

UPDATED 30 OCTOBER 2017

1. The Zulu Girl by Roy Campbell:

GLOSSARY

Acres — remnant
 Smoulder — burn slowly w/o flames
 Hoe — remnant
 Prowl — remnant
 Languor's — tenderness
 Imbibes — absorb/soak up
 Unquenched — unsatisfied
 Unsmotherable — inextinguishable/cant put out
 Ferocity — fierceness
 Looms — rises before

Theme: Triumph over exploitation/pathetic recreation of hardship of endurance of SA people

Form:
 Regulated form
 5 stanzas with 4 lines with same rhyme pattern= 5 quatrains
 Stanzas relate because of pattern
Rhyme scheme: ABAB / CDCD / EFFE / GHGH / IJJ

Tone: (Author's attitude or feelings about the subject)
 Serious

Mood: (Readers emotions from reading the text)
 Foreboding

The Zulu Girl

Roy Campbell (1901–1957)
 Modern/South African Poet

Setting: Description of a hot landscape where labourers work. Simply an observation of a Zulu woman feeding her child. Closer it becomes clear it's about oppression of women.

Sympathy/admiration

Epithet—adjectives of similar meaning

1 When in the sun the hot red acres smoulder

2 Down where the sweating gang its labour plies

3 A girl flings down her hoe, and from her shoulder

4 Unslings her child tormented by flies.

5 She takes him to a ring of shadow pooled

6 By the thorn-tree: purpled with the blood of ticks,

7 While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled

8 Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks.

9 His sleepy mouth, plugged by the heavy nipple,

10 Tugs like a puppy, grunting as he feels;

11 Through his frail nerves her own deep languor's ripple

12 Like a broad river sighing through the reeds.

13 Yet in that drowsy stream his flesh imbibes

14 And old unquenched, unsmotherable heat

15 The curbed ferocity of beaten tribes,

16 The sullen dignity of their defeat.

17 Her body looms above him like a hill

18 Within whose shade a village lies at rest,

19 Or the first cloud so terrible and still

20 That bears the coming harvest in its breast.

Not a wife—lost tradition to modern world

Gang = people instead of individuals/no identity/forced to work/no individuality/identity.

Girl flings her hoe to feed her child= rebellious act
 Mass production vs. reproduction responsibilities.

Malnourished

Metaphor: coolness of a shadow = pool

The care that the mother shows for her child: looking for ticks + lice = emphasizes the poor conditions in which they're forced to live.

Metaphor: fierce animal—shows protective nature of mother

Onomatopoeia: hard + sharp sound

Onomatopoeia

Weary/unenthusiastic/hopeless

Woman breastfeeds her child. Plugged—immense hunger: He's hungry + tugs her nipple. How people are viewed: Puppy=child
 Dog= mom
 Mom doesn't see her child like this. She feels overwhelming tenderness.

Simile: L10—innocent/harmless + natural activity
 L12—more than nutritional sustenance
 Pain + sadness of history— great river

Personification—sighing—groaning/tired after hard work.

Paradox: he drinks milk/she drinks from the river

Alliteration: forceful pattern L15-16

Metaphor: unstoppable African spirit. Underlying message = child is symbol of Zulu nation
 L14—refers to fierce warriors of Zulu tribe. Strength of Zulu people still exist despite oppression.

Life has value: important life process

Gloomy silence

Not alone/abandoned
 Tradition of human struggle + survival

Looking up at her from child eyes
 Impressive statuesque—shielding + protecting

Words relating to heat:
 → Sun
 → Hot
 → Red
 → Smoulder
 → Sweating
 → Unquenched

Land is almost too hot to bear + could burst into flames.

Men = culture
 Women = Nature

Not final—Day of reckoning is inevitable

Cloud that brings the rain that'll lead to a harvest. Metaphor: children of the oppressed will one day reap the harvest of their suffering they'll overcome their oppression with the help from their mothers like the 'Zulu Girl' in the poem.

Personification: revolution/freedom

Simile: protects all oppressed children. Mother metaphorically becomes a hill that overshadows a whole village. No longer just the mother of the child she represents all the mothers of all the children of the oppressed.

1. The Zulu Girl by Roy Campbell:

Introduction

The Zulu Girl by Roy Campbell focuses on the pitiable plight of African people who are under domination and exploitation of European Civilization. It evokes the context of one particular African tribe that is "Zulu".

This poem ventures to disclose a terrible plight of a South African tribal woman whose life is spent in poverty and labour. The speaker catches a sight of a girl working in a field in blistering heat, yet looking after other responsibility of nurturing children. He closely examines the activities of the poor, deprived girl and her hungry son and describes them meticulously so as to display a vivid picture of a pathetic yet glorious sight of a woman.

It develops the image of breastfeeding by comparing it with the flow of a stream and then a river into the child's body; the mother's image looks like a mountain, and then a cloud to the child. At the end the poet states explicitly that the energy thus transmitted will soon convert itself into a rainy and fertile of a new future for the tribe. It is a revolutionary poem that takes an ordinary situation of a young mother breastfeeding her child to meditate the suppressed energy of the African people, which the poet thinks will inevitably bring about a revolution.

The Zulu Girl by Roy Campbell: Critical Analysis

Theme

The poem Zulu Girl is a powerful yet pathetic recreation of the hardship and endurance of the South African people. Roy Campbell makes the masculinist equation i.e. male is equals to culture and female is equals to nature. It poses an immediate problem of how miserably the poor South African people are forced to work on the farm. The poem is powerful both in sound and in effect.

Content

- On the surface, this poem is simply an observation of a Zulu woman feeding her child. Upon closer consideration, however, it becomes clear that the poem is about oppression, specifically of women.
- The poem has a four line stanza. The speaker provides us a detail of the plight of the Zulu girl. The observation made by the speaker is minute and influential.
- The **first stanza** gives a description of a hot landscape where the labourers work.
- It is during the daytime that the sun sheds its hot rays on the ground -“the hot red acres”. The farm seems to be under the powerful heat of the sun. It is so parching that the hot red acres –African landscape-seem to be ready to burst into flames.
- In the field is the “gang”. The word “gang” as of course frequently used in this connection, suggests that its members have no individuality and identity, are treated rather like prisoners, or are being made to undertake forced labour: certainly they have no personal pride or pleasure in the work they are doing, and are actually under some kind of the compulsion
- Now the observation is focused on the girl who flings down her hoe which can be seen as an act of defiance of authority, which exacts her subjection, a turning from mass production to the responsibilities of reproduction. Then she unslings her child from her shoulder. The child besides being “tormented by flies” is also in need of nourishment, for the girl takes him to a patch of thin shade nearby to feed him at her breast. While the child feeds, the girl passes her hand caressingly through his hair. It is significant perhaps that the mother is referred to as a ‘girl’: this may suggest that she is not a wife and belongs to the vast number of black South Africans who have lost their traditional ways of life and have been caught up in the chaos of the modern world.

- The **second stanza** illustrates the care that the mother shows for her child: she is looking for ticks and lice on him, which emphasises the poor conditions in which they are forced to live.
- **In stanza three, four and five** the poet goes on to give his impression of the relationship and feeling between mother and the child in more than a merely physical sense. The child is 'grunting' as he feeds, that is he is feeding greedily and expressing his simple but deep satisfaction. Not only does he take in physical nourishment, however, for during this process of feeding, her own deep feelings 'ripple' and are conveyed little by little into his frail, infantile nerves.
- The poem admirably suggests the strong intimate mother-and- child relationship developed by breast-feeding (often, of course, lost or destroyed in more 'advanced' cultures). The word 'languours' is important. It tells us that the girl appears rather weary, unenthusiastic, and hopeless, as though expressing a deep despair and resentment against the whole situation in which she finds herself.
- Nevertheless, even in her mood of hopelessness, her motherhood and the latent satisfaction she has in feeding her child, seem to arouse in her a kind of pride, 'the old unquenched, unsmotherable heat': a feeling perhaps that her life has some value, that she is taking part in an important life process; that she is not alone and abandoned; she belongs to an old enduring tradition of human struggle and survival; her 'tribes' though 'curbed' and 'beaten' for the time being, 'have a dignity' in their 'defeat'; and still retain their self-respect, and are ready to 'rise again'.
- As the poem develops, we seem to move gradually closer to the mother, until in the final stanza we are looking up at her, almost as though through the eyes of the child himself; and she appears as an impressive, statuesque figure, shielding and protecting her helpless infant. In the two last lines of all, after being compared to a 'hill', she is likened to a great storm cloud which "bears the coming harvest in its breast".

- In the **third stanza**, the woman breastfeeds her child. He is hungry and tugs at her nipple like a 'puppy' (line 10). This image again points out the way in which the people in the poem are viewed: if a child is viewed as a puppy, his mother is viewed as a dog. The mother, however, does not see her child in this way, and feels an overwhelming tenderness for her child.
- In the **fourth stanza**, the underlying message becomes clear. The young child is a symbol of the might of the Zulu nation: in him, there is an 'old unquenched, unsmotherable heat' (line 14) that refers back to the fierce warriors of the Zulu tribe. The strength of the Zulu still exists in the Zulu people in spite of the oppression that they experience.
- In the **final stanza** of the poem, the mother metaphorically becomes a hill that overshadows a whole village. She is no longer just the mother of one child; she represents all the mother of all the children of oppressed people.
- She is also compared to the first cloud that brings the rain that will lead to a harvest. This is a metaphor that suggests the children of the oppressed people will one day reap the harvest of their suffering; in other words, they will overcome their oppression with help from mothers like the 'Zulu Girl' in the poem.
- Without appealing to our emotions directly or blatantly (as a propagandist might have done) the writer arouses our sympathy for the Zulu Girl in the hardships of the existence; this leads on to an admiration for the endurance and for the strength of life that is seen in her.
- This in its turn, through the concluding simile, leads to a kind of prophetic hint that the scene we have witnessed is not final, and that a different and better state of affairs is bound to come in the future.

- We notice that this hope is not conveyed by plain, prose statement, as a matter of fact: it is glimpsed imaginatively by the poet's intuition and conveyed in the form of this indirect suggestion.

Form and structure

- ✓ Campbell makes use of a regulated form to structure his message. The five stanzas of four lines each follow the same rhyme pattern. The first stanza uses *a-b-a-b*, the second *c-d-c-d*, and so on. The different stanzas are thus related to each other because of this noticeable pattern.

Poetic / language devices

- ❖ As mentioned in 'Content' the poet uses imagery, symbol, metaphor and diction to add meaning to the poem throughout.
- ❖ The simile in stanza three, which compares the child to a 'puppy' (line 10), implies an innocent, harmless and natural activity. However, the 'broad river' (line 12) contains more than nutritional substance. The reader is informed that this child is absorbing much more and the dash used at the end of line 14 tells us what this is.
- The poem begins with a fairly simple observed situation, and as the poet develops and reflects upon it, its references broaden out until it is of world-wide significance. The first strong impression we are given in the poem is of the heat which scorches the landscape where the girl is working: the acres, we are told, are red, which we know is the predominant colour of the African earth, but 'hot red', and obvious pair of adjectives suggest in our mind something similar- 'red hot' the **epithet** usually applied to heated iron. This together with the **metaphor of 'smoulder'** gives the impression that the land is almost too hot to bear and could almost burst into flames.

- We are given other details that emphasize the unpleasant nature of the ‘gang’s’ work: they are ‘sweating’; the child is ‘tormented by the flies’. At last she flings down her hoe. She does not just ‘drop it’ or throw it down: the word **‘flings’ suggests impatience and exasperation**. An interesting point to notice in the first stanza is the way in which the **rhythmic and rhyming pattern emphasizes the physical effort made by the girl** when she takes the child from her back. “When in the sun the hot red acres smoulder / A girl flings down her hoe, and from her shoulder / Unslings her child, (tormented by the flies).”
- In stanza two, we read how the mother, in the meagre shade of the thorn trees, is searching the hair of her child for ticks – again a **detail which suggests the poverty and unsanitary conditions under which these labourers live**.
- We notice that her sharp nails are ‘purpled with the blood’ of the parasites. In fact, the phrase ‘purpled with the blood of ticks’ is grammatically out of place; it is intended presumably to relate to its head - word ‘nails’, but the nails are introduced by the conjunction ‘while’ and cannot strictly be governed by a loose phrase which lies outside the clause together. Our attention is held by the **metaphor ‘prowled’**, which **suggests that her fingers are like a fierce animal searching through the forest for its prey**. The **sharp electric clicks** are produced when she finds a tick and cracks it between her fingernails: this produces a sound like that given by an electric spark. Not only does the **metaphor** give this impression but the sounds of the word sequence ‘ticks’, electric, clicks intensify it.
- In stanza three, we turn on different matters, but the choice of words is apt again. We see, and hear that the baby’s mouth is ‘plugged’; he tugs at the nipple: grunting as he feeds. The **sequence of ugly vowel sounds suggest the greediness** (and hunger) of the baby as he feeds, and this is intensified in the animal **simile ‘like a puppy’**, in which the same vowel sound appears.

