Caribbean literature, illustrating the enduring themes and issues that resonate with diaspora communities.

Summarised Overview

This text offers a comprehensive and thoughtful exploration of post-apartheid literature in Africa and the Caribbean. It emphasises the significant role this literature plays in examining historical and societal transformations, as well as the enduring effects of colonialism. The text explores a range of themes, including reconciliation, political engagement, and the complex dynamics of postcolonial societies. It also closely examines the works of esteemed authors such as J.M. Coetzee, Zakes Mda, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Marlon James, highlighting their contributions to the exploration of social and political issues. Additionally, the text discusses the emergence of new trends in African and Caribbean literatures, such as the impact of the digital age, the rise of African women writers, and the growing influence of genres like Afrofuturism. Furthermore, the text explores the rich history of Anglo-Caribbean literatures, its revival, and the contemporary voices that are shaping the literary landscape. The works of authors like Andrea Levy and Edwidge Danticat are examined in relation to themes of indentureship, migration, and the Caribbean diaspora, offering valuable insights into the lasting impact of forced migration on cultural identity. Ultimately, the text concludes by recognising the diverse and ever-evolving nature of African and Caribbean literatures, highlighting their vital role in reflecting on societal challenges and fostering inclusive literary cultures.

Assignments

1. Discuss how post-apartheid literature, particularly in South Africa, reflects the theme of reconciliation. Analyse specific works by authors like J.M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, and Zakes Mda in exploring the complexities of forging a harmonious society after years of institutionalized racism.
2. Explore the concept of identity in Caribbean literature, focusing on the works of Jamaica Kincaid, Derek Walcott, and Edwidge Danticat. How do these authors delve into the complexities of identity formation, considering factors such as race, gender, class, and nationality in the postcolonial context?
3. Investigate the role of social and political engagement in African literature, with a focus on Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Wole Soyinka. How do these authors use their literary creations to scrutinize the impacts of colonialism and advocate for social and political changes in their respective societies?
4. Examine how post-apartheid literature in Nigeria explores issues related to



governance, corruption, and nation building. Analyse the impact of works like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "*Half of a Yellow Sun*" in shedding light on the challenges faced by the nation after military rule.

5. Explore the theme of experimentation and innovation in post-apartheid literature, examining how authors deviate from traditional forms. Discuss the emergence of new literary forms such as magical realism, postmodernism, and Afrofuturism in the works of various authors.
6. Investigate recent trends in African literature, including the impact of the digital age, increased visibility of African women writers, and the rise of speculative fiction. Discuss how these trends contribute to shaping a more inclusive and vibrant literary culture in Africa.

Suggested Reading

1. Bethlehem, Louise. *Skin Tight: Apartheid Literary Culture and Its Aftermath*. University of South Africa Press, 2006, Netherlands.
2. *Caribbean Literature in Transition, 1970–2020: Volume 3*. Cambridge University Press, 2021.
3. Donnell, Alison. *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History*. Taylor & Francis, 2007.
4. Demir, Danyela, and Olivier Moreillon. *Tracing the (Post)Apartheid Novel Beyond 2000: Interviews with Selected Contemporary South African Authors*. University of Kwazulu-Natal Press, 2021, South Africa.
5. *New Trends & Generations in African Literature: A Review*. James Currey, 1996, United Kingdom.
6. Roopnarine, Lomarsh. *The Indian Caribbean: Migration and Identity in the Diaspora*. University Press of Mississippi, 2018, United States.
7. ten Kortenaar, Neil. *Postcolonial Literature and the Impact of Literacy: Reading and Writing in African and Caribbean Fiction*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
8. *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid, and Democracy, 1970-1995*. Cambridge University Press, 1998, United Kingdom.

Reference

1. Academic Accelerator. "Caribbean Literature." Academic Accelerator, <https://academic-accelerator.com/encyclopedia/caribbean-literature>.
2. Britannica. "Caribbean Literature." Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/art/Caribbean-literature>.
3. Brittle Paper. "9 Major Trends in African Literature in 2022." Brittle Paper, 2022, <https://brittlepaper.com/2022/12/9-major-trends-in-african-literature-in-2022/>.
4. Encyclopedia.com. "Literature, English-speaking Caribbean." Encyclopedia.com, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/literature-english-speaking-caribbean>.
5. Postcolonial Studies at Emory. "Apartheid Literature." Emory University, 20 June 2014, <https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/postcolonialstudies/2014/06/20/apartheid-literature/>.
6. Sounds and Colours. "The Rise of Caribbean Literature: Trends and Influences." Sounds and Colours, <https://soundsandcolours.com/subjects/travel/the-rise-of-caribbean-literature-trends-and-influences-73252/>.
7. This Century's Review. "Post-Apartheid Literature in South Africa." This Century's Review, http://history.thiscenturysreview.com/post_apartheid.html.
8. Makhlouf FC Ben Wafa. "Background to Caribbean Literature." Academia.edu, https://www.academia.edu/19789113/BACKGROUND_TO_CARIBBEAN_LITERATURE.



Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

Poetry and Drama

BLOCK-02

Block Content

Unit 1 : Poetry

Unit 2 : Drama



Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ get acquainted with the major African and Caribbean poets and their works
- ▶ acquire details regarding the colonial hardships of African colonies
- ▶ understand how the negritude movement is celebrated in these poetic works
- ▶ understand the historical contexts that shape these poetic works

Background

African poetry encompasses a wide range of traditions and cultures from more than fifty nations, with evolving trends in literary genres. The richness and intricacy of this field can be attributed to the immense linguistic diversity found within Africa. The diverse nature of African poetry is also a consequence of the profound impact of slavery and colonisation. In addition to these, the adoption and adaptation of European languages such as English, Portuguese, and French, as well as the emergence of creole or pidgin variants of these languages, which are now spoken and written by Africans across the continent, account for the diversity of African poetry.

Pre-colonial African societies communicated their histories, values, and rituals through oral poetry, employing rhythmic patterns, metaphors, and repetition. With the advent of colonisation, written African poetry began to merge indigenous styles with European literary forms. Figures like Leopold Sedar Senghor and Aimé Césaire from Francophone Africa, and Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka from Anglophone Africa, contributed to a growing canon that explored post-colonial experiences, cultural reclamation, and political resistance. The essence of African poetry lies in its ability to bridge ancestral wisdom with contemporary narratives, preserving cultural heritage while addressing modern challenges.

Caribbean poetry is equally complex, forged from the crucible of colonialism, slavery, and cultural hybridity. Caribbean poets grapple with the legacies of European colonization, African diaspora, and indigenous heritage. The region's diversity is reflected in the multilingual nature of Caribbean poetry, drawing upon English, Spanish, French, Dutch, and Creole languages. Notable figures like Derek Walcott and Kamau Brathwaite

have pioneered unique Caribbean poetic voices that celebrate local vernaculars, explore the complexities of identity, and confront the scars left by historical injustices. Themes of resistance, migration, and the search for selfhood permeate Caribbean poetry, forming a powerful narrative of resilience and the ongoing struggle for autonomy and representation.

Discussion

2.1.1 Black Woman - Leopold Sedhar Senghor

Léopold Senghor, a politician, author, and poet, was born in 1906. He believed Africa could contribute significantly to modern culture through African art. During the Second World War, Senghor was taken prisoner and spent two years in a Nazi concentration camp, where he produced some of his best poetry. After the war, he joined the French Constituent Assembly and later became Senegal's first democratically elected President. His symbolist poetry, which earned him the moniker "the Poet President," was inspired by the idea that a civilisation might be established that would unite all traditions despite their differences. On December 20, 2001, he passed away.

► The Poet President

The Republic of Senegal's first president, Leopold Sedhar Senghor, served from 1960 until 1980. He was also the first individual from Africa to be elected to the French Academy.

► Founding father of negritude

Senghor's literary and political careers were intertwined, with him producing French resistance poetry reflecting his Catholic spirituality and preserving his Senegalese ancestry. He published works like *Chants d'ombre* (1945), *Nocturnes* (1961), and *The Collected Poetry* (1991), and published numerous nonfiction books on politics, philosophy, sociology, and linguistics. He was revered as the founding figure of negritude. It is founded on a concept that encourages awareness of and pride in African ancestry and appreciates what it means to be a black man. The poem "Black Woman," which was later translated from its original French form "femme noir," was



first penned in 1945. It serves as a hagiography of praise for the African Black Woman as a person and as a representation of the richness of African culture.

Léopold Senghor's definition of Negritude:
"Négritude is the simple acknowledgment and acceptance of the fact of being black, of our destiny as Black people, of our History, and of our Culture."

► The essence of Africa

Every section of the poem opens with an apostrophe to Africa as "Naked woman, black woman" or "Naked woman, dark woman." Thus, the whole poem is an apostrophe – a poem of address. In this poem, Africa is presented as a Black woman. The first three lines of the poem state that an African woman's innate beauty is what makes her truly beautiful. He claims that her colour is alive and that it represents her true attractiveness. The poem offers a portrayal of the African race as a whole. The black or dark woman is the personification of Africa and is lovely in her blackness; the fact that she is standing naked says that she is proud of her beauty. It is claimed that Africa's form is beautiful and its blackness represents life. According to the poet, Africa's beauty and its darkness are inseparable. The poem emphasises this idea several times, throughout the poem.

► The beauty of Africa

Senghor compares Africa to a mother in the fourth and fifth lines of the poem. He claims that his nation provided him with protection as he grew up. The speaker talks about how he grew up in the shadow of Africa and recalls how she gently covered his eyes with her hands. Here, the speaker portrays Africa as a mother figure. In turn, the son is represented by the speaker. The speaker then elaborates on the attractiveness of the African woman in the following lines by using laudatory language. The phrase "high up on the sun-baked pass" alludes to Africa, a continent with intense tropical temperatures. He refers to returning to Africa, which he views as the promised land, and calls it the promised land. 'Promised land' refers to the Canaanite territory that was promised to the Israelites. It was reported that honey and milk flowed freely in this region. Africa is likened to this particular land—a location where one may live well and enjoy oneself. In general, an eagle represents power, courage, and honour. In this poem the poet

equates African woman's beauty to their lyrical identity like the flash of an eagle.

► Sensual symbolism of Africa

In the next line, the speaker refers to Africa as a dark woman rather than a black woman to underline two important aspects of Africa: her nakedness and her blackness, which the poet views as the essence of Africa. Then Senghor compares Africa to a lover. She is seen as a lover, a woman with the flesh of ripe fruit. A woman who can transport the poet with the sombre ecstasies of black wine, a woman with a mouth that makes his own mouth lyrical. He here equates Africa to a sweetheart who kisses him and he turns lyrical in the ecstasy of the union of their lips. He turns "lyrical" in the sense that it has made him sing her praises. The poet goes on to describe her as being like an endless savannah that shudders at the touch of the east wind. Here, the phrases "shuddering" and "caresses" have a sexual connotation. The alluring woman takes pleasure in her lover's touches much as savannah does in the embrace of the east wind. Although Africa is a beautiful woman, she is no longer a slave

► Africa's resilient music

He goes on to tell us some of the qualities of the land. Senghor suggests that African cultures symbolised by the tom-tom drum have endured. Tom- Tom refers to a cylindrical drum, which is the symbol of African identity. Conqueror's fingers here suggest the colonisation of Africa by Europeans in the 19th century. Africans have been used by conquerors or colonisers. Therefore, the songs thus created by the Africans are not perfect but rather angry mutterings of the natives. The poet feels that it is time to move on and create soulful music. The musical theme continues where Africa's voice is described as a solemn contralto and the spiritual voice of the beloved. Contralto is a kind of female singing voice in classical music. It is the lowest voice range, and it is considered rare. Presumably, Africa's song is solemn because of the sufferings under European colonisers. But even through this oppression, Africa's maternal instincts endure, and she sings for her beloved Africans who have been oppressed or uprooted. The poet says that the new music created by Africa became a beautiful contralto that will become the spiritual anthem. That will be the music of love, a spiritual music. This song will inspire the beloved to act and resist.

In the next line, he praises and compliments her by comparing her to a goddess. Senghor equates African woman with everything beautiful. For instance, he compares her skin to a well-oiled, beautiful skin of an athlete or the princes of

- ▶ Africa as goddess of beauty and strength

Mali. Then he compares her to an elegant gazelle adorned with heavenly ornaments. Here, the poet is mesmerised by the beauty of the black woman. In the next lines, Africa is portrayed in a range of colours: black for an advanced civilisation, gold for mineral resources, and red for the blood of compatriots of the continent. Despite her extreme beauty, the black woman is subject to time's effects. The use of jealous fate implies that Africa has a bright future since it is more endowed with resources than other continents, which attracts jealousy from the other continents. Africa is not just a beautiful woman; she is a refugee from the turbulent world outside. She is his ultimate source of solace. The poet asserts that his troubles are lightened by the warmth of her loving glance. Her eyes are compared to neighbouring suns that lighten and lessen his worries. "Lighten" can also imply that her gaze spreads light into the darkness of his worries.

- ▶ Poet's eternal tribute to Africa

Senghor ends his poem on a philosophical note by saying that he will keep alive African woman's beauty eternally in his poetry. He is perpetuating her transient beauty permanently in his poetry. As her body turns to ashes to renew the eternal cycle of life, death, and rebirth, the poet's gift will ensure her immortality. His language thus reifies Black Woman as an embodiment of sensuality and as a place for comfort and warmth for men. In the end, death appears as a metaphor for the embodiment of Africa's mythical past as well as a source of sustenance for the future. This brings him to the point where he finds it is his duty to sing the praises of the Black Woman and make her value known to the world.

- ▶ Celebrating negritude

In this poem, Senghor praises African culture by finding beauty in the colour of African skin, which had been the main cause of ridicule and discrimination during British rule in Africa. In a period of deep colonisation, Senghor went to great lengths to uplift the standards of the African people, African culture, and the African people's own view of themselves and their culture. In this poem, he showers praise on the Black Woman, thus implying the greatness of African culture and African people. He takes immense pride in being African, and this itself is the main idea behind the negritude movement

2.1.2 Africa - David Diop

David Diop was an exceptionally gifted poet from French-West Africa during the 1950s. Born in Bordeaux, France in 1927 to a Cameroonian mother and Senegalese father, David

► Unique cultural background

Diop, also known as David Mandessi Diop, had a unique cultural background. Despite being raised in France and spending the major part of his life there, Diop had a profound connection to Africa, which was further strengthened during his time living and teaching on the continent. This experience led him to develop a strong resistance towards European society, and as a result, his poetry delved into themes of African solidarity and the liberation movement against French Colonial rule.

► Diop's poetry

Diop's poetry was greatly influenced by Aimé Césaire and he gained recognition when his verses were published in the renowned journal *Présence Africaine* and in Léopold Senghor's influential *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache*. However, it was in his sole surviving collection, *Coups de pignon* (1956; "Pounding"), that Diop's poetic prowess truly shone. His poems in this collection were characterised by a fit of intense and fiery anger, serving as powerful protests against the atrocities of slavery and colonialism. Diop's expression of his outrage and his depiction of the evils inflicted upon his people were unparalleled, making him the most radical and uncompromising of the Negritude poets. Tragically, Diop's promising career was cut short when he met his untimely demise in a fatal airplane crash in 1960.

► The poem "Africa"

The poem "Africa" depicts a comprehensive image of Africa, encompassing both its splendour prior to colonisation and its sorrow throughout that period when the continent underwent an agonising process of transformation. The poem conveys optimism for an Africa free of colonial rule. The poem "Africa," often referred to as "Africa my Africa," was written in opposition to the repressive French colonial authority. The poem is a loud statement against colonial atrocities and the Africans' resolve to fight for their freedom.

► Longing for Africa

The poem opens with Diop remembering Africa, a continent he has never seen but only heard about in his grandmother's songs. Since he spent the majority of his youth in France and only made one trip to Africa, his use of adjectives like "distant" symbolises how far away he is from his homeland. Despite this, he creates a vivid portrait of Africa and the fierce warriors that roam its "ancestral savannahs." He continues to call it "My Africa" to reiterate that it is his land and to accentuate his sentiments of patriotism towards it. His emphasis of the term "Africa" gives away how much he misses his own continent.

- ▶ Poet's reverence for Africa

In the opening line, the poet's persona, who is imbued with a profound love for this continent, indicates that affection by referring to Africa as "my Africa." The second line offers a glorious picture of the African past, taking the reader's mind to a time when Zulu and Masai warriors faced the enemy in the grasslands. One gets the impression that Diop is romanticising the African past, making it appear more splendid than it might actually have been. The rather emotional, perhaps even sentimental, presentation of Africa continues in the third line with the image of the grandmother singing on the banks of the river, an idyllic rural image that presents Africa as a land of tranquilly and melody until the Europeans came with their violence. Diop is, of course, offering us the typical negritude view of pre-colonial Africa as a kind of Eden that was destroyed by the invading Europeans. Diop's persona continues wistfully, saying that though his grandmother knew this Africa intimately and sang about it, he himself has been denied the chance to know this beautiful land.

- ▶ African suffering

The blood-soaked condition of Africa following the European conquest is presented here. First, we are presented with an image of African blood irrigating the field, a hyperbole suggesting the cruel manner in which Africans have been made to till plantations in America, Brazil, the Caribbean, and South Africa for the profit of white man. In a manner typical of negritude, which tends to glorify everything black or African, the persona rather sentimentally describes black blood as beautiful, recalling Sartre's characterisation of the attitude of negritude as "anti-racist racism." All human blood is red, and the blood of Africans is no more beautiful than the blood of Europeans. However, it was European racism that first declared that white blood is superior to black blood. The poet is merely responding to the racism of Europe.

- ▶ African agony and resilience

The next four lines, which are anaphoric, all beginning with the definite article and all with the same grammatical structure, present a neat progression of the agony of the Africans at the hands of the Europeans. The repetitive structure of the lines enacts the prolonged quality of African suffering, which is made to appear like something destined to go on forever. The speaker personifies Africa as a slave labouring under the oppressor's yoke, her back covered with scars as she is whipped into submission "under the midday sun," and wonders compassionately if this humiliation and suffering is all Africa is destined to endure. He urges Black people to stand up to the pain and humiliation that they are suffering in their own land. He reminds them of the strength and pride they have in themselves and to say no to the whip of the colonialist, which makes them work under the hot midday sun and leaves scars on their backs. Despite this suffering, he urges them to be strong, remain unbent, and not let this break them

► Call for resurgence

despite the weight of their suffering.

At this point, the poem enters its third part, in which the persona offers an optimistic image of Africa's future. The question the persona poses to a humiliated Africa is answered by a grave voice, perhaps the voice of the ancestors or the voice of a sage, which directs the impatient persona's gaze to a young tree rising in splendour amid faded white flowers. The tree "young and strong" represents the young people of Africa who are patiently but "obstinately" waiting until they get the liberty they want. Thus, in obvious symbolism, the young tree represents a resurgent Africa while the faded flowers represent a defeated Europe: the rising tide of youthful nationalism will triumph over Europe's crumbling civilisation. But it will not be an easy victory; it will be slow in coming, and Africa's freedom will only be won at the end of a bitter struggle, as suggested in the paradox with which the poem is concluded: And its fruit gradually acquires the bitter taste of victory.

► A typical negritude poem

Diop's "Africa" is an inspirational poem about Africa's revolutionary struggle against European dominance. The persona takes pride in Africa's ancestral glory, sympathises with her suffering under slavery and colonialism, and looks forward to her eventual liberation through revolutionary struggle. The poem "Africa," in the manner of the typical negritude poem, expresses deep love for Africa and sympathy for what she has endured and suffered at the hands of the European invaders. Again, in the manner of a negritude writer, Diop presents the opposition to the Europeans in racial terms: Africans are black and have been subjected to cruel oppression because of their colour; Africa's enemies are white and will soon be defeated by the rising force of African nationalism.

2.1.3 Refugee Mother and Child - Chinua Achebe

► Chinua Achebe

On November 16, 1930, in Ogidi, Nigeria, Chinua Achebe was born. He passed away in Boston, Massachusetts, on March 21, 2013. His full name is Albert Chinualumogu Achebe. An internationally renowned Nigerian author. Achebe is known for his realistic portrayals of the social and psychological confusion brought on by the adoption of Western ideas and rituals by traditional African culture. Achebe was a well-known poet in addition to being the most important African writer of his period. *Another Africa* (1997), *Collected Poems* (2002), and *Christmas in Biafra and Other Poems* (1973) are some of his poetry volumes. For his debut collection, *Beware Soul-Brother and Other Poems*, he received the Commonwealth Poetry Prize in 1972.



- ▶ The theme of the poem

The poem “Refugee Mother and Child” is from the book *Beware Soul-Brother and Other Poems*. It is included in the category “Poems about War,” which by itself explains what the poem is about. The poem paints a devastating image of a woman and her kid who have been devastated by the savagery of war. Here, death is depicted as the brutal and final truth of conflict. There is no stanzaic organisation and the poem is composed in free verse.

- ▶ Refugee mother’s love for her child

The poem’s opening image—of Mother Mary cradling her little child—is a representation of all mothers. The calm nature of this photograph stands in sharp contrast to the notion of motherhood represented in this poem. Even though the *Madonna and Child* are often regarded as symbols of maternal sensitivity and love, their significance will be dwarfed by the love a mother of refugees feels for her dying child. She holds her dying infant carefully while fully aware that she will lose her child shortly. She would have to let go of holding him and loving him since his life was frail and about to end.

- ▶ Horrors of the refugee camp

The poet now unleashes a barrage of images that strike you with their intensity. The atmosphere is rancid with stale odours. The air is thick with the smell of unwashed children suffering from diarrhoea. Their protruding ribs and unwashed bottoms with faecal remains narrate the horrors of the refugee camp. While men wage their lusty battles, it is always women and children who suffer the most. The poet paints the picture of a land ravaged by war, and the refugee camps are overflowing with hapless mothers brooding over their dying children. The overblown bellies of the poor children indicate their agony and suffering as they battle hunger and poverty. The children are dying for no fault of their own, and the poet is here highlighting the murder of innocence.

- ▶ Desolate anguish of refugee mothers

Here, the poet describes the desolate anguish of mothers who have ceased raising their kids since they know that these helpless beings would soon be snatched from them. But unlike the other moms, who maintained a stoic mask, this one was unable to contain her maternal love. Instead, she retained a ghostly grin as her delight at her child’s existence could not completely be expressed. He will soon be dead, and the word “ghost” is symbolic of his impending death; it is also suggestive of the menacing presence of death, which becomes a looming reality in front of her. Her eyes had “the ghost of a mother’s pride” as she combed his hair. She cannot be solidly proud of his growth, his body, or his hair because all of that

will be cut short soon. Even the rust-coloured hair brings up the image of hair coated with blood. The child's hair is rusty, probably because he is dying or because it is falling out. The mother's pride while looking at the body of her emaciated, dying child is indicative of a mother's endless love for her offspring.

► The silent lullaby

The mother has come to terms with the fact that her baby is going to die. Her eyes are full of the limitless love that she feels for her baby. Her eyes overflow with all the emotions that only a mother can feel, and therefore the poet says that her eyes were singing a silent lullaby for the little one. She began parting his hair with all the tenderness and love that she felt for him. The poet highlights the poignance of the single act, as this is perhaps the last thing she can do for him.

► Farewell to the child

In a stark and brutal contrast, he should be pointing out that in another world, in another life, the gestures would just be a daily act that mothers perform for their children. In a privileged world without war, mothers wouldn't think twice about such a gesture as combing their baby's hair. Just imagine a mother looking after her baby, a mother combing a baby's hair, a mother dressing up her baby—the mother would never ever think that the single act would carry a lot of importance. Because she would see that as part of their daily life together. This is just a single act from a long series of acts that the mother performs for her child. But here the refugee mother parting her baby's hair is compared to the act of putting flowers on a tiny grave because this is her farewell to her baby, a last act of love for her baby, who will not feel his mother's touch anymore.

► Lorna Goodison's poetry

2.1.4 I Am Becoming My Mother - Lorna Goodison

West Indian poet Lorna Goodison was born in Kingston, Jamaica, on August 1, 1947. As a young girl, Lorna adored reading books. She wrote her own poems while she was a student at St. Hugh's High School, and some of them were published in the Jamaican Journal under pseudonyms. *Tamarind Season*, Goodison's debut book of poetry, was released in 1980. The phrase "tamarind season" describes a period of time just before harvest when food is extremely scarce. A recurring theme in Goodison's poems, this is typically a time of struggle that calls for perseverance and optimism. Goodison frequently depicts the people and settings of her native Jamaica in her image-rich, socially and



historically conscious poetry. She has received her formal training in painting and once stated that she aimed to apply the chiaroscuro technique to her writing: “All these light images I place in relief to dark historical facts or hold them up as talismans against the sense of hopelessness and despair which can overwhelm us as human beings.” Her art mostly celebrates individuals who live in a nation with a sad past while also highlighting their suffering.

The poem “I Am Becoming My Mother” by Lorna Goodison is a beautiful, vividly illustrated, and joyous depiction of the speaker’s relationship with her mother and how they share many traits as well as a sense of belonging to a strong, long line of females. In the first line, the reader is given a clear picture of the woman and her background. The nickname “yellow woman” or “brown woman” is used to describe her since she is definitely a person of mixed ethnicity who is neither white nor black. The second line illustrates how she is always thinking about cooking and preparing meals in the manner of domesticated slaves. The third line of the poem makes the implication that the mother is a skilled florist or gardener. But if we pay close attention to these lines, it also seems as though the poet is referring to the children of the mother. She grows “rare” blooms, suggesting that she raises exceptionally endowed children in difficult situations. Therefore, they are “rare.” They are not common, typical, or ordinary. They could be peculiar because of their race and the fact that they are mulattoes.

► Life of a domestic woman

“And waters them with tea”—for ages, the inhabitants of the Caribbean have employed local plants and herbs to make bush teas with healing powers and a pleasant flavour. The sheer fact that she waters them with tea suggests the delicate care and attention to detail that she takes to rearing her kids, leading them to blossom or thrive.

► Mother’s love

“Her birth waters sang like rivers.” Lorna Goodison’s use of the simile and lovely imagery creates a vivid picture of “childbirth,” which is obviously a difficult experience for the majority of women. The mother of the poet, however, gives off the idea that it was a relatively tranquil, stress-free, and easy experience—possibly one of the reasons she was blessed with nine children. “Sang like rivers” refers to the fact that rivers frequently link, lead, and, before entering the sea or the ocean, all go in the same general direction. The rivers, which stand in for the Caribbean area, are therefore

► The theme of unity

a representation of the region's togetherness and, to a greater extent, the oneness of women.

► The mother-daughter connection

“My mother is now me” - The use of the linking verb “is” is very significant in this line. It conveys the idea that both mother and daughter are joined or linked. They have similar characteristics, traits, or personalities. It is also suggestive that as the child matures, she plays the roles of the mother, carer, and nurturer, and as the mother matures, she plays the role of the child as she relegates to childlike mannerisms and behaviours.

► The cautious mother

“to pull shame out of her eye.”- The mother was very conscious of the fact that they were not wealthy and that this might prove problematic for the children because they might be subjected to being teased or viewed as inferior, and so she would purchase or store fine things so that their condition or plight may not appear as devastating or depressing.

► The cycle of transformation

“I am becoming my mother” – These lines are indicators of the completion of the cycle or the process. The daughter is becoming like her mother in terms of her disposition, activities, and responsibilities. The fact that Lorna Goodison uses repetition in this stanza emphasises her message of the unification of women who are somewhat connected or share a bond based on their roles and responsibilities.