- Then the poet goes on to describe the deep strong feelings which pass in a steady, inevitable flow from the mother to the child and here the **simile of the broad river** is very suitable.
- Stanza four arouses out increased attention with an unexpected switch of thought, **almost a paradox**. In the physical sense it is obviously the child which is drinking from its mother; in another sense we are now told that her flesh is, in a deeper sense, imbibing something from the drowsy stream.
- To make the sudden change of thought from the reflective to the aggressive, there is a **sudden change in the rhythmic and sound qualities of this stanza**, and we come to a vigorous climax on the energetic multi-syllabic word 'unsmotherable'. "Yet in that drowsy steam her flesh imbibes/ An old unquenched unsmotherable heat..."
- The word 'unsmotherable' takes on special force in its context with 'unquenched', which seem to prepare the way, and the monosyllable 'heat' which gives the line its decisive conclusion. The line as a whole is an emphatic statement of the unquenchable vigour and spirit of the African people: nothing can blot out or obliterate their primal energy (heat – one of the basic essentials of life).
- The feeling of conviction is repeated in a slightly different rhythmic pattern in two following and closely parallel lines: "The curbed ferocity of beaten tribes/ The sullen dignity of tier defeat" when an element **of alliteration 'b' and 'd' also adds to the forceful pattern of speech**.
- The poem now moves to its prophetic climax and the Zulu Girl, as we have seen, takes on the significance of a symbol. She is no longer just a single, stray, exploited, hardworking individual in some remote part of the veldt: she represents to us the potentiality of her race for suffering, survival, and triumph. Her body is grand and imposing: it 'looms' over her child, and its protective power is beautifully shown in the **picturesque simile** of "... a hill/ Within whose shade a village leis at rest."

- We notice that the shade, unlike that of the thorn trees (a mere 'pool') is unbroken and extensive, and in it the village lies in peace and tranquillity, 'at rest. The 'looming hill' leads our thoughts to the second simile of the great thunder cloud, 'so terrible and still', which suggest violent storms to come in the near future, but with the prospect of a welcome harvest in the fullness of time.

"Zulu Girl" is thus an effective and meaningful short poem, in which many resources of the poet's art have been combined to treat one of the urgent problems of the modern world.

Sound devices

- The rhyme of the stanzas provides the poem with regular rhythm.
- Sound is also employed to add riches to the image of the 'grunting' (line 10) child, the sound of the mother's nails rustling through the child's hair with onomatopoeic 'clicks' (line 8), and the personified 'sighing' (line 12) of the river as the mother's milk passes to her child.

TAKEN FROM ENG2603 STUDY GUIDE

Roy Campbell's "The Zulu Girl".

Be aware that, in contrast to the poem "A Red Blanket Addresses Christians", the speaker in Campbell's poem mostly articulates his/her sense of distance from his/her focus, the Zulu girl.

Notice that s/he refers to her, for example, in the generic ethnic identity, that s/he calls her a "girl" despite also describing her as a mother. Because of this speaker's ignorance and tendency to generalise, it may be argued that s/he uses stereotypes (refer to the definition of "stereotype" given above).

However, also notice that from the beginning of Stanza 3 to the concluding stanza, the speaker assumes a sense of familiarity with the "girl", despite opening the poem with a description of her as being physically distant from him and just a "girl".

2. Ntsikana kaGabha - "Ntsikana's Bell"

A cautious approval of an example of a Western colonial tool is also apparent in Ntsikana kaGabha's poem, "Ntsikana's Bell". First and foremost, it is imperative to recognise the context that this poem conjures up. The references to Christian fellowship are repeated throughout: "Sele! Sele!" – explained in the paratext as a "call to worship", the title's "bell", "the Word of the Lord", 'the call' and "heaven". The call-and-response mode of this poem, suggested in the motif,

Sele! Sele!

Ahom, ahom, ahom!

implies a form of communal incantation or prayer session. It is as if the reader hears the poem's speaker engaged in a dialogue or two-way communication with the audience, reminiscent of a Christian church service. This is a context where the minister, upon appealing to the worshippers to heed God, hears them responding in the affirmative. The usage of the exclamation marks underlies the authority with which the request is made. The parishioners do not appear to be expected to protest, as the percussive sound of the "bell", being persistent, is musically enticing. In addition, Ntsikana, who seems to resemble the missionary school teacher carrying a "belt" (see paratext in line 2), sometimes the stick, presumably threatens to discipline the flock into compliance. The suggestion is that the performance resembles people who show unity in purpose by virtue of responding positively to the instruction of God, represented in the poem by Ntsikana. In turn, hearing this poem being chanted frames the reader/audience into a worshipper.

The poet's locating of this poem within the Christian ritual space is in itself a rhetorical device that sets the scene for another kind of politics: that which saw the rise of black "liberation theology". The first indication of this politics is hinted at in the title: it alludes to the visionary and counsellor, Ntsikana, "the Xhosa Christian prophet (d.1822)" (see J. Pieres, 1989: 137) or, according to T.J. Stapleton (1994: 27), "the first Xhosa convert to Christianity". Ntsikana is credited with initiating literacy projects and spreading the

Christian gospel among the Xhosas across the Eastern Cape at the time when Christianity was an integral component of the English colonial invasion of Southern Africa. In other words, Ntsikana was both a Western educated teacher and a Christian lay preacher.

The centrality of Ntsikana to this poem emphasises a dimension which contrasts with the colonial missionary's Christian ethos which ostensibly privileged the spiritual above material concerns. In contradistinction to the ethereal, this poem foregrounds the Xhosa people re-using Christian mysticism in order to mediate the English colonial conquest. The poem mentions this agony again in the second line of the fourth stanza, where Ntsikana introduces the emotive land question: "It has been fenced in and surrounded, this land of your fathers". In the quotation above, Ntsikana is heard articulating the liberation struggle using the syntax and idiom that are not typical of Standard English. In this line, he identifies the subject phrase, "the land", with an article, "It", in the main clause and substitutes this subject with a noun, "this land", in the supporting clause. This seeming anomaly intensifies the rhetorical or persuasive nature of the climate of the struggle for material issues, and also underscores how the Xhosas have "translated" both the English language and Christianity into the call to resist colonial invasion. The assumption is that the primary audience in this poem are Xhosa home language speakers, as the nature of colonial domination – implied in "fenced in and surrounded" – connotes the early form of South Africa's Bantustan system with which they are familiar. In short, Ntsikana is heard telling the Xhosas that the "land" belongs to them by virtue of prior occupation or of being their ancestors', as opposed to the Christian God who allegedly does not recognise sectarian boundaries and the kind of property ownership that is defined in terms of ancestral lineage.

This is why, in this poem, the audience hears the call to action being articulated by Ntsikana, as opposed to a Christian prophet; by a popular intellectual who graced the Xhosa shores, in contrast to an ancestral figure who the traditional Xhosas do not recognise as Xhosa; and by a visionary who the Xhosas associate with the early history of their liberation struggle, as opposed to a figure who the dominant Western history depicts as someone who contributed to the demise of the Xhosa anti-colonial resistance (see Stapleton, 1994: 29). The form of Christianity that informs this poem is therefore localised, popular and charismatic.

To conclude, this poem shows the Xhosa people having a troubled attitude towards Christianity. The central symbol of this dilemma is Ntsikana, an early Xhosa prophet, because he invoked Christianity's broad framework in order to resist English imperialism. The character of Ntsikana signals a new form of modernity where, many years after his death, the poet uses the persona of Ntsikana rallying the Xhosas to action by sounding a "bell". Therefore, the poem's depiction of Ntsikana telling the "multitudes" that they are being called to "heaven" can only mean that he implores the Xhosa to forge ahead with the nationalist struggle.

3. “A Red Blanket Addresses Christians” by Nontsizi Mgqwetho

TAKEN FROM TL 201 2016

Read the poem “A Red Blanket Addresses Christians” by Nontsizi Mgqwetho on pages 91-92 of *The New Century of South African Poetry*, and answer the question below.

In the absence of shared cultural and religious beliefs, a sense of community is lost.

In the light of this statement, write an essay in which you analyze the poem “A Red Blanket Addresses Christians” by Nontsizi Mgqwetho, highlighting the feelings and concerns of the speaker. Briefly discuss the attitudes of the speaker towards Western education and comment on the usage of language.

The title of the poem clearly suggests a clash between African tradition (Redness which can be demonstrated by the smearing of red ochre as a gesture to accept the ancestors) and religion (Christianity). The words ‘A Red Blanket’ are employed metaphorically or as an image in the sense that they are symbolic of an African culture which is now abandoned by the younger generation, who seems to follow Western civilization.

The speaker clearly condemns the manner in which the youth behaves where respect for African culture diminishes and morality degenerating. The young girls do not preserve themselves and their bodies anymore, but they freely give themselves to their lovers without the payment of dowry. The marriage institution has lost its meaning and respect. The speaker in stanza two and three gives comments on education. Seemingly the younger generation is brainwashed into thinking that after acquiring education they can do as they please without observing the customs. The younger generation is receiving education but seems to do this at the expense of their culture. The speaker highlights the fact that education instead of empowering the youth, has disempowered them because they seem to lack morality and have lost direction. They have turned into thieves and crooks. Education is seen as a disempowering tool, because it performs that which is undesirable, the opposite of what it should actually be doing. This can be deduced from

the following lines in stanza 3, 'Goals crammed to capacity, courts jam packed, With the learned products of school education'.

The notion or the understanding of religion and culture by the speaker is questionable because it seems as if she suggests that one cannot be a 'red blanket' and a Christian simultaneously, (stanza 5) 'You still wear red blankets in God's very house'. We can argue that culture should not be seen as contrary to religion. The two notions can exist simultaneously, and should not be seen as competing for the human soul. In the African context both culture and religion are vital for the human spirit. They each play a role in the life of an individual. (This idea is illustrated in a number of texts such as *The Heart of Redness* by Zakes Mda, where both the believers and non-believers display a profound respect for their ancestors).

According to the speaker, those who call themselves Christians behave in strange ways. The image of a hyena is employed to illustrate this point. In stanza 5 'You're Christians by day, hyenas by night'. A hyena cannot be trusted and is dangerous, which means that the so-called Christians cannot be trusted and their behavior is questionable. The mocking statement 'You Christians are suckers for every fad' clearly points out how the speaker is disgusted. The people are neither grounded in culture nor in religion. Another image employed is 'Cloaking God in crocodile hide' in stanza 6. This means that Christians camouflaged themselves in order not to be seen that they are not true Christians either. Their claim to believe in God is questionable.

The behaviour Christians depict raises a question of identity crisis. This can be attributed to colonialism since it displaced people and they lost a sense of themselves. The Christian religion was also introduced by the missionaries in a manner to confuse and brainwash people instead of empowering them. Therefore in the eyes of many, Christian religion was seen as a weapon for the colonialists to conquer Africans, take their stock, land and mineral resources.

The last stanza clearly parades the fact that the speaker also embraces Christianity or at least has respect for God. The last line,

'But of course I don't which to imply
That God's word's devoid of truth.
Mercy!

The above quoted lines at the end of the poem prove the point that the poet or the speaker is engaging her views from a particular perspective. The poet as a writer is a representative of her community and therefore part of the culture of the very same community. Her identity along with that of her community is questionable.

Therefore both education and religion are questioned as instruments the West employed to conquer Africa, which in the eyes of the speaker threaten the survival and growth of African tradition and culture. Having done the analysis one can actually agree with the statement that 'In the absence of shared cultural and religious beliefs, a sense of community is lost'. This has been evident in the manner in which the speaker raised her concerns, and commented on the behaviour of Christians and those who are educated.

TAKEN FROM STUDY GUIDE ENG2603

Let us consider Pratt's definition of "contact zones" in a reading of Nontsizi Mqgqwetho's poem, "A Red Blanket Addresses Christians" (p. 91).

Read the poem, identifying the speaker, the tone and the addressee.

By now, you should be able to establish that the poem presents the speaker who depicts him/herself in terms of the metaphor "red blanket". The speaker mentions this metaphor in the title, and in the last stanza it is preceded by the first person pronoun in the plural form, "We".

The colour red is used here to refer to those Xhosas who allegedly refuse to embrace Christianity and Western modernity, who prefer to follow Xhosa rituals and customs and to decorate themselves and their couture in red ochre. This colour is dominant in this

culture's practices (Here you may wish to refer to Zakes Mda's novel, *The Heart of Redness*, 2000).

You will also notice that this speaker addresses "Christians" and further that s/he is unhappy with them. How do we know this? Refer to the use of the second person pronoun, in the form of "you" and "your", throughout the poem and consider how, through this perspective, the speaker introduces a sense of cold distance from those he calls "Christians". However, the speaker's attempt to establish distance from the Christians has just the opposite result.

How do we arrive at this assertion? Try this procedure to arrive at the answers:

Jot down in point form the commonality between the speaker and the "Christians" that s/he gradually discloses in the poem. Good answers should include the following points:

- The speaker refers to Christians as "your daughters" in line 1.
- You should have identified and evaluated the speaker's reasons for disapproving of "Christians" in every stanza.
- You should also have commented on the concluding stanza where the speaker remarks that s/he also values the Christian God's "truth", noting that this speaker therefore paradoxically discloses his/her sense of entanglement with the Christians

It is worth highlighting at least two advantages of considering representations of Africa in terms of "contact zones":

The colonised appear as active participants, using the very ideological resources based on racist lines of thought that the coloniser monopolises, as opposed to being mere objects who do not contribute to history.

4. The Slave Dealer – Thomas Pringle

TAKEN FROM ASSIGNMENT FEEDBACK SEMESTER 1 2017

Thomas Pringle like most of his contemporaries, through writing poetry, aimed at fighting the plight of slavery and forms of discrimination pertaining to race and class against the natives (black people) of South Africa. This is evident in his poem *The Slave Dealer*.

Black people were forcefully removed from their own land and from their families, and taken across the seas to be used as slaves for the white people in USA and the United Kingdom, for instance. The trans-Atlantic slave trade was effectively practiced in the western part of Africa, in countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and Angola. Incidents of the slave trade were also reported in other parts of Southern Africa which affected South Africa until 1940s. The slave trade and acts of forced labour can be seen as some of the platforms depicting the colonial encounter.

The title of the poem, 'The Slave Dealer', introduces the subject matter, contextualizes the poem and suggests a possible theme, that of slavery (forced labour and slave trading). In short, the title tells the reader what to expect in the poem. The slave dealer is thought of as a person who has been at the forefront of the system of slavery, a cruel act that was performed to the Africans (natives of the continent), where they were sold to the people of the west.

Pringle employs the term character of the **Wanderer** in the first line to depict the emptiness the slave dealer felt at the end of the slave trade system or after he had decided to quit and return home to his mother. The phrase, "From ocean's wave", further illustrates and concretizes the context of the poem, that is, the slave trade was actually performed in the middle of the sea where the captured would find it impossible to escape. If they did escape, they would be diving down to their death in the deep of the ocean.

The term, "Wanderer", implies the loss the slave trader felt inside. It can be argued that initially he had planned to make wealth in order to live a fulfilling life, but being a wanderer

suggests that the world has dealt with him. He is alone, no friends, and there is no mention of wealth in the poem which then alerts the reader to the fact that the slave trader failed to attain his goals. Instead he came back home feeling lost and guilty considering what he had been doing at sea. The term Wanderer can also be seen as a collective term which refers to all those colonialists who took part in slave trade. The poet may have witnessed how they felt at the end of the slave trade period. They may have looked terrible, like people who seemed hollow inside as a result of creating ill-conditions for the captives and killing people on a wide scale.

The term, 'Mother', in the first and second stanzas suggests that it is a metaphor for all the mothers of the colonialists who took part in slave trade. The mothers did not approve what their sons were doing, that is, forcefully trading black people which resulted in dislocating many of the native people's families, but they could not stop their sons. All they had to do was to watch and wait for that moment when the sons would realize the cruelty and folly of their behavior and actions.

The slave trader is self-incriminating when he proclaims:

'There is blood upon my hands!' he said

'Which water cannot wash; (lines 1 & 2)

In the same stanza (fourth), he then details what he has done in lines (3 to 6) until the end of the stanza. This stanza portrays a new identity displayed by the slave trader. He recognizes that his acts were erroneous because they torture his mind frequently. And perhaps that is why he has taken a decision to return to his mother to confess his sins.

This tells the reader that he knew his mother was against his wrong doings but he did not listen. It therefore makes sense to the reader why the slave trader makes his way back to his mother.

The word, 'Negro', serves to highlight the race of those who were captured as slaves, that is, black people. This word also reveals the setting which refers to the post-colonial era when Black people were called Negroes, a term considered to be derogatory at the time.

In stanza 5, the slave dealer reveals that he could not stand the blooded sea anymore and possibly that is why he left for home.

And now all ocean cannot wash
My soul from murder's dye;
Nor e'en thy prayer, dear Mother, quash
That Woman's wild death-cry!

There is a Christian connotation in the above quoted lines which refer to his soul being washed. Christianity embraces the values of baptism in water and the acceptance of God for the ultimate purge or healing. But the slave dealer has lost hope in everything and that is why he has become a Wanderer, and he knows that the only person who can understand him is his mother. That is how the poet, Pringle, asserts the theme of Christianity in the poem.

The phrase, 'That Woman's wild death-cry', may be a reference to a single incident frequenting his mind of a woman who cried when faced with death or it may refer to all women he ill-treated, lashed out at or killed during the process of slave dealing. The capital letter 'W' may further refer to the fact that there were a lot of women who were killed, traded or died as a result of his actions. The slave dealer confesses to his mother that. This is what prevents the slave dealer from being able to live a meaningful and fulfilling life, or at least pray and ask for forgiveness from God.

The fact that the slave trader commissions the phrases "On God's Judgment-day; the Avenging One, Was witness when she died! And now with God I have to deal, And dare not meet His eye!," may suggest that the speaker/ slave dealer is indeed depicting a new identity that portrays the turning point in his life. He decides to turn away from cruel acts of trading people, because he realizes that it is time to stop and face God. It can be attested therefore that Pringle believed in the values of Christianity and that it is in this light that he viewed the system of slave trade.

Pringle gives the speaker a platform to tell the story of a slave dealer from the third person perspective and in the process allows the slave dealer to narrate the gory details from the first person perspective. It can be argued therefore that the speaker and the slave dealer are one person. Pringle executes a rare skill of giving his speaker different levels of narrating his calamity, which makes the poem appealing and compelling because it offers the reader different points of view. This is a rich skill that is rare in South African poetry and it makes sense why Pringle is considered the father of South African poetry.

5. TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN – SIPHO SEMPALA

Tone

- Sarcastic
- Satire

Speaker describes and comments on the experience of discrimination of a black person under apartheid.

Speaker seems to be addressing **someone**, not anyone in particular as one will address in a formal letter.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

- Bearer. carries the struggle
- Bare of everything but particulars
- Is a Bantu - derogatory term.
- The language of a people in southern Africa
- He seeks to proceed from here to there
- Please pass him on - pun
- Subject to these particulars
- He lives
- Subject to the provisions
- Of the Urban Natives Act of 1925 - ACT CREATED TO RESTRICT MOVEMENT.
- Amended often
- To update it to his sophistication
- Subject to the provisions of the said Act
- He may roam freely within a prescribed area
- Free only from the anxiety of conscription - restricted freedom
- In terms of the Abolition of Passes Act - carry passes - enrolled for navy/war.
- A latter-day amendment change law whenever suited.
- In keeping with moon-age naming
- Bearer's designation is Reference number 417181
- And (he) acquires a niche in the said area
- As a temporary sojourner - small space
- To which he must betake himself person who resides one place temp.
- At all times
- When his services are dispensed with for the day
- As a permanent measure of law and order - ironic - not a order but enforced
- Please note
- The remains of R/N 417181 - ONLY AT DEATH THEY ARE FREE
- Will be laid to rest in peace - only when dead.
- On a plot - restful place
- Set aside for Methodist Xhosa - language spoken by Bantu peopl.
- A measure also adopted
- At the express request of the Bantu people (black) were happy to be burned next to each other.
- In anticipation of any faction fight
- Before the Day of Judgement

Repetition of Subject

Further law enforcement.

Suffer together & help together

Highlights that they had a separate place even at death. Shows segregation

Highlights they Chasman believe in judgement day.

L2 = BARE - connotation not have nothing, be naked, no possessions.

L4 = Language the all speak / Bantu language

L5 = He is not free has to ask for permission to go places.

L6 = pun "pass - let him go (give him pass) / the pass they carry with them.

L7 = certain "particulars" that were required for him to move from -8 "here" and there" Forced to live this way (LWS)

L9-10 = Repetition of Subject emphasises he was forced to do / laws enforced upon native. Restricted movement, was not free to go anywhere, only prescribed areas.

L17 = Act changed frequently to suit the Gov that was in charge. - harder for black people to move around.

L15 = Even black people was denied this right - to serve their own country - therefore there free - Satire.

L16 = All Black males / people to carry reference book wherever they go that had their picture and personal details of them. if they didnt they were imprisoned

NOTES TAKEN FROM E-TUTOR

Discuss how the theme of identity is explored in the poem 'To Whom It May Concern' by Sepamla. The context(time and place/ period) is crucial in understanding the poem. Write a paragraph and share with other students in order to begin a discussion.

The poem *To Whom It May Concern*, was written by Siphso Sepamla in the 70's during Apartheid in South Africa. Sempala's poetry was aimed to call fellow Africans together in a spirit of resistance against oppression. (www.antiessays.com) Most of his work had a political undertone. The Urban Natives Act of 1925 and the Passes act, give us the necessary background information, to understand the context of the poem. The Natives Act of 1925 made the local authority responsible for the blacks in its area. The Pass laws were intended to force Black people to settle in specific places. (www.sahistory.org.za)

The writer uses sarcasm throughout the poem. The heading is sarcastic, it sounds very appropriate and correct, but in fact it indicates that no one in particular wants to take responsibility for the content of this letter. Again this person in the letter is not considered important enough. The letter is addressed nameless like the person in the poem.

This nameless person in the poem is described with different names, to emphasis that this person has not his own identity, he is what the government wants and allows him to be. He is called repeatedly a subject (line 7, 9 and 13), a person under the rule of the government. He is called sarcastically a bearer, although he is bare of everything, and can only bear his particulars (line 1-2). His name is Reference number 417181 (line 19, 27), which is not a name but purely a number.

We see more of this mockery, when this no-name person is allowed to roam freely, but only around a given area (line14). Strictly speaking, there is no freedom about that. He can update his sophistication, but only to the provisions of the Act (line 12-13). He can acquire a niche, but only for a temporary stay. The government even has as a permanent measure of law and order, directions where this person one day will be buried.(lines 25-28). The writer shows us satirically on the generosity of the government to this Bantu.

The identity of this poem would be about how the government had used his power in different ways to suppress and rule a specific part of the population.

TAKEN FROM ENG2603 STUDY GUIDE

“The spectacular documents; it indicts implicitly; it keeps the larger issues of society in our minds, obliterating the details; it provokes identification through recognition and feeling rather than through observation and analytical thought; it calls for emotion rather than conviction; it establishes a vast sense of presence without offering intimate knowledge; it

confirms without necessarily offering a challenge. It is the literature of the powerless identifying the key factor responsible for their powerlessness. Nothing beyond this can be expected of it.”

In a paragraph of seven lines, use these points that Ndebele raises in order to evaluate Siphso Sepamla’s poem, “To Whom It May Concern”.

6. THE CHILD WHO WAS SHOT DEAD BY SOLDIERS at NYANGA – INGRID JONKER

Symbol of all the innocent children who were killed by soldiers under Apartheid in SA because he only "wanted to play in the sun".

Protest poem against Apartheid.

Anaphora: The speaker repeats the phrase "the child" throughout the poem. The speaker also repeats the phrases "is not dead" in stanzas 1 & 3, "lifts his fists against his..." in stanzas 1 & 2, & "who shouts Afrika! Shouts the breath" in stanzas 1 & 2.