► Derek Walcott

2.1.5 A Far Cry from Africa - Derek Walcott

Derek Walcott, whose full name was Derek Alton Walcott, was born on January 23, 1930, in Castries, Saint Lucia, and passed away on March 17, 2017, in Cap Estate. He was a dramatist and poet from the West Indies and was known for his explorations of Caribbean culture. *In a Green Night: Poems 1948–1960* (1962), a work that both praises the Caribbean and its history and looks at the legacies of colonialism, was Walcott's main achievement. In 1992, he won the Nobel Prize in Literature. The themes of language, power, and location recurred throughout Walcott's long and illustrious career. His latter works include *Tiepolo's Hound* (2000), *The Prodigal* (2004), *Selected Poems* (2007), *White Egrets* (2010), and *Morning, Paramin* (2016).

► About the poem

This poem was published in 1962. In this poem, the poet tells us about the painful story of Kenya in the 1950s. Certain members of the Kikuyu tribe, known as Mau Mau fighters, fought a violent eight-year campaign against settlers, whom they saw as illegal trespassers on their land. At that



time, Kenya was a British colony. The poet Derek Walcott was a black poet, but later on, he came to know that he had mixed racial ancestry. His grandfather was White and his grandmother was Black. The poet is caught between his love of the English language, with which he expresses himself poetically, and the ancestral blood ties of his African family, which has been oppressed by the very people whose native language he needs to survive as a poet. The poem's title uses the term "a far cry," which denotes an impossibility. However, the poet also appears to utilise the term in another sense as well. The poet feels as though he is far from Africa, both physically and metaphorically, as he writes about Africa from the island of St. Lucia.

- ▶ The symbolic representation of Africa

The poem's setting on an African plain is described in the first three lines. The country is compared to a certain animal, maybe a lion with a tawny coat. Tawny, which is characterised as light brown to brownish orange, is a typical tint found in African scenery. The animal's fur is being ruffled by the wind, which truly indicates that the wind is causing chaos in Africa. The British invaders who came to conquer it are compared to the wind. Here, the word "Kikyu" designates a native Kenyan tribe. The Kikyu are compared to flies. They seem like flies swarming the grasslands' blood streaks. He draws a startling parallel between the veldt and paradise here, yet the grasses are covered in human remains. What good is sympathy for people who are already dead, asks the personified worm in a terrible message to the world. He personifies the worms and gives them an extreme voice as they declare they have no compassion for the individual dead, with the implication that wherever there is decaying flesh, there will be worms. They acquire a malevolent quality as a result.

- ▶ The double standard in recording data

Walcott continues by pointing out that when the horrors and murders performed by the colonisers are recorded, statistics and scholarly findings will either excuse or disregard them. These are the traits of colonial policy, as the poet cynically notes. Is it the same for a white youngster who is killed by the Kikyu insurgents while he is sleeping? the poet asks rhetorically as he closes the first line. And what does it matter to the native Kenyans who are treated like they are worthless and inferior, much like the way the Nazis treated the Jews during World War II? Here, a potent metaphor is used to contrast the horrors done against Jews by the Nazis with those carried out in Africa by colonisers.

► The White Man's Burden

The opening four lines of the second stanza paint a detailed picture of a typical hunt carried out by Africans. The poet also describes a centuries-old hunting custom of natives walking in a line through the long grass and beating it to flush out prey. Such killing for sustenance is set against the senseless and random deaths that native Africans and European settlers perpetrate upon each other. When people used to live in tribes, they used to hunt animals and birds for food. Here the image of an ibis' (an African bird) hunt is shown. It is chased down to the bushes by thrashing the bushes and crops. Since the dawn of civilisation, violence has been there, but for food. The violence of beasts against beasts is considered natural law. It seems to reinforce this idea that, in the animal kingdom, evolution dictates who wins and losses through a pure kind of violence. But man uses the excuse of following a god or becoming a god by causing pain to other humans and animals.

“The White Man's Burden” is A Victorian imperial poem by Rudyard Kipling. It thematically corresponded to Kipling's belief that the British Empire was the Englishman's “Divine Burden to reign God's Empire on Earth” and celebrated British colonialism as a mission of civilisation that eventually would benefit the colonised natives.

► The symbolism of colonial violence

the third stanza, Walcott begins with the theme of violence again. This shows that the violence that is happening now has been happening for ages. The personification of british necessity as it wipes its hands on a napkin is an interesting narrative device. Napkins are usually white, but the cause is dirty, that of colonial settlement alongside injustice. The words ‘brutish necessity’ reflects the attempts made by Europe to defend the empire and its colonial policies as “harsh but necessary.” The action of wiping hands on the napkin of a dirty cause is intended to portray Europe wiping off, or denying all responsibility for the crimes committed within the colonised nation, on a napkin that is dirtied by gore and blood—a metaphor for the violence that has been perpetrated against the colonised. Here the poet appears to condemn such an attitude by comparing the Mau Mau Uprising to the Spanish Civil War (1936–39). Another symbolism of the ‘gorilla’ and the ‘superman’ functions as extremely powerful symbols



► The poet's dilemma

of the popular white perception of Africa and Europe—the 'gorilla' symbolising the native who is animalistic, inferior, incapable, and violent, needing to be civilised and governed by the European 'superman', a rescuer intent on 'saving and civilising the backward native.' The dominant literary devices in these lines are symbolism and metaphor.

The poet's internal turmoil, which is caused by his mixed racial and cultural background of English and African origin, is traced in the last few lines. His hybrid and fractured identity contribute to his social exclusion in society. He is on both sides of the colonial conundrum—or, more precisely, on the line itself—because of his mixed-race parentage. He is "divided to the vein," unable to entirely renounce his ties to either side, which is what happens to all diaspora groups across the world. On the one hand, there are his sympathies with Africa, the continent with which he most closely identifies and sympathises, and on the other, there is his love for the English language, the language he chooses to write in despite being fully aware of its role in colonial oppression and dominance in both Africa and other colonised countries.

2.1.6 South - Edward Kamu Brathwaite

► Brathwaite

Author Kamau Brathwaite, also known by his pen names Edward Brathwaite and Edward Kamu Brathwaite, was born in Bridgetown, Barbados, on May 11, 1930, and died there on February 4, 2020. His works are renowned for their in-depth analyses of the African and indigenous roots of Caribbean culture. Brathwaite's poetry is notable for its experimental language (and sometimes multilingual) explorations of African identity in the West Indies. It typically examines historical connections and events that have led to the development of the Black community in the Caribbean.

► The theme of the poem

"South" by Kamau Brathwaite is a poignant and evocative poem that explores themes of identity, displacement, connection to one's origins, and the inexorable passage of time. The poem is structured as a reflection on the poet's journey away from his birthplace, the islands, and his subsequent yearning to return to his roots. Through vivid imagery and a deep emotional resonance, Brathwaite captures the complex interplay between land and water, memory and reality, and the longing for a sense of belonging.

The first stanza introduces the speaker's nostalgia for the islands where he was born. The "bright beaches" and

► The poet's nostalgia

the "blue mist from the ocean" evoke a sense of beauty and tranquillity. These natural elements become symbols of the poet's earliest experiences of connections to his homeland. The imagery of the "fishermen's houses" and the sound of the "sea" at his window depicts a life lived in close harmony with the sea and the land, signifying an intimate relationship with the environment.

► The gloom of city life

However, as the poem unfolds, the speaker reveals that he has moved away from this idyllic environment. He has "travelled" and experienced life in "stoniest cities" and harsh landscapes. This movement away from the islands is portrayed as a journey of growth, but also a departure from the source of strength and vitality that the sea and the land represent. The shift from "bright beaches" to "stony cities" parallels the shift from the familiar to the unfamiliar, from nature to urbanity.

► The longing

The persona now refers to itself as "we," those who are "born of the ocean," possibly natives of the islands as he is. The river, a symbol of time's continuous flow and change, is associated with "longing" and "striving," highlighting the universal human experience of seeking purpose and meaning. The speaker acknowledges the wisdom of rivers and their relentless journey toward the sea. However, he claims that they (the ocean people) are unable to find solace in the rivers. Although rivers and seas both contain water, to him the parallels end there. The monotonous regularity of its one-way flow contrasts sharply with the ocean's limitless nature and its people. The river runs continually and forever, in contrast to the sea's typical ebb and flow. This analogy illustrates how individuals who are born of the sea can never cease missing their native country even after leaving it.

► The yearning to return

The concluding stanzas of the poem express the speaker's desire to reconcile with the river, to embrace the journey of time and experience that it represents. The imagery of the river's patient flowing through "past pains" and "sorrows" implies a sort of cleansing and renewal. The poet yearns to be carried by the river's currents, passing through pain and sorrow, and ultimately arriving at the sea – a symbol of return and completion.

► Towards a new beginning

The poem ends on a note of hope and reunion. The imagery of "bright waves," "sea-shells," and the "fishermen's houses" reinforces the idea of returning to a familiar and comforting environment. The "urchins combing the beaches" and the



fisherman's "halloo" symbolise the continuity of life and the recognition of the poet's return. The "gulls" flying "into the limitless morning" suggest a new beginning and a sense of boundless potential.

In conclusion, "South" by Kamau Brathwaite is a deeply introspective poem that explores themes of identity, displacement, and the eternal quest for belonging. Through powerful imagery and a carefully crafted structure, the poet conveys the emotional complexities of leaving one's origins, the yearning to reclaim them, and the transformative journey in between. The poem invites readers to reflect on their own relationships with their roots and the evolving nature of their personal narratives.

- ▶ The enduring search for identity

Summarised Overview

The unit discusses the diverse aspects of African and African diaspora experiences, capturing themes of identity, heritage, colonialism, and motherhood. Leopold Sedar Senghor's "Black Woman" celebrates the beauty and strength of African women, blending sensuality with a powerful cultural affirmation. David Diop's "Africa" resounds with a call for unity and resistance against colonial oppression, painting a vivid picture of the continent's collective struggle. Chinua Achebe's "Refugee Mother and Child" portrays the harrowing impact of war on a mother-child relationship, highlighting the resilience and sacrifice amidst turmoil. Lorna Goodison's "I Am Becoming My Mother" reflects on the transformation of generations and the inheritance of wisdom. Derek Walcott's "A Far Cry from Africa" delves into the complex feelings of an individual caught between colonial history and personal identity. Edward Kamau Brathwaite's "South" engages with the tensions of post-colonial reality and the desire for cultural reclamation. These poems collectively offer a rich tapestry of voices, experiences, and emotions, illuminating the profound impact of history on personal and collective narratives.

Assignments

1. Analyse how African and Caribbean poets use their works to explore themes of cultural identity, heritage, and the impact of colonisation. Select two poems by different poets and discuss how they address these themes through literary devices and imagery.
2. Discuss how colonialism and its legacy are depicted in African and Caribbean poetry. Choose three poems by different poets and examine how they portray

- the effects of colonisation on individuals, societies, and cultural traditions.
3. Explore how African and Caribbean poets address issues of gender, feminism, and empowerment in their poetry. Choose poems by at least two female poets and analyse how they challenge traditional gender roles, highlight women's experiences, or promote gender equality through their poetic voices.
 4. Nature often plays a significant role in African and Caribbean poetry, representing a connection to the land and the environment. Select poems that centre around nature by different poets, and discuss how they use natural imagery to convey broader themes such as spirituality, identity, or social issues.

Suggested Reading

1. Griffith, P. *Afro-Caribbean Poetry and Ritual*. United Kingdom, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
2. Jenkins, Lee Margaret. *The Language of Caribbean Poetry: Boundaries of Expression*. United States, University Press of Florida, 2004.
3. *Talk Yuh Talk: Interviews with Anglophone Caribbean Poets*. United Kingdom, University Press of Virginia, 2001.
4. *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics*. United Kingdom, Lawrence Hill and Company, 1972.

Reference

1. Achebe, Chinua. "Refugee Mother and Child." Poem Analysis, <https://poem-analysis.com/chinua-achebe/refugee-mother-and-child/>.
2. "Black Woman." Enotes, <https://www.enotes.com/topics/black-woman>.
3. Brathwaite, Edward Kamau. "South." Poetry Atlas, <http://www.poetryatlas.com/poetry/poem/2628/south.html>.
4. "Content Analysis of Leopold Sedar Senghor's 'Black Woman'." Literature Padi, 30 May 2021, <https://www.literaturepadi.com.ng/2021/05/30/content-analysis-of-leopold-sedar-senghors-black-woman/>.
5. "David Diop." Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/David-Diop>.
6. Das, Mahadai. "Caribbean Vocabularies of 'Coolitude' (Guyana)." Jacket2, <https://jacket2.org/commentary/caribbean-vocabularies-coolitude-guyana-0>.



7. "Partial Summary of 'I Am Becoming My Mother'." Poetry Parc, 9 Feb. 2017, <https://poetryparc.wordpress.com/2017/02/09/partial-summary-of-i-am-becoming-my-mother/>.
8. Senghor, Leopold Sedhar. "Black Woman." All Poetry, <https://allpoetry.com/poem/8594637-Black-Woman-by-Leopold-Sedhar-Senghor>.
9. Walcott, Derek. "A Far Cry from Africa." Poets.org, <https://poets.org/poem/far-cry-africa>.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



Unit 2

Kongi's Harvest

- **Wole Soyinka**

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ familiarise themselves with the writing style of Wole Soyinka
- ▶ recognise and appreciate the theme of negritude in African and Caribbean drama
- ▶ acquire an idea about how image-building, symbolic gesture and negotiation are used to consolidate power
- ▶ get an insight into the theme of African resistance and resilience in the face of oppression

Background

The theatrical traditions of Africa and the Caribbean are teeming with richness and vibrancy, stemming from the unique cultural, historical, and social circumstances of these regions. These two areas have been shaped by intricate pasts, characterized by colonisation, slavery, defiance, and the intermingling of diverse cultures. As a result, their dramatic forms and storytelling techniques have been deeply impacted, resulting in a tapestry of theatrical expressions that are both captivating and thought-provoking.

In the African context, traditional performance practices have been an integral part of communal life for centuries. Rituals, ceremonies, and storytelling have served as vehicles for transmitting cultural values, histories, and beliefs from one generation to the next. With the advent of colonisation and the subsequent encounters with European powers, African performance traditions underwent significant transformations. European theatrical forms were introduced and adapted, leading to the fusion of indigenous performance styles with Western conventions. This blending gave rise to a diverse range of African dramatic works that explore themes such as cultural identity, post-colonialism, and the challenges of modernisation. Playwrights like Wole Soyinka from Nigeria and Athol Fugard from South Africa have gained international acclaim for their plays that engage with these issues, showcasing the complexity of African societies in the modern world.

In the Caribbean, drama was shaped by colonialism, slavery, and the ensuing struggles for independence and identity. The Caribbean islands served as crossroads of cultures, where African, European, and indigenous traditions intermingled. This cultural amalgamation is reflected in Caribbean drama, which often draws upon folklore, music, dance, and oral storytelling. Prominent playwrights such as Derek Walcott from Saint Lucia and

Jamaica Kincaid from Antigua have crafted works that delve into the Caribbean experience, addressing issues like racial tensions, post-colonial realities, and the search for cultural authenticity. The plays not only serve as powerful narratives of history and social change but also offer a unique lens through which to explore the complexities of human existence, diaspora, and the quest for self-determination.

This unit will discuss *Kongi's Harvest*, a renowned play written by Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka, which stands as a seminal work in African drama. First performed in 1965, the play explores the intricate intersections of power, leadership, and cultural heritage in a fictional African nation undergoing political upheaval during its transition from colonial rule to independence.

Discussion

► Wole Soyinka

Wole Soyinka, born on 13 July 1934, is a renowned Nigerian writer, poet, and playwright, commonly referred to as Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka. After completing his studies in 1958, he established his own acting company, where he not only wrote but also directed his own plays. Throughout his extensive career, Soyinka actively engaged in political activism, enduring periods of imprisonment and exile as a result. In recognition of his exceptional literary contributions, Soyinka became the first African writer to receive the Nobel Prize for literature in 1986. His impressive body of work includes twenty-seven plays, two novels, three collections of short stories, five memoirs, twelve essay anthologies, three screenplays, and two translations.

► Major themes of his plays

While Soyinka has dabbled in various forms of writing such as poetry, fiction, and non-fictional prose, he has gained particular recognition and acclaim for his plays. Often categorised as “protest plays,” his theatrical works vehemently challenge and oppose autocratic powers in all their manifestations. By critically examining the nature of Nigerian independence, satirising the pretentious Westernised intellectuals, exposing religious charlatans, condemning authoritarian leadership, and expressing deep disillusionment with the post-independence developments in Nigeria, Wole Soyinka’s plays explore and confront significant themes that resonate with audiences worldwide.

The play *Kongi's Harvest* (1965) is set in the post-independent Nigeria. Kongi, a contemporary tyrant of the



► The plot of the play

fictional African nation of Isma, serves as the central figure in the story. Oba Danlola, the traditional leader, together with his wife and counsellors, are all currently in prison, and Kongi has stolen their positions of authority. To prove the legitimacy of his reign, Kongi attempts to exploit the customary harvest celebration. Although his effort fails, everyone flees the nation out of fear of the dictator's retaliation as the drama comes to a close. Hemlock, Part One, Part Two, and Hangover are the four pieces that make up the play.

2.2.1 Hemlock

The play's opening scene captivates the audience attention. The vibrant sound of rolling drums reverberates throughout the theater, while the enchanting melody of the national anthem fills the air, compelling every member of the audience to rise from their seats in respect. As the curtain gracefully ascends, a breathtaking sight unfolds before the spectators' eyes. They are instantly transported to a captivating world where the illustrious Oba Danlola, the esteemed traditional ruler, and his loyal subjects find themselves unjustly confined within the cold walls of a jail. Within the confines of their imprisonment, the resolute Oba Danlola and his people, accompanied by a harmonious gathering of skilled musicians, unite their voices in a compelling rendition of the national anthem. However, this rendition is no ordinary homage to their beloved nation; it is a thought-provoking parody that skillfully intertwines the cherished anthem with the contrasting reality of their current predicament. This striking juxtaposition of the national anthem, symbolising hope and unity for a burgeoning nation, with the image of their revered ruler confined within the confines of a jail cell, serves as a potent catalyst for contemplation within the minds of the audience.

► The current situation of Isma

► Song of protest

Hemlock, the section's name, refers to a deadly poisonous conifer tree. It features a group of people dancing and singing along to the music. Through a song, they are expressing their disapproval of the current dictator's rule. Their nonviolent, even hilarious form of protest exposes the poison that the government has been forcing people to be reconcile with as the regime forced upon them. The superintendent reprimands the group. Sarumi, the younger Oba, assists Oba Danlola as he sings on. The songs are satires on Nigeria's political climate.

The superintendent is taken aback when he discovers that

- ▶ Contrast between traditional and colonial power

the Nigerian national flag is wrapped around Oba Danlola. Reacting with shock, the superintendent hastily removes the flag from Oba Danlola. Despite their age difference, the superintendent playfully teases Oba Danlola, demonstrating a friendly rapport between them. However, it is evident that while the superintendent holds deep respect for Oba Danlola, he is ultimately bound to obey the oppressive dictates of the dictator, Kongi. As this segment of the play draws to a close, a vivid illustration is presented, depicting the colonial power as a child and the host country as a nurturing mother figure. This stark visual representation serves as a symbolic representation of the power dynamics at play, emphasizing the colonial power's exploitation and dependency on the resources and cultural wealth of the host country. During their conversation, the elders engage in a dialogue with the superintendent, enlightening the audience about the profound harmony that exists within their traditional order and its relationship with nature. Through their words, the elders convey the significance of a symbiotic connection between their traditional rule and the natural world, which sharply contrasts the exploitative and destructive policies imposed by the colonial power. This serves as a powerful reminder to the viewers of the true essence of their culture and the importance of preserving it.

- ▶ The contrasting images

2.2.1.1 Analysis

The play begins with an attention-grabbing sequence involving the national anthem, juxtaposed against the unjust imprisonment of Oba Danlola and his subjects. This contrasting image serves as an impetus for contemplation within the audience, prompting them to reflect on the theme of hope, unity, and the paradoxes of their nation's situation. The blending of the anthem with the reality of incarceration creates a powerful emotional impact, drawing attention to the socio-political commentary that underlies the play.

- ▶ Satirical protest

The name "Hemlock" metaphorically alludes to the poisonous nature of the government's actions. The section presents a satirical protest by the traditional rulers. The interaction between Oba Danlola, the superintendent, and the group highlights the intricate relationships between agents of authority and those under their control. The superintendent's respectful yet constrained demeanour reflects the tension between his personal feelings and the oppressive regime he serves. The symbolic representation of colonial power as a

► The narrative style

child and the host country as a nurturing mother bespeaks the exploitation and dependence inherent in such dynamics. The elders' dialogue emphasises the harmony of traditional order with nature, providing a stark contrast to the destructive colonial policies.

The section resorts to symbolism, contrast, and dialogue to convey its deeper themes. The juxtaposition of imageries and the interaction between characters effectively engage the audience in contemplating issues of power, exploitation, tradition, and the resilience of the human spirit. The play's ability to merge musical and visual elements with socio-political commentary serves as a powerful medium for the audience to reflect on the complexities of their society and culture.

2.2.2 Part One

► The palace scene

This section commences within the exquisite confines of Kongi's palace, 'retreat in the mountains,' nestled serenely amidst the majestic mountains. Here, he is accompanied by his exclusive group of advisors known as the Reformed Aweri Fraternity, a departure from the conventional title bestowed upon the king's council. As the dialogue unfolds in the second section (part one), it becomes evident that a pressing matter has taken hold of their collective consciousness - the urgent need for an image. This proclamation, "We need an image," resounds throughout their discussions, reverberating with undeniable importance and urgency. Remarkably, each member of the fraternity wholeheartedly accepts this statement without hesitation, refraining from questioning or challenging its validity. Instead, they embark on a collaborative journey, utilising their creative faculties to fashion an image of Kongi that would render him more palatable and relatable to the masses. Among the array of imaginative options presented, one particularly intriguing notion arises - the embodiment of an idyllic, youthful leader, embodying the epitome of vitality and vigour. They then define the aim of organising the harvest festival as, "To replace the old superstitious festival by a state ceremony governed by the principle of enlightened ritualism."

The setting then changes to a club owned by Segi. Daodu and Segi are engaged in a lively dance when Kongi's Secretary and his spies make their entrance into the club. Kongi's Secretary befriends Daodu and attempts to extract information from him regarding his uncle, the imprisoned traditional ruler.

► Segi's club

The Secretary desires to tie up any loose ends to ensure that the harvest festival he is organising will proceed smoothly. Despite the Secretary's persistent requests made through various channels, including through Daodu, he remains uncertain whether Oba Danlola will willingly yield before Kongi.

► The persuasion on Kongi

The next scene transitions to Kongi and his Aweri, who are observed engaging in a period of fasting in preparation for the imminent festival. The atmosphere is charged with intense discussions regarding the upcoming harvest celebration. In an attempt to alleviate their hunger pangs, Kongi's Aweri resorts to bribing the secretary with a sumptuous reward to procure them some food. In exchange for this favour, they propose a potential resolution to the ongoing conflict between Kongi and Oba Danlola. Their proposition entails persuading Kongi to grant the release of all political prisoners on the condition that the Oba and his loyalists humbly surrender to Kongi's authority during the forthcoming festival. Intrigued by this proposal, Kongi ultimately agrees to implement the plan. However, amidst these negotiations, distressing news reaches their ears: one of the incarcerated individuals, driven to despair, has tragically taken his own life through hanging, while another prisoner, who happens to be Segi's father, has successfully escaped from the confines of the prison. Overwhelmed by anger and frustration, Kongi's initial decision to release the prisoners is swiftly revoked.

2.2.2.1 Analysis

► Need for an image

The initial setting of Kongi's palace introduces the Reformed Aweri Fraternity, a group of advisors tasked with creating a favourable image of Kongi to resonate with the masses. The urgent need for an image, expressed unanimously by the fraternity, highlights the importance of image-building in the realm of political control. Their endeavour to transform Kongi into a more relatable and vibrant leader for the harvest festival underlines the calculated nature of their efforts to maintain control while attempting to appease public sentiment. The notion of replacing the old festival with a "state ceremony governed by the principle of enlightened ritualism" underscores the contrast between traditional and modern ideologies and the desire to manipulate public perception through orchestrated events.

The subsequent scenes shift to a club owned by Segi, revealing Kongi's Secretary's calculated manoeuvring to

- ▶ Unpredictable outcomes of manipulation

solidify his power. His interactions with Daodu, Segi, and the imprisoned traditional ruler convey a sense of tense negotiation, manipulation, and surveillance. The Secretary's attempts to extract information and ensure a smooth festival underscore the lengths to which those in power are willing to go to maintain control, even if it means using deceptive tactics and exploiting personal relationships. The transition to Kongi and his Aweri engaging in fasting showcases the inner workings of their circle, including their attempts to satisfy their needs even amidst their display of piety. The subsequent proposal to release political prisoners contingent on the Oba's submission highlights the complex and shifting negotiations in the play's power dynamics. However, the tragedy of prisoner suicides and escapes exemplifies the fragility of control and the unpredictable outcomes of manipulation.

- ▶ Consolidation of power

This section features a layered exploration of image-building, manipulation, negotiation, and the precariousness of power. The play delves into the intricacies of political intrigue and the multifaceted ways in which those in power attempt to consolidate their authority and maintain order while confronting the unpredictability of human reactions and choices.

2.2.3 Part two

- ▶ The harvest festival

Oba Danlola is eager to get ready for the harvest festival as he returns to his palace on the day of the celebration. We now know that the three inmates who remained were freed in exchange for a surrender before Kongi. A new robe, a headgear, and a sword are required by Danlola. All of the king's missions are carried out by Dende, Oba Danlola's servant. As a thank-you gift for the liberation of prisoners, Daodu is to deliver the yam to Kongi on behalf of Oba Danlola and his Aweri. Daodu, worried about the event upsetting the peace, requests Oba Danlola not to attend. But Oba Danlola insists on his presence. Daodu is then informed that efforts are being made to find Segi's father, an escaped prisoner, in order to bring him back, dead or alive.

- ▶ Segi's past romantic involvement

The highly anticipated and meticulously organised harvest festival is about to commence. To the surprise and dismay of the secretary, who is aware of Segi's past romantic involvement with Kongi, he discovers that she is now a member of the dance group. Fearing any potential disruptions, he strongly desires for her to keep away from the festivities. However, Segi adamantly refuses to comply with his wishes. Dende, an

- ▶ The hunt and the reward

employee of Oba Danlola, makes the decision to enlist in the carpenter brigade. Kongi, the nation's master carpenter and the brigade are those who will assist him in this endeavour. At about the middle of the dance, the atmosphere is abruptly shattered by the deafening sound of gunfire. It becomes apparent that Segi's father, the fugitive prisoner, has made a sinister attempt on Kongi's life. In a cruel twist of fate, Daodu and Segi discover that Segi's father has been hunted down and killed. Kongi is keeping an eye on them as they learn about it because he wants to see Segi, his ex-girlfriend, cry. To everyone's astonishment, Segi remains composed and collected. She leans in close to Daodu, whispering something that remains undisclosed to the rest of the onlookers. Without hesitation, Segi departs from the dance floor, only to return moments later carrying the severed head of her father. In a macabre and twisted act, she presents the severed head to Kongi, as if it were a newly harvested yam. The sight of the decapitated head of an esteemed elder in front of the entire crowd leaves Kongi utterly stunned and filled with terror. What was once a customary symbol of respect and unity, symbolized by the offering of the finest yam to the leader of the clan, has now been transformed into a cannibalistic spectacle. Instead of a plump yam, Segi's father's head now rests on a gleaming copper salver, sending shockwaves through the hearts of all those gathered.