Separate areas that were reserved for blacks to live in.

The fact that the child "was shot dead", as we learn in the title, is brought home again and again throughout the poem.

The Child who was Shot Dead by Soldiers at Nyanga
Ingrid Jonker (1933-1965)

Draws a common idea that violence within a country destroys innocent members of society, woman & children, & damages the country & its future severely. This child's death has inspired others to take up the cause of freedom & given new energy to the struggle against apartheid.

The speaker is not sympathetic for the child for being killed. She has not mentioned race, racism or racial conflict.

The child is not dead
the child lifts his fists against his mother
who shouts Afrika! shouts the breath
of freedom and the veld*
in the locations* of the cordoned* heart

Savannah or grassveld

Fenced off

5

The child lifts his fists against his father
in the march of the generations
who shout Afrika! shout the breath
of righteousness and blood
in the streets of his embattled pride

10

Contrast: line 11 & 15.

The child is physically & medically dead, but not spiritually or poetically.

The child is not dead
not at Langa nor at Nyanga
nor at Orlando nor at Sharpeville
nor at the police station at Philippi
where he lies with a bullet through his brain

Black township in Cape Town.

First black township in Soweto; 1931 black people were relocated.

Black township in Transvaal.
Allusion: Sharpeville Massacre, 21 March 1960, at the police station.

Larger black township in Cape Town.

15

The child is the dark shadow of the soldiers
on guard with rifles saracens* and batons

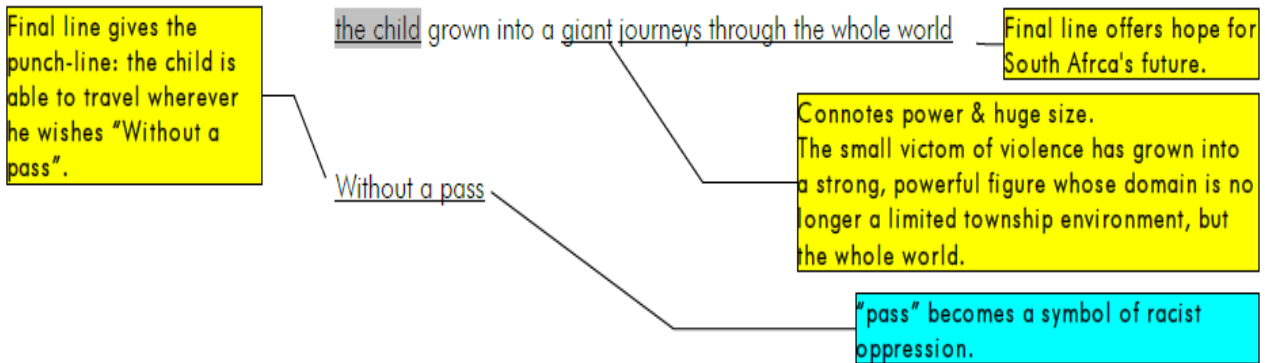
Metaphor

Armoured cars or tanks

the child is present at all assemblies and law-givings
the child peers through the windows of houses and into the hearts of mothers
this child who just wanted to play in the sun at Nyanga is everywhere

The child has grown up: lines 21-22.

the child grown to a man treks through all Africa



*veld – savannah or grassland

*locations – was used under Apartheid to describe the separate areas that were reserved for blacks to live in.

*cardoned – fenced off

*saracens – armoured cars or tanks

Allusion: Reference to a statement, person, place, event or thing that is known from literature, history, religion, mythology, politics, sports, science, or popular culture.

Anaphora: The repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses.

Enjambment: The running on of the thought from one line, couplet, or stanza to the next without a syntactical break/punctuated pause.

What is the poem about?**What is the subject of the poem?**

🍏 "The child" is a symbol of all the innocent children who were killed by soldiers under Apartheid in SA because he only "wanted to play in the sun".

Who is speaking?

🍏 3rd person narrative.

What is the location/setting of the poem?

🍏 1960's during the Apartheid Era.

Themes and messages of the poem:

🍏 Draws a common idea that violence within a country destroys innocent members of society, women & children, & damages the country & its future severely.

🍏 This child's death has inspired others to take up the cause of freedom and given new energy to the struggle against Apartheid.

🍏 Protest poem against Apartheid.

Attitudes and feelings in the poem:**Emotions and feelings of the speaker:**

🍏

Tone of the poem:

🍏 Bold & determined.

Form and structure of the poem (rhyme, rhythm, line length, stanza length, etc.):

🍏 Open form (free from regularity and consistency in elements such as rhyme, line length and metrical form).

🍏 Free verse (lines with no prescribed pattern or structure).

Type of poem:

🍏 Protest poem.

Poetic devices (e.g. metaphors, similes, enjambment, alliteration, personification, etc.):

🍏 The effect of the repetition of the phrases "the child", "is not dead", "lifts his fists against his..." and "who shouts Afrika! Shouts the breath" is to drive the poem home into the memories of its audience.

Personal response to the poem (how do I feel, what impact does the poem have on me):

🍏 YOUR PERSONAL RESPONSE!

7. MOTHO KE MOTHE KA

Motho ke Mothe ka Batho Babang (A Person is a Person Because of Other People)

Jeremy Cronin (1949-) Political/Activist/Protest

Glossary
Wat maak hy daar?—what is he doing there?
Baas—boss
Ubuntu—humanity towards others/showing compassion towards people

Tone: (Author's attitude or feelings about the subject)
Intimate

Mood: (Readers emotions from reading the text)
Thoughtful

Theme:
Resistance
Communication

Form:
Visual layout—narrative presented on the left
Translation in brackets

Sound Devices:
Ironic—w/o any formal/ sound devices centred on sound + lack of it.

Poetic Devices:
Punctuation + typography (the way it's printed/set-out) to convey the poet's message
Use of italics for different purposes as well as the use of dashes. The use of italics in line 20 + 22 indicate direct speech.
Use of present tense – content feels immediate
Last stages—feels as if we're sharing the cell + watching signals with the speaker.

Poem captures scene of one prisoner communicating with another discreetly under watchful eye of a warder. Cleverness shown maintaining human contact communicating with sign language in defiance of the deprivation of imprisonment. Illustrates truth about the human condition. Cruelty of isolation as a form of punishment and favoured treatment of political prisoners

- 1 By holding my mirror out of the window I see
2 Clear to the end of the passage.
3 There's a person down there.
4 A prisoner polishing a doorhandle.
5 In the mirror I see him see
6 My face in the mirror,
7 I see the fingertips of his free hand
8 Bunch together, as if to make
9 An object the size of a badge
10 Which travels up to his forehead
11 The place of an imaginary cap.
12 (This means: A warder.)
13 Two fingers are extended in a vee
14 And wiggle like two antennae.
15 (He's being watched.)
16 A finger of his free hand makes a watch-hand's arc
17 On the wrist of his polishing arm without
18 Disrupting the slow-slow rhythm of his work.
19 (Later. Maybe, later we can speak.)
20 Hey! Wat maak jy daar?
21 –a voice from around the corner.
22 No. Just polishing baas.
23 He turns his back to me, now watch
24 His free hand, the talkative one,
25 Slips quietly behind
26 –Strength brother, it says,
27 In my mirror,
28 A black fist.

Time-wasting chores

Link to guard

Translation in brackets
Format of this translation/explanation is varied as the poem progresses
1st insertion announces itself as an explanation
2nd L15
3rd L19 give explanations directly

Italics—indicate direct speech

Personified: commenting on sound by emphasizing its absence.

Most effective that L26 also written this way as the prisoners are communicating so effectively the may as well use direct speech.

Last insertions lose the brackets as if the reader has now learned the poem's language + no longer needs them

8. JOHANNESBURG – WILLIAM PLOMER

The poem's setting is of a Post-Colonial South Africa and the modern mining industry in the late 19th century. This era saw the boom in the mining industry and a development of the "City of Gold", Johannesburg. The poem is written as an experience and reflection of the experiences in the city. The environment and the circumstances surrounding the composition of the poem is directly linked to the imagery and choice of words that are used in the poem.

In the poem "Johannesburg" the speaker shares information about the city from another perspective which could be one of an observer rather than a person working in the city. The poem's underlying theme and meaning which is to expose the city for what it truly is. In the poem "Johannesburg" by William Plomer, he begins by expressing and describing his experience in the city in a positive light which can be seen in the first stanza: "fortunes were founded overnight, And mansions rose among the rocks to blaze with girls and light" (l.2-4). These lines provide a minor theme which reflects the city in a positive and beautiful light but it is then shadowed by the main idea or major theme.

The major theme in this poem is that of morality, bitterness and disappointment as experienced by the writer; "Pioneers, O pioneers" (l.21) and "Grey pillars of a Christian State, Respectability has turned, Swashbuckler prim and scamp sedate" (l.22-24). The aforesaid lines speak of how men who were Christian and from a Christian state turned to mischievous unrespectable people because of the gold in the city of Johannesburg. The previous stanzas; (stanza 5) also reveal information about how the experience often involved cruelty and violence.

William Plomer also provides information in the very first line of the poem "Johannesburg", where he states "Along the Rand in eight-five" (l.1) which is a moment when the mining-boom occurred in Johannesburg. This time period involved settlers who travelled to South Africa to explore gold. The speaker also provides information about the chronological time period; "Seek now the nuggets of your prime, and sift the gold dust of your dreams" (l. 26-27). These lines provide important information about who, what and when this poem

speaks about. The word “Nugget” (l.26) is a very old or tradition meaning for “a small lump of gold” and it shows the time setting that the speaker wishes to provide.

The poem “Johannesburg” by William Plomer, evidently exploits and experiences life in “Johannesburg” from a capitalist or explorer standpoint. The speaker speaks of the evils of capitalism and how the city “Johannesburg” was formed. In the first stanza, the speaker uses imagery to depict the kind of lifestyle that the capitalists enjoyed and how the young men enjoyed the fruits of their labour “And mansions rose among the rocks” (l.3). This line is evidence of how the gold rush benefited many settlers who built mansions using the proceeds from the mining of the gold in Johannesburg. The kinds of lifestyles that the capitalist lived is described in more detail in the second stanza “In champagne baths men sluices their skin” (l.5). The word “Sluices” in this line describes how much gold was up for grabs for the capitalists during this period of the gold rush. “Sluices” (l.5), meaning, “showering with” is used as imagery to suggest that the men actually showered with the gold. The speaker also provides information as to how the gold was acquired in “Riding bareback under stars, as lordly anarchs of the veld” (l.17-18). These lines once again provide insight into how the men conquered the land or open field “Veld” (l.18). The speaker goes as far as expressing, by the use of diction, how the hunger for gold led to tribal wars and free cruelty in the land that they invaded, “Venison feasts and tribal wars, Free cruelty and a cartridge belt” (l.19-20).

However, with all the riches and glamour in the life of a gold explorer in “Johannesburg”, the speaker reminds the workers who laboured for the gold that they are “pioneers” (l.21) who have lost their “Christian” (l.22) faith and “respectability” (l.23) which can be seen as a disappointment in their state. The disappointment is in line with the lifestyle that they lived during their youth.

TAKEN FROM ENG2603 STUDY GUIDE

How, according to the speaker, Johannesburg came into being?

- that the speaker states that Johannesburg came into being from nowhere (line 1),

- that this city developed in gendered terms and conditions,
- and further, that it exploited these men and left them out in the cold on their retirement.

Refer to the last 2 stanzas and then, in a paragraph of five lines, discuss the identity of the people whom the speaker addresses

Looking at the 2 last stanzas, it is apparent that

- The speaker watches or imagines retired mine workers,
- he remarks that they exemplify the consequences of the exploitative mine industry,
- in its inception, mining was a gendered enterprise that (ab)used women (“girls” in line 4 and “whore” in line 12) as a form of entertainment for men at night (expressed as “light”),
- as they aged, these men changed from “swashbucklers” or “scamps” into “prim” and “sedate” elderly people (expressed as “Greybeards” in the fourth stanza).

Discuss the “men” working on the “Rand” in the first 3 stanzas and then, in a paragraph of five lines, show how these “men” relate to those to whom the speaker refers in the concluding 2 stanzas.

It may also be argued that the sarcasm in the 6th stanza contains the high point of the poem’s criticism of the collusion between capitalism, Christianity and patriarchy. This criticism is carried over into the final stanza, the second and fourth lines of which rhyme. However, in order to understand how this criticism is built up and sustained, you need to go back to the first 6 stanzas.