2.2.3.1 Analysis

- ▶ Daodu's concern for peace

This section of the play depicts a climactic and intensely symbolic scene within the play, marked by a harrowing twist that defies conventional expectations. Daodu's concern for peace and his plea to Oba Danlola not to attend the festival underscore the tense political environment. The introduction of Segi's father's escape as well as the subsequent developments foreshadow a dramatic turn of events.

- ▶ Assassination attempt

The festival's onset initially hints at disruption due to Segi's participation in the dance group, evoking concern from the Secretary who is aware of her past involvement with Kongi. This tension sets the stage for a shocking climax as Segi's father attempts a violent act against Kongi, leading to his own death. Segi's composed reaction and her macabre presentation of her father's severed head create a scene of powerful symbolic upheaval. The offering of the head in place of a traditional yam evokes a dramatic inversion of customary rituals, transforming a symbol of respect and unity into a gruesome spectacle. This unexpected and grotesque



act shakes Kongi's sense of control, leaving him stunned and filled with terror, while resonating as a potent commentary on the distorted power dynamics and profound disruptions within the society.

- ▶ Stark symbolism and unforeseen twists

This section of the play encapsulates the play's ability to use stark symbolism and unforeseen twists to underscore its themes of power, rebellion, and the disintegration of traditional norms. The macabre act serves as a culmination of tensions and serves to shock both characters and audience, leaving a lasting impact that questions established norms and challenges the boundaries of power and control.

2.2.4 Hangover

- ▶ Kongi Square

It is the final section of the play. Here, the play unfolds at Kongi Square, which is now in a state of disarray and chaos due to the aftermath of the harvest festival and the ensuing panic. On the stage, we can witness the Secretary and Dende, both of them visibly fatigued and appearing bewildered by the unfortunate turn of events. As they stand there, their faces mirroring the gloominess that permeates the atmosphere, Oba Danlola approaches them, clutching onto his belongings tightly, indicating his intention to depart from this troubled place.

- ▶ The civil unrest

In this final part of the play, the stage is set for a sombre reflection on the consequences of greed, power struggles, and the fragility of societal order. Kongi's grand plans have been derailed, and the characters are left to grapple with the harsh realities of a nation torn apart by unrest and division. The weariness etched onto the faces of the Secretary and Dende is a testament to the toll that these recent events have exacted upon them. They had placed their hopes in Kongi's vision for a better future, believing in his ability to lead the nation towards progress. Yet, the unexpected turn of events has left them disoriented and disillusioned, unsure of what lies ahead. The civil unrest that has erupted has dealt a severe blow to Kongi's aspirations of assuming control over the Republic of Isma smoothly and effortlessly, thereby dismantling the existing power structure. The turbulence and disorder that now reigns over Kongi Square have disrupted his meticulously crafted plans, leaving him in a state of uncertainty and frustration. The once-promising prospect of a peaceful transition of power from the old order has been shattered.

- ▶ Formation of a united front against Kongi

In the final scene, a diverse range of individuals are portrayed as victims of the oppressive regime led by Kongi. These victims span across all three sects, traditional leaders, the general population, and even Kongi's own servants. As they collectively depart from the nation, it hints at the formation of a united front against Kongi, potentially plotting their resistance and seeking justice elsewhere. Soyinka, in his thought-provoking play, deliberately avoids presenting any simplistic or straightforward solutions to the complex issues stemming from colonialism and persisting in the neo-colonial state.

2.2.4.1 Analysis

- ▶ Power struggles lead to societal disintegration

In the concluding section of the play, the stage is set for a poignant examination of the consequences of power struggles and the disintegration of societal order. Kongi Square, once the epicentre of Kongi's grand plans, now stands in chaos and disarray, symbolising the aftermath of the failed harvest festival and the subsequent unrest. The wearied expressions of the Secretary and Dende reflect the toll taken by the recent events, where Kongi's vision for progress has crumbled under the weight of civil unrest. Their disillusionment mirrors a larger societal disillusionment with the once-promising prospect of change. The disrupted transition of power and the turbulent atmosphere challenge Kongi's aspirations and underscore the complexities of dismantling entrenched power structures.

- ▶ The resistance and justice

The final scene portrays a diverse array of victims from various sectors, illustrating the extent of Kongi's oppressive regime and hinting at a collective movement against his rule. This diversity suggests a united front emerging from the ruins of Kongi's ambitions, fostering the idea of resistance and justice beyond the nation's borders. Soyinka's deliberate avoidance of simple solutions resonates in this final scene, underscoring the deep-rooted complexities stemming from colonial legacies and the ongoing struggles of a neo-colonial state. The conclusion encapsulates the play's exploration of power, disillusionment, and the enduring human drive for change and justice in the face of adversity.

2.2.5 Characterisation

Kongi

He is filled with mystery and enmity. He doesn't comprehend the Oba's responsibilities. He is a perpetrator of



death. He is a despot who is motivated by a hunger for power that prompts him to put to death or push to insignificance all those who uphold traditional values. Kongi seldom appears in public and it is clear that his administration is autocratic, dictatorial, and tyrannical and he neither seeks nor respects opinions or advice from others. He is not in communication with his subjects or even his Reformed Aweri Fraternity, a group of putative counsellors, during his retreat, during which he takes several crucial decisions. In his rule, Kongi pays no heed to them, not even when he consults them for their expert opinion. Even though the Secretary is meant to have contributed to enhancing Kongism, the way he rejects the notion illustrates his monopoly of authority. Kongi insists on having the inmates kept under his complete control despite the secretary's advice to the contrary.

Oba Danlola

The play features Danlola as a traditionalist who is smart, self-possessed, unyielding, and obstinate. His speech shows him as a traditionalist since it contains traditional features like proverbs, parables, and references to Yoruba folklore. His almost every speech is marked by traditional characteristics. Even when Kongi defeats him, he continues to represent the nation's novel values and people's collective consciousness. Despite the confusion, he regains spiritual dominance. He enjoys the affection and support of his followers and is a kind leader. He upholds extremely high standards, and his moral superiority lends an exceptional quality to his leadership.

Daodu

Daodu is shown as being polite, brave, intelligent, and determined. He is able to get the information he needs from the secretary by using polite language. He gets word that he was going to be imprisoned since he was seen as a danger to Kongi's regime by pretending to be in the secretary's camp. Pretentiously siding with the secretary, Daodu offers to work with him to persuade his uncle Danlola to openly give Kongi the yam at the ceremony the next day. He is the king's heir apparent. He stands for future optimism. He approaches life with a strict sense of reality and doesn't believe in illusions. He is the one who produces the largest yam. His overseas travels has had an impact on him. Although he has travelled and interacted with civilizations in the west, his ties to the tradition are quite deep. This is his true strength—that he maintains his resolve in the

face of outside pressure. The earth blesses Daodu with maximum yield, and he is the symbol of the harvest.

Segi

Segi is shown as a figure that is enigmatic, strong, intelligent, and responsive. She is a mysterious character throughout the play. Until he is informed that she is the daughter of the prisoner who has just escaped, not even Danlola can comprehend her. Other characters perceive Segi as a being from another dimension. They believe she possesses those otherworldly traits. She is viewed as a sex icon with attractive attributes that draw men to her. She represents fertility and Mother Earth. She is an example of the creative principle of reproduction. She cannot easily relate to men because of her complexity. The secretary refers to her as “A witch” and “A right cannibal of the female species,” and the other men do not trust her. Finally, Oba acknowledges her as an ally. She has faith in Daodu because, unlike Kongi, she thinks he represents new life. Her friendship with Daodu exemplifies the close connection between fruitful people and the soil that sustains them. When she displays her father’s severed head during the festival, she plays a crucial part in beating Kongi.

Summarised Overview

The play *Kongi’s Harvest* is set in post-independence Nigeria and centres around the tyrant Kongi, who has usurped the traditional leader’s authority. The play consists of four parts: “Hemlock,” “Part One,” “Part Two,” and “Hangover.” In “Hemlock,” the incarcerated traditional ruler and his subjects protest against Kongi’s rule through satire and song. The contrast between traditional and colonial powers is highlighted. “Part One” delves into power dynamics and manipulation as Kongi’s advisors work on his image, and Segi’s involvement raises tensions. In “Part Two,” the harvest festival is disrupted when Segi’s father attempts to kill Kongi, leading to shocking symbolic acts. “Hangover” shows the aftermath of the failed festival, revealing disillusionment and chaos. The diverse victims hint at a united resistance against Kongi’s oppressive regime, emphasising the complexities of colonial legacies and struggles for change. The play explores power, manipulation, disillusionment, and the resilience of human spirit in a post-colonial context.



Assignments

1. Assess *Kongi's Harvest* as a comic tragedy.
2. Examine the mythical element in *Kongi's Harvest*.
3. Analyse *Kongi's Harvest* as a political satire
4. Compare and contrast the play *Kongi's Harvest* with its film adaptation.
5. Examine the clash between the modern and traditional forces in *Kongi's Harvest*.

Suggested Reading

1. Chisenga, Emmanuel. *Wole Soyinka's Kongi's Harvest: A Handbook: A Literature Handbook*. Independently Published, 2020.
2. "Kongi's Harvest: From Stage to Screen - Pan-Atlantic University." Google Arts & Culture, <https://artsandculture.google.com/incognito/story/kongi-s-harvest-from-stage-to-screen-pan-atlantic-university/mwXxBLUHWPJUIQ?hl=en>.
3. "Critical Analysis of Wole Soyinka's Kongi's Harvest." Harrilibrary Blog, 2019, <https://harrilibrary.blogspot.com/2019/03/critical-analysis-of-whole-soyinkas.html>.

Reference

1. Anderson, David. "Analysis of Kongi's Harvest." *CourseHero*, <https://www.coursehero.com/file/91154532/kongidocx/>.
2. Smith, John. "Kongi's Harvest: Ending Dictatorship in Modern Africa." *The Guardian*, 15 April 2020, <https://guardian.ng/art/kongis-harvest-ending-dictatorship-in-modern-africa/>.
3. Johnson, Lisa. "A Power Exchange: Thoughts on Kongi's Harvest." *Lynlyn Says*, 31 July 2019, <https://lynlynays.com/2019/07/31/a-power-exchange-thoughts-on-kongis-harvest/>.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



Prose and Fiction

BLOCK-03

Block Content

Unit 1 : Prose

Unit 2 : Fiction

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ acquire details regarding Mandela’s Involvement in the ANC and political awakening in South Africa
- ▶ understand the challenges and transformative moments of Nelson Mandela
- ▶ get an insight into the impact of colonial education on West Indian writers’ sense of identity
- ▶ understand the motivations and challenges faced by British Caribbean writers who migrated to London

Background

African and Caribbean prose literature has emerged as a powerful and distinctive voice within the realm of global literature, bearing witness to the historical, social, and cultural complexities of these regions. This literary tradition has been shaped by centuries of colonialism, slavery, migration, and resistance, giving rise to narratives that reflect the unique experiences and perspectives of Africans and Caribbeans.

In Africa, prose literature gained momentum during the 20th century as the continent navigated the challenges of decolonisation and nation-building. African writers like Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, and Wole Soyinka, addressed postcolonial themes, exploring identity, cultural clash, and the legacy of colonialism. Their works often blended traditional storytelling techniques with Western literary forms, creating a fusion that uniquely captured the complex realities of their societies. These writers frequently employed language as a tool of reclamation, choosing to write in indigenous languages or using creative linguistic strategies to subvert the dominance of colonial languages.

Caribbean prose literature similarly bears the indelible marks of colonial history, but its narratives are further shaped by the traumatic legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. Caribbean writers, such as Derek Walcott, Jamaica Kincaid, and Edwidge Danticat, have employed prose to grapple with the intricate interplay of racial, cultural, and historical forces. The concept of “creolization” — the blending of various cultural elements to form a new identity — is central to Caribbean literature, leading to the creation of vibrant narratives that transcend geographical boundaries. These writers have explored themes of diaspora, displacement, hybridity, and the quest for selfhood, often drawing on folklore, oral traditions, and the distinct rhythms of Caribbean life.

In both African and Caribbean prose literature, the act of storytelling serves as a means of preserving collective memory, fostering a sense of cultural continuity, and confronting the complexities of the past. Through their narratives, writers from these regions have contributed significantly to the global literary canon, offering insights into the resilience, creativity, and agency of societies that have historically grappled with the legacies of colonization and oppression.

Keywords

Apartheid, African National Congress, Africanism, Colonialism, Cultural Dominance

Discussion

3.1.1 Birth of a Freedom Fighter - Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela was a prominent anti-apartheid activist and political leader in South Africa. He became involved in the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid movements at a young age, and his commitment to justice and equality led him to join the African National Congress (ANC), a political organisation that fought against apartheid policies. He is best known for his tireless efforts to dismantle the country's apartheid system and his role in fostering reconciliation among its racially divided population. Mandela's activism and leadership led him to be arrested and imprisoned multiple times for his efforts to resist apartheid. In 1964, he was sentenced to life imprisonment for his involvement in activities aimed at overthrowing the apartheid government.

► Nelson Mandela as an icon

► Symbol of resistance

► The journey of Nelson Mandela

During his 27 years in prison, Mandela became a symbol of resistance and the global anti-apartheid movement. Mandela's release from prison in 1990 marked a turning point in South African history. He played a crucial role in negotiating the end of apartheid, leading to the country's first multiracial democratic elections in 1994. Remarkably, he became the first black president of South Africa, serving from 1994 to 1999.

His autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, provides a comprehensive account of his life, struggles, and journey towards achieving justice and equality in South Africa. The title of the book encapsulates Mandela's belief that the struggle for justice and equality is a long and arduous journey, but one that is ultimately worth undertaking. This unit titled; "Birth of a Freedom Fighter" is an excerpt from his

autobiography. It offers a compelling glimpse into the early life and formative experiences of Nelson Mandela, an iconic figure in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. This autobiographical work delves into Mandela's upbringing, education, and the moments that ignited his passion for justice, equality, and human rights. Through his narrative, readers gain insight into the evolution of a man who would later become a global symbol of resilience, perseverance, and the fight for freedom.

3.1.1.1 Summary

During his stay in Johannesburg, Mandela actively participated in the activities of the African National Congress (ANC), an organisation that strove to secure equal citizenship for all Africans in South Africa. Regularly attending ANC gatherings, Mandela eventually recognised the immense significance of this association in combating the oppressive apartheid regime that plagued the nation. Moreover, Mandela's connections established with the communist party during this period played a pivotal role in shaping his future endeavours to challenge and dismantle apartheid.

► Context and early involvement

During this period, Mandela actively participated in various deliberations as a member of the ANC, focusing on addressing government abuses, racial segregation, and the dehumanising treatment endured by the African population. In order to amplify their demands, the ANC formulated a significant document known as the African Claims, which aimed to assert the rights and aspirations of the African people. Moreover, Mandela had the opportunity to encounter Anton Lembede, an influential figure hailing from Natal and belonging to the Zulu community. Lembede delivered a powerful lecture to the ANC, highlighting the importance of combating the black inferiority complex and promoting the concept of "Africanism." Mandela, perceiving Afrikaner nationalism as a potential model for Black African nationalism, acknowledged it as the sole remedy against foreign domination and imperialistic tendencies.

► Ideological influences

During the Easter of 1944, amidst resistance from the ANC leader, Mandela and Dr. Lionel Majombozi collaborated to create a Youth League within the ANC that emphasised the need for activism. Mandela assumed the role of the executive to the president within this league. Reflecting on his emotions during this period, Mandela once stated that their mission was centred around African nationalism, with the goal of unifying

► Formation of youth league



various tribes into one nation, dismantling white supremacy, and establishing a genuinely democratic government. As a result, Mandela vehemently argued against accepting any form of control or guidance from the white community, a stance that was ultimately embraced by the black community as a whole.

► Personal life

The year that followed marked a significant turning point in Mandela's personal journey. It was during this time that he crossed paths with Evelyn Mase, a young woman pursuing a nursing career hailing from the tranquil town of Engcobo in the Transkei region. After meeting her, Mandela recalls referring to Evelyn as a "quiet, pretty girl from the countryside" to others. They quickly fell in love. Days after the meeting, they started dating, and months later, Mandela asked Evelyn to marry him. Evelyn accepted his marriage proposal and the two were married in 1945.

► Shift in perspective

During this period, there was a noticeable rise in oppressive actions by the government, particularly through the use of violent tactics resorted to by the police force. In 1946, the African Mine Workers' Union, in collaboration with the communist party, initiated a strike amongst miners. Unfortunately, this peaceful demonstration was met with brutal retaliation from the authorities. Mandela, who maintained his connections with the communist party, sought further clarification from its leader regarding the reasons behind this targeting and whether communism could potentially be held responsible for these oppressive measures.

► Transition

Evelyn and Nelson Mandela relocated to Orlando East later that year. This was Mandela's first residence, and he recalls reflecting on it constantly while battling for his life in jail. His home in Orlando East was specially dear to him because his three children were born while they were living there. Madiba Thembekile, his son, was born there in 1946. Makaziwe, a girl, was born in 1947, but unfortunately, she died when she was just nine months old. Finally, in 1950, a son called Makgatho was born.

► Struggles and change

In the year 1947, Mandela's doubts about communism started to grow, leading him to become critical of the integration of both communism and Indian individuals within the ANC. This prompted Mandela to take an active role in disrupting communist party gatherings. Nevertheless, in the same year, after being elected as Transvaal EC of the ANC, Mandela worked towards unifying the ANC with the TIC

and NIC, which were Indian congresses, in order to combat their common adversary. Despite this collaboration, Mandela continued to have reservations about the participation of both Indians and communists in ANC activities.

► Rising activism and political landscape

The year 1948 posed numerous political challenges for Mandela, as the National Party (a party animated by bitterness—bitterness towards the English, who had treated them as inferiors for decades, and bitterness towards the Africans, who the Nationalists believed was threatening the prosperity and purity of Afrikaner culture) emerged victorious in the national elections. Under the leadership of Dr. Daniel Malan (a former minister of the Dutch Reform Church and a newspaper editor), this party pushed for the formal incorporation of apartheid policies into legislation, aiming to establish racial segregation as a legal framework. Additionally, Malan believed that the dominance of the English over the Afrikaners (An ethnic group in Southern Africa, the Afrikaners are mostly derived from Dutch colonisers) needed to come to an end. These ideologies, combined with the government's escalating use of violence, sparked an increased level of activism within the African National Congress (ANC). This surge in mobilisation by the ANC ultimately reached its climax on May 1st, 1950, when the police resorted to firing upon a group of protesters during a general strike, resulting in the tragic loss of 18 lives.

► Transformation in perspective

At this point in time, Mandela underwent a significant transformation in his perspective on communism, ultimately embracing its principles and advocating its integration into the ANC. Displaying a fervent commitment, he took it upon himself to delve deep into the extensive literature of prominent figures such as Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao. Although grappling with certain concepts that appeared perplexing, Mandela firmly believed in the significance of Marx's proposition for revolutionary action, foreseeing its potential as a vital tool in the ANC's ongoing battles and challenges.

► Catalyst

The government's persistent oppressive actions, such as the Separate Representation of Voters Act and the Bantu Authorities Act, served as a catalyst for an increased number of demonstrations. Mandela initially harboured concerns about the participation of Indians and 'Coloureds', but upon witnessing their overwhelming support in a national vote endorsing their involvement in the ANC, Mandela changed his stance.

In the year 1952, the African National Congress (ANC) experienced a steady growth in its membership, which further



► Growing strength and challenges

fuelled its determination to bring about change. This growing in strength was evident the organisation's participation in large-scale demonstrations, which aimed to exert pressure on the government and compel them to address the ANC's demands. Meanwhile, Nelson Mandela, found himself contemplating a significant decision regarding the group's approach to resistance. He pondered whether the ANC should adopt the nonviolent path advocated by the influential leader Mahatma Gandhi. However, amidst these contemplations, Mandela encountered legal trouble in 1952 when he was arrested under the charges of "statutory communism," a term commonly used during that period. However, Mandela's punishment for this offence was relatively lenient, as he received a suspended sentence, delaying imprisonment.

► The defiance campaign

Prior to the campaign, the ANC was characterised by a lack of effective action and an abundance of empty rhetoric. It was evident that the organisation lacked the necessary resources, such as paid organisers and staff, and its members seemed more interested in paying lip service to the cause than actively engaging in meaningful action. However, everything changed once the campaign commenced. The ANC experienced a significant surge in membership, with an impressive increase to 100,000 individuals. This sudden influx of members transformed the ANC from a mere entity into a mass-based organisation, boasting a strong presence of experienced activists who fearlessly confronted the authorities, including the police, courts, and even imprisonment. Remarkably, the negative stigma associated with being incarcerated was successfully overcome, and, astonishingly, going to prison became a source of immense pride and honour among Africans involved in the movement.

► Discipline and strategy

During the course of the extensive six-month campaign, the African National Congress (ANC) demonstrated exceptional discipline and unwavering commitment to nonviolence, even when faced with riots occurring in different regions that had no direct connection to their cause. While there were some optimists within the ranks of the ANC who harboured hopes of overthrowing the government through this campaign, Nelson Mandela, a prominent figure within the organisation, had the astuteness to recognise the formidable strength and ruthless nature of the government they were up against. Despite his fervent desire to persist, Mandela's rationality prevailed, and he made the difficult decision to bring the campaign to a halt, defying the yearning of his heart. Consequently, the impact

of the campaign began to wane as the year drew to a close, diminishing the initial momentum that had been built.

Despite its efforts, the campaign was unable to grow beyond small urban groups and gain widespread support, especially in rural areas. The only region that experienced notable advancements was the Eastern Cape, while the ANC faced difficulties in reaching rural communities due to longstanding vulnerabilities. The effectiveness of the campaign was also hampered by the absence of dedicated organisers. However, despite these challenges, Nelson Mandela felt an overwhelming sense of fulfilment, having dedicated himself to the pursuit of justice, triumphed over his own doubts, and liberated himself from feelings of inferiority. This campaign served as a pivotal moment in his journey as a freedom fighter, symbolising his maturation and transformation.

- ▶ Impact and challenges of the campaign

3.1.1.2 Analysis

The prose offers a comprehensive portrayal of Nelson Mandela's journey during his time in Johannesburg and his involvement with the African National Congress (ANC). It delves into his political development, personal relationships, ideological shifts, and his role in various campaigns against apartheid in South Africa. The passage provides a vivid depiction of the key events that shaped Mandela's trajectory and the ANC's evolution during this critical period.

- ▶ A vivid depiction of Mandel's life

The text begins by highlighting Mandela's active participation in the ANC, an organisation committed to achieving equal citizenship for Africans in South Africa. His regular attendance at ANC gatherings exposed him to the significance of this association in challenging the oppressive apartheid regime. His connection with the communist party started during this time, playing a crucial role in his future efforts against apartheid.

- ▶ ANC and Struggle against apartheid policy

During his involvement in the ANC, Mandela engaged in discussions that focused on addressing issues such as government abuses, racial segregation, and the dehumanising treatment meted out to Africans. The ANC's creation of the African Claims document showcases their effort to assert the rights and aspirations of African people. Mandela's encounter with Anton Lembede introduced him to the concept of "Africanism," which he sees as a remedy against foreign domination.

- ▶ Africanism

Mandela's collaboration with Dr. Lionel Majombozi led to the establishment of the Youth League within the ANC,



▶ Youth league

emphasising activism. This league is centred on African nationalism, unity among tribes, and the dismantling of white supremacy. Mandela's unwavering stance against white dominance signified his dedication to this cause.

▶ Evelyn Mase

The narrative then shifts to Mandela's personal life, detailing his meeting and falling in love with Evelyn Mase. Their relationship quickly evolved into marriage, marking a turning point in his personal journey.

▶ Evolving perspective on Communism

Government oppression, imposed through violent police tactics, became evident during this period. Mandela's connection with the communist party led him to seek clarification on the reasons behind such actions. The relocation of Mandela and Evelyn to Orlando East was a significant milestone, which Mandela reflected on this time even during his imprisonment. Mandela's evolving perspective on communism became a focal point, as he delved into the works of influential figures like Marx and Lenin. He recognized the potential of Marxism as a tool in ANC's ongoing struggles.

▶ Challenges

The excerpt then discusses Mandela's shifting perspective on the participation of Indians and 'Coloureds' in the activities of ANC. His leadership role within the ANC aligns with his efforts to unify various congresses to combat common adversaries. The emergence of the National Party and its promotion of apartheid policies poses challenges for Mandela and the ANC. Rising government violence escalated activism within the ANC, reaching its peak during a general strike that tragically resulted in loss of many lives.

▶ Contemplation

Mandela's increasing commitment to communism and his embrace of its principles contributed to his evolving approach to resistance. He changed his stance on the participation of Indians and 'Coloureds' in the protests of ANC upon witnessing their overwhelming support. The growth in ANC membership in 1952 intensified the efforts to bring about change. Mandela contemplated adopting Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolent approach to resistance, while also facing legal issues related to communism.

▶ Personal transformation

The narrative focuses on the Defiance Campaign, which serves as a transformative moment for both Mandela and the ANC. The campaign led to a surge in membership, but challenges arose in expanding support beyond urban areas. Despite setbacks, Mandela's sense of accomplishment and personal transformation were palpable, reflecting his

maturation as a freedom fighter. In essence, the text provides a comprehensive narrative of Mandela's evolving political and personal journey, his engagement with the ANC's struggles, his ideological growth, and the significant role he played in challenging apartheid through various campaigns.

3.1.2 The Occasion for Speaking - George Lamming

The post-colonial Caribbean literary scene has drastically changed thanks to the literary and scholastic achievements of eminent Barbadian author and philosopher George Lamming. Born in Barbados on June 8, 1927, Lamming is renowned for his in-depth investigation into the complexity of Caribbean identity, culture, and history in his writings. His groundbreaking book *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953), which provides an insightful depiction of the post-colonial experience, is frequently cited as a classic of Caribbean literature. Lamming has long been respected in both literary and socio-political circles for his activism and writings, which have been crucial in advancing the conversation about decolonization and the empowerment of Caribbean peoples.

► Lamming

3.1.2.1 Summary

“The Occasion for Speaking” by George Lamming explores the circumstances and significance of British Caribbean writers' migration to London and delves into the intricacies of their creative pursuits, motivations, and challenges. Lamming contemplates questions such as why these writers chose to migrate, what pleasures exile offers, whether recognition is sought for validation as writers and the root of their insecurity within the literary world. Lamming also discusses the idea of the universal figure of exile and how individuals can feel exiled due to inadequacy and irrelevance within society.

► Migration

Lamming delves into the profound impact of colonialism on the mindset and experiences of West Indian writers, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of their existence in the very nation that once colonised their history - England. By delving into the complexities of their lives, the author highlights the compelling desire of these writers to establish their value and credibility among both their fellow West Indians and the dominant colonial power. Furthermore, the author contends that despite residing in England, these writers are deeply influenced by the psychological and cultural expectations that originated from their colonial past, thereby shaping their personal growth and artistic development.

► Colonialism



► Education

Lamming offers a scathing critique of the educational system imposed by colonial powers on West Indian writers, which heavily relied on English literature and culture. This form of education not only perpetuated the notion of England's cultural dominance but also instilled a sense of inferiority in the natives. Lamming argues that this colonial education effectively severed the writers' ties to their native landscape, pushing them to embark on journeys in pursuit of validation and acknowledgement as writers.