FEEDBACK FROM ASSIGNMENT 1 SEMESTER 1 2017

The text written from a white authors’ perspective. the poems make obvious the following three distinguishing drastic consequences of colonial expansion:

- fragmentation of the family unit,
- inhuman restrictions of movement, and

□ conversion of human beings into instruments of labour.

You were also expected to draw a comparison between Serote's poem and William Plomer's poem, "Johannesburg". You could not have overlooked the third person authorial perspective of this poem, and to highlight its expression of the tragedy begun by the development of the city. You could have elaborated by stating that, similar to Serote, Plomer presents the catastrophe befalling the male figure

□ in his role as a member of the working class and

□ in him being forcefully alienated from his nuclear family and from his loved ones.

You could have observed that Plomer creates an impression that these workers remain alienated throughout their young adulthood until their retirement age. In those stanzas (2-3) where Plomer focuses on the workers in the setting of the Johannesburg mines, the tone is tragi-comical. In other words, he expresses this sense of tragedy with humour; especially:

□ when he defines the setting as 'mansions' rising 'from the rocks',

□ when he describes the cosmetic changes that the youthful workers effect on their bodies in order to give expression to and pursue sensual desires, and

□ when he comments on the pride and bravado with which the retired workers reminisce about their youth (in stanza 4-5).

Let us tease out how you could have closely analysed these phrases for the tone of tragicomedy;

□ We infer from the phrase, 'mansions rise from the rocks', that the builder is either careless or stupid. This is because a proper and recommended building process is a slow one, as opposed to being a quick one, as suggested in the word, 'rise'.

□ This sense of stupidity is repeated when the speaker says that the young adult miners cosmetically change their bodies to look radiant and sexually attractive.

You should have noted that the exploitative nature of mining industry humiliates

the workers so much so that they relieve their sexual urges by experimenting with prostitutes. We expected you to also note that sex work industry is indicative of a people who have lost basic human values, possibly and often as a result of the failure of the state to offer human beings decent living conditions.

□ You could have proposed that, according to the speaker, the former miners, now in their old age, have become helpless and pitiable, and that this is why he calls them 'Greybeards'. You could have commented on the significance of the usage of the colour, grey', repeated also in the penultimate stanza to refer to the state and to Christianity. You could have also argued that the speaker thinks of the people he is observing as being somewhat delusional and as being hypocrites. These are people who the speaker says they allegedly claimed to be Christians when, in actual fact, they were marauding thieves and bigots who supported racist oppression.

9. CITY JOHANNESBURG – WILLY SEROTE

The poem “City Johannesburg” is based on the relationship between the speaker, who is an African person working in the city and the city itself. The speaker in this poem makes continuous reference to the title of the city which can be seen on the phrases “Jo’burg City” (ll. 5; 10; 12; 19; 22; 34; 40). The use and repetition of the name “Jo’burg City”, which is a colloquial word for Johannesburg displays and reinforces the relationship between the city and the writer as being intimate

In line 1, the speaker describes a “salute”. Usually one would salute someone in authority, such as an officer in the army or the police. It is meant to show respect for authority. The “salute” in the poem is different, in that it takes the form of a frantic search for the speaker’s pass. This indicates the speaker’s anxiety and fear when in Johannesburg

In the first (lines 6– 7) a simile is used. The hand searching for the pass is compared to the shape and movement of a snake. We see the helplessness and humiliation of the speaker as he searches for the “pass” that allows him to work in the city, and which is therefore as important as his “life”.

The second image (lines 20–21) personification. The city breathes and exhales. This shows the vast power of the city and also suggests pollution and industry (“Thick iron breath”). I identify with how small and powerless the speaker feels.

The third image (lines 26–27) metaphor. The lights of the city are compared to “neon flowers” and lamp posts are compared to “cement trees”. This reveals the artificial beauty of the city in the dark: nature has been replaced by “neon flowers” and “cement trees”.

These lines help me to empathize with the speaker’s plight. The imagery is striking and unusual, allowing me to see the attraction of the city as well as the pain it causes.

In the poem “City Johannesburg”, Mongane Wally Serote writes and provides information about the time frame in years when he experienced Johannesburg on a first-hand basis. In

the first stanza (l.1-4), the writer also gives the reader a personal account by the use of the personal pronoun "My" (l.2) of what it was like being an African in those days because it meant that he was always required to carry his "Pass" (l.4). The "Pass" or "Dompas" was a form of identification that black people were obliged to carry around as part of the laws by the Apartheid Government.

The speaker compares his arms to a hungry snake (long and thin). This line gives the reader a preliminary glimpse of what to expect the speaker's experience to be like. "While my stomach groans a friendly smile to hunger" (l.8) is another example of how the writer uses imagery "Groans" to engage the reader into imagining the sound of the poor man's stomach. The poverty lifestyle is experienced by the speaker "My comic houses and people, my dongs" (l.15). The black African man in "City Johannesburg" lives in laughable "Comic houses" (l.15). The writer in "City Johannesburg" continues to provide imaginable details of the conditions that they lived under and how "close" to death they were in; "where death lurks in the dark like a blade in the flesh" (l.30). According to the writer it is evident that there was no value for life for him or his "people" (l.29) during this time.

The phrases that describe the setting. "I can feel your roots, anchoring your might" (line 31) and "Jo'burg City, you are dry like death..." (line 39)

The speaker is apprehensive in Johannesburg, as we can see from the way he desperately searches for the pass that allows him to be in the city. He also sees the city as a place of desperation and sorrow, as we see in the words "Expressions that have tears like furrows of soil erosion..." (line 38).

"City Johannesburg" is about the relationship between the speaker, an African working in the city in the apartheid era, and the city, Johannesburg. He is at the mercy of the city, which is shown to be vast and powerful, a place of insecurity and sorrow for the speaker.

The poem uses personification to show how the city exerts control over individuals and every aspect of their lives. Although the speaker works in the city, at night the speaker

must travel back to the “comic houses” and dry “dongas”. The city leaves workers with “frozen expressions” on their faces, which shows how inhospitable the city is towards its African worker.

TAKEN FROM ENG2603 STUDY GUIDE

Jot down notes

●● on the routes that the speaker travels and the regularity with which he journeys on them.

it should be apparent to you that the speaker describes the city as a product of racist control

●● on the imagery that he uses to convey his frustrations.

He is coerced by regular curfews to accept being discriminated against on the basis of his race,

●● on the imagery that he uses to describe the city.

The city is charted by racist laws that inhibit free movement,

●● on the imagery that he uses to convey his sense of entrapment.

He is forced to abide by the law's demand that he must account for his presence in the city,

Poverty and dreadful living conditions affect black people exclusively, and where these effects have turned black people against one another.

Notice that, while documenting the evidence of black oppression, this poem reads slowly. This calm pace recalls performance and “spoken word poetry”.

Some notes to ponder over: “Spoken word poetry” originates in the Harlem Renaissance, a widespread phenomenon of art and cultural revival concerned with articulating black people’s aspirations and outrage at slavery in America at the beginning of the 20th century. Since then, this poetry has developed into many types, and across the world.

In the poem, “Johannesburg”, punctuation marks dictate the rhythm of the poem, slowing it down. This allows the speaker to engage in a process that is musical; this effect is intensified by the poem’s refrain, “Jo’burg City”. It may further be argued that this constant refrain suggests a process of healing.

Perhaps as a result the frequent occurrence of enjambment or “run-on-lines” in Serote’s poem, “City Johannesburg”, reading it one feels as if one is involved in a musical event.

The subject that this poem explores is rather weighty, as it concerns the trauma of the black experience. It is therefore no wonder that Serote deploys what seems to be the trope of music in order to deal with this history. After wandering through the depths of the pain of apartheid and driven by the power of the written word, the poem pauses regularly in the refrain.

This refrain is intended to help the reader to return to a moment of calm. By implication, while the poem immerses the reader in the history of oppression through graphic images of entrapment, at the same time it overturns the evoked pain in the refrain.

FEEDBACK FROM ASSIGNMENT 1 SEMESTER 1 2017

The text written from a black authors’ perspective. the poems make obvious the following three distinguishing drastic consequences of colonial expansion:

- fragmentation of the family unit,

- inhuman restrictions of movement, and
- conversion of human beings into instruments of labour.

Serote's "City Johannesburg" is narrated from the first person or autobiographical perspective, while Plomer's is told from the authorial third person's. It was significant to highlight this dissimilarity, as it underscores the emotions invested in the descriptions of the impacts of the labour conditions of Johannesburg on the migrant labourers. The difference is important, as it accordingly determines the reader's emotional responses to the repercussions of the establishment of the city on the ordinary workers. For instance, in Serote's poem, the reader meets the labourer directly, hears his plights first-hand and is as a result restricted to sharing in the anger of the complainant. By contrast, in Plomer's poem, the narrator communicates the mineworker's predicaments and also analyses them independently to the reader. It is as if the speaker tones down on the harsh realities of the mining industry.

Let us further tease out each poem's narrative angle. You could have argued that, in the case of Serote's poem, the first person perspective brings the reader closer to the city conditions afflicting the speaker. You could have substantiated by closely analysing the significance of the frequent usage of the first person perspective, that is, the pronouns, 'my' and 'I'. In the course of your alerting of the reader to the pronoun, 'my', you could have argued that this recurrence is indicative of a person who feels bodily threatened and therefore resorts to affirming himself. In other words, the first person angle inserts the subject in time, place and body, especially at the time when s/he is oppressed.

Here follow the phrases that you could have closely analysed to elaborate upon this form of self-assertion:

- 'my stomach groans a friendly smile to hunger',
- 'My stomach also devours coppers and papers'
- 'my pass, my life',
- 'my pockets',
- 'me, my love',
- 'My death'

You were expected to recognise and note that the speaker attributes his sense of fear to his setting, which is Johannesburg, and to pay attention to his descriptions of this location. For instance, he identifies the milieu in terms of pronouns, especially only those that we refer to as the second person perspective, 'you' and 'your'. It was envisaged that you were going to note that these pronouns imply to the speaker that he does not share in the power or privilege that his addressee, that is, Johannesburg, provides. Therefore, these second person perspective pronouns denote a sense of conflict between the speaker, introduced throughout the poem as 'my' and 'I', and the object he is addressing.

You could have emphasized that the speaker expands upon his sense of alienation in his repeated reference to himself, and in his frequent identification of himself in terms of physical space, that is, his setting of Johannesburg. In these citations, the speaker notes that he has a limited access to Johannesburg. You could have argued that this is because he says that he has no option but to commute to this site for employment 'At six in the morning' and return home from 'five noon'. This is the setting which he describes as cold and structured in racist by-laws. He describes this geography in the metaphor of 'black and white and roboted roads'. The attention to colour recalls apartheid's unfair segregation of human beings into white and black. These laws demand of him to seek permission so as to be authorized to be in those zones demarcated as white. The narrator acutely recalls the humiliation particularly when:

- he 'searches' for his 'pass' in his 'back pocket', because he is aware that, as a black man, failure to carry a pass might lead to incarceration,
- his stomach 'groans' in hunger, because he knows that the circumstances that lead to his hunger are racially motivated, or
- he thinks of himself rushing to board a bus to work in Johannesburg, because he nervously and resentfully fulfils his unfair labour obligations.

In articulating his self-awareness, he highlights the fact that he is inconvenienced by having to seek permission to be in the city of Johannesburg from the authorities who classify him as black and therefore not fit to live in the zones designated exclusively white.

Therefore, in these observations, he is particularly aware of his body, as shown when he expresses his sense of anxiety and discomfort.

It was crucial that you should show how the speaker's usage of imagery reveals his views and attitudes towards Johannesburg. You could have noted that he personifies Johannesburg in a well-established motif or pattern. You were expected to notice irony in the seeming praise, 'This way I salute you' and in 'Jo'burg City', and to expand upon his grief by closely analyzing the sense of rejection that he feels each time he sets out for Johannesburg. For instance, he says that he 'leave[s] behind me, my love' to the Johannesburg whose 'thick iron breath' he 'inhale[s]' at 'six in the morning'. Please find more imagery and show how it enables the speaker of this poem to articulate exasperation with Johannesburg.

10. THE BRITISH SETTLER

By making close reference to content and poetic devices, discuss how this poem uses satire to portray the coloniser (“The British Settler”).

Remember to quote from the poem to support your argument. Firstly, when you see a question like this, make sure you highlight or underline the keywords:

- content
- poetic devices
- satire

You need to refer to both the content and the form of the poem in your answer. You also need to link these aspects to the poem’s use of satire.

Ask yourself: What is satire? **The use of humour/irony/ridicule/exaggeration to expose or criticise people’s shortcomings**

Ask yourself: What does the poem satirise? **The British coloniser, as per the title of the poem. Thus, the poem exposes and ridicules the coloniser for what he “really” is.**

Ask yourself: How does the poem do this? **By means of both content (*what it talks “about”*) and poetic devices or form (*how it talks “about” it*).**

Once you have identified these key aspects of the question, you are ready to begin your planning.

Introduction:

“The British Settler” satires the British coloniser by means of both content and form. The speaker in the poem seems to suggest that the coloniser is mighty, but by means of exaggeration and irony he actually shows that the coloniser is weak and pitiful. This is done by means of both the content of the poem, as well as the rhythm and form.

Body:

One or two paragraphs to explain how the speaker suggests that he is mighty/brave/smart, with examples from the poem

One or two paragraphs to explain that, in actual fact, the speaker’s “bravery” is meant ironically, with examples from the poem (content)

One or two paragraphs to show that the poem also uses form to satirise the coloniser – the rhyme scheme and singsong rhythm of the poem undermines its content

Conclusion:

Summarise the findings, and conclude that although the poem seems to suggest that the coloniser is mighty/great/brave etc., it actually uses satire to exaggerate and thereby undermine the speaker; thus, it suggests the opposite of what it seems to

"The British settler"

In the poem "the British settler" the poet use of poetic devices is highly effective. He uses the setting, imagery and tone with great zeal.

The poem is set in South Africa. This is evident with the use of "cape" in line 6 and other words in subsequent stanza. The terms used, are also clues to show that this poet is talking about South Africa. Evidence in line 13, with the derogative term "kafirs"used, to refer to a black person.

The tone of the poem is somewhat humorous and contradicting when the poet uses onomatopoeia satire to express himself in, line 4 "winning losing". This is also quite evident in line 16 "I drew the kafirs teeth" here the poet uses imagine of him being a dentist and extracting the man's teeth.

The style of the poet is different, in that he does not keep his poem organized, that is, there is different number of lines in each stanza, stanza one has 5 lines, stanza two, 4 lines and stanzas three, 8 lines. The last stanza brings the poet back to reality because he, bring us the reader to the his present day. By telling us "s four and twenty year" he shows us that in the previous stanza he was speaking about, when he first came to South Africa. The structure of the poem is unclear in this regard.

The first stanza and the last few lines of the last stanza are repeated. Why? did he run out of ideas? No, he uses repetition to show how much he loved what he was doing, conquering Africa.

TAKEN FROM ENG2603 STUDY GUIDE

We begin by considering how Andrew Geddes Bain's poem, "The British Settler", depicts the dominant form of modernity.

Identify the instances in which the speaker addresses himself from a first person perspective, "I", and the phrases that highlight the power that he ostensibly possesses.

A good answer should include the following points:

- the authority that the speaker claims as a "British" man or a masculine figure
- his claims over livestock and the land, and
- the stereotypes that he uses to represent people of other races.

In this poem, the speaker boasts about his exploits in conquering the Cape, ostensibly a place he finds alien. He takes particular delight in stating that “Charlie Somerset”, a reference to the governor of the Cape at the time, officially allocated him the land on which he subsequently “built a house” (l6) and from which he began to expand as an entrepreneur. Throughout the poem, he does not shy away from addressing himself as a settler, and from boasting about how he has repressed and conquered the land and the indigenous people, whom he refers to in racially derogatory terms. The reader may find this speaker stupid and insensitive, concluding that the poem makes a mockery of him and of the brazen sense of masculinity that he espouses. The entire poem may thus be described as satire. It is interesting that this critique taps indirectly into the experience of the colonised in order to make a case against the coloniser.

As evident in the poem, “The British Settler” and in other poems written by white authors during the late 19th and early 20th century, European settlers are depicted either as celebrating their annexation of Africa or as refusing to address the black racial question

11. YOUR CATTLE ARE PLUNDERED - ISAAC WAUCHOPE'S

Citashe, in the first stanza of his poem, avers that the cattle (not mentioned but understood because of the concord *ZI*—of *zimkile*) have been confiscated by the enemy. This was a practise during the wars of dispossession. The victor would forcefully or feloniously dispossess the vanquished, of their wealth. The use of the cattle-symbol in this poem is both literal and figurative. Citashe implores his countrymen to recover their lost national heritage, material and otherwise. But this time negotiations should be the approach—force should be abandoned. In the second stanza he states that the rights (*amalungelo*) are being lost.

This is reference to both material (i.e. land and the then recently discovered minerals, and political rights). The third stanza requests the countrymen to think in depth or broadly (*zigqale*) and confront reality or truth (*inyaniso*). They should base (*misa*) their argument (i.e. having a starting point or principle on sense, substance, reality or truth). Emotions should give way to reasoning. Citashe advocates the appropriation of the subjugator's weapon, 'literacy', to make it serve the interests of the oppressed. He says:

While incorporating the views of scholars who have analysed the foregoing poem, namely Odendaal (1984:5) and Opland (1995:33), this article moves further, by arguing that the poem introduces a constitutional discourse which would permeate Xhosa poetry (oral and literal), and a broad range of other cultural manifestations. The poem proposes a redefinition of identity. It proposes that the African should move away and move out of the erstwhile protective refuge, the ethnic identity. Hoho (i.e. *Intaba kaHoho* or *iHlathi likaHoho*) is a forested mountain in the Eastern Cape. According to Kropf (1915:506) it is situated '... at the head of the Keiskama River in which the Gwiligwili (river) has its source'. It is said that Rarabe purchased this mountain from the original possessor Hoho, a Khoisan chief.

This venerated mountain became a symbol of Xhosa identity. It was used by warriors as a place of refuge and a fort during the wars with the British colonial armies. Recognising the futility of war, Citashe indicates that the 1880s bring to an end the noble role that was played by the *iNtaba kaHoho* in literal and figurative sense. Citashe proposes a broader identity that transcends ethnic and racial boundaries. To him, a nation is an entity that is broader and richer than the racial and the ethnic.

An Historical Territory or Homeland

Smith (1991:14) postulates that one of the fundamental features of national identity is attachment to a historic territory or homeland. This explains why loss of land constit-

utes one of the dominant themes of the poetry of the late nineteenth century.

According to Vilakazi (1945:289), before the unification of the four provinces to form the union of South Africa, the main grievance of Africans was the loss of their land through conquest. He says :

... the great factor in successful fighting against the government lay in the unity of clans, not in thinking in terms of blood relationship under rival chiefs, but in creating a national 'united front'.

TAKEN FROM ENG2603 STUDY GUIDE

Isaac Wauchope's "Your cattle are plundered" portrays resistance to Europe's colonialism in terms of the acquisition of Western education.

Read the poem aloud, emphasising the exclamation marks and the verbs that the speaker uses at the beginning of some of the lines.

Rewrite the poem in the table provided below, and then account for it in a paragraph of 6 to 8 lines. Good answers will show a restructuring of the poem in a way that identifies the rationale, imperatives and warning.

Here is an example:

Imperialism	Immediate imperatives	Diplomacy
Your cattle are plundered, compatriot!	After them! After them!	Take up the pen. Seize paper and ink.
Your rights are plundered!		Grab a pen. Put pressure on the page. Engage your mind. Focus on facts. And speak loud and clear. Don't rush into battle. Anger stutters.

At the heart of this poem is the conflict between the immediate and impulsive response to colonial oppression and the acquisition of Western education as well as diplomacy or calm rational thinking. The poem suggests that both responses have one rationale in the form of colonialism.

The poem further depicts imperialism using two graphic metaphors: the plundering of cattle and of rights. It seems that the gist of the poem is focused on the column on the extreme right, as it is more detailed than the middle and the extreme left columns. A closer look at these specifics reveals that this poem equates Western education with reason, and contrasts both to an emotive and aggressive reaction.

It may be argued that the preferred retort recalls the value that many Africans came to invest in Western education, especially after having been dispossessed of their land through the Berlin conference of 1884. At this conference, the major European countries divided Africa into fiefdoms to be shared among themselves. In one way, therefore, Africans may be seen as having entered into modernity neither on their own terms nor on those that aptly redressed the coloniser's brute force.

The speaker introduces this violence in two lines that both contain one common verb, "plundered", and end with an exclamation mark. In its plosive sound and simple past tense form, this verb articulates the coloniser's authority more forcefully and meticulously than the verbs that the poet uses to encourage resistance to imperialism.

TAKEN FROM E-TUTOR NOTES SEMESTER 1

Research on the Poet (Please advise if we refer to him as an author or Poet?)

- Born in 1852. Died in the Mendi Disaster when the steamship sank in 1917, killing 646 people mainly black South African troops. Isaac was an interpreter on the ship.
- He served almost two years in prisoner for assisting a colleague as a lawyer (Derails are vague though)
- Member of the Eastern Cape African Elite.
- Congregational minister
- Political Activist
- Historian Poet

- The poem was a conclusion to a letter to he wrote to Isigidimi SannaXosa that encouraged a petition for the release of the Xhosa chiefs that were imprisoned on Robben Island.
- This was due to the struggles of black rights urging that they fight with pen and ink opposed to weapons of war.

Poem

- consist of 3 stanzas made of 6 lines each
- No Rhyming words

Stanza 1

- “Cattle” – Symbol that is both literal and figurative
- People has been confiscated by the enemy. The victors of the pass used to dispossess the vanquished of their wealth.
- The poet wants his countrymen/women to recover their lost heritage, material and other wealth.

Stanza 2

- Line 1 – refers to their lost heritage, material and wealth.
- Line 12 – No force should be used during this recovery.

Stanza 3

- involves the countryman/women to critically think and analyses the situation. Then confront reality with truth. Their argument must be based on reality, truth, substance, sense. Emotions should give way to reasoning's.

Theme

- Diplomacy
- Modern day righting
- loss of land (main grievance of Africans)
- Colonial Oppression

Tone

- Calm
- Emotional
- Aggressive
- Rational Thinking

Style

- Shows modernity – Using paper and ink to put ones point across appose to violence.

Setting (I am confused with the setting)

- Somewhere in the Cape Town. This was based on the assumption of the Hoho mountain and the Poet writing for the motivation of releasing the chiefs from Robben Island.

Conflict

- Immediate and impulsive response to colonial oppression

Rhythm (Not sure)

Stanza 1

- Chaos – “After Them! After them!” chasing after someone “Muskets” Contributes to the chaos of arms and ammunition

Stanza 2

- Rushed
- “Grab” hurried movement
- “Load it” associated with loading a fire arm which also represents a rushed movement.

Stanza 3

- Calm and diplomatic
- ‘Engage your mind” - Almost like a warning to say think carefully
- “Focus on facts” – To be specific, truthful and diplomatic
- “Don’t rush into battles” – A calm mind is a clear one
- “Anger stutters” – A reminder of the consequences of anger.

Speakers Identity

- ✓ Black oppressed poet

Imagery

- ❖ The imagery created is a battlefield.
- ❖ Sense of darkness and decay - The word "Plundered" (verb) can mean so many different things eg. Pillage, Loot, rob,raid,ransack,strip,fleece,ravage, devastte, maraud, sack, rape

Immediate Imperatives

- “After them! After them!”

Imperialism depicted through 2 metaphors

- “Your cattle are plundered, compatriot”
- “Your rights are plundered”

Other Metaphors

- Pen representing a weapon. “fire with your pen”
- Ink representing a bullet. “load, load it with ink”
- Page representing a Whiteman in charge. “Put pressure on the page,”

Understanding certain words

- “Musket” – Is a light gun with a long barrel fired from the shoulder.
- “Hoho” – A mountain on the Eastern Cape. Rarabe purchased this mountain from the original Khoisan chief Hoho
- “Stutters” – Verb: Stammer, stumble, falter, flounder, hesitate, pause, blunder, splutter
- Compatriot – Countrymen/women fellow citizen
- Diplomacy – Art of dealing with people in a sensible tactful way

Irony

- “Put pressure to page.” – A page is generally white with black script.
- One can assume that the irony in this is that the black citizens (Script) are putting pressure onto the white leaders (Page).