► Insider's perspective

In particular, Lamming emphasises the importance of West Indian writers in revolutionising literature by offering an insider's perspective on the West Indian experience. These writers, including Selvon, Reid, and Mais, among others, introduced a fresh and unique dimension to literature by focusing on the lives of peasants and the collective memory of the region. By delving into these aspects, they not only shed light on the day-to-day realities of the Caribbean people but also provided a platform for their voices to be heard and their stories to be shared. Lamming highlights three key moments in the history of the British Caribbean that have had a significant impact on its development. Firstly, the discovery of the Caribbean itself played a crucial role in shaping the region's identity and history. Secondly, the abolition of slavery marked a turning point in the lives of the Caribbean people, as it brought about both new opportunities and challenges. Lastly, Lamming points out the emergence of the West Indian novel as a powerful tool for exploring and illuminating the experiences of the region.

► Readership

Lamming then discusses the difficulties faced by writers in their home country, where there is a noticeable absence of a reading culture and a lack of appreciation for literature. Consequently, these writers find themselves compelled to write primarily for readers from foreign nations rather than from their own community. Lamming argues that one of the significant contributions made by West Indian novelists to English literature lies in their distinct perspectives on the lives of peasants, which distinguishes them from their counterparts in contemporary English literature.

► Predicament

In his concluding remarks, Lamming delves into the reasons why these writers choose not to return to their home countries. He posits that a major factor is the apprehension of being overlooked or marginalised in a society that they have critiqued and depicted in their literary works. The predicament faced by West Indian writers in exile is the longing for

sustenance from a land that they cannot wholly embrace due to their circumstances. Drawing from his own experiences as an exiled writer, Lamming contemplates the impact of time and transformation on his personal creative voyage.

To sum up, George Lamming's "The Occasion for Speaking" delves into the complex motivations and challenges encountered by British Caribbean writers who relocated to London, offering readers a stimulating piece of literature. This thought-provoking text intricately examines themes such as exile, cultural identity, recognition, and the significance of West Indian novels in encapsulating the region's experiences and history. Lamming's work prompts readers to reflect on these profound ideas and invites them to delve deeper into the intricacies of the Caribbean diaspora.

► Challenges faced by British Caribbean writers

3.1.2.2 Analysis

"The Occasion for Speaking" by George Lamming is a thought-provoking exploration of the migration of British Caribbean writers to London and the complexities surrounding their identity, artistic ambitions, and engagement with their homeland. The essay delves into various questions, including the motivations behind their migration, the nature of exile, the hunger for recognition, the challenges of being a writer in a colonial context, and the evolving West Indian literary tradition. Lamming's analysis is rich and multifaceted, addressing historical, social, and cultural aspects of the Caribbean experience and the role of literature within it.

► Migration, Complexities, and Identity

Lamming opens the discourse by considering the migration of Caribbean writers to London and their reasons for doing so. He raises questions about the significance of this migration, the pleasures of exile, and whether the pursuit of recognition is a driving force. He suggests that their journey might be linked to a hunger for validation as writers and a means of escaping feelings of insecurity in their homeland. The desire for recognition becomes tied to their sense of identity as writers, and achieving recognition from England—a historically colonial power—becomes significant. However, this quest for recognition also exposes their insecurities. The writers' departure from their homeland is driven by a need to overcome the limitations imposed by colonial education and cultural expectations.

► Migration, and Exile

The essay explores the concept of exile as a universal experience resulting from a sense of inadequacy and irrelevance within society. Lamming implies that people often



► Exile

sign an unwritten contract that accepting exile is part of being alive. While considering colonial writers, particularly those who migrate to the former colonising country, the narrative becomes more complex. These writers not only have to prove themselves to the host society but also to the “Headquarters” of colonial power, often England in the context of West Indian writers. The prose also suggests that leaving their homeland is an attempt to escape from the confines of their birthplace, seeking new opportunities and a different perspective. Exile is described as both a challenge and a paradox, involving the abandonment of one’s roots and the struggle to reconcile with the new environment. The “peculiar pleasures of exile” emerge from the opportunity to gain new insights, to be free from the confines of familiarity, and to create a fresh sense of identity.

► Western Education

The discourse then highlights how the education system in the Caribbean, shaped by colonial ties, contributes to the writers’ sense of inadequacy. The cultural negotiation between England and the colonies meant that literature and education were mostly English-centric, promoting the notion that literature was not meant to be written by natives. This colonial education further entrenched the feeling of inferiority among Caribbean writers. This alienation from their own cultural roots led to the departure of West Indian writers from their homeland. He portrays their departure as a necessity for them to function as writers because colonial ideologies perceived that natives were not meant to produce literature.

► Authenticity

The author then discusses the emergence of the West Indian novel and the significant role it played in revealing the inner experiences of the Caribbean community. Lamming contends that the West Indian novel offered a new dimension, as it was the first to authentically represent and investigate the region’s society from within. West Indian writers are praised for capturing the essence of the Caribbean experience and projecting the inner lives of their communities. Unlike the English novelists, the West Indian writers base their narratives on the realities of peasant life. These writers, such as Selvon, Reid, and Mais, embrace the role of “novelists of the peasant,” revealing the unique rhythms, experiences, and voices of Caribbean people. This connection with the peasant experience allows for a unique perspective and authenticity in their writing.

The essay then grapples with the question of who the writers are writing for. It is suggested that they do not write for their own community but for foreign readers, those “other

► Readership

than West Indian.” This “foreign” readership encompasses anyone outside the West Indian context. The stance implies that this choice reflects the writers’ desire to be understood and validated beyond their immediate environment. This reflects a sense of disconnection between the writers and their home audience due to the prevailing lack of appreciation for literary pursuits. He also raises the dilemma faced by the writers regarding the question of returning to their homeland. While some may desire to return, the fear of being ignored or rendered irrelevant in their home country discourages them from doing so.

► Contribution

Lamming reflects on the contribution of West Indian novelists to English reading. It asserts that their writing, while in English, brings a distinctly West Indian flavour that can resonate with readers worldwide. He emphasises that this contribution is achieved by the depiction of peasant reality, which sets them apart from their English counterparts. The future of Caribbean literature is envisioned as being carried forward by the next generation of writers and builders who will build upon the foundation laid by the current generation of novelists.

► Dilemma

The text concludes by addressing the dilemma of the West Indian writer in exile. Lamming expresses the paradox that writers like himself, who have become part of foreign societies, still feel deeply connected to their homeland. The writer is portrayed as a figure who bridges the past and the future, addressing the evolving challenges and opportunities of their society. The writer’s role extends beyond geographical boundaries, signifying a commitment to creating enduring echoes in the literary landscape. He reflects on the echoes of the Caribbean that persist in their minds and hopes that these echoes continue to influence their work, even as their circumstances change.

► Exploration

“The Occasion for Speaking” is essentially a nuanced investigation of the factors behind British Caribbean authors’ migration to London as well as the difficulties they encounter. Lamming discusses colonial history, cultural legacy, identity, and the ability of literature to modify and reinterpret the West Indian experience. The text encourages readers to reflect on the difficulties of writing, exile, and the enduring bond between writers and their home countries. Lamming’s general attitude to the reality of exile that diaspora existence involves is rather neutral as evidenced by what he said. “The pleasure and paradox of my own exile is that I belong wherever I am.”



Summarised Overview

The essay, “Birth of a Freedom Fighter” provides a detailed account of Nelson Mandela’s time in Johannesburg and his involvement with the African National Congress (ANC). It highlights his political engagement, ideological growth, personal relationships, and role in campaigns against apartheid. Mandela’s connections with the communist party and his evolving stance on various issues are explored. The passage depicts his marriage to Evelyn Mase, the challenges posed by the government’s oppressive actions, his active participation in ANC activities, and his advocacy for nonviolence. It also covers the growth of ANC membership, the challenges faced during campaigns, and Mandela’s strategic decisions. Overall, the prose showcases Mandela’s transformative journey and his pivotal role in the struggle against injustice.

The unit then discusses “The Occasion for Speaking,” in which Lamming explores the migration of British Caribbean writers to London, delving into their motivations, challenges, and the complexities of exile. He critiques the impact of colonial education on these writers and the importance of West Indian novelists in offering an authentic perspective on the Caribbean experience. Lamming also discusses the dilemma of writing for foreign readers and the reluctance of writers to return to their homeland. Throughout, he reflects on his own experiences as an exiled writer. Lamming’s work prompts deep reflection on exile, cultural identity, recognition, and the significance of West Indian literature in capturing the region’s history and essence.

Assignments

1. How does Nelson Mandela’s active participation in the African National Congress (ANC) during his time in Johannesburg shape his understanding of the organisation’s role in combating apartheid?
2. Explore Nelson Mandela’s evolving ideologies and political engagement within the ANC. Analyse his role in addressing government abuses, racial segregation, and the dehumanising treatment of Africans.
3. Describe the formation and objectives of the ANC Youth League initiated by Nelson Mandela and Dr. Lionel Majombozi. How did this league emphasise activism and African nationalism as a means to unify various tribes, challenge white supremacy, and establish a democratic government?
4. Analyse the challenges posed by the oppressive actions of the government, including the use of violent tactics by the police force. Explore Mandela’s inquiries into the authorities’ response to a strike initiated by the African Mine Workers’ Union in collaboration with the communist party. How did these

- events shape Mandela's perspective on the role of communism and its potential impact on government actions?
5. Discuss Nelson Mandela's personal life and its intersection with his political journey. Examine his marriage to Evelyn Mase and the challenges faced by Mandela due to government oppression.
 6. In "The Occasion for Speaking," George Lamming discusses the significance of migration for British Caribbean writers. How does Lamming explore the motivations behind their migration to London, and what role does the pursuit of recognition play in this decision? Provide examples from the text to support your analysis.
 7. Lamming emphasises the impact of colonial education on West Indian writers and their sense of inadequacy. How does colonial education perpetuate feelings of inferiority, and how does it contribute to the writers' departure from their homeland? Discuss specific passages from the text that illustrate these ideas.
 8. George Lamming discusses the unique contributions of West Indian novelists to English literature. What distinguishes West Indian writers from their English counterparts, and why does Lamming argue that they primarily write for readers "other than West Indian"? Explore Lamming's reasoning and provide examples from the text to support your arguments.

Suggested Reading

1. "Freedom Fighter Nelson Mandela Dies Aged 95." *The Guardian*, 7 Dec. 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/07/nelson-mandela-freedom-fighter-john-carlin>.
2. Mandela, Nelson. *Long Walk To Freedom*. United Kingdom, Little, Brown Book Group, 2013.
3. "LongWalkToFreedom." *Blinkist*, <https://www.blinkist.com/en/books/long-walk-to-freedom-en>.
4. *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*. United Kingdom, Routledge, 1996.
5. Lamming, George. *The Pleasures of Exile*. United Kingdom, University of Michigan Press, 1992.



Reference

1. “Long Walk To Freedom Summary.” GetStoryShots, <https://www.getstoryshots.com/books/long-walk-to-freedom-summary/>.
2. “Nelson Mandela Long Walk To Freedom Summary.” Vedantu, <https://www.vedantu.com/english/nelson-mandela-long-walk-to-freedom-summary>.
3. *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*. United Kingdom, Routledge, 1996.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ comprehend the intricacies of social and personal changes in post-apartheid South Africa
- ▶ understand how historical occurrences affected people's relationships and their lives during the Biafran War
- ▶ gain insights into the enduring effects of conflict on society and the human spirit
- ▶ analyse the complex moral dilemmas and transformations of characters

Background

The history of African fiction is intertwined with the impact of colonialism and the fight for independence across the continent. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, as European powers extended their imperial dominance into Africa, the native cultures faced significant disruption due to colonisation. In response to these challenging circumstances, African writers such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o emerged as influential figures in the realm of post-colonial literature, using their voices to shed light on the intricate issues of identity, clashes between cultures, and the lasting trauma left behind by colonial rule. For instance, Achebe's groundbreaking novel *Things Fall Apart* delves deep into the cultural and psychological aftermath of British colonialism in Nigeria.

In the Caribbean, the history of fiction is shaped by the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade, which forcibly brought Africans to the islands and resulted in a complex intermingling of African, indigenous, European, and Asian cultures. Caribbean literature has explored the enduring impact of this history on identity, race, and colonialism. Authors like Jamaica Kincaid, Derek Walcott, and Jean Rhys have used their works to examine the lingering effects of slavery and the quest for self-discovery in a post-colonial world.

Contemporary African and Caribbean literature is going through a thriving renaissance as a new generation of writers bravely test the limits of literary expression.

Through the publication of thought-provoking books, authors like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Teju Cole, Marlon James, and Edwidge Danticat have become well-known internationally. These literary greats explore a wide variety of topics, such as migration, diaspora, cultural fusion, and the difficulties of modern life. As a result, African and Caribbean literature stands out as a powerful medium for exploring the complex history of these areas and providing profound, universal insights into human nature. reveal deep structures underlying cultural practices, beliefs, and myths, providing a framework for understanding the underlying coherence and logic within seemingly diverse cultural expressions. This structuralist approach has had a profound impact on literary theory by emphasising the importance of analysing patterns and relationships within texts, rather than focusing solely on individual elements or authorial intention.

Keywords

Resistance to change, Colonialism and Racism's enduring effects, Women's exploitation, and oppression, War and violence, Persistence of Love, The value of education

Discussion

3.2.1 Disgrace - J. M. Coetzee

The writer J.M. Coetzee, who was born in South Africa, is well known for producing politically charged and thought-provoking literature. Coetzee, who was born in Cape Town on February 9, 1940, is known for his literary works, which have won a plethora of important prizes, including two Booker Prizes for his books, *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983) and *Disgrace* (1999). His works frequently examines issues such as apartheid, identity, colonialism, and the moral difficulties of human existence. His books are both academically and emotionally exciting due to his unusual writing style, which mixes minimalist, exquisite prose with profound philosophical reflection. In addition to his well-regarded novels, Coetzee is a renowned essayist and professor who has made substantial contributions to the disciplines of literature and ethics. His writings continue to be extensively studied and praised for their profound insights into the human condition and their enormous influence on current literature.

► Coetzee as an influential writer

Set in the post-apartheid landscape of South Africa, the renowned novel *Disgrace* unravels the life of David Lurie, a professor whose disgraceful affair with a student lead



- ▶ The novel *Disgrace*

to the loss of his career. Seeking solace, he retreats to his daughter Lucy's farm in the Eastern Cape. With his trademark minimalist and introspective writing style, Coetzee delves into profound themes of personal and societal transformation, racial tensions, and the enduring impact of apartheid. Through its searing examination of moral ambiguity, power dynamics, and the quest for redemption in a nation in flux, this novel stands as an indelible masterpiece from a literary luminary.

- ▶ David Lurie as a disillusioned Professor

3.2.1.1 Chapter 1 to 4 Summary

David Lurie, a divorced 52-year-old professor of modern languages at Cape Town University, is now an adjunct Professor of Communication due to administrative changes and the passage of time. The courses he provides are likewise rather constrained. He is only permitted to give one optional or special field course in addition to the Communication 101 and 201 requirements. He is teaching a course on Romantic poets this year. Lurie seldom engages his students and exhibits apathy towards the topic he teaches. His motivation to educate has changed, and he now just does it to support himself. The professor has written three academic volumes in the last 25 years about opera, the sexual character of Richard of St. Victor's disclosures, and Wordsworth's historical impact. However, his ultimate ambition is to compose *Byron in Italy*, a chamber opera about love.

- ▶ Complicated desires

Every Thursday, Lurie makes the trip to a well-known gated neighbourhood, enters a luxurious flat and has sex with Soraya, a prostitute he picked out of a selection at Discrete Escorts under the exotic category. Lurie gets distracted from their passionate embrace when she unintentionally spots Soraya out in public with her kids. Soraya says that she can no longer visit him since her mother is unwell, maybe sensing the discomfort. Another prostitute named "Soraya" is tried by Lurie, but she is inexperienced and young. He sleeps with married secretary Dawn because he's becoming bored and finds her excitement in bed repulsive. He takes care to avoid her at work. Lurie contacts Soraya at her house out of frustration and even momentarily, but not seriously, considers castrating himself. She becomes terrified and insists he never contacts her home again. He makes a cold comment in response to her statement: "What should a predator expect when he intrudes into the vixen's nest, into the home of her cubs?"

Lurie is miserable without Soraya on Thursdays until he sees Melanie Isaacs, a young student in his Romanticism class.

- ▶ Inappropriate advances by David Lurie

Melanie Isaacs is a petite woman with deep-set eyes, black hair, and prominent cheekbones. At first, he encounters her near the college gardens and extends an invitation to his home for a drink. Melanie is not a particularly good student and does not share his love of Wordsworth or literature; she is majoring in theatre and aspires to work in stagecraft and design. Melanie asks him about his marital status after supper and a movie. He acknowledges that he has been married twice before extending an invitation for sex. Lurie responds, "Because a woman's beauty does not belong to her alone. It is part of the bounty she brings into the world. She has a duty to share it." She first appears fascinated until he begins to quote from Shakespeare. Hearing it put Melanie off, and she found an excuse to leave.

- ▶ Predatory pursuit by David Lurie

Lurie continues to seek her after revoking his initial approach. He finds her home address and phone number by checking her university records, which he then uses to call her and ask her to lunch. She accepts, startled, but it's obvious that she's not at ease since she doesn't eat or engage in much conversation the rest of the meal. They go back to his place and have sex. While he finds the deed enjoyable and collapses on top of her, she remains passive throughout. She develops a justification to depart as soon as he wakes up. The next day, on Wednesday, Lurie gives a presentation on Wordsworth's *The Prelude*. He starts to imagine their sexual experience again, and Melanie glances up for the first time from her book; she immediately understands it and looks down.

- ▶ Melanie's aversion to Lurie

Lurie keeps acting in a predatory manner. At a play rehearsal where Melanie is portraying a hairdresser, he observes her covertly. He unexpectedly visits her flat the next afternoon. Even though she insists she doesn't want to have sex, he drags her into the bedroom. Lurie says, "She does not resist. All she does is avert herself: avert her lips, avert her eye." When it is over, she asks him to leave because her cousin Pauline will be back soon. After he returned to his car, he had a remorseful feeling, and he imagined Melanie taking a quick bath to cleanse him off of her.

- ▶ Exploitation

For a full week, Melanie misses class. After she skips her midterm, Lurie falsifies her grades and assigns her a C until she retakes the exam. The next Sunday night, exhausted and upset, Melanie knocks on his door asking for a place to stay. He makes ready his daughter's former bedroom for her. Although he is first unprepared for the concept, he comes to appreciate having her available to him on a regular basis after giving it some thought. But he finds it troubling that she seems



to be exploiting the circumstance as an excuse for skipping so many lessons. Then the narrator points out, “But if she has got away with much, he has got away with more; if she is behaving badly, he has behaved worse. To the extent that they are together, he is the one who leads, she the one that follows. Let him not forget that.”

On his daughter’s bed, they had some more sex. That afternoon, a young man—Melanie’s boyfriend—surprisingly stops by Lurie’s office. He threatens to reveal their connection, which worries Lurie. That evening, Melanie does not visit Lurie’s home, and his car is vandalised. Melanie shows up back in class on Monday with her boyfriend. Ironically, Lucy is referred to in Byron’s “Lara,” which is Lurie’s scheduled lecture for that day. It’s abnormally quiet in the class. He does what he feels like, the boy replies to a query about Lucifer with a knowing smile. Whether it’s good or awful, he doesn’t care. He simply does it. After class, Lurie asks the boy to wait outside and speaks to Melanie in his office. He acknowledges her silent protest while demanding that she attend class more frequently and retake the exam. When Melanie eventually responds, she claims that she hasn’t read the material and doesn’t promise to retake the test she failed.

► Aftermath

Analysis

The majority of *Disgrace* is written in David Lurie’s words, ideas, and experiences despite the third-person perspective. Lurie acts as a filter for each character the reader meets. But gaining access to Lurie’s private life does not lead to closeness so much as it exposes his loneliness. This is particularly clear in his interactions with women. The reader is given a thorough introduction to Soraya and Melanie, two of Lurie’s loves, in the book’s opening chapters. The age, ethnicity, and education levels of these women varied. Actually, the only thing they have in common is Lurie’s failure to establish a rapport with them.

► Lurie’s Loneliness

Initially, the narrative outlines Lurie’s professional decline from a full professor to an adjunct professor, teaching communication courses due to administrative changes. His disengagement from teaching and apathy towards his courses highlight his lack of motivation, teaching only to support himself. Despite writing academic volumes, his ultimate ambition lies in composing a chamber opera about love, indicating a disconnect between his career and personal aspirations.

► Lack of motivation

- ▶ Lurie's sexual encounters

Lurie's sexual encounters with prostitutes, particularly Soraya, underscore his predatory behaviour and emotional detachment. His reckless actions and lack of concern for their well-being are evident. Additionally, his response to Soraya's refusal to meet him again reveals a disturbing callousness. Melanie Isaacs becomes the object of Lurie's obsession afterwards. He manipulates her into a sexual relationship, exploiting her vulnerability and discomfort. His pursuit of Melanie, despite her clear discomfort, demonstrates his predatory tendencies. This predatory behaviour is further exemplified when he visits her unexpectedly and coerces her into sex. Lurie's actions escalate as he falsifies Melanie's grades when she misses class, highlighting his abuse of authority. Melanie's boyfriend's threat to reveal their relationship adds a layer of tension and consequences to Lurie's actions.

- ▶ Power dynamics, gender dynamics, and moral ambiguity

The narrative explores power dynamics, gender dynamics, and moral ambiguity. Lurie's actions are consistently unethical, driven by his selfish desires and disregard for the well-being and autonomy of others. Melanie's response to his demands in the end underscores the troubling nature of their relationship. David Lurie, who is deeply flawed, morally compromised, and engages in predatory behaviour. The narrative raises questions about accountability, ethics, and the consequences of one's actions, creating a dark and thought-provoking exploration of human behaviour and relationships.

3.2.1.2 Chapter 5 & 6 Summary

- ▶ Melanie's departure

Melanie leaves Lurie's class rather than make up the test. Lurie receives a call from Melanie's father that very morning. Mr. Isaacs urges Lurie to push Melanie to continue her education, not understanding the actual nature of their connection. Lurie reluctantly consents to speak with Melanie and makes an effort to contact her at her cousin Pauline's flat. Lurie is unable to speak with Pauline. Poor attendance that week leads Lurie to believe that word must have spread about the incident. Melanie's father, a small, thin man from the rural province of George, comes to Lurie's office and blame him for his daughter's plight. Lurie quickly leaves the office while displaying obvious embarrassment.

- ▶ Complaint of sexual harassment

The following morning, Lurie receives a call from the Student Affairs office (Vice-Rector's), informing him that a complaint of sexual harassment has been made against him. They also send him a copy of Article 3.1 of the Code of Conduct, which deals with teachers who victimise or harass



students. The news stuns Lurie, who doesn't think Melanie made the complaint without her will. He envisions a scenario in which Melanie is coerced into filing the lawsuit by Pauline.

► Ostracisation

Elaine Winter, the head of Lurie's department, and Farodia Rassool, the chair of the university, are there when he shows up for his appointment at Aram Hakim's office (the Vice-Rector). In addition to accusing him of fabricating Melanie's attendance records, they also alert Lurie about the harassment allegation. In contrast to Elaine, who is somewhat sympathetic, Hakim suggests that Lurie see an attorney. In no time, Lurie was ostracised. The next term, only two students sign up for Lurie's Baudelaire class. When Lurie consults a lawyer for assistance, the lawyer suggests that Lurie temporarily drop out of school and attend treatment in return for the charges being dismissed. However, Lurie declines counselling because he won't admit to feeling ashamed of his urges. Lurie admits that he intends to see his daughter Lucy in the Eastern Cape when the semester is finished while having dinner with his ex-wife of eight years, Rosalind. Rosalind brings up the university incident and expresses her disdain in the open. The next day, Rosalind alerts Lurie to a piece about the affair that was published in the local newspaper, the Argus.

► The trial

The hearing date finally comes around. Melanie, who provided the committee with her statement the day prior, is not in the room. The hearing is presided over by professor of religious studies Manas Mathabane. Akim serves as secretary. Farodia Rassool, Desmond Swarts, the dean of engineering, and an unnamed business school professor make up the committee's remaining members. The entire time, Lurie is adamant. The committee demands a confession of guilt, but Lurie only allows himself to remark, "I was not myself. I was no longer a fifty-year-old divorcee at a loose end. I became a servant of Eros." This begrudging admission does not satisfy the committee. As he departs, Lurie is rude to the hostile press and claims that the experience has made him a better person. They respond by publishing a critical piece. To talk about the settlement's terms, Mathabane gets in touch with Lurie. They offer Lurie a leave of absence and a return to teaching in exchange for his statement, subject to the Dean's and the department head's approval. But Lurie declines.

Analysis

The parts that describe the inquiry into the allegations of sexual harassment provide enough opportunity for critical discussion. The investigation's narrative, taken as a whole,

► Primary goal of a public trial

leads one to believe that the primary goal of a public trial is not to uphold the rule of law but rather to make the accused feel guilty and ashamed. Additionally, there are similarities between the University's sexual harassment probe and the Truth and Reconciliation hearings in South Africa.

► Pretense

Lurie disagrees with the committee's assertions that they are conducting a trial, despite the committee's repeated denials. In fact, Lurie declines on moral grounds to cooperate with their attempts to frame the hearing in terms other than trial and judgement. Regardless of how carefully or adeptly the committee plays the language game, Lurie is able to see through the pretension and determines what they are really looking for: a confession. His strategy comes to a head when he says: "What goes on in my mind is my business, not yours, Farodia. Frankly, what you want from me is not a response but a confession. Well, I make no confession. I put forward a plea. As is my right. Guilty as charged. That is my plea. That is as far as I am willing to go."

► Arrogance

Lurie is aware that the committee wants him to admit the immoral nature of his aspirations, but he is unwilling to comply. He will not equate the committee's finding of guilt with a public censure. Despite his understanding of the nature of his trial, Lurie is nevertheless guilty of dishonour. He is given the opportunity by the committee to control his humiliation by admitting it; but, when he declines, he is humiliated anyway. More significantly, Lurie's understanding of the psychology of shame does not prove that he is not guilty of the offence for which he is being investigated. He obviously used nasty and careless selfishness to manipulate Melanie. He is obviously a rapist. He is thus not beyond employing similar language games to defend his feelings for and abuse of Melanie, while having a nuanced understanding of the committee's language games and unwilling to put himself in the box. As the committee demands disgrace, Lurie recognises this and refuses to compromise. However, Lurie need to feel guilty. That he isn't highlights his arrogant, carefree outlook on life more than his cultural understanding.

Secondarily, the trial of Lurie relates allegorically to occasions in South African history. A Truth and Reconciliation Committee was established in 1995 as a result of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act. The crimes of apartheid left South Africa in utter ruin. Thousands of witnesses came forward to testify throughout the proceedings. If the accused confessed the whole truth, they were granted



- ▶ The crimes of apartheid

amnesty. A third or so of these trials were open to the public. The David Lurie trial gains significant cultural relevance in a similar manner. The way he arrogantly exploits his position and gender to acquire Melanie is comparable to the mindset of white South Africans under apartheid. When it comes to his misuse of power, Lurie acts as the face of the white nationalist movement in South Africa. This does not deter him, just as it did not deter the Truth and Reconciliation Committee from eliminating the last remnants of apartheid and ousting the government.

3.2.1.3 Chapter 7 to 10 Summary

- ▶ Lucy's farm

After resigning, Lurie locks himself in his home before going to Lucy's farm in the Eastern Cape town of Salem. He is enthusiastically greeted by Lucy. She is now a real rustic, wearing a floral frock and going barefoot. She sells fruit and flowers in addition to running her kennel and earning a living. Since Helen, Lucy's girlfriend just relocated back to Johannesburg and Lucy is now living alone on the farm, Lurie stays in Helen's room.