Any suggestions on what line 10 means

“Stir in your chair”

12. WITWATERSRAND – ELISABETH EYBERS**TAKEN FROM ENG2603 STUDY GUIDE**

In a paragraph of five lines, discuss how the rhyme scheme of Elisabeth Eybers's poem, "Witwatersrand", supports the critique of capitalism

13. NIGHTFALL – B.W. VILAKAZI**TAKEN FROM ENG2603 STUDY GUIDE**

In an essay, comment on whether B.W. Vilakazi's poem, "Nightfall", elaborates on the lament for destroyed nature that is key to Eybers's "Witwatersrand".

14. LETTER TO MARTHA 4**TAKEN FROM ENG2603 STUDY GUIDE**

Write a paragraph in which you explore the metaphor of containment that the speaker uses to describe the setting, and the images that he uses to elaborate upon this metaphor.

- The metaphor of “containment” is the “single cell” (line 1), and it is elaborated on in the “awareness of the proximity of death” (line 6) (possibly because the cell in which the speaker is imprisoned is on death row).
- This metaphor is further expanded upon in the phrases “grey silence” and “empty afternoons” (line 14) (possibly because, being in solitary confinement, the speaker is gloomy and depressed).

According to the speaker, the dominant sense of doom that he expresses in the detailed image of entrapment in the poem, “Letter to Martha, 4”, is overturned in his religious appeals. He introduces these pleas in line 3 through the only verb in this first stanza. Identify this verb, and then discuss its significance in a five to six line paragraph.

The verb in question is “asserts”. This verb is the only one in this stanza and in the remainder of the poem which is intransitive, which contains an ‘s’ alliteration sound, and cadences in the plosive consonant ‘t’. As an intransitive verb, it does not take an object (or subject phrase). In this case, the phrase expresses the idea of spirituality or religion that the speaker argues is the prisoner’s refuge. The contrast between the solution and the adversary in the form of apartheid is very stark.

However, the poem introduces this answer by associating it with the ineffable perseverance of those who have very remote access to political authority and who recognise themselves as powerless in the face of the transcendental or God. These are those who still observe “childhood” prayer rituals in stanza two, the “weak” in stanza four, or those who commune with “god” in the last stanza, for example.

The syntax of this poem appears to chain together all these images into one sentence so that it is impossible to conceive of this poem without the dominant images of those who do not command sufficient power to influence bureaucracy.

Christianity, the religion that we touched on in Activity 1 above, came to Africa with the juggernaut of colonialism. As evident in Dennis Brutus's poem, "Letter to Martha, 4", however, Christianity is being redeployed to serve the oppressed. The proposal is therefore that religion can be defined as an aspect of everyday life.

According to the philosopher Michel de Certeau ([1984] 1988: xii), everyday life concerns individuals who appropriate (or alter and individualise) the dominant economic order for their own different ends

15. WAITING – ARTHUR NOTJIE**TAKEN FROM ENG2603 STUDY GUIDE**

Let us now consider whether religion plays any centrality role in the poem, Arthur Nortje's "Waiting", the subject of which is depression.

This is an "exile" poem, because it was written in exile. Read this poem carefully, paying particular attention to the speaker's overwhelming sense of gloom.

In "Waiting", Jacques Berthoud (1984: 5) remarks, Nortje

"presents his subject as located in time and place, achieving this by a subtle manipulation of depth of field, regularly shifting focus from background to foreground, and from present to past ... In this poem the community and the self are involved in each other at the deepest level. Indeed, the self does not appear as an autonomous given, but as something unstable, dependent and at risk. The art which seemed self-regarding ... is not merely aesthetic, but therapeutic. Floating up through some basic fracture of the mind, it is hailed as the only thing capable of checking the disintegration of a subject sundered from its origins."

In three paragraphs, discuss the imagery that the speaker uses to convey his depression. Show whether he succeeds in recovering from his depression, and then consider whether this is on account of his limited sense of spirituality or religion

16. UNDER THE SUN

TAKEN FROM ENG2603 STUDY GUIDE

- How does the poem construct the antithesis between searing light and feathery darkness?

The structure of the poem is deliberately clear and stark, the two halves held neatly in balance by the isolated adversative conjunction “but”. Note how the verse structure is contained in the tight arrangement of repeated, yet varied specificities:

- spatial location: “under the sun”.
- role: daughter/comrade/lover/friend expanded in “they are me”/“I am them”.
- spatial location: “under the stars” expanded.
- role: “I am”, expressed not as above through a series of nouns denoting precise fields of loyalty and duty, to parents, lovers, friends and so forth, but as a statement of pure, individual existence: “I am”.

The poem’s subtle play on identification: “I am daughter ... friend”, “they are me”, “I am them” artfully mirrors the many facets of this woman’s spirit, the multiplicity of roles she plays and culminates in the irrepressible surge of freedom and selfhood in the concluding lines: “I am/wonderfully/less than/vapour”.

- What do you think these antithetical images represent?

Note how immensely descriptive of a free state of mind the combination of adverbs “wonderfully/less” and the aptly chosen noun “vapour” is. In six words, only one noun: contrast it with the series of nouns in the opening lines and you will begin to detect the poem’s careful and delicate artistry. How remarkable that so much “being” is concentrated in the evanescent, almost imperceptible “vapour”. How is this effect achieved?

Note how the poem unfolds towards this single-word climax through some interesting rhetorical devices: for instance, the chiasmic arrangements of the central portion of the

poem: “I do to please/and please to do” (ABBA structure) and “they are me/and I am them” (ABBA structure again). This repeated formal arrangement has the effect of enclosing visually (and rhetorically) the speaker of the poem in a cage-like structure. Note how, following the adversative “but”, the verse begins to unfold freely and pours itself out into a catalogue of evocatively named stars. Mythical reminiscences fuse into the vast vault of the night sky, under whose mysterious and liberating light the being is nothing but an evanescent form.

●● Is the careful naming of the stars at all significant

And, yet, the accurate naming of the stars provides a specific structure for the human being observing them, an alternative to the glaring, guiding light of the sun. Does the speaker in the poem need this alternative? Does she – who is labelled as, and executes (dutifully, we infer) the role of, “daughter”, “comrade”, “lover”, “friend” – need and pursue a different role, the role of a human being free of all obligations and duty (to country and kin)? Is this a sign of disloyalty, or the expression of an irrepressible impulse towards a state of freedom which is not to be coupled with political and familial issues? Submerging the self into “vapour”, an indeterminate element not susceptible of definition and categorisation, allows the speaker to attain a freedom which is beyond any granted by State, kin or friend. It is from this state of pure liberty that the speaker can reflect on the inward emotions and aspirations that animate her hidden life, as an individual untrammelled by quotidian duties and obligations to the world that exists outside of her own self.

Such a scrutiny of individual aspirations and display of an inner self which does not adhere to the dictates of duty (as comrade, relative, friend) would have been unthinkable in earlier poetry. We see, here, an evolution from poetry which responds to important themes of freedom and justice, to poetry which begins to narrow the scope back onto the individual, the core of humanity common to all. This development is noteworthy and ushers in a different aspect of literary creativity in the sphere of ideological responses to power.

17, SOMETIMES WHEN IT RAINS – GCINA MHLOPE**Sometimes when it rains Gcina Mhlope (an extract)**

- 1.1 As a child, the speaker enjoyed the rain, and thought that clothes were unnecessary/could not see the need for clothes/wished people could be naked.
- 1.2 Compassionate/caring/sensitive/empathetic.(what kind of person 1 mark.)
The speaker thinks of others/is aware of the suffering and hardship of others
(Justification 1 mark)
- 1.3 The personification emphasises the harshness of the winds by giving them the characteristics of:
cruelty/unkindness/callousness/being unfeeling ('cold')
AND/OR
bad temper/being furious/enraged/blowing violently ('angry')

Any two words that comment on 'cold' **AND/OR** 'angry'.
- 1.4 Tone: longing/wistful/regretful/sad/kind/sympathetic
NOT wishful – too close to 'wish'
Reason: the speaker expresses the desire that everyone could be happy/contented/hopeful (but she recognises that this is not so)
- 1.5 The title acts as a refrain to draw attention to the hardships and suffering of humanity/creates a sad mood that reflects/creates a contrast between the speaker's naïve attitude in childhood and more mature understanding now/links to the idea of memories that were good contrasted with the more sombre viewpoint now. (**ONE point developed = 2 marks**)

18. SHAK-SHAK SEITHAMO MOTSAPI'S**TAKEN FROM THE STUDY GUIDE**

(I AM ONLY INCLUDING THESE NOTES AS THEY ARE FROM THE STUDY GUIDE. IT IS NOT PART OF OUR LIST OF POEMS FOR EXAMS)

The “post-anti-colonial” is also an outpouring of vitality and the unpredictable. Let us consider this assertion with reference to Seithamo Motsapi’s poem, “shak-shak”. Carefully read this poem, paying close attention to its musical quality.

Then, on a separate page, discuss how this poem captures the richness of life.

This poem reverberates with music, dance and graphic art. The intention seems to be to depict a people who imagine themselves liberated from oppressive legislations or the norms. The poem conjures up this alternative space through the word, “carnival”, mentioned in line one, fourteen and twenty-six. Carnival is a site of imaginative and spiritual ‘richness’ that people affirm especially during traumatic experiences. In imitation of carnival, the poem has a set of recognizable motif.

I mention only a few:

“shak-shak”,
the usage of onomatopoeia in ways that call to mind bodily movements such as dance,
the references to the kind of music that is percussive and sometimes accompanied
by the beating of bells,
voices or animated singing,

The performances identified above may be thought of as multiple voices that constitute a coherent discourse of political defiance. The latter is a concept that indicates that the participants merely imagine themselves liberated by engaging in synchronized choreographies in a communal or social gathering. As the poet states, “so the poor wd throw pots of paint/ curdled in the heart of the drowsy skies” (lines 5–6), the people spontaneously intone varied and animated supplications.

The poem powerfully articulates this charisma by beginning with an upbeat, “&”, and by making it a key motif. By virtue of also functioning as a conjunction, “&” further suggests an image of a persistent upsurge such as electrical voltage. The poet proposes this effect in line three–four. He also builds on the image of electrocution in different ways. In the first, he describes the performers as the “high/voltage jolly demons” (line 19–20). The second is apparent in his repetition of the phrase, “& the carnival entered the last streets”. In other words, the usage of the metaphor of electrical voltage corresponds with the idea of “madness”.

Why does he compare his soul to a site of dereliction, that is, “shantytown” which brings to mind a sense of improvisation, impermanence and poverty? Also, why is it important for him that he seems to be concerned about the carnival that appears to have already happened? It looks as if he is reflecting on how he became affected by watching the carnival. This means, therefore, that, by virtue of associating carnival with “madness”, that is, the kind through which emotions are expressed freely, he deliberately takes the persona of one of the performers of the carnival.