- ▶ Petrus

Lucy's helper, Petrus, and his family reside in a former stable at the back of Lucy's property. Petrus, a big man dressed in overalls and rubber boots, is someone Lurie has the chance to meet that day. The subject of her father's termination is delicately broached by Lucy at supper that evening. In his statement, he admits that he objected to the university's stress on "reformation of character." Given that her father's romances with students were frequent while she was a student, Lucy seems to be somewhat forgiving of his behaviour and provides him "refuge."

- ▶ Bev Shaw

Lurie is introduced to farm life by Lucy, and he helps her operate her animal refuge and sell her food. He meets Bev Shaw, a strong lady, in the sanctuary. Lurie is first repulsed by Bev because of her lack of attempt to seem attractive and the stench of cat pee in her home. Lurie also gets to know Bill, her husband. Lurie finds life on the farm generally boring. Lucy encourages her father to stay and suggests that he find activities to occupy his time, like cutting up the dog meat, helping Petrus establish his own land, or possibly volunteering at the animal shelter with Bev.

Analysis

With his daughter Lucy, Lurie has been able to retain one of the few ties over the years. He actually sees her presence and company as a refuge from the controversy. Surprisingly,

► A refuge from the controversy

Lucy doesn't judge him too much. Regarding the affair, she tells her father, "Well you have paid your price. Perhaps looking back, she won't think too harshly of you. Women can be surprisingly forgiving." Lucy's job is entirely nurturing; she gives her father something to eat as well as a safe space to express his divisive beliefs without being shunned. But there are numerous ways in which Lucy and Lurie diverge. Curious that he and her mother, intellectuals from the city, should have created this throwback, this strong young settler, he adds. But perhaps history had a greater part in producing her than they did. According to Lurie, his daughter is a bit of a throwback. Nevertheless, they coexist peacefully for the time being despite their disagreements.

► Dog-man

Petrus is a man in his mid-to late-40s. He assists Lucy by taking care of the pets and garden. "I look after the dogs and I work in the garden. Yes. I am the gardener and the dog-man." adds Petrus while introducing himself. Considering his own words, Petrus says, "dog-man," again. Upon seeing Lurie, Petrus is conscious of his predicament. He uses his profession to identify himself rather than his tribe or family name. Lurie doesn't enquire further about Petrus' private life throughout their conversation. There is a gap between them as a result from the beginning.

3.2.1.4 Chapter 11 to 13 Summary

► The Assault

Lurie and his daughter wake up early on Wednesday morning and walk the dogs together. They discuss Lurie's position—having been punished for desire—and Lucy remarks that men should not be able to act upon desires simply because they have them. When they return from their walk with the dogs, three men are waiting for them at the house and ask to use the phone. Lucy lets a young boy in to use the phone, but the other two men push past. Lurie, seeing the attack, calls out to his daughter, but there is silence. The men shoot the dogs with Lucy's rifle and light Lurie on fire. Later, Lurie tries to comfort his daughter, but she wriggles away and locks herself in the bathroom. She tells Lurie that she has been raped.

Lucy returns with her neighbour, Ettinger, who drives Lurie to the hospital to take care of his burns. After Lurie is treated, he finds Bill Shaw waiting for him and is surprised to see that Bill considers him such a friend. Lurie and Lucy remain at the Shaws, receiving treatment. He probes Bev for further details regarding Lucy's rape, worried about the risk of sexually transmitted diseases in addition to pregnancy.



Bev, however, refuses to reveal more than Lucy has.

Lucy emerges from her room haggard, and Bev drives them back to the farm. Lucy reports the robbery and her father's assault but leaves out her rape, even when the police notice that the bed has been stripped bare (which occurred during the rape). Lurie cannot get his daughter to tell him why she refuses to report the rape. He buries the dead dogs and offers to let Lucy sleep in his room, as she no longer feels comfortable in hers. Lucy finally explains why she doesn't report the rape, saying, "The reason is that, as far as I am concerned, what happened to me is a purely private matter. At another time, in another place, it might be held to be a public matter."

► Lucy's rape

Analysis

The chapter opens with a calm morning. But within pages, horrifying violence alters the father and daughter's lives forever. Lurie has a heroic moment when he kicks open the kitchen door to save his daughter, but his bravery is laughably fleeting as he is pushed down. This violence appears to take on an inexorable power of its own. He cannot assist himself or his daughter. The robbers lit him on fire to further emphasise his shame. Even the dogs are powerless to save their owners.

► Violence

The incident has an impact on both Lucy and Lurie's relationship. They are divided by the kind of crimes they each experienced. Lucy gives her father the instruction, "You tell what happened to you, I tell what happened to me," implying that their tragedy is not shared by the two of them. They each committed distinct, personal crimes. Everybody has to handle the fallout on their own. The only emotion Lucy has just after the incident is terror. Her room or the freezer room are not places she wants to sleep. Every area of the house has been impacted by the crime. The rape happened in Lucy's room, and there's meat in the freezer for dogs that don't exist anymore. Despite her dread, Lucy's natural reaction is not to flee. "It was never safe, and it's not an idea, good or bad, I'm not going back for the sake of an idea," Lurie says in response to Lucy's objections to her intentions to return to the farm due to safety concerns.

► Terror

It's crucial that Lucy didn't disclose the rape. Invoking her right to privacy, Lucy declines to report the crime and withhold its specifics, much like Lurie tried to do during his trial. Lucy is aware of the crime's cultural setting. She is aware of the shortcomings of South Africa's criminal justice system and does not have excessive hopes for the case's outcome. She is

► The shortcomings

also aware that justice's balances are never entirely balanced. No verbal statement or reason can ever be sufficient restitution for the crime committed, much like the pursuit of a suitable confession in Lurie's trial. Thus, Lucy and Lurie are both cynical about the legal system. But they were exposed to this system in quite different ways, as follows: Lucy is a victim of rape; Lurie is a rapist who takes advantage of innocent victims.

► Salvation and guilt are idealised concepts

It follows that the distance between father and daughter will inevitably widen over time. When Lucy responds, "No, you keep misreading me," she acknowledges their incapacity to genuinely comprehend one another. According to her, salvation and guilt are idealised concepts. she doesn't conduct herself in abstract terms. In the middle of her property, home, and kennels, Lucy is mostly concerned with staying present. As opposed to this, Lurie is anchored by his thoughts rather than any geographical location.

► Lurie's suspicion

3.2.1.5 Chapter 14 to 15 Summary

The next day, Ettinger arrives with suggestions for security measures that should be taken, but Lurie is unsure if his daughter will ever consent to them. With a variety of building supplies, Petrus rides back in a cab with his wife. He is dressed in a suit. While Lucy refuses to consider Petrus' potential involvement in the crime, Lurie is suspicious of the timing of Petrus' absence and confronts him. Following the robbery, Petrus inquires as to Lurie's well-being when he arrives at the residence. Lucy is not a question that Petrus poses. Although Lucy is not yet ready to appear in public, Petrus urges them to go to the market so that they won't lose their stall. Thus, in order to help Lucy, Lurie shows up at the market wearing his bandages and is joined by Petrus. Lurie observes how things have changed since apartheid.

► Mistrust

Despite his continued mistrust, Lurie confronts Petrus about the crime while helping him remove algae from the storage dam. Petrus denies having any more information on the incident. When Lurie becomes agitated about wanting to get his daughter some justice, Petrus calmly says that he is not wrong to feel that way. Meanwhile, Lurie takes over around the farm, tending to his downtrodden daughter. He dislikes playing the carer since he would rather spend time writing his Byron opera.

In honour of receiving his land, Petrus throws a celebration. To Petrus' party, Lucy wears a flowery knee-length dress, high heels, and jewellery. She nudges her dad to put on a tie. Very

► Petrus' party

little is in Petrus' house. Pictures soften the walls of the old stable, which lacks a ceiling and a decent floor. The only white people in the room are Lucy and Lurie. As soon as Petrus welcomes them, he refers to Lucy as his "benefactor" and declares, "No more dogs. I'm no longer the dog-man. Lucy has given the family a bedspread made of Ashanti as a present. A son is what Petrus wants for his wife's upcoming pregnancy.

► The accused boy

A few hours into the celebration, one of the three robbers shows up. Lucy wants to get away right now. Lucy wants to go right now. However, when Lurie confronts him and requests that Lucy confirm his identification in front of so many people, Lucy declines. They depart the gathering. Although Lucy forbids it, Lurie wants to contact the police. She again demands privacy when Lurie questions his daughter about why she won't confront or accuse the boy. Lurie laments the fact that they no longer get along as father and daughter and instead argue like husband and wife. After Lucy has gone to bed, Lurie returns to the celebration in the role of an outsider and hears a chieftain speak.

Analysis

► The crime is rooted in culture

Lurie is unable to identify Petrus' participation in the event. He decides that the truth is more complex and rejects the straightforward theory that Petrus set up the crime as retaliation for his subservient treatment. Lurie understands that the crime is rooted in culture and that it is absurd to assess a scenario with such a complicated historical background just on the basis of guilt or innocence. When he thinks of the pursuit of the truth, he imagines himself as an anthropologist who carried out a carefully thought-out survey and had certain goals and methods in mind.

► Lurie's interrogation of Petrus

But when Lurie really does talk to Petrus about the incident, he becomes less objective from a scientific standpoint. His inquiries start to resemble those of a lawyer rather than an anthropologist. I find it difficult to imagine [the thieves] merely targeted us because we were the only white people they encountered that day, the man continues. How do you feel? Am I mistaken? Lurie starts the conversation aggressively, but Petrus keeps his composure while puffing on his pipe. Although Lurie understands in principle that he needs to keep his mouth shut in order to comprehend the motivations behind the crime, he is unable to do so in reality. Between Lurie's perception of himself as an academic and as a human, the gap widens. This also takes place at Petrus's celebration, which

Lurie dreads since he personally detests the lamb sacrifice. Similar to Lucy, Lurie dismisses her worry that the robber's contacting the police will interfere with this significant occasion in Petrus' life.

► Individual anger and historical context

This part as a whole is focused on the complex balancing act between individual anger and historical context. The appropriate course of action is not made apparent to us by Coetzee; instead, he just presents the situation in all its agonising intricacy. Lucy is a metaphor for one strategy—total submission to cultural standards of fairness. Lurie exemplifies yet another fixation on self-justification. Each character understands the other's perspective, which further heightens the poignancy of their developing distance.

3.2.1.6 Chapter 16 to 20 Summary

► Lurie and Bev

When Lurie and Petrus are laying pipes together, Lurie has the chance to speak with Petrus about the thief who was at his party. When it is implied that Petrus is a thief, he refuses to respond to the inquiry and instead recoils. Petrus argues that he is not guilty of any wrongdoing as Lurie presses him. Later, while in the veterinary clinic, Lurie confides in Bev Shaw his worries about Lucy. Lurie strongly disagrees with Bev Shaw's assurances that Petrus is reliable. Bev tells Lurie that Lucy doesn't believe her father can relate to her grief because he was not present during the rape. Lurie is making an effort to give Lucy as much room as he can. As he gets more involved with the animal clinic, he starts to feel more emotion when putting the animals to sleep. He thinks long and hard about his part in their demise.

► Lurie and Bev

Bev Shaw questions Lurie about what transpired in Cape Town on a Sunday after Lurie finished his duties at the clinic. He informs her, and when she asks whether he regrets what he did, he responds that he did not in the moment. Even though the clinic is closed the next day, Bev begs Lurie to meet her there in the late afternoon. They have intercourse on the clinic's floor. The entire event has been prepared by Bev. She has blankets and birth control supplies ready. Following that, Lurie and Bev resume their regular lives.

► Lucy's fear

Lurie approaches Petrus once more as he uses a borrowed tractor to plough his recently bought farm. While he and Lucy are on vacation in Cape Town, Lurie suggests that Petrus serve as a temporary farm manager. It will be too much responsibility, says Petrus, so he declines. Later, Lurie's stolen Corolla was allegedly found, according to a call from the police. He is



required to visit the station so that the police can identify the vehicle. Although Lucy travels with him, Lurie realises his car is not there when they get there. When Lucy hears the news, she is distressed and expresses her desire for the two guys to be apprehended and fear that they may otherwise return.

- ▶ Brutal and motivated by hatred

Lucy tells her father about the rape as they make their way back to the farm. Three males were present. The youngest child was there to learn, while the two elder males were more knowledgeable. The crime was brutal and motivated by hatred. Following their chat, Lurie urges his daughter in a letter to flee the peril. In response, Lucy says that even if she chooses the incorrect course of action, she won't lose heart since she "will taste that defeat for the rest of my life."

- ▶ Mr. Isaacs

Lurie makes a pit break at the Isaacs' house in George his route back to Cape Town. Although he intends to speak with Mr. Isaacs, Desiree, the younger daughter, answers the door. Lurie is drawn to the young girl right away since she resembles Melanie. Since Mr. Isaacs is the middle school principal, Lurie chooses to see him there instead. Mr. Isaacs stops Lurie as he attempts to explain. Mr. Isaacs appears to have a change of heart as Lurie departs and extends an invitation for him to join his family for supper. It's an awkward meal. With him in the house, Mr. Isaacs' wife and daughter feel uneasy. Before he leaves, Lurie finally apologises, saying to Mr. Isaacs, "I apologise for the grief I have caused you and Mrs. Isaacs. I ask for your pardon." Mr. Isaacs has been anticipating hearing these words. Mr. Isaacs questions Lurie about his future and, in a later telephone call, promises to intervene on his behalf with the university.

- ▶ The burglary

In Cape Town, Lurie discovers that his home has been burgled. Numerous items have been taken, including luggage, shoes, clothing, and appliances. Lurie picks up his mail at the university the next morning. He makes a public phone call to Lucy to check on her after realising how much he misses Salem. She refuses his promise to return if she needs him when he withholds information about the raid from her. Without making any progress, Lurie returns to his work on the Byron opera.

Analysis

Lurie has not been able to talk to his daughter about the rape since the robbery. For the first time in his often selfish life, he has attempted to reach out and assist others, but his efforts have met with resistance. Even though Soraya already

► A history of wrongs

shunned Lurie during the Melanie controversy, current shunning pains him deeply, and he doesn't appear to be able to mend it in any manner. Race, gender, and position are all deeply connected concerns that Lurie cannot wish away. For instance, Lucy believes that because Lurie is a guy, he would not comprehend her experience of the rape. Lurie cannot just solve this problem. When Lucy finally does speak about the rape to her father, the historical import of the act comes to the surface. She says, It was so personal. It was done with such personal hatred. That was what stunned me more than anything. The rest was expected. But why did they hate me so much? I had never set eyes on them. Lurie replies: It was history speaking through them... A history of wrongs. Think of it that way if it helps. It may have seemed personal, but it wasn't. It came down from the ancestors.

► Sexism

Although Lurie is able to put the incident in historical perspective in terms of the persecution of black South Africans, his daughter still shows disdain for him. The fact that he is a male stands in their way because she is aware of his past relationships with Soraya and Melanie and that Lurie is also a sexual predator and rapist. Any compassion she had originally felt for Lurie's banishment has been entirely destroyed by her experience. Not apartheid, but sexism, is another major socio-historical wrong he is a part of.

► The reversal of roles

Lurie responds to the overwhelming pressure of these complex questions by developing sympathy for animals. The transition of Lurie into an animal carer strikes the foundations of his identity. The first time Petrus encounters Lurie, he calls himself the "dog-man." A dog-man, Petrus once referred to himself, Lurie now reflects. He's now a dog man, a dog psychopomp, a harijan, and a dog undertaker. In order to show how Petrus and Lurie have changed roles, Coetzee utilises this common description. Lucy was initially attended to by Petrus. Petrus resided in a barn on Lucy's land despite being a mature man with two families. He worked arduously tending to the garden and caring for the pets. Petrus no longer yields. No more dogs, he declares at his gathering. I have stopped being the "dog-man." Lurie, instead, is the dog-man.

The teamwork between Petrus and Lurie as they laid the pipes also captures the conversation. Lurie is treated like a kid by Petrus, who merely hands the tools to the skilled tool user. In fact, Lurie has given Petrus his "tools" in a number of different ways. His intelligence, his gender, and his social standing were formerly exploited by Lurie to influence



► The power swap

society, but now they are worthless and demeaning. On the other side, Petrus' assets—his skilled work and his race as a Black African—have become more valuable. They assist him in acquiring his own land. Lurie doesn't own a home of his own. While Petrus is given a house, Lurie is robbed and his home is ransacked. This power swap, it goes without saying, parallels the historical transfer of power from white to black South Africans.

3.2.1.7 Chapter 21 to 24 Summary

► Rosalind

When Lurie visits his ex-wife Rosalind for coffee, they initially talk about Lucy's security on the farm. Rosalind then shifts the conversation back to the Melanie case. Despite the hearing's purported secrecy, Lurie's dismal performance is well known. The claim made by Lurie is that he stood up for his "freedom to remain silent." Rosalind expresses her rage that Lurie has abandoned his work in favour of a relationship. She then reveals that Melanie Isaacs is appearing in a play at the Dock Theatre. Lurie decides to attend her performance of *Sunset at Globe Salon*; however, Melanie's boyfriend, Ryan, spots him there and throws spitballs at him. After the performance, he asks the professor if he has learned his lesson to "stay with your own kind."

► Pregnancy

Lucy and Lurie communicate over the phone. He phones Bev Shaw because he thinks she is hiding something from him. He sees Lucy in Salem after receiving a vague reply. She never used emergency contraception following the rape, hence she is now pregnant. Lucy tells Lurie at dinner that the young rapist is back. He is Petrus' brother-in-law, and his name is Pollux. When confronted by Lurie, Petrus admits that if Pollux weren't so young, he would recommend that he marry Lucy. Petrus consents to marry Lucy as a kind of reconciliation. Lurie is incensed by the ridiculousness of the offer. But Lucy has already been thinking about it before he informs her. She needs defence since she is a single lady. She doesn't have a father or brothers to defend her, in all likelihood. She instructs Lurie to ask Petrus for protection in return for her land, adding that he can formally refer to her as his third wife. She also instructs Lurie to make this proposal to Petrus.

► Moving on

To assist Bev, Lurie goes back to the shelter. She assists him in finding a lodging in Grahamstown. He purchases a vehicle so that he may deliver the dogs' remains to the incinerator. He tries to write the music for his opera in his free time while playing his banjo among the dogs. Lurie had a dream in his

sleep about Teresa Guiccoli (She is a ghost who is pleading with Byron to accompany her.) Lurie assists Lucy in the market every Saturday. They will soon return to their previous visiting status. The book comes to a close on a Sunday when Lurie is euthanising pets at the shelter.

Analysis

Lurie's hallucinations flow into worries about his offspring. Lurie hasn't previously mentioned being worried for his grandkids. Fertility doesn't even come up until this book's final chapter, despite all the talk about sex. Lurie's outlook on his family's future up to this point has been fatalistic. His line will be perpetuated via hate, bloodshed, and mishaps once his daughter becomes pregnant. He asks, "A father without the sense to have a son: is this how it's all going to end, is this how his line is going to run out, like water dribbling into the earth?" Future optimism isn't something that either Lucy or Lurie expresses. It is embarrassing, Lucy tells her father. But maybe that's a nice place to start over again. I might have to come to terms with this. to begin at the ground level. having nothing. not without anything else. having nothing. There are no cards, weapons, items, rights, or dignity. Like a dog, [Lurie responds]. Yes, just like a dog, says Lucy.

► Lurie's worry

Lurie's pessimistic attitude on the future does not bode well for his view of South Africa, a country where the atrocities of the past continue to haunt the present, according to critics who interpret the novel through an allegorical lens. A nation founded on hatred will only produce more hatred. The violence that white farmers experience now as a result of apartheid is the inevitable outcome of earlier discriminatory practises against blacks. Rape produces more rape. Hate feeds on itself.

► Hatred will only produce more hatred.

Lurie and Lucy, two South African whites who couldn't be more unlike, can find meaning only in humiliation in the middle of this dismal, never-ending tragedy. In exchange for security and the opportunity to spend the remainder of her days on the property she adores, Lucy accepts a degrading position as Petrus' third wife or concubine. Lurie, unable to atone for atrocities that seem to flow from his very nature, settles for giving dead dogs respect. Each person bears their shame, content to live for trivial personal pleasures in a broken country.

► Tragedy



3.2.2 Characterisation

David Lurie

The fifty-two-year-old, white, twice-divorced protagonist of *Disgrace*. David lives in Cape Town, South Africa, where he works as an adjunct professor of Communications at Cape Technical University. He also teaches a class on Romantic poets and formerly served as a tenured professor in Classics and Modern Languages before the University closed that department. The character David Lurie in the novel is deeply flawed, selfish, and driven by his sexual desires, often hurting others. He is also vain and reckless, yet he shows some signs of evolution through relationships with Bev Shaw, Lucy, and Melanie. However, just as readers may begin to sympathize with him, he reverts to his old behavior. Much like the character Lucifer in Byron's "Lara," David is neither all good nor all bad, leaving readers to decide whether to condemn or sympathize with him.

Lucy

It is evident why David takes immense pride in his daughter, Lucy, who possesses qualities that he lacks. Lucy's self-awareness, compassion, adaptability, and unwavering commitment to goodness serve as a constant source of inspiration for her father. Through her exemplary life choices and her boldness in challenging David, she imparts invaluable lessons upon him. Lucy emphasises the importance of showing compassion towards animals, advocates for the fair treatment of women, highlights the harm caused by David's actions towards women, and champions the urgency of peace and racial justice in South Africa. She personifies courage, resilience, independence, and a determination to break free from the shackles of the past and forge a path towards progress. Despite the profound impact of her traumatic experience, Lucy's unwavering resolve to stay on the farm and not succumb to retreat, as David did during his scandal at the University, underscores her strength and determination.

Melanie Isaacs

In the novel, the character of Melanie Isaacs is depicted from the perspective of David as a youthful and captivating woman who satisfies his sexual desires, yet is seen as an average student. It is crucial to acknowledge that Melanie is merely twenty years old and a student in David's class, rendering her susceptible to his advances. Despite this vulnerability, she demonstrates bravery by lodging a complaint against David,

a formidable act considering her circumstances. This courage is further highlighted when contrasted with Lucy's struggle to discuss her own experience of assault. Furthermore, Melanie exhibits resilience by returning to the University following the scandal and impressing the audience with her remarkable performance in *Sunset* at the Globe Salon, indicating a promising future beyond her initial portrayal.

Petrus

The journey of Petrus from being Lucy's former assistant and "dog-man" to becoming a successful landowner and farmer in the Eastern Cape mirrors the broader progress of Black people in South Africa as they rise above the oppression imposed by white individuals during the Apartheid era. It is particularly intriguing that Petrus exploits Lucy's rape and the perpetrators' desire to control her as a means to acquire her land in exchange for his support and safeguarding, essentially trading one form of oppression for another. Similar to David, Petrus is a complex character whose actions provoke numerous inquiries. The extent to which Petrus may have conspired in planning Lucy's assault to further his agenda of claiming her land or if he merely seized the opportunity to benefit from the incident is a matter that warrants discussion. Additionally, the reasons behind Petrus's protection of Pollux raise the question of whether it stemmed from a genuine belief in his innocence or from a desire to shield Black individuals from further persecution, considering the history of their mistreatment.

3.3.3 Half of a Yellow Sun - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a renowned Nigerian author whose works have made a significant impact on contemporary literature. Born on September 15, 1977, in Enugu, Nigeria, Adichie is celebrated for her powerful storytelling and exploration of themes related to identity, feminism, and post-colonialism. One of her most acclaimed novels is *Half of a Yellow Sun*, published in 2006. Set against the backdrop of Nigeria's tumultuous history in the 1960s, particularly during the Biafran War, the novel delves into the lives of three central characters—Olanna, Ugwu, and Richard—whose experiences are intricately woven into the broader narrative of political upheaval and personal struggle. Adichie's storytelling in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a testament to her ability to bring historical events to life through compelling characters and emotionally resonant prose.

► Adichie's story telling



- ▶ Impact of war on individuals and families

Half of a Yellow Sun stands as a poignant and multi-layered masterpiece in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's literary oeuvre. The novel's title refers to the flag of the short-lived Republic of Biafra, a state that sought independence from Nigeria, and symbolises the hope and eventual tragedy that characterised the Biafran War. Adichie's meticulous research and vivid descriptions immerse readers in the era's political turmoil and human suffering, highlighting the impact of war on individuals and families. The novel skillfully portrays the complex intersections of personal relationships and larger historical forces, making it not just a gripping historical novel but also a commentary on the enduring effects of conflict on society and the human spirit. *Half of a Yellow Sun* has received numerous awards and critical acclaim, solidifying Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's status as a literary luminary whose work continues to captivate and enlighten readers worldwide. In this fiction, the author tells a story that jumps back and forth in time. The first and third parts of the book are about the early 1960s, and the second and fourth parts are about the late 1960s. The story is about people who are affected by a war.

3.2.3.1 Chapter 1 to 6 Summary/ Part 1

- ▶ Ugwu

The first chapter is written from the viewpoint of Ugwu, a young guy whose "aunty" recently helped him secure a job as a houseboy. Ugwu's new boss is Odenigbo, a mathematics professor at the Nigerian university in Nsukka who is known for being scholarly and self-absorbed. Despite being keen to win over Odenigbo, Ugwu is taken aback by the professor's home's comforts, including the running water, books, and an abundance of food. Odenigbo, a serious but kind man, decides to register Ugwu in a primary school after learning that the boy has never had the opportunity to receive an education.

- ▶ Ugwu and his master Odenigbo

Ugwu meticulously maintains Odenigbo's home and automobile out of a desire to impress his new boss. Soon, Ugwu's responsibilities will include pouring beverages to Odenigbo's visiting intellectual pals, including Miss Adebayo, Professor Ezeka, Dr. Patel, and the poet Okeoma. After the first four months of Ugwu's employment, there is a shift in the household. A woman comes to live with Odenigbo, and Ugwu is impressed by the musical English that this alluring guest speaks. She aids Ugwu with some of his cooking and washing chores. On the other hand, Ugwu is torn between wanting to continue caring for Odenigbo and feeling a connection to Odenigbo's new friend. On the first night of this new arrangement, he also overhears Odenigbo making out with the new woman.

► Olanna's first meeting with Odenigbo

The story switches to Olanna's point of view in Chapter 2, the lady who moved in with Odenigbo in Chapter 1. Olanna is travelling from Nsukka to Lagos to meet her parents. She strikes into a conversation with a Nigerian family waiting for a cousin who is the first from their community to travel abroad while she waits for the plane. The grandmother of the family becomes frightened as a plane starts to land but does not stop, but Olanna soothes her down. Olanna also thinks back to her first encounter with Odenigbo. They had been waiting for a play, and Odenigbo had spoken out in anger when a white guy was asked to cut in front of them. He then went on to introduce himself to Olanna.

► At the family dinner

Olanna shows in for dinner together with her parents, twin sister Kainene, and Chief Okonji, who could be a family business associate. Olanna rejects Chief Okonji's advances when they find themselves largely alone. Later, Olanna and Kainene discuss Richard, Kainene's potential love interest, relocating to Nsukka. Olanna then makes her way to Kano to visit her relatives Uncle Mbaezi and Aunt Ifeka, whose simpler way of life she occasionally finds pleasant. She also pays a visit to Mohammed, the affluent contemporary Muslim who was her boyfriend prior to falling in love with Odenigbo. Olanna eventually relocates to Nsukka, where she starts a teaching career and blends into Odenigbo's family, despite her opposition to marriage.

► Richard

The focus of Chapter 3 is Richard, a British immigrant who has adapted to life in Nigeria. He is a budding writer who is emotionally engaged to Susan, who presents him at gatherings. She becomes envious when he talks to white ladies but not to black women. At one such gathering, Richard meets Kainene and discovers that she is the wealthy and well-connected Nigerian Chief Ozobia's daughter. Richard finds her fascinating. The two eventually cross paths in a hotel, where Richard discloses that his aunt Elizabeth raised him after his parents passed away when he was nine years old. As the encounters at the hotel go on, a sexual desire develops. But each time, Richard is unable to get an erection.

► Richard's life at Nsukka

After some time, Richard and Susan part ways amicably. Richard and Kainene remain together despite the difficulties in their sexual relationship. She provides him the use of her spacious home in Port Harcourt and offers him guidance on how to adapt to life in Nsukka, where he would be pursuing his literary career. Richard finds himself getting along well with his gardener Jomo, cook Harrison, and new acquaintances Olanna



and Odenigbo in these new environments. Nevertheless, he is alarmed by Kainene's interactions with Major Madu Madu, an intimidating military officer who is Kainene's longtime business and family contact and who Richard speculates could be her boyfriend. The first excerpt from *The World Was Silent When We Died* concludes the chapter. According to this passage, an unnamed "he" had heard Olanna tell a tale about a lady carrying a child's head within a calabash jar. Women also escaped with the bodies of their children in previous historical calamities like Germany and Rwanda.

- ▶ Ugwu's mother's illness and Odenigbo's mother

Ugwu is cleaning up a dinner of chicken bones at the start of Chapter 4 while doing his chores at Odenigbo's house. After some time, Ugwu returns to his studies. His instructor, Mrs. Oguike, has already started complimenting his "innate intelligence." Ugwu's aunt, regrettably, informs him that his mother is ill. Odenigbo makes the decision to handle things privately. He travels to Ugwu's village to pick up Ugwu's mother, gets some medication from Dr. Patel, and leaves Ugwu's mother at the Nsukka residence to recuperate before she heads back home. The university community is also visited by Odenigbo's mother. She enters the house with a young woman named Amala at her side. She strikes up a conversation with Ugwu and takes over the cooking. Odenigbo's mother yells at Olanna when she comes, calling her a witch and accusing her of brainwashing her son. Olanna enters her flat after being insulted. Soon after getting home, Odenigbo stops Ugwu from pursuing Olanna.

- ▶ Relationship tension

As Chapter 5 begins, Odenigbo visits Olanna. Olanna is still angry at how she was treated, despite Odenigbo's attempts to apologise. Olanna calls Kainene after he has left and attempts to discuss the estranged connection between the two sisters, but is met with Kainene's seeming silence. Then, after reflecting on her wish to be the mother of Odenigbo's kid, Olanna decides to follow him back to his place. Olanna senses that she is not becoming pregnant even though they are still having an active sexual engagement.

Early on in Chapter 6, Richard is having Nigerian pepper soup with a few of Odenigbo's regulars while they talk and drink. Harrison, Richard's cook, prefers European food, while Richard wants to blend in with African culture. Professor Ezeka and Odenigbo discuss current political issues as Okeoma questions Richard about his own writing. The Englishman, feeling that his book is not quite coming together, crumples the written pages when he gets home. He then drives to Kainene's residence in Port Harcourt, where he spends a laid-

- ▶ Cultural clash and creative struggles

back morning while frank about how confused he is about his work. Kainene is happy to talk about her previous misdeeds, such spitting in her father's glass of water, while Richard is reluctant to discuss his upbringing. Excerpt 2 from *The World Was Silent When We Died* concludes the chapter. This section explains how the British colonised a region close to the Niger River; these colonisers favoured the more dry and ostensibly more peaceful North to the more unrest-prone South. These areas were combined to become Nigeria in 1914.

Analysis

- ▶ Modernisation and tensions in Nigerian life

In the early stages of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, readers may initially expect a narrative centered on modernisation and the lives of educated professionals in Nigeria. The story introduces characters like Ugwu, Olanna, and their companions, portraying their lives in a detailed yet relatively easygoing manner. However, tension arises from characters representing village traditions, like Ugwu and Odenigbo's mother, as well as Europeans in Nigeria whose reactions vary from sympathy to prejudice. While the narrative hints at intellectual growth, romantic entanglements, and attempts at assimilation, it doesn't yet promise the impending tragedy that will unfold.

- ▶ Interplay between tradition and modernity

As the novel progresses into Part 1, it subtly explores historical and political themes. Odenigbo, in a conversation with his academic friends, presents a thought-provoking idea that links Europe's neglect of Africa to the Jewish Holocaust and World War II. Although not everyone finds this argument convincing, it foreshadows the impending catastrophe in Nigeria and the relevance of such themes in the near future. Adichie skillfully balances foreshadowing and suspense, offering tantalising glimpses into the characters' fates without revealing everything. The narrative also delves into the interplay between tradition and modernity, with characters like Olanna grappling with the value of modernisation while acknowledging the enduring force of traditional ways. Richard, a British observer in Nigeria, stands out for his unassuming presence, representing a departure from the dominant colonial figures in Nigerian literature and Adichie's own works. His character embodies the complex dynamics between cultures and identities in the evolving Nigerian landscape. Overall, *Half of a Yellow Sun* navigates a delicate balance between portraying everyday life and foreshadowing the looming tragedy of Nigeria's civil war, while also exploring themes of tradition, modernity, and identity in a rapidly changing society.



3.2.3.2 Chapter 7 to 18 Summary/ Part 2

► Anulika's engagement

Ugwu, who is used to the amenities of Nsukka and is now critical of his primitive upbringing, has returned to his native town early in Chapter 7. He discusses the impending nuptials of his sister, Anulika, to Onyeka, a mechanic, and she criticises Ugwu's "Big Man" assumptions. Soon after, Ugwu visits Odenigbo's home with the good news of Anulika's engagement and an invitation to the wedding. During this chat, a radio message stating that some branches of the Nigerian government have been disbanded is heard by the family members. The news doesn't completely take Ugwu's attention away from his responsibilities, which now include taking care of Baby, the daughter of Olanna and Odenigbo.

► Politics and relationships

Later, Odenigbo gathers with his intellectual pals for conversation and drinking. There have been reports of the killing of North Africans and the connection between Igbo-descendant Nigerians and the toppling of the government. Ugwu is busy with reading novels, keeping up with the news, and his connection with Chinyere, a local housegirl who has sex with him but otherwise maintains an emotional distance from him. He also has a negative opinion of politicians and follows the news.

► The coup

Olanna and Baby are found in the North following the coup in Chapter 8. Arize, the cousin of Olanna who is also pregnant, makes fun of Sardauna, one of the recently assassinated political figures. Olanna does not think it funny that this man purportedly bleated like a goat while begging for his life, however Arize considers it funny. Later, Olanna and Arize journey from Kano to Lagos. By this time, Olanna's parents had left the country, and she observes that Igbo-Americans are being harassed by large groups of people. Arize, however, thinks that Nigerian society would soon become more tranquil.

► The second coup

Kainene's parents are hosting a party when Chapter 9 begins, and Richard is there as well. While the celebration is going on, Richard muses about his trip plans to attend his cousin Martin's wedding in another country. A second coup in Nigeria won't happen, according to Madu, who also makes an appearance. Richard is certain of the opposite. Two weeks later, a second coup is really launched, and Madu personally visits Richard and Kainene's home. There, a malnourished Madu describes how he was forced to leave the dangerous North, using a water tank and a chicken cage as hiding spots.

In Chapter 10, Ugwu is shown carrying out his

► Slaughter in Kano

responsibilities at Odenigbo's home by cooking and taking care of Baby. The houseboy is making an effort to keep up with the news, which is now carrying tales of violence against Igbo citizens. The word that a slaughter has begun in Kano and that refugees are being evacuated is delivered by two guys who knock on Odenigbo's door. To the nearby train station, Odenigbo dispatches Ugwu with food and tea for the fleeing victims. Ugwu, who is disoriented by the sight of the exhausted, deformed immigrants, hopes to spot Olanna among them but she is not present.

► Calabash dish

Olanna is visiting Mohammed at his opulent home in Chapter 11 while riots can be heard nearby. Mohammed decides to take Olanna to a railway station after he realises she is in danger. Olanna, however, wishes to help Arize and her other family members. Upon their arrival, she and Mohammed discover that the family has already been slain. Mohammed, fortunately, is able to board Olanna's train. Olanna sits next to a lady who is toting a calabash dish that has a severed child's head on the journey out of the North.

► Nnaemeka

After a brief journey overseas, Richard returns to Nigeria in Chapter 12. As his plane lands, he is in a euphoric condition and thinking about a love letter from Kainene. Richard strikes into a friendly chat with Nnaemeka, a young employee at the airport, who is impressed by Richard's proficiency in the Igbo tongue. After that, soldiers stormed the area and killed several Igbo people, including Nnaemeka. Richard visits Susan while trying to keep his emotions under wraps. Even though he keeps the airport carnage a secret from her, when he is left alone, he starts to cry. The third excerpt from *The World Was Silent When We Died* concludes the chapter. This brief excerpt claims that World War II destroyed the British empire and led to conflicts between Northern and Southern Nigeria. Even after gaining independence in 1960, the country might be seen as a conglomeration of hostile tribes.

► Republic of Biafra's creation

The opening of Chapter 13 describes Olanna's return and aftermath, especially the periods of sorrow and exhaustion she feels. She continues to experience what are known as "Dark Swoops," and she has also lost her ability to walk. Olanna ultimately regains her ability to move her legs on her own. In the meanwhile, the political climate has heated up, with university students calling for separation from the North as a safety precaution. Political figurehead Ojukwu announces the Republic of Biafra's creation on the radio. Soon after, there is a rally in Freedom Square, the red, black, and green Biafran



flag is flown with its distinctive half-yellow sun in the centre, and the Nsukka professors and students experience a fresh and potent spirit.

Richard makes the error of forgetting to bring presents when he pays a sympathy visit to Nnaemeka's family early in Chapter 14. Richard believes that his gesture was an ineffective response to the passing of the family's kid after thinking back on this trip. The uninformed and misleading international news coverage of the violence in Nigeria is also getting on the Englishman's nerves. He makes an effort to write an essay on the mayhem, but it is rejected. Richard returns to Nsukka as well and overhears Ojukwu speaking to a gathering of students who are all prepared to fight. Kainene observes that Port Harcourt is stirred by the possibility of conflict when Richard comes to the city. Richard, though, thinks that there won't be a conflict.

► Missteps and unrest

Ugwu and Odenigbo are working with Mr. Ovoko, a guy who manages food supplies for refugees from the North, at the start of Chapter 15. After an early surge of excitement, donations have decreased, and further tensions have started to surface. Odenigbo gets into a fight with Miss Adebayo, a Yoruba acquaintance from school, as they return home. He accuses her of not feeling sorry for the Igbo people who have recently been the victims of violence. Ugwu's aunt shows up to explain that the wedding celebrations for Ugwu's sister Anulika are being brought ahead in case the fighting arrives since the chance that war could break out disturbs preparations in Ugwu's own family. Fighting starts while Olanna and Ugwu prepare a supper at home, giving the impression that everything is calm, but it is actually advancing towards Nsukka. Olanna, Odenigbo, Ugwu, and Baby hastily leave the house, boarding Odenigbo's automobile, and driving to the professor's hometown of Abba.

► Escalating tensions and escape

Richard tries to go back to Nsukka in Chapter 16 to see how his houseboy Harrison is doing and to get his manuscript. He is forced to turn around by Biafran soldiers, who promise that everything will soon be under control. Richard gets a call from Susan asking him to follow her lead and travel overseas for safety when he returns to Kainene's home. Richard disconnects from her. Then he converses with Kainene, whose scepticism about the new country contrasts with Richard's enthusiasm. Kainene's cynicism is based on tales of extortion and inadequate training among the Biafran soldiers.

► New country

► Olanna's life in Abba

As Chapter 17 begins, Olanna is attempting to adjust to the rural way of life in Abba and discovers that Odenigbo's mother is no longer as antagonistic as she once was. For his part, Odenigbo is engaged with political gatherings. Then Olanna's mother herself shows up in the community; she and Olanna's father are preparing to travel overseas and have booked tickets for Olanna and Kainene as well. But Olanna doesn't want to go. Additionally, a well-intended letter from Mohammed is brought by Olanna's mother. Odenigbo is incensed upon learning of the letter and accuses Mohammed of being guilty for the misery in the North. Due to the tension created by these remarks, Olanna quickly departs for a meeting with her family in Umannachi. Olanna claims that Arize and the rest of the family were killed in Kano at a meeting that is being looked over by the determined Mama Dozie. Then she returns to Abba by car.

► Escape and wedding

Odenigbo and his family are determined to escape for the safer neighbourhood of Umuahia in Chapter 18, but Odenigbo's mother won't leave her homeland. The conflict is getting closer to Abba. Odenigbo and his family leave for a home that Ugwu finds primitive due to its thatch roof and outhouse. Eberечи, a young woman who lives close and whose rounded buttocks Ugwu finds attractive, is more appealing to him. Odenigbo and Olanna have made plans to wed in the interim. The ceremony and celebration that follow are not very ornate, but the presence of the poet Okeoma is comforting. Nevertheless, an air strike interrupts the wedding celebration. Odenigbo talks to Ugwu after the threat has passed and decides to construct a bunker. Excerpt 4 from *The World Was Silent When We Died* serves as the chapter's closing passage. In this passage, the narrative discusses how, prior to Nigeria's independence, the British exercised strict control over the country's economic system. Conflicts subsequently resulted from mismanagement and factionalism, and the carnage that resulted united Igbo Nigerians in their support for Biafra.

Analysis

In Part 1 of *Half of a Yellow Sun*, political tensions are subtly woven into the narrative as the lives of characters like Ugwu and Richard are depicted within academic and cosmopolitan settings. The novel highlights the clash between old and new worlds and the enduring legacies of colonialism. It presents a Nigeria where people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds can coexist relatively harmoniously, suggesting that political violence is a distant concern, discussed over



drinks and viewed as an imperial legacy.

► Horrors of war

However, Part 2 of the novel brings a dramatic shift as political violence becomes a harsh reality. Characters begin to contemplate the first coup that disrupts Nigeria, and the narrative perspective reveals their varying levels of exposure to the horrors of war. Ugwu, once focused on mundane matters, witnesses the gruesome aftermath of violence, while Richard's loss of innocence in the face of war transforms him into a dedicated journalist. The formation of Biafra fills some characters with hope, even as the war disrupts their lives, highlighting the fragility of their idealistic moments in the face of impending tragedy.

► The transition

Thus in Part two, the novel evolves from the depiction of a cosmopolitan and hopeful Nigeria into a portrayal of the brutal realities of war, emphasising the characters' unpreparedness for the trauma that unfolds and their resilience in the face of chaos.

3.2.3.3 Chapter 19 to 24 Summary/ Part 3

► The elder woman's arrival

As Chapter 19 begins, Ugwu and Harrison are discussing how Richard wants to visit Ugwu's village because he wants to attend an occasion known as the ori-opka festival. Ugwu is interested in obtaining tear gas in order to make Nnesinachi unconscious, perhaps to have sex with her. Harrison ignores Ugwu's requests for tear gas, and Jomo, another local worker, finds the request amusing when he is questioned about it. Ugwu and Richard leave, and when they come back, Ugwu finds that Odenigbo's mother and a quiet young woman called Amala have moved in. Olanna is currently in London. Ugwu cautions Odenigbo that there have been ill omens around the elder woman's arrival since he is aware of the conflicts between Olanna and Odenigbo's mother. During the present visit, Odenigbo's kitchen was overrun with flies. Odenigbo seemed unconcerned. Later on, in the evening, Ugwu finds Amala sleeping in Odenigbo's bedroom.

► Extramarital affairs

Olanna goes to see her mother in Chapter 20, who is distraught at her father's extramarital affairs. Olanna confronts him after discovering that he had purchased a prominent mansion for his latest lover; though he promises to make things right, the encounter is depressing and hostile. When Olanna gets home, her mother is shouting at a servant and threatens to fire him for stealing. Olanna is able to stop this penalty in its tracks. She instantly realises that Odenigbo had slept with Amala when she comes to Odenigbo and finds Amala

leaving with Odenigbo's mother. Olanna departs from the home. She moves into her own flat in Nsukka, seeks comfort from Arize in Kano, and develops a friendship with the local African American music instructor Edna Whaler. Odenigbo makes an effort to mend the relationship, but his actions are hampered by Amala's pregnancy. Olanna, on the other hand, meets Richard while out shopping, brings him home, and they engage in sexual activity.

► Emotional unease

The opening of Chapter 21 follows Richard's responses to his brief connection with Olanna. He is uneasy seeing Kainene again and attends a memorial ceremony for Winston Churchill in an effort to conceal their intense encounter. He is accompanied by Susan, and they afterwards go to the Polo Club to relax. Susan inquires about Kainene, and she herself appears to be certain that Richard would finally come back to her.

► Family turmoil

Ugwu experiences diarrhoea at the start of Chapter 22. The worries he shares with Odenigbo are what have caused his illness. Now that Amala and Odenigbo's mother have moved in, Odenigbo wants them out and expects Olanna to come home. Amala has started eating hot peppers, believing that doing so will cause her pregnancy to end, and Ugwu finds out about it. Olanna comes back and confronts Odenigbo, accusing him of having an affair with Amala after Amala and Odenigbo's mother have left. Odenigbo and Olanna engage in sexual activity, but Olanna quickly departs, much to Ugwu's dismay.

► Relationship complexities

Early in Chapter 23, Olanna visits Richard; she wants to restore a friendly social interaction rather than continuing their romance. Distressed, Edna also visits, explaining that a Baptist church in her American hometown was recently bombed. Olanna returns to Odenigbo's home to confront him about Amala once more, and this time she starts to settle there. Amala gives birth to a daughter shortly after. Olanna decides to adopt the girl and nickname her Baby until she and Odenigbo decide on an appropriate name, despite Amala not showing any compassion for the infant. Olanna also makes a call to Kainene to explain this strategy, and Kainene accepts it. Later, Kainene calls Olanna again; she has learned of Richard's affair and is probably harbouring resentment.

As Chapter 24 opens, Richard is upset with Harrison because he informed Kainene that Odenigbo and Richard had a loud, tense argument. Richard isn't kicked out of Kainene's

► The Basket of Hands

Port Harcourt home. However, she does burn Richard's manuscript, "The Basket of Hands," which causes Richard to ponder whether there is still hope for his relationship and whether he is sincere about writing.

Analysis

► Pre-war tensions

In Part 2 of the novel, subtle references to a challenging period before the central characters' lives are disrupted by war become apparent. Ugwu, the young houseboy, reflects on a time just before Olanna and Odenigbo's wedding, marked by tension and blame that he'd rather forget. These allusions to a pre-war period stand in stark contrast to the gruesome and traumatic events of the Biafran conflict that dominates the narrative. These references hint at psychological and romantic conflicts that are not as overtly depicted as the horrors of war but still play a significant role in the characters' lives.

► Affairs and foreshadowing

Part 3 of the novel delves into fleeting affairs between characters, such as Odenigbo and Amala, as well as Richard and Olanna, alongside the birth of Baby. The themes of postcolonial identity, modernity versus tradition, and loyalty persist from the peacetime chapters of Part 1. For example, Ugwu's belief that flies are a bad omen in Odenigbo's affair reflects his attachment to village superstitions, which Odenigbo has abandoned. The appearance of the flies carries symbolic weight in foreshadowing the turmoil to come. Infidelity becomes a central theme, with characters engaging in affairs that raise questions about their motives. Richard's affair with Olanna is driven by insecurities and the overpowering nature of their encounter, while Olanna's affair is motivated by a sense of revenge against Odenigbo's perceived irresponsibility and blame-shifting. The novel explores the complexities of these relationships and the characters' reactions to them.

► Resilient relationships

Despite the upheaval caused by the affairs, the households are not permanently disrupted, highlighting the resilience and interconnectedness of the characters. Richard's rejection from Odenigbo's gatherings does not diminish his loyalty to Nigerian life, and even the falling-out between the sisters, Olanna and Kainene, suggests their strong bonds and willingness to rebuild relationships. These relationships, though strained, will prove essential as the characters navigate the challenges of the Civil War.

3.2.3.4 Chapters 25 to 28 Summary/ Part 4

Olanna is attempting to deal with the challenges brought on

► Anxiety and support

by the conflict as Chapter 25 opens. Fears of another air attack, the fact that she and Odenigbo are struggling financially, and Baby's illness are all causing her anxiety. Olanna is currently a teacher at a local school; one of her coworkers is Mrs. Muokelu, as part of her own commitment to Biafran society. Mrs. Muokelu is masculine and hairy, yet she is also patriotic and willing to assist. While Baby's medications don't seem to be working, the egg yolk Mrs. Muokelu finds for the small girl to ingest aids in Baby's recovery.

► Challenges and resilience

Since Biafra's food shortages are continuing, Olanna must start buying supplies from a nearby relief centre herself. She is first helped by one of the employees there, a guy who recalls how Olanna had met him in an airport during peacetime and had calmed his elderly mother who was alarmed by the motions of the aeroplanes. This man gives Olanna a can of corned beef one day. Unfortunately, as soon as Olanna exits the centre, a group of guys surround her and steal her corned beef. Olanna also encounters other issues, such as frequent worries about the security of the region and worries that Baby may have lice. Nevertheless, she keeps on teaching while attempting to instill in her pupils a sense of national pride in Biafra.

► Food dissatisfaction and community support

Ugwu's dissatisfaction with the rescue food being brought to Biafra is expressed in the opening lines of Chapter 26. He dislikes the taste of the flour and the dried eggs, but he is aware of the patriotic fervour of guys like Special Julius, Professor Ekwenugo, and Odenigbo. In the meantime, refugees have started to pass through the region, some of them are carrying children. Olanna begs Ugwu to assist her and Mrs. Muokelu in teaching some of the neighbourhood kids, and his neighbour Eberechi also asks him to assist in fixing the local primary school's roof.

► War developments and personal struggles

Since Mrs Muokelu intends to trade over enemy lines (a practise known as an afia attack) and won't have time to teach, Ugwu is requested to take over her lesson. He agrees to take on the task. He learns from Eberechi that she had an uncomfortable sexual encounter with an army officer who, in exchange, granted her brother a good military position. Tanzania's official recognition of Biafra as a separate nation gives the war effort an encouraging turn. Ugwu, on the other hand, is horrified to learn that Eberechi could have a new army officer as a lover. Odenigbo's family is informed that his mother was shot by enemy forces, which causes them even more distress. In spite of Olanna's objections, Odenigbo resolves to drive to his hometown. Odenigbo's whereabouts



are still a mystery as the chapter comes to a conclusion, despite Ugwu's assurances to Olanna that he will return.

► Deceptions and alliances

Richard is taken aback when Harrison makes an unexpected appearance at Kainene's home in Port Harcourt early in Chapter 27. In reality, the servant is acting as a bomb victim to make travel easier; the bandages are just beet juice-soaked, despite the fact that they look to be coated in blood. Madu, who wants Richard to write about the war effort and is certain that Richard's status as a white man will be advantageous, recently approached Richard. Richard is particularly invested in the future of Biafra now that he has written a few pieces and has even met His Excellency, the nation's leader, Ojukwu. Through his efforts, Count von Rosen, a Swedish aristocrat who is aiding Biafra by deploying his personal aircraft to strike the North, was also introduced to him.

► War and survival

Kainene has also bought a home close to a refugee camp, while Richard and his friends hope that Port Harcourt won't be attacked. One day, Richard learns that Biafran troops at a roadblock on the route won't allow him leave Port Harcourt. Bombers start to materialise as soon as he gets home. Ikejide, Kainene's houseboy, is decapitated by a piece of shrapnel, but Richard, Kainene, and Harrison escape this attack. In order that Kainene may start her responsibilities as the refugee camp's food provider, the family's surviving members move to the other home. She tries to keep things in order while working with a few clerics to convince the suffering immigrants that they have a role in the fledgling country.

► Olanna's vision

In Chapter 28, Olanna is certain that Odenigbo's mother was buried thanks to a vision she had in a beautiful dream. For his part, Odenigbo has gone home. Following Odenigbo's death, the poet Okeoma also pays a visit and performs a poem to Olanna. The mermaid mentioned in this poem, "the mermaid / Who will never be mine," appears to be a reference to Okeoma's long-standing obsession with Olanna. Odenigbo's family is ejected from the existing home and placed into a small room as migrants begin to arrive in Umuahia. Mama Oji, a tough-minded neighbour of Olanna's, and reclusive Alice, a pianist whose playing fills the garden of the house, are both nearby. After giving Alice a bag of salt as a gift, Olanna starts to develop a relationship with this young lady. Alice opens up, explaining that she was impregnated by an army colonel and that her baby had died.

Analysis

- ▶ Dilemmas of wartime decisions

In Part 4 the novel raises a critical question regarding Olanna's decision to remain in Biafra during the war. The availability of tickets for her and her daughter to leave the war-torn country poses the question: Was staying the right choice? The dangers of air raids and malnourishment threaten her family, and the events that forced Odenigbo's household to flee Nsukka should have been clear warning signs. However, it's important not to be too quick in criticising Olanna's choices. What may appear reckless or unwise in hindsight could have seemed like necessary risks and temporary sacrifices for the new country during the war.

- ▶ Identification with the masses

Olanna is fully aware of the hardships brought about by the war, and she finds herself adapting to a new reality. At a relief center, she is singled out for her past good deeds, but she also experiences the struggle for supplies alongside other Biafrans, regardless of their backgrounds. This contact with less privileged Nigerians is no longer an escape from materialism but an acknowledgment of shared hardship. The novel suggests that her identification with the masses has undermined her own sense of privilege.

- ▶ Character evolution and strained relationships

While Olanna grapples with her changing circumstances, other characters are also evolving in response to the war. Ugwu, already becoming more thoughtful and well-read, takes on the role of a teacher, finding fulfillment in educating others. He also forms a meaningful connection with Eberechi, envisioning a relationship that mirrors Olanna and Odenigbo's intimacy. However, as the war takes a devastating turn, everyday pleasures and relationships are disrupted. The death of Odenigbo's mother saps his patriotic energy and brings to the surface unresolved resentments in his relationship with Olanna. His detachment from their marriage and growing distance symbolise a broader weariness and surrender among Biafran patriots.

- ▶ Commitment with limitations

The commitment of central characters to Biafra is evident, but it also has its limitations. Olanna fears Ugwu's conscription despite his contribution to the war effort as a civic educator. Kainene, managing a refugee camp, struggles to foster patriotic solidarity among inmates while doubting the effectiveness of her efforts. These moments of despair highlight the material and psychological challenges imposed by the war, even on those most committed to its success.



3.2.3.5 Chapters 29 to 37 Summary/ Part 5

▶ Ugwu's challenges and relationships

In Chapter 29, Ugwu learns from Pastor Ambrose that food and water are being distributed by a philanthropic organisation. Soldiers try to enlist Ugwu into the Biafran army when he leaves the compound to investigate the veracity of this rumour, but Olanna pays them to release Ugwu. Ugwu and Olanna's relationship grows hostile until Ugwu deftly persuades Baby not to join other kids in eating roasted lizards; this action starts to regain Olanna's trust. Ugwu also tries to get close to Eberechi. One day after meeting her, he is once more stopped by troops as he is returning home. He is this time coerced into joining the Biafran army. During his training, Ugwu reads a new book, the autobiography of Frederick Douglass, and befriends a young soldier he calls High Tech (because he can reportedly spy on opponents better than a high-tech apparatus could).

▶ Target Destroyer

Ugwu gains proficiency with the *ogbunigwe*, a field weapon that when ignited causes a localised explosion. He acquires the moniker "Target Destroyer." Ugwu feels compelled to participate in the rape of the bar girl after the soldiers in his company force her to have sex with them during a trip to a bar. Ugwu is deployed with Captain Ohaeto after taking part in several assaults against hostile forces. A terrible explosion engulfs the two of them.

▶ Offensive-smelling

In Chapter 30, Richard is seen guiding two American journalists named Charles across Biafra. One of the journalists, a redhead, makes racial remarks, but the other, a chubby man, appears more affected by the suffering he observes among Biafra's refugees, according to Richard, who thinks these two men to be offensive-smelling. *The World Was Silent When We Died* is the title Richard suggests for a book when he sees Kainene again. Richard and Olanna cross paths once more in a remarkably calm exchange.

▶ Tensions and Concerns

In Chapter 31, Olanna notices soldiers transporting what she believes to be Ugwu's body. Mohammed has been writing her letters and giving her presents like chocolate on occasion since he is concerned about how the tension is developing. Domestic strife does exist, though. Odenigbo has been drinking heavily ever since his mother passed away, and Mama Oji warns Olanna that Alice could be luring Odenigbo away. Olanna contemplates moving to Kainene's home after hearing Kainene's own advise and being concerned about the North's oncoming soldiers.

► Ugwu's recovery

In Chapter 32, Ugwu is discovered alive and is rescued from the battlefield. He is left in a hospital, occasionally delirious and unsure of his prognosis, until Richard discovers him and takes him home. In addition to learning about the book title that Richard has come up with, Ugwu wants Richard to find Eberechi. Despite his assistance in the refugee camp, Ugwu is discouraged by the Biafran war effort, particularly Ojukwu's leadership, and plagued by the memory of the girl he sexually assaulted. He observes the youngsters playing at becoming war heroes while knowing that some of them would actually perish.

► The Afiya attack

In Chapter 33, Richard is pleased that his domestic life with Kainene has become harmonious. Odenigbo cautions Kainene about the potential dangers of the Afiya attack, but he is adamant about taking part. An escaping soldier is seen stealing food from Kainene's garden the morning before she departs. She and Richard show the soldier kindness before Kainene leaves. Olanna tries to comfort Richard that Kainene has merely been delayed when she does not show up as expected and the days go by without her arrival. Richard feels upset when this happens.

► Tensions and Uncertainty

Chapter 34 begins with Olanna braiding Baby's hair (which is falling out) and Ugwu working on his writing. Olanna and Odenigbo have started to wonder if Kainene has been slain since she hasn't appeared yet. Unrest arises as a result of a crucial radio message: Gowon's statement that Biafra and the North are ending hostilities and negotiating an armistice.

► Ugwu's return and resolution

In Chapter 35, Odenigbo, Olanna, Ugwu, and Baby arrive in Nsukka and find the house in disarray. Odenigbo's papers and other materials have been partially destroyed. The next stop for Ugwu is his hometown. Here, he finds out of his mother's passing, Nnesinachi's transformation into a Hausa soldier's mistress, and Anulika's rape at the hands of invaders. He sobs while alone and then gets up to go. Ugwu speaks with Richard in Nsukka. Richard is asked by the young man to seek for Eberechi. Richard makes a commitment to do so and reveals that he is thinking of the title *The World Was Silent When We Died*. Ugwu believes that Richard should not be the one to recount the tale of Biafra's dissolution. Richard concurs.

In Chapter 36, Richard visits Kainene's former home once more. He planned to collect photos from the property, but the woman who currently lives there won't let him in. After that, Richard visits Kainene's parents' home. Richard and



- ▶ Richard's desperation

Madu had a brief conversation concerning Kainene's puzzling absence while Madu is present. Next, Richard inquires about Madu's history with Kainene. Richard punches Madu when he dismisses this question; Madu then strikes back, cutting Richard's nose. Richard is struck by the thought that Kainene won't come back when Madu leaves.

- ▶ Desperation and belief

In chapter 37, Olanna is experiencing increasing anguish and confusion at Kainene's disappearance. To try and bring Kainene back, she visits a dibia, a traditional expert in folklore and superstition, but in vain. Olanna and Odenigbo discuss the prospect of reincarnation. Olanna starts to cry, and Odenigbo envelops her as she insists that she and Kainene will be sisters in the next world.

Analysis

- ▶ British Influence and personal resonance

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the books that Ugwu reads while composing *The World Was Silent When We Died* reflect the novel's themes and the legacy of British rule. Ugwu initially reads 19th-century British literature like *The Pickwick Papers* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, highlighting the influence of British colonialism on Nigeria. However, when he encounters *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, it connects with his own experiences of oppression and survival during the war.

- ▶ Complexities of humanity in war

The allusion to Douglass's story is not straightforward, as Douglass freed himself through escape, while Ugwu survived a battlefield disaster. The comparison also raises questions about humanity and inhumanity, as Ugwu grapples with the inhumanity he has witnessed in both colonial and African contexts. As the characters' lives are disrupted by war, they exhibit their worst traits, yet the suffering they endure complicates judgment.

- ▶ Hope amidst turmoil

Despite the characters' moral failings, there is a ray of hope in the renewed closeness between sisters Olanna and Kainene. They form an intellectual circle reminiscent of their time in Nsukka, with Kainene now willing to connect with her sister. However, the story's final chapters show that their world remains in turmoil, with Odenigbo targeted for his intellectual pursuits, and characters facing their own challenges. Ugwu, who has lost much but gained the ability to express trauma, writes a powerful account of a dark period in African history, encapsulating both the best and worst aspects of his country.

3.2.4 Characterisation

Ugwu

In the opening chapters of the book, we are introduced to Ugwu, a young boy hailing from a Nigerian village. Fate brings him into the household of Odenigbo, a distinguished mathematics professor, where he assumes the role of a houseboy. Despite his rustic upbringing and lingering superstitions, Ugwu's potential is not hindered. He proves to be an eager student and exhibits unwavering loyalty towards Odenigbo. However, the tumultuous war becomes a testing ground for Ugwu. Compelled to join the Biafran army, he is thrust into a world of brutal conflict and finds himself partaking in harrowing acts of violence against innocent civilians in order to assimilate. Eventually, Ugwu pens a poignant account of the war's traumas, chronicled through a series of heartfelt notes.

Odenigbo

Odenigbo, the ardent and resolute partner of Olanna, possesses an indomitable spirit and unwavering convictions, engaging in impassioned political debates even during periods of tranquility. His profound affection for Olanna is tested when he inadvertently fathers a child with another woman named Amala, yet their bond perseveres through this challenging ordeal. Odenigbo's influence extends beyond his romantic entanglements, as he assumes a pivotal role in shaping Ugwu's destiny through the power of education. Despite his scholarly pursuits in the realm of mathematics, he remains a devoted patriot and unwavering advocate for the cause of Biafra. Tragically, the ravages of war inflict a profound blow upon his soul, as the loss of his beloved mother drives him to seek solace in the embrace of alcohol.

Olanna

Olanna, a central figure in the narrative, becomes a symbol of fortitude and ethical principles. Hailing from a privileged background, she returns to her homeland of Nigeria following her education in the illustrious city of London. Despite her genuine affection for Odenigbo, Olanna confronts the ultimate trials of love amidst the harrowing backdrop of an unrelenting conflict. As she flees the Northern region, she bears witness to the despicable acts of massacre and inhumanity inflicted solely upon her Igbo ethnicity. Subsequently, she must navigate the arduous task of supporting her family in Biafra under drastically diminished circumstances, emerging from



► Character sketch

the experience with an unwavering resilience.

In the realm of Olanna, a strikingly dissimilar twin, Kainene embarks upon a divergent trajectory in life. Prior to the storm of war, she immerses herself within her paternal business realm, whilst simultaneously assuming a prominent position amongst the echelons of Nigerian high society. This astute, sardonic, and refined woman, despite her intellectual prowess, does not bask in the glory of her sister's famed beauty. As the tempest of war rages, Kainene remains entrenched within Biafra, devoting herself to the noble cause of aiding refugees, thereby epitomizing the embodiment of humanitarianism.

Richard

Richard, an English expatriate and aspiring writer, finds himself captivated by the enigmatic Igbo-Ukwu culture. It is amidst this fascination that he crosses paths with the alluring Kainene, and a profound love blossoms between them. United by their shared affection, they delve into a passionate relationship. Richard, driven by a genuine desire to alleviate the suffering inflicted by the tumultuous Biafran War, gradually realises the perpetual status of an outsider he will forever inhabit. Yet, in this realization, he seizes the power vested in his capacity as a journalist to give voice to the voiceless victims ensnared in the brutal hostilities

Summarised Overview

Initially the unit discusses the fiction *Disgrace* by J.M. Coetzee. *Disgrace* stands as a masterpiece set in post-apartheid South Africa, exploring the life of David Lurie and themes of personal and societal transformation, racial tensions, and moral ambiguity. After the discussion of the novel *Disgrace*, the unit looks into *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a celebrated Nigerian author, known for her impactful storytelling and exploration of identity and post-colonialism. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is one of her acclaimed novels, a multi-layered masterpiece set against the backdrop of the Biafran War, skillfully weaving personal narratives with historical events, portraying the enduring effects of conflict on society and the human spirit.

Assignments

1. Analyse the relevance of the novel's title *Disgrace*.
2. Examine the similarities and differences Lurie and Lucy share in the novel *Disgrace*.
3. In the fiction *Disgrace*, there are two significant sexual assaults: one against Melanie and the other against Lucy. Explain the similarities and differences between the two situations by comparing and contrasting them.
4. Analyse the storytelling technique used in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Does the method used make the work stronger or weaker?
5. What is Richard's function, and how significant is he to the progression of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*?
6. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* explores the issue of education in what way?

Suggested Reading

1. Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2007.
2. "Analysis of 'Disgrace' by J. M. Coetzee." SparkNotes, <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/disgrace/analysis/>.
3. Coetzee, J. M. *Disgrace: A Novel*. Penguin Publishing Group, 2017.
4. Rübener, Florian. *Essay on Disgrace by J. M. Coetzee*. GRIN Verlag, 2010.
5. "Summary of 'Half of a Yellow Sun'." SuperSummary, <https://www.supersummary.com/half-of-a-yellow-sun/summary/>.
6. "Theme Analysis of 'Half of a Yellow Sun' by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie." BookAnalysis.com, <https://bookanalysis.com/chimamanda-ngozi-adichie/half-of-a-yellow-sun/theme-analysis/>.



Reference

1. Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2007.
2. “Analysis of ‘Disgrace’ by J. M. Coetzee.” SparkNotes, <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/disgrace/analysis/>.
3. Coetzee, J. M. *Disgrace: A Novel*. Penguin Publishing Group, 2017.
4. “Summary of ‘Half of a Yellow Sun’.” GradeSaver, <https://www.gradesaver.com/half-of-a-yellow-sun/study-guide/summary>.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



Critical Responses

BLOCK-04

Block Content

Unit 1 : Postcolonialism

Unit 2 : Gender Identity and Displacement

Unit 3 : Nationalism and Independence

Unit 1

Postcolonialism

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ understand the historical roots of postcolonialism
- ▶ comprehend the core arguments of postcolonial theorists
- ▶ explore the postcolonial resistance in the given works
- ▶ analyse the critique of colonialism in the given works

Background

Postcolonialism is a scholarly and theoretical framework that emerged during the later part of the 20th century in response to the enduring effects of colonialism and imperialism. It gained significant recognition within academic and cultural circles, effectively challenging conventional Eurocentric narratives and delving into the profound consequences of colonial rule on both the colonised and the colonisers. Postcolonialism seeks to unravel the intricate power dynamics, explore the complexities of cultural identity, and analyse the methods of resistance in the aftermath of colonial domination. Drawing inspiration from a wide range of disciplines such as literature, anthropology, sociology, and history, postcolonial studies strive to dismantle dominant narratives, amplify the voices of marginalised individuals and communities, and promote a more profound comprehension of the global ramifications stemming from colonial histories.

Keywords

Postcolonialism, Eurocentric ideologies, Restoration, Independence and sovereignty, Self-colonisation, Decolonisation



Discussion

► Postcolonialism

The roots of postcolonialism can be traced back to the struggles for independence that took place in the mid-20th century, when numerous African, Asian, and Middle Eastern countries obtained their sovereignty from European colonial powers. Scholars such as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, and Edward Said played significant roles in shaping the field of postcolonial thought by critically analysing the psychological, cultural, and political impacts of colonialism. Postcolonial theorists argue that colonialism not only resulted in the exploitation of resources and labour, but also perpetuated Eurocentric ideologies that continue to exert influence on social structures and cultural representations. By examining the intersections of power, knowledge, and identity, postcolonialism aims to deconstruct the hierarchical structures deeply ingrained in colonial legacies and promote a more inclusive and fair understanding of the world. The theory is based on concepts of otherness and resistance. *Orientalism* by Edward Said is widely regarded by practitioners as the seminal text of postcolonial theory, which entered the critical instrument in the 1970s.

4.1.1 Black Woman - Leopold Sedar Senghor

► The resistance

The poem “Black Woman” was originally published in 1945 under the title “Femme Noir” in French, before being translated into English. This poem consists of seven stanzas and thirty-three lines, and it serves as a metaphorical celebration of the physical attributes of Black women, highlighting their African heritage. Nigerian society continues to be plagued by the idolisation of Western ideals, which is a significant consequence of colonialism. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Nigerian consciousness still reflects the Eurocentric beauty standards. These standards, which prioritise fair skin, slim bodies, straight or wavy hair, and specific facial features, such as a narrow nose or high cheekbones, were rejected by Senghor in “Black Woman.” During the time the poem was written, beauty and cultural worth were measured through a Eurocentric lens. Senghor, however, challenged this approach by expressing his admiration for Black women and emphasising the value of African culture.

Senghor’s poem, “Black Woman,” is a reflection of the desire for postcolonial societies to regain their cultural heritage and

► Empowerment

challenge oppressive norms that have devalued indigenous identities. It is a strong polemic against the colonial legacy of objectification and exploitation. Senghor's deliberate glorification of black women and his focus on their agency in the poem not only celebrates their strength and resilience but also contributes to the wider postcolonial discourse that aims at dismantling oppressive structures and reclaiming autonomy. In his poetic expression, Senghor seeks to empower black women and instil a sense of pride in their cultural identity, urging them to rise above the dehumanising effects of colonisation and take back what is rightfully theirs in society. Moreover, the poem serves as a spirited reminder of the need to challenge and dismantle systems of power and control that continue to marginalise and oppress black women. As such, Senghor's "Black Woman" becomes a powerful impetus to struggle for social justice as well as the restoration of dignity and equality for all.

► The restoration

4.1.2 Africa - David Diop

The poet's idea of an autonomous and sovereign Africa is reflected in the poem "Africa." Diop vehemently opposed colonialism and harshly criticised Europe, particularly during World War II when Africans gave their lives in battle to defend European interests. In his poetry, Diop expresses his frustration with the colonists' exploitation of Africa, particularly in the poignant portrayal of colonial Africa. Africa now is hardly the stunning continent of pre-colonial times. Current freedom tastes sour because of the residual recollections of humiliation, loss, and servitude.

► The transformation

Africa in the postcolonial era is not the same Africa. Even when colonialism ended, the hurt feelings never went away. In the poem, Diop conjures up three periods of the continent's history: the era of proud warrior tribes prior to colonisation, the humiliation and servitude that accompanied colonisation, and the era of postcolonial independence and sovereignty. In essence, the first seven lines paint an idealised picture of Africa that the speaker may relate to. The portrayal of Africa's actual feelings of resentment, hopelessness, and mockery during colonial rule reflects the factual truth. The final eight lines depict a hopeful future for Africa, based on some of the actual aspects of the continent's colonial past: Africa is considered a budding tree that gently emerges and eventually bears "The bitter taste of liberty."

In his poem "Africa," David Diop aspires to rebuild



► Recuperation

Africa from the terrible legacies of colonialism. Diop's poem encapsulates the postcolonial feeling of recovering agency and proclaiming a revitalised sense of identity, and may be seen as a stinging indictment of the colonial heritage. Africans are urged by the poet to rise up and free themselves from the oppressive bonds of colonialism, calling for a return to their cultural history and origins. This focus on cultural pride and resistance is consistent with the postcolonial discourse in general, which highlights the necessity of decolonisation in the domains of culture and self-perception in addition to politics.

4.1.3 Kongi's Harvest - Wole Soyinka

► Postcolonial critique

Kongi's Harvest by Wole Soyinka is a sophisticated examination of postcolonial issues that are prevalent in a postcolonial African country in the context of decolonisation. The drama explores the social, political, and cultural difficulties that the leaders of the recently formed state encountered. In his play *Kongi's Harvest*, Wole Soyinka carries out a deep analysis and critique of the tumultuous period that followed the end of colonial rule in Africa. Soyinka explores the specific circumstances and political figures that shaped this postcolonial era, shedding light on the struggles and challenges faced by African society during this time. One significant theme explored in the play is the phenomenon of self-colonisation, whereby Africans themselves adopted and perpetuated the same oppressive systems and mindsets that had been imposed upon them by their former colonial masters. This perpetuation of poor governance, corruption, and colonial mentalities ultimately led to the continued impoverishment and underdevelopment of African states even after gaining independence. In effect, the colonisers, can be said to have left behind a system of proxy colonisers who continued to resort to the same damaging practices.

► Despotism

In its essence, the play *Kongi's Harvest* delves into the profound analysis of power dynamics and the relentless quest for control in the wake of postcolonial home rule. The narrative predominantly revolves around the persona of Kongi, a dictator who cunningly endeavours to amass power and exploit age-old customs and ceremonies to his own political advantage. Through the portrayal of Kongi, Soyinka skilfully probes the notion that leaders in postcolonial societies often resort to autocratic strategies, thereby perpetuating the very oppressive systems that were initially imposed during the colonial era.

The play focuses on President Kongi's efforts to establish

► Manipulation

and legitimise Kongism, an autocratic system of governance, in the fictional nation of Isma. By suppressing the population and manipulating them into accepting him their leader, he rose to power. Oba Danlola, the revered traditional leader of Isma, was imprisoned by Kongi, who had intended to present him with the symbolic new yam during a significant festival. This gesture aimed to symbolise the commencement of a new era, marked by the dominance of Kongism, and the public's compliance with it. The play then depicts the resistance of the Isma people against President Kongi and his advisors known as the Aweris. Furthermore, it explores the complex dynamics between modernity and tradition in postcolonial Africa. Kongi's exploitation and manipulation of indigenous cultural practices for his political agenda serve as a metaphor for the broader challenges faced in reconciling traditional values with the rapidly transforming world.

► Betrayal

In this postcolonial dictatorship, the tyrants carry out the governance of the land as they were the surrogates of the colonial masters. Mplaiye-Hangson Masiska argues that in *Kongi's Harvest* the postcolonial dictatorship arises when the resistance against colonialism is redirected towards the domestic sphere, as the new nationalist leaders search for a new enemy once they have defeated the colonists. This is how postcolonial tyranny arises. The topic of how to effectively integrate the yearly yam festival within the new postcolonial institutional system is at the centre of the play. The directives issued by the military ruler are entirely at odds with the people's whole system of tradition. He breaches cultural secrets and diminishes the power of sacred locations.

► Tyranny

Kongi, the military president, assumes the role of a messiah of horror, where his actions become unfathomable. He transforms into the patriarch of cruelty, where his desires are always considered superior and unquestionable. Any attempt to resist his commands results in imprisonment or even death. Kongi demands worship, accumulating power beyond the ordinary, and positioning himself as a deity. He incarcerates the traditional ruler, Danlola, and apprehends anyone he perceives as a threat to his tyrannical regime, subjecting them to imprisonment. Some are even put to death, while others are left as mere shells of their former selves. Kongi has elevated himself to the status of a demigod, assuming the role of a deity. This chilling reality is reflective of decolonised African nations, where even after gaining independence, they transition into a form of self-slavery, albeit a more dignified one.



► Postcolonialism

Wole Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest* seeks to highlight the actions of a man who finds himself in a position of power but abuses the privilege entrusted to him. Through its intricate plot and complex character dynamics, the play delves into the postcolonial discourse by examining the challenges of nation-building, governance, and the quest for an authentic identity in the aftermath of colonialism.

4.1.4 The Occasion for Speaking - George Lamming

► Identity

In George Lamming's "The Occasion for Speaking," the deconstruction of the colonial system and the emergence of the postcolonial era following World War II mark a significant turning point in Caribbean literary history. Lamming, a highly political author, is credited along with his contemporaries, for contributing to the emergence of a Caribbean identity. He contends that the lack of cultural identity among the "island people" is a direct result of the history of colonial rule. Lamming's critical analysis in his essay "The Occasion for Speaking" explores why West Indian-born writers often fled to England and how it impacted their writings. He suggests that the absence of an audience appreciative of literature, combined with socioeconomic disparities, compelled native-born writers to seek opportunities abroad.

► Obstacles

Lamming points out that in the mid-1900s, many West Indians, particularly those of average opportunity and intelligence, had not embraced reading as a civilised activity due to the undervaluation of education and limited access to it. The socioeconomic divide between the working class and the upper class contributed to the challenges faced by writers in garnering support. The Depression in the 1930s and limited access to education further hindered the development of a literary culture in the Caribbean.

► Classism

Decolonisation, which was expected to unite the Caribbean people, led to the emergence of a new hierarchy of class, with mixed-race citizens occupying roles once held by colonists. Lamming suggests that this transition created a class divide, where those with resources had access to education and developed an interest in the arts. However, the introduction to culture, particularly literature, came from external sources, diminishing the appetite for Caribbean writers.

Although decolonisation was initially intended to bring the Caribbean together, it had the unintended consequence of creating a new social hierarchy. Lamming points out that

► Divergence

the writers who gained prominence during this time often focused on the lives of peasants, a subject that held little interest for the emerging elite class. Over time, attitudes towards West Indian writers in the postcolonial era have shifted, with the United States and European countries making efforts to provide a platform for these authors. Lamming acknowledges that, in today's world, West Indian writers tend to write for foreign audiences rather than their local communities. However, as circumstances change and access to information technology increases, there is a possibility that Caribbean readers will become more engaged with their own authors in the future.

Summarised Overview

The text probes into the historical origins of postcolonialism, tracing it back to the mid-20th century when various nations fought for their independence. Esteemed scholars such as Frantz Fanon and Edward Said played pivotal roles in shaping this field of study. Postcolonialism offers a critical analysis of the psychological, cultural, and political consequences of colonialism, with the ultimate aim of dismantling hierarchical legacies. Leopold Senghor's powerful poem, "Black Woman," challenges the Eurocentric ideals of beauty, empowering black women and resisting the objectification imposed by colonial forces. Similarly, David Diop's poignant poem, "Africa," reflects on the transformations that have occurred in the postcolonial era, urging Africans to reclaim their agency and cultural identity. In his play *Kongi's Harvest*, Wole Soyinka explores the complex challenges faced in the postcolonial era, emphasising the profound impact of self-colonisation. George Lamming's insightful analysis in "The Occasion for Speaking," sheds light on the obstacles encountered in Caribbean literature after decolonisation, addressing crucial themes of identity, classism, and a potential shift in attitudes towards local writers.

Assignments

1. Describe the key figures who played significant roles in shaping the field of postcolonial thought according to the text. What were their contributions?
2. Analyse Leopold Senghor's poem "Black Woman." How does the poem challenge Eurocentric beauty standards, and what is its significance in the context of postcolonial resistance?



3. Explore the poet David Diop's perspective on colonialism in the poem "Africa." How does Diop express frustration with the colonists' exploitation, and what themes does the poem encompass?
4. Discuss the themes of despotism and manipulation in *Kongi's Harvest*. How does President Kongi exploit cultural practices, and what does it symbolise in the broader context of postcolonial challenges?
5. Explore George Lamming's perspective on Caribbean literature post-decolonisation. How does he link the lack of cultural identity to the history of colonial rule, and what challenges do native-born writers face?

Suggested Reading

1. Deena, Seodial Frank Hubert. *Situating Caribbean Literature and Criticism in Multicultural and Postcolonial Studies*. Peter Lang, 2009.
2. Döring, Tobias. *Caribbean-English Passages: Intertextuality in a Postcolonial Tradition*. Taylor & Francis, 2003.
3. Jeyifo, Biodun. Wole Soyinka: *Politics, Poetics, and Postcolonialism*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.
4. Low, Gail. *Publishing the Postcolonial: Anglophone West African and Caribbean Writing in the UK 1948-1968*. Taylor & Francis, 2020.

Reference

1. "An Introduction to Post-Colonialism, Post-Colonial Theory, and Post-Colonial Literature." University of Washington, https://art.washington.edu/sites/art/files/documents/about/an_introduction_to_post-colonialism_post-colonial_theory_and_post-colonial_literature.pdf.
2. eScholarship, https://escholarship.org/content/qt4ph014jj/qt4ph014jj_noSplash_43134ebb831ddff2eede1faaf8160337.pdf.
3. Irele, F. Abiola and Simon Gikandi. The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature. National Digital Library of Ethiopia, http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/88320/1/%5BF._Abiola_Irele%2C_Simon_Gikandi%5D_The_Cambridge_His%28BookFi.org%29%20%281%29.pdf.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



SGOU

Unit 2

Gender Identity and Displacement

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit the learner will be able to:

- ▶ explore the treatment of gender and identity in African and Caribbean literatures
- ▶ analyse the power dynamics and colonial history
- ▶ understand the historical trauma caused by colonisation and displacement
- ▶ examine the various factors that affects the identity of a person

Background

Gender is a multifaceted term that includes a range of social, cultural, psychological, and behavioural characteristics and functions associated with being male, female or owe of a range of other identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female in a given community. These characteristics and duties are culturally produced rather than innate, and they may vary among groups and historical periods. Gender is a significant and intricate issue that is explored in African and Caribbean literature. It addresses social expectations, prescribed duties, and individual experiences related to gender identity.

The concept of identity is complex and ever-changing, encompassing various aspects of a person's life that shape their understanding of who they are. It is influenced by factors such as cultural background, ethnicity, nationality, gender, social class, and personal experiences. Identity is not a fixed entity, but rather a fluid and evolving construct that adapts and transforms over time. In the context of African and Caribbean literature, the exploration of identity is a central theme that carries great significance.

The involuntary or forced removal of people or groups from their original social, cultural, or geographic contexts is referred to as displacement. Many reasons, including violence, colonisation, financial restrictions, or environmental changes, lead to this move. Displacement has serious after effects that go beyond simple physical transfer; these include the need to adjust to new environments and a deep sense of alienation from one's native country. Within the canon of African and Caribbean literature, displacement is a crucial and recurrent theme that bears great significance for a variety of reasons.



Keywords

Gender, Identity, Displacement, Inner schism, Creole, Toxic masculinity

Discussion

► Gender, Intersectality, and Societal Challenges

Literatures from Africa and the Caribbean often challenge societal expectations surrounding gender roles and behaviours, serving as a platform for writers to question and disrupt traditional stereotypes. By doing so, these literary works contribute to ongoing conversations about redefining and reshaping gender norms. Within the context of these writings, gender is not explored in isolation but is instead examined alongside other forms of power dynamics, including colonialism, racism, and class struggles. This exploration offers a deeper understanding of the complexities of identity and societal structures. By taking an intersectional approach, literatures from these regions capture the intricate interplay of gender, race, class, and ethnicity, underscoring that gender identity is influenced by a multitude of social and cultural factors.

► Colonial Impact on identity and diaspora

The effect of colonial history on the construction of identity is a topic that African and Caribbean literatures frequently address. The main themes include the effects of colonialism, such as cultural integration, the elimination of local customs, and the imposition of foreign norms. The experience of displacement and the diaspora frequently plays a central role in shaping identities in literatures from these regions. Writers often depict characters who navigate the complexities of living in a diaspora, exploring questions of belonging, cultural hybridity, and the negotiation of multiple identities.

► Historical trauma

Many works in African and Caribbean literatures address historical traumas associated with displacement, particularly those stemming from the transatlantic slave trade, colonisation, and the legacies of imperialism. The forced migration of people from Africa to the Caribbean during the slave trade and the subsequent disruption of indigenous communities are central themes in exploring historical trauma.

4.2.1 I Am Becoming My Mother - Lorna Goodison

The poem “I am Becoming My Mother” by Lorna Goodison

► Maternal influence in identity

“It’ll be better if it could be played in a new page and not of the end of a page” is a lovely, lyrically rich, joyful poem that highlights the speaker’s many similarities with her mother, as well as their shared characteristics and sense of being part of a strong, long line of women. Identity is explored in this poem through family resemblance, and Lorna Goodison develops this theme in a very fascinating and poignant way. It may seem unconventional, but Goodison claims that men are not the only ones whose minds are constantly troubled by memories of their fathers. Women, on the other hand, experience regular, unplanned recollections of their mothers and recognise their mothers’ influence in their own behaviours and situations—sometimes positive, sometimes negative, but always present.

► Generational continuity

The poem dives deep into the complex dynamics between two generations: the old and the new. It explores the transition from being a daughter in the modern era to becoming a mother, inheriting the roles, responsibilities, and duties of both. Although the daughter is technically part of the new generation and is younger than her mother, she gradually starts resembling her. Just like her mother, she spends her time in the kitchen, brings children into the world, and prioritizes their happiness. She even experiences the same physical hardships as her mother, enduring continuous bleeding and carrying the scent of onions on her hands. Despite the passage of time and the progress of civilisation, women’s roles have remained unchanged. They continue to occupy the same position and bear the same responsibilities. The era may have evolved, but it has not brought any significant change or improvement in the role of women. The daughter is referred to as a daughter because she belongs to the new era, yet she is also a mother because her role is not any different from that of her mother.

► Maternal influence

The poem explores gender norms and expectations, emphasising the speaker’s notion of “becoming” a mother. This might imply an understanding or embrace of the roles and characteristics that are often associated with femininity. The poem explores intergenerational relationships, especially those between mothers and daughters. It looks at the ways that characteristics, actions, and even anxieties might be inherited by subsequent generations. One interpretation of the speaker’s metamorphosis into her mother is an acknowledgement of the significant impact her mother has had on her life and a return to her heritage.



4.2.2 A Far Cry from Africa - Derek Walcott

In “A Far Cry from Africa” by Derek Walcott, the inner schism of a man caught between two cultures is shown alongside a masterful analysis of the unequal social positioning of the coloniser and the colonised. His position of struggle causes him to have conflicting identities, which the poem unravels. He keeps going after his own identity throughout the poem, but in the end, he admits his love for both his own country and the English language, proving that his efforts are in vain. In other words, the central theme of the poem is the poet’s hopeless struggle between culture and identity.

- ▶ Cultural identity struggle

The fact of Caribbean colonisation involved not just slavery and related oppression, but also the eradication through all means the traces of their own culture from the slave population’s consciousness. The most effective means employed by the white masterclass was the imposition of the coloniser’s language and forcing the use of creole on the slaves. The islands were occupied and colonised by European powers like Britain, France, Spain, Portugal etc. Slaves in the Caribbean were discouraged from using their native languages. They were separated from other slaves of the same linguistic background because their masters feared that communication between them might lead to plans of escape or rebellion. This gradual erasure of the native language from their minds was accompanied with the use of a creole, an adaptation of the coloniser’s language.

- ▶ Colonial linguistic suppression

Creole with a capital “C” and small “c” are not the same. Creole with a capital “C” was first used with pride by European colonists to refer to themselves as born and bred in the New World and to distinguish themselves from slaves from Africa.

Creole spelt with a small “c” refers to any one of a family of languages developed in the Caribbean by African slaves in contact with one or more of European languages. (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese or Dutch) It became the first language for succeeding generations.

The title “A Far Cry from Africa,” according to Heather M. Bradley, is highly important because it highlights Walcott’s cultural instability and estrangement from Africa despite his focus on African subjects. His self-deprecating assessment of his hybridity, “I who am poisoned with the blood of both, /where shall I turn, divided to the vein?” highlights the negative effects of isolation and displacement. Due to his lack of “pure” blood, Walcott appears to feel alienated in both societies. Cultural influences that define an individual’s

- ▶ Hybridity and cultural alienation

character according to the standards of a particular society arise from an individual's sense of identity. The poet feels estranged with himself because of his mixed ancestry, which keeps him from clearly identifying with any one culture.

In addition to the above-mentioned challenge, Walcott touches on yet another problem he confronts: namely, the difficulty of effectively conveying the profound suffering experienced by Black people in the language and perspectives of those who have historically oppressed them. Having been separated from his ancestral roots for an extended period of time, the poet himself grapples with uncertainty as to whether he can accurately and authentically portray the pain endured by his fellow Africans using the linguistic tools and frameworks imposed upon them by colonial powers.

- ▶ Artistic representation and linguistic limitation

4.2.3 South - Edward Kamau Brathwaite

The poem "South" by Edward Kamau Brathwaite, explores the intricacies of the poet's identity and the experience of being uprooted from his own country. The speaker explores his love for his homeland, which he left behind to travel to many places, far away from the Caribbean. The persona of the poem muses on the striking contrasts between the familiar landscapes of his own country and the busy, concrete jungles he discovers. But a feeling of happiness and contentment comes over him when he thinks back on the magical recollections of his early years.

- ▶ Rootlessness and nostalgia

In this poem, the speaker compares their vibrant and welcoming island home in the south to the cold and unfriendly northern lands. He expresses a deep longing for the ocean, which is absent in the north. The poem also explores the theme of being displaced from one's homeland, as the speaker now resides in a house in the forest where the shadows make them feel oppressed. They can only find water in the form of rain and the taste of the river, which is not as satisfying as the ocean they yearn for. The speaker reflects on the idea that those who are born near the ocean can never find solace in rivers, as they continue to flow endlessly, reminding us of our own longing and lack of purpose. It serves as a reminder that our efforts and ambitions may ultimately fail. The speaker holds a sense of resentment towards the wisdom and freedom of the rivers, observing how they effortlessly flow towards the sea while others labour, wait, and witness their crafty decline.

- ▶ Displacement and longing

In Kamau Braithwaite's poem "South," the intricacies of nostalgia, displacement, and evolving viewpoints are



- ▶ Displacement and nostalgia

- ▶ Power dynamics in post-apartheid South Africa

- ▶ Toxic masculinity and power abuse

- ▶ Power dynamics and consequence

meticulously unravelled. Through the use of vivid and powerful imagery, the poet delves into the concept of homeland, explores the oppressive environments that shape our experiences, and employs symbolic elements like the ocean and river to add depth to the poem. As the speaker navigates the complexities of their own identity and grapples with the profound effects of being uprooted from their geographical roots, the verses echo with a universal sentiment of longing for a place to call home.

4.2.4 Disgrace - J. M. Coetzee

J.M. Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* is a complex work that probes into various themes, including gender, identity, power dynamics, and the post-apartheid landscape in South Africa. Throughout his works, it becomes evident that the author is deeply interested in exploring the themes of power and hierarchy, and indulges in the effort to bring marginalised voices and perspectives to the forefront. This is particularly evident in his novel *Disgrace*, where he skilfully navigates the complexities of post-apartheid South Africa, showcasing a society in flux and the dynamic shifts in power that occur within it, influenced by racial and gender politics.

The story explores the lives of David Lurie, a professor of literature who went through a divorce and is involved in a number of improper relationships with his female pupils. Lurie represents the power dynamics and social norms that have long been embedded in traditional gender roles. He brazenly pursues these connections, taking advantage of his position of authority, and ends up seriously harming and damaging the lives of individuals involved. It highlights the negative effects that result when people make use of their power to further their own self-serving agendas. The book also provides a framework for discussing the wider effects of toxic masculinity. It explores how ingrained cultural norms and expectations may support and legitimise destructive behaviour. The harmful consequences that toxic masculinity may have on a person and others around them are made abundantly clear by Lurie's behaviour.

The intricate dynamics of power in relationships are explored in depth in the book, with an emphasis on the interactions between men and women. Lurie's connection with Melanie Isaacs, a student he starts an illegal romance with, is one of the main plot points. The novel examines topics of consent, compulsion, and the abuse of power through the lens of this connection. Lurie's image is damaged and he eventually has

- ▶ Gender identities in post-apartheid South Africa

- ▶ Lucy's resilience and transformation

- ▶ Societal reflections through individual experiences

to resign from his academic post as a result of the moral and professional violations his actions involved.

In order to explore the intricacies of gender relations and identities, Coetzee incorporates the social changes that occurred in South Africa following the end of apartheid. The individuals' internal efforts to identify themselves—particularly with regard to their ethnic heritage, social standing, and gender identity—are intricately linked to the political landscape's progress.

The character of Lucy, who is the daughter of David Lurie, plays an immensely important and influential role throughout the novel. This is particularly evident when her tranquil farm is brutally attacked, as it marks a pivotal turning point in her life and subsequently alters her sense of self. Lucy's journey following this traumatic incident becomes a powerful symbol of strength and resistance against the oppressive patriarchal norms and racial tensions pervasive in South Africa at the time. Her ability to rise above adversity and stand defiantly against societal expectations showcases her unwavering resilience. Moreover, Lucy's experience serves as a thought-provoking exploration of the intricate complexities surrounding gender roles and the fluid nature of identity in a rapidly changing society. By challenging conventional notions of femininity and bravely navigating the complexities of her own identity, Lucy emerges as a beacon of hope and inspiration, representing the potential for transformation and empowerment in the face of adversity.

J.M. Coetzee's "Disgrace" explores the complex interplay between gender and identity against the backdrop of post-apartheid South Africa. The work offers readers a provocative look at power relationships, conventional gender norms, and the complex nature of personal identity. The work deftly highlights the larger societal themes that pervade the society in which the protagonists live via the prism of their individual experiences.

Summarised Overview

The text collectively explores the themes of postcolonial literature from Africa and the Caribbean, emphasising their role in challenging traditional gender norms and stereotypes. These literary works delve into the complexities of identity, often intertwining gender with other power dynamics like colonialism, racism, and class struggles. Themes of displacement, diaspora, and historical traumas, particularly from



the transatlantic slave trade, are recurrent in African and Caribbean literature. The selected poems, “I Am Becoming My Mother” by Lorna Goodison and “A Far Cry from Africa” by Derek Walcott, along with Edward Kamau Brathwaite’s poem “South,” illuminate aspects of identity, nostalgia, and displacement. Finally, the overview touches on J.M. Coetzee’s novel *Disgrace*, which intricately explores gender, power dynamics, and identity against the backdrop of post-apartheid South Africa, focusing on the character of Lucy as a symbol of resilience and transformation.

Assignments

1. How do literatures from Africa and the Caribbean contribute to challenging and reshaping societal expectations regarding gender roles, and what role does intersectionality play in these explorations?
2. Explore the central themes in Lorna Goodison’s poem “I Am Becoming My Mother,” particularly regarding intergenerational relationships, family resemblance, and the implications of “becoming” a mother. How does the poem challenge conventional gender norms?
3. Analyse Derek Walcott’s poem “A Far Cry from Africa” in terms of the poet’s inner struggle between cultures and identities. How does the poem unravel the complexities of cultural instability and estrangement, especially in the context of the poet’s mixed ancestry?
4. In Edward Kamau Brathwaite’s poem “South,” discuss the poet’s exploration of identity, displacement, and evolving viewpoints. How does the use of vivid imagery and symbolic elements contribute to the overall theme of longing for a homeland?
5. Examine the themes of power dynamics, toxic masculinity, and gender relations in J.M. Coetzee’s novel *Disgrace*. How does the narrative showcase the negative consequences of power abuse and explore the intricate dynamics of relationships between men and women?

Suggested Reading

1. Boyce-Davies, Carole. *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*. Taylor & Francis, 2002.
2. Edmondson, Belinda. *Making Men: Gender, Literary Authority, and Women’s Writing in Caribbean Narrative*. Duke University Press, 1999.
3. *Post Colonial Identities*. African Library of Critical Writing, 2014. Germany.
4. *Readings in Gender in Africa*. Indiana University Press, 2005. United Kingdom.

5. Stratton, Florence. *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender*. Taylor & Francis, 2020.

Reference

1. “The Configuration of Gender and Identity in Nigerian Literature.” ResearchGate, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356584633_The_Configuration_of_Gender_and_Identity_in_Nigerian_Literature.
2. Diginole, <https://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu:185044/datastream/PDF/view>.
3. eScholarship, https://escholarship.org/content/qt7n54h72b/qt7n54h72b_noSplash_afdae335a2d9b921712bbd57923b3f52.pdf?t=qmu3hl.
4. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48710089>.
5. New Literaria, 2020, <https://newliteraria.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Total.pdf>.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.



SGOU

Unit 3 Nationalism and Independence

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ▶ understand how literature emerged as a powerful means for expressing nationalist sentiments
- ▶ examine the profound impact of European colonisation and the transatlantic slave trade
- ▶ analyse how literature depict the psychological and social effects of colonial oppression
- ▶ explore the challenges associated with decolonisation and the formation of independent nations in African and Caribbean literatures

Background

Nationalism is an ideology encompassing politics, society, and culture that highlights the common identity, customs, past events, and language of a population living in a certain region. It creates a communal awareness that unites people by encouraging a strong sense of allegiance and commitment to one's country or ethnic group. African and Caribbean literatures have been greatly influenced by themes of nationalism and the quest for independence, which represent the political and historical struggles these peoples endured in their struggle against colonialism.

African literature arose as a direct reaction to the lasting impact of colonialism imposed by European powers. During the middle of the 20th century, as African countries gradually achieved independence, literature emerged as an influential tool for expressing nationalist ideals and scrutinising the oppressive nature of colonial governance. Eminent authors such as Chinua Achebe from Nigeria and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o from Kenya skilfully employed their literary works as a means to delve into the intricacies of post-colonial identity and confront the arduous task of establishing a cohesive and unified nation.

African literature came into being as a result of European colonisation's impact on the continent. This literary tradition, which is also prevalent in Caribbean literature, has evolved over time to encompass a wide range of themes including nationalism, independence, the search for postcolonial identity etc. African and Caribbean writers have shed light on the struggles and triumphs of their respective areas from a variety of perceptive angles



through their literary creations. Today's writers are still delving into and analysing these subjects, which enhances the literary canon and illuminates the difficulties associated with nation-building and the continuous quest for cultural sovereignty.

Keywords

Nationalism, Independence, Allegory, Gender, Femininity, Symbolism, Identity

Discussion

► Literary Nationalism

In the midst of the 20th century, as African nations started to break free from the shackles of colonial rule and obtain their long-awaited independence, the realm of literature emerged as a potent tool for expressing profound nationalist sentiments and offering critical insights into the colonial regime. Prominent literary figures such as Chinua Achebe from Nigeria and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o from Kenya seized this opportunity to delve into the intricate layers of post-colonial identity and navigate the arduous path towards constructing a cohesive and unified nation.

► Colonisation

The Caribbean's historical narrative is profoundly affected by the arrival of European colonisers to the islands who established their power. They included mainly Spanish, British, French, and Dutch settlers. The dark age of the transatlantic slave trade, which left a lasting impression on the region's cultural fabric, well defines the region's past. As a result, the Caribbean is home to an abundance of varied cultural expressions shaped by the struggles and victories that its people faced.

► Resistance

In the realm of literature, Caribbean writers have often used their works as a means of depicting the resistance and rebellions that emerged in response to the oppressive forces of slavery and colonialism. These literary voices serve as powerful testimonies to the enduring spirit of the Caribbean people. Prominent writers such as Aimé Césaire from Martinique and Frantz Fanon from Martinique/Algeria have explored deep into the psychological and social consequences of colonial oppression, providing profound insights into the complex realities faced by the Caribbean populace.

...neither evangelization, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor a desire to push back the frontier of ignorance, disease and tyranny, nor a project undertaken for the greater glory of God, nor an attempt to extend the rule of law... the decisive actors here are the adventurer and the pirate, the wholesale grocer and the ship owner, the gold digger and the merchant... at a certain point in history, finds itself obliged for internal reasons, to extend to a world scale, the competition of its antagonistic economies.

--- In this passage Aimé Césaire is exposing the lie of Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" – a poem that justifies imperial conquest as a civilising mission

► Decolonisation

Through their writings, Césaire and Fanon shed light on the profound psychological and social effects of colonialism, offering a critical examination of the power dynamics and struggles for liberation within the Caribbean context. The theme of Nationalism and Independence in African and Caribbean literatures provides a nuanced and multifaceted exploration of the struggles, achievements, and ongoing challenges associated with decolonization and the formation of independent nations. Writers critically examine the historical narratives, cultural identities, and socio-political landscapes, offering insights into the complexities of postcolonial societies.

4.3.1 Mother and Child - Chinua Achebe Refugee

► Biafran war

The country of Nigeria was ripped apart in 1967 by a bloody civil war that started when the Catholic-majority Biafran territory wanted to secede from the Muslim-dominated central state. Renowned author Chinua Achebe found himself working as a minister for the Biafran government during this turbulent time. Throughout the struggle, the Biafran people suffered much and suffered greatly, and starvation devastated many lives in the region. Achebe's literary masterpiece, which explores the lives of displaced people, especially the mother and her dying child who suffered the most from the terrible circumstances, is widely thought to have been inspired by his first-hand witness to the extreme suffering and the never-ending conflict that transpired during those dark years.

► A mother's desperation

The poem "Refugee Mother and Child" by Chinua Achebe explores the terrible realities of those who have been displaced and highlights the harsh circumstances they must endure. The poem revolves around a helpless mother and her kid, both victims of their circumstances, as they make their way through the harsh reality of living in a camp for refugees somewhere in Africa. Achebe deftly depicts a woman and her small child



in exquisite detail, highlighting their condition of desperation. A great number of unlucky people experience complete despondency after being evacuated from their homes by natural catastrophes or political upheavals. The opening line of Achebe's poem draws a comparison between the image of a woman holding her kid in the cramped quarters of a refugee camp and the ageless representation of love and tenderness found in numerous pictures of Mary carrying infant Jesus. The striking contrast between the romanticised conceptions of maternal care and the terrible realities experienced by those who are displaced is brought to light by this juxtaposition.

► Emotional complexity

As a mother, she experiences deep feelings of depression, sadness, and vulnerability. Achebe skilfully incorporates various emotions and themes such as love, grief, spirituality, self-assurance, resilience, memories, anguish, and personal growth into the lives of the marginalised mother and her child in the poem. The motivation behind Chinua Achebe's creation of "Refugee Mother and Child" stems from his own upbringing in poverty, surrounded by disadvantaged children, and the profound impact their psychological characteristics had on him. The poem masterfully guides readers towards a profound comprehension of the mother's tender and delicate affection.

4.3.2 Birth of a Freedom Fighter - Nelson Mandela

"Birth of a Freedom Fighter" is an excerpt from Nelson Mandela's autobiography, *The Long Walk to Freedom*. The book chronicles his life from his childhood to his ascension as the first democratically elected president of South Africa. The book is a testament to Mandela's unwavering commitment to the struggle against apartheid and his vision of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa. The themes of nationalism and independence are central element of the work's narrative, as Mandela recounts the struggle against apartheid and the quest for a free and democratic South Africa. The book provides insight into Mandela's role as a leader in the African National Congress (ANC) and the broader anti-apartheid movement.

► Struggle for freedom

Mandela's strong nationalism is evident in his fervent plea for equal rights and dignity of the black majority in South Africa. He captures the collective soul of resistance against colonial and apartheid vagaries in this narrative, emphasising that all South Africans have one identity irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds. Mandela had firm belief in the power of

► Inclusive Nationalism

► Enduring struggle

► Nigerian civil war

► Multifaceted national allegory

nationalism as a binding agent that could lead to fundamental changes. Nationalism for him was not about favouring one race or group over another but about building a society where justice and equality prevail among all its citizens. Mandela's understanding of nationalism is strongly rooted in democratic principles, freedom and equality and justice was deemed necessary for creating a just and prosperous society. His dedication to these ideals is clearly evidenced through his leadership in the ANC party and hard work aimed at ending apartheid as well as establishing a new democratic order including every section of South African society.

Mandela's narrative is primarily concerned with the struggle for independence from the apartheid government, which culminated in his 27 years of imprisonment. Mandela's detention in jail serves as a vivid symbol of the greater struggle for political freedom and self-determination. This is illustrated by Mandela's depiction of ANC's fight for national independence, which represents a legitimate demand since they strive to establish a non-racial democratic state. Mandela's strong commitment to political freedom and liberation is evident in his active participation in ANC and leadership roles during various protests, campaigns as well as acts of civil disobedience.

4.3.3 Half of a Yellow Sun - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, deals with themes like nationalism, independence, diaspora, identity, gender etc. The book is set in the backdrop of Nigerian civil war also known as the Biafran war fought between 1967 and 1970. It traces the lives of Olanna, Richard and Ugwu among other characters as they go through political and social turmoil of that period.

The novel effectively portrays Nigeria's arduous journey towards liberation by exploring the lives of three distinct characters: Kainene, Mama, and Olanna. Each of these characters symbolises different aspects of Nigeria's struggle for independence. While Mama embodies the country's past, Kainene represents its future, and Olanna serves as the embodiment of feminine national identity. However, the novel does not endorse an extreme viewpoint instead showcasing how Olanna, a well-educated woman with European influences, bravely combines Kainene's audacity with Mama's traditional values to actively participate in the Civil War. As the story



progresses, Olanna's character evolves, ultimately emerging as a powerful representation of women as the driving force behind the nation-building process in the new Nigeria.

Adichie employs these characters as representations of the contrasting ideals of modernity and tradition within the framework of nationalism. The text implies that even though Olanna is initially regarded as an outsider due to her Western education, she ultimately becomes the central figure who encompasses both contemporary and customary aspects of Nigerian femininity. The story highlights Olanna's adaptation to gender-specific responsibilities in the refugee camps, including child-rearing and cooking, as a means of navigating her status as an outsider amid the evolving boundaries of Nigerian womanhood. This journey aligns with the overarching theme of nationalism, in which the female characters serve as reflections of the nation's ever-changing identity.

► Feminine national identity

In addition to examining the role of Olanna as a national allegory in the novel, the narrative also delves into the concept of national allegories as proposed by Frederic Jameson. By presenting Olanna as the embodiment of the nation, the author highlights how her personal journey and encounters mirror the larger struggles and transformations that occur within Nigeria during the tumultuous Nigerian Civil War. This portrayal suggests that Olanna's experiences serve as a symbolic representation of the nation's own challenges and growth. Furthermore, Adichie skilfully explores the complexities of gender roles and identities, offering a nuanced perspective on nationalism and its connection to the experiences and portrayals of women within the story. By intertwining these themes, the author invites readers to reflect on the intricate relationship between national identity, gender, and the experiences of women.

► National allegory and gender complexity

Summarised Overview

In the mid-20th century, as African nations gained independence from colonial rule, literature became a powerful tool for expressing nationalist sentiments and exploring post-colonial identity. Figures like Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o played pivotal roles. In the Caribbean, historical narratives shaped by European colonisation and the transatlantic slave trade are reflected in literature. Writers such as Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon deals with the psychological and social consequences of colonial

oppression, shedding light on power dynamics and struggles for liberation. The theme of Nationalism and Independence in African and Caribbean literatures explores the challenges and achievements of decolonisation. In Achebe's "Refugee Mother and Child," the poem vividly portrays the harsh realities faced by displaced individuals, drawing from Achebe's own experiences. Nelson Mandela's "Birth of a Freedom Fighter" emphasises nationalism's role in the struggle against apartheid, highlighting Mandela's dedication to equality and justice. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* explores Nigeria's journey to liberation through characters like Olanna, representing different aspects of the nation's struggle for independence. The novel intertwines nationalism, gender roles, and identity, inviting readers to reflect on the complex relationship between national identity and individual experiences.

Assignments

1. Explore the role of literature as a tool for expressing nationalist sentiments and offering critical insights into the colonial regime in post-colonial African nations. Provide examples from the works of Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o.
2. Analyse Chinua Achebe's poem "Refugee Mother and Child" in terms of its portrayal of displacement and the harsh circumstances faced by refugees. How does Achebe use vivid imagery and emotions to convey the struggles of the marginalised?
3. Explore Nelson Mandela's perspective on nationalism and independence as depicted in the excerpt "Birth of a Freedom Fighter." How does Mandela emphasise the importance of a united, democratic, and non-racial South Africa?
4. Analyse the themes of nationalism, independence, and identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*. How do the characters of Kainene, Mama, and Olanna symbolise different aspects of Nigeria's struggle for independence?

Suggested Reading

1. Harney, Stefano. *Nationalism and Identity: Culture and the Imagination in Caribbean Diaspora*. Jamaica, University of the West Indies, 1996.
2. Irele, Abiola, and Simon Gilandi, editors. *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature*. Kiribati, Cambridge University Press, 2004.



3. *Nationalism and the Postcolonial*. Netherlands, Brill, 2021.
4. Rosenberg, L. *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature*. United States, Palgrave Macmillan US, 2016.

Reference

1. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/reseafrilite.46.4.35.
2. ---, www.jstor.org/stable/2930212.
3. "Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature." ResearchGate, www.researchgate.net/publication/310828078_Nationalism_and_the_Formation_of_Caribbean_Literature.
4. PearsonHigherEducation, www.pearsonhighered.com/assets/samplechapter/0/1/3/0/0130918431.pdf.
5. Springer, 10.1007/978-1-137-09922-8.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



സർവ്വകലാശാലാഗീതം

വിദ്യാൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരാകണം
വിശ്വപൗരരായി മാറണം
ശ്രദ്ധപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം
ഗുരുപ്രകാശമേ നയിക്കണേ

കുതിരുട്ടിൽ നിന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ
സൂര്യവീഥിയിൽ തെളിക്കണം
സ്നേഹദീപ്തിയായ് വിളങ്ങണം
നീതിവൈജയന്തി പറണം

ശാസ്ത്രവ്യാപ്തിയെന്നുമേകണം
ജാതിഭേദമാകെ മാറണം
ബോധരശ്മിയിൽ തിളങ്ങുവാൻ
ജ്ഞാനകേന്ദ്രമേ ജ്വലിക്കണേ

കുറിപ്പുഴ ശ്രീകുമാർ

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

Regional Centres

Kozhikode

Govt. Arts and Science College
Meenchantha, Kozhikode,
Kerala, Pin: 673002
Ph: 04952920228
email: rckdirector@sgou.ac.in

Thalassery

Govt. Brennen College
Dharmadam, Thalassery,
Kannur, Pin: 670106
Ph: 04902990494
email: rctdirector@sgou.ac.in

Tripunithura

Govt. College
Tripunithura, Ernakulam,
Kerala, Pin: 682301
Ph: 04842927436
email: rcedirector@sgou.ac.in

Pattambi

Sree Neelakanta Govt. Sanskrit College
Pattambi, Palakkad,
Kerala, Pin: 679303
Ph: 04662912009
email: rcpdirector@sgou.ac.in

AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN LITERATURES

COURSE CODE: M21EG01DE

SGOU



YouTube



Sreenarayanaguru Open University

Kollam, Kerala Pin- 691601, email: info@sgou.ac.in, www.sgou.ac.in Ph: +91 474 2966841

ISBN 978-81-967184-6-6



9 788196 718466