19. FOR ALL THE VOICES, FOR ALL THE VICTIMS – ANTJIE KROG**(TAKEN FROM INTERNET NOTES)**

In 1996, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) started holding public hearings on the gross human rights violations that occurred during the apartheid era. Both victims and perpetrators shared stories at the TRC about violence, suffering, oppression and torture. Antjie Krog bore witness to these narratives as one of the journalists that reported on the TRC hearings. In her literary work Krog expresses her conflicted feelings towards the past in general and the hearings of the TRC in particular. Her poem “For All Voices, For All Victims” was written in response to these hearings and explores the relationship between reconciliation and national belonging. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was a commission that was assembled in South Africa after the abrogation of Apartheid. People were then allowed to talk about their experiences during Apartheid, as well as given testimonies. Staging public hearings was a sign of democracy and transition, to show that all people will now have the same rights and will be treated equally. The TRC was cultivated through three committees that lead to these interviews with people and their testimonies: * The Human Rights Violence Committee (human rights abuses that occurred between 1960 and 1994). Their hearings were held all around South Africa. * The Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee (charged with restoring victims’ dignity and formulating proposals to help with rehabilitation). * The Amnesty Committee (they considered applications from people who applied for amnesty in accordance with the provisions of the Act). Their hearings were held all around South Africa. If the crimes were politically motivated, the Commission would grant amnesty to those who committed abuses during the Apartheid era. “For All Voices, For All Victims” by Antjie Krog is a poem which is reflected on The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and all the testimonies and experiences of the people that experienced Apartheid. It is a breakdown on what the Commission’s responsibilities are and the changes that they bring. Krog, is a South African poet who likes to interpret and understand things on her own way, and then to write what she feels. In this poem she feels for the need of belonging, and she feels that only after the TRC, she can find this sense of belonging. This poem is about the struggles against apartheid, the human rights that got violated, changes that will occur because of democracy and the speaker’s role in history. Her experience as

a white South African that is relative to the TRC, as well as her role as a poet and someone who is trying to make sense of her country's past. In the first line of this poem, Krog addressing someone, "because of you / this country no longer lies / between us but within" she is addressing the victims who got victimized and abused during the Apartheids era. The structure of the address suggests that reconciliation and forgiveness are necessary for her to belong to post-apartheid South Africa. The victims have the chance now to speak their minds and share their stories with the world. She is addressing these victims to make her poem more personal, personalizing this shows us that she cares and she has hope for these people, saying they all, including herself and the rest of the economy can live amongst each other now. The way Krog uses the tone of the poem is significant to the themes of reconciliation and belonging. The tone of the poem is equivalent to the mood or attitude of the speaker. It is how the reader interprets the poem, whether he/she is going to have the same attitude towards the poem as the speaker. Krog has the need to belong in this country and her guilt is making it difficult for her. She feels guilty for how white people had treated black people, for what they had done to them. She expresses empathy towards these black people. The pace of the poem starts off fast but later on it slows down. It starts off fast so the readers can understand this emphasis of seriousness Krog is giving about the Apartheids era and all that has happened during this time. She wants the readers to realize and accept what happened and to understand her feelings and opinion about it. When the tone slows down, Krog is asking for forgiveness from these victims. Repetition is of the words "forgive me" are used. This emphasizes her sense of belonging, if she is forgiven she can belong. The narrative is often intense and spirited, she writes about her feelings towards the TRC and the Apartheids era. Her choice of words are powerful, it lures the readers to understand the seriousness of this events. She is trying to heal the nation through speech. Rhythm and word choice are significant in the formation of the nation to which she wants to belong. In the poem Krog explains what has happened to South Africa, the change that had occurred in 1994. Krog is personifying our country or nations by giving it human characteristics. At first she saw the country as a "wounded" place. If a human is physically hurt, he is wounded, Krog is personifying a wounded person with this wounded country. Therefore saying the country is broken. Where there were only feelings of sadness and despair. This gives the readers an image of South Africa as a place of cruelty. Hearing the horrible testimonies of all those people

that were abused during Apartheids era, she had the feeling of despair. After democracy in 1994, where Apartheid was distinguished, Krog felt a sense of relief, she felt like the country had calmed down, "it breathes becalmed." Only humans can calm down, it is an emotion which humans can feel, thus personifying the country again. There is a sense of hope, the country has changed to a place of democracy where there would be no more abusing of people and violence. This is an image of a country with hope and happiness. An image where all the people, no matter if you are black and white, could live together, where everyone had equal rights. Because of this democracy there is no more Apartheid, nothing separating people from each other, but all the people living amongst each other as South Africans. The act of speaking and listening and asking for forgiveness that dominated the TRC hearings is evident throughout the poem. She speaks her mind and she wants her readers to listen, in other words she writes what she feels and what she wants the readers to read and she is hoping that they would "listen" that they would read this poem and "hear" what she is trying to express to her readers. The significance of "skin" focus on the fact that Krog as a white South African woman, was the woman who reported to the TRC. At first she was "scorched" by what she had heard from these victims, so she said "a new skin" which is a new beginning, a new country and a new life, where skin colour does not matter anymore. We are all the same and we all have the same legal rights. This is what Krog is trying to make her readers understand. She feels guilty because of her skin colour and she wants to move forward as an ally but is struggling with her own guilt. She wants a country where there would be no more violence, but only peace. Since 1994 there was a change in South Africa, democracy have had occurred and Apartheid was no more. Referring to "a new skin" means that there is a new chapter in people's lives. It is a new country with new sets of rules and new legal rights. Using the word "skin" is significant, because of Apartheid, because there your skin colour mattered. "A new skin," a new country is born. Krog reflects on the importance of the TRC and the stories that was shared. She terrified with the testimonies she had heard. She wanted to share this with the outside world so they could know about this and express their own feelings about it. At the heart of this poem is the concept of belonging and reconciliation. How people can move on after being victimized and abused. How forgiveness comes into play and how to heal after these events that had occurred during the Apartheids era. As such, the poem has much to say about the human

condition in general, how we consider what we inflict on each other, and what comes after that deep, abiding pain. This is what is important to Krog and this is what she is trying to explain in this poem. She wants to be forgiven for the past years in South Africa and she wants to be accepted by all the people, no matter their skin colour. She wants to belong, she wants to call these people her family and South Africa her home. She hated the feeling of not belonging in the post-apartheid South Africa. Thus is the poem "For All Voices, For All Victims" written in response to the hearings and testimonies of the victims of the Apartheids era it and explores the relationship between reconciliation and national belonging.

20. PREGNANCY – SALLY-ANN MURRAY

TAKEN FROM SEMESTER 1 2016 TL

SEMESTER 1

ASSIGNMENT 01

The New Century of South African Poetry, edited by Michael Chapman

OR

Nervous Conditions by Tsitsi Dangarembga

DUE DATE: 22 March 2016

The New Century of South African Poetry, edited by Michael Chapman

The New Century of South African Poetry edited by Michael Chapman

Read the poem "Pregnancy" by Sally-Ann Murray on pages 436-437 of *The New Century of South African Poetry*, and answer the question below.

In "Pregnancy", the speaker addresses her unborn child, explaining to it how she feels about her pregnancy and awaiting its birth, as well as what she hopes for its future.

In an essay of about 1500 words (four to five pages) provide a close reading of the poem in which you illustrate the various processes the mother goes through in preparing for the birth of her unborn child. In your answer refer to how the speaker herself prepares for the child's birth mentally and physically, and use specific examples from the poem to support your argument.

Note: It is important to focus on both the content and the form in your discussion. It is not enough to merely provide a summary of events. Explain clearly how the poet portrays the message by means of both the thematic concerns and the poetic devices employed in the poem.

In "Pregnancy" by Sally-Ann Murray, the speaker goes through a number of processes in preparing for the birth of her unborn child. This poem is a free verse, written with no specific rhyme scheme or pattern, and consists of 11 stanzas of unequal length. Despite its seemingly undetermined form, the poet uses a number of poetic devices to convey the content of the poem. This essay will conduct a close reading of the poem, focusing on both its content and form, to determine how the speaker in "Pregnancy" prepares herself for her child's birth. The emphasis will be on the speaker's experiences in terms of both her mental and physical processes, and it will show that the mother's lived experience of her pregnancy fluctuates, and does not conform to what is expected by Western society.

In the first stanza, the speaker says that she is "expecting" (line 1), the choice of word here activates a double meaning when one considers the title "Pregnancy". The speaker is not only expecting a child, but she is also expecting "to feel I don't know what" (line 2). This emphasises her uncertainty about her future and the future of her child. The poet uses a simile to express that the unborn child knocks at the womb of the mother "like a student entering the presence of authority" (line 4). This suggests that the mother sees the child entering the world ready to learn, until later it will grow up and "butt in more/ and still more and more confident" (lines 5-6). These lines emphasise growth and progression, as the mother sees the child grow and develop, becoming more confident with age.

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The second stanza continues the imagery of the first, as the poet uses onomatopoeia to imitate the metaphorical "Nok nok" of the child in line 7, and again in line 13 in stanza three. The knocking prompts the question "Who's there?" (line 8), which is left unanswered in "the mirror's muteness" (line 10), a metaphor that stresses the mother's ambiguity about what exactly to expect from her pregnancy. She mentions that doctors, books, and even other women cannot provide her with the answers she seeks, and she is left only with "each week's waiting which throws me back upon my body" (line 12). The suggestion here is that the woman's own physical body and her lived experience of her pregnancy tell her more about what to expect than any other external sources could.

Despite this bodily knowing, the speaker is afraid, because she "knows nothing of the knowledge that [the child] seek(s)" (line 14), except that it is undoubtedly life "or some quest equally as large" (line 15). The poet draws a comparison between the largeness of life and the physical largeness of the pregnant woman through the strategic placement of the next lines: "though each week my body bellies its figurehead more fully/ breasting a cargo through erratic waves" (lines 16-17). The words "figurehead", "cargo", and "erratic waves" evoke the imagery of a ship. The pregnant woman is compared to a ship that is physically large and carries a precious cargo, as well as the statue at the prow of a ship, which moves forward into the waves as the ship moves through the ocean.

Stanza four consists of only two lines, but these are important for their shift in tone. The speaker calls to mind phrases that are often said to pregnant woman, such as that they are "blossoming" like flowers. These words are supposedly said by other women, suggested by the phrase "my dear" (line 18). Yet the speaker does not share this sentiment stating that she is not a flower and does not intend to "pistil into motherhood" (line 19). The pistil is of course the female organ of a flower, which makes this image ever so effective. Clearly the speaker does not agree with the romanticised image of motherhood so often prescribed by Western society. Stanza seven too addresses this theme, as she calls upon the words of "people": "Just wait, people say ironically [...] Your time will come;/ We cannot wait to see you, as the Bible puts it, big with child" (lines 27-30). Here the speaker also makes reference to a Christian religious text, and evokes further images of "people" with prescriptive ideas of what one should do when pregnant. The speaker shows her disdain for these ideas with the interjection "(Well what else can I do [but wait], with this intimate living that happens all despite me?)" (line 28).

Although the mother has control over her own emotions and ideas about motherhood in the face of other women, her power is limited as she tries to "hold and refuse [the child's] shape" (line 20). She describes the struggle of holding the body of the child and refusing it at the same time, as she adjusts her clothing to fit her new shape, but insists on "pleasuring my body - my body - as I will" (line 23). She addresses the unborn child in stanza seven when she says "you will not lie still but I belie your presence" (line 24), which further underscores the struggle of coping with the ever-moving child in her womb, while trying to disguise her growing belly. Stanza eight continues this idea, as the speaker explains to the unborn child that she "refuse(s) but hold your shape" (line 31), and depicts her continuous struggle with the physical effects of pregnancy such as frequent urination (line 34). The poet alternates the theme of "what people think" and society expects of pregnancy in stanzas four and seven, with the mother's own experiences of the physical changes in her body in stanzas five, six and eight. This juxtapositioning of the stanzas imitates the oscillating feelings of the mother between what is expected of her to feel and what she actually experiences and feels.

Despite the mother's mixed emotions and experiences, stanza nine highlights that the unborn child is ever-present: "And always another knock/ a kick/ a funny flick" (lines 35-37). This stanza breaks the forms of the previous stanzas with its short, abrupt one-word lines, and the indentations now used for the first time to imitate the sudden movements of the foetus. Even though the mother experiences a mix of emotions and bodily changes, the unborn child waits, "taking things slowly,/ circling the date declared to make you present" (lines 44-45). The unborn child is described in the final stanza as hidden, "lying low beneath the swell" (line 46) of the mother's belly, and only shows its shape "in moments" (line 47).

The final stanza draws a parallel between the fluctuating emotions of the mother – “my elation and sadness” (line 48) – and the physical movements of the foetus in the womb – “your perks and dents” (line 49), until it comes to the conclusion that these emotions and movements flippantly or cheekily decline the future of the foetus. The implication here is that soon the foetus will be born and be a child outside the womb of the mother, and the movements from the inside and the mother’s mixed emotions will be no more; her pregnancy will come to an end when she gives birth to the child on the date “declared to make you present” (line 45).

In conclusion, it is clear from this close reading of the poem that the speaker experiences a number of mixed emotions when it comes to her pregnancy. She is elated and hopeful at times, but she also experiences physical anguish at the changes to her body, and the manner in which the foetus has taken control of it. The mother refuses the romanticised notion of pregnancy often propagated by society, and through the depiction of her fluctuating state in terms of both its content and form, the poem portrays the lived experience of the pregnant woman both mentally and physically.

References:

Chapman, M. ed. 2002. *The new century of South African poetry*. Johannesburg & Cape Town: AD Donker.

Notes:

This essay serves as an example of what we expected of you for this assignment. There are a number of other poetic devices that could have been emphasised and explored in the poem to motivate your argument. The key concerns here are whether you were able to 1) conduct a close reading of the poem, and 2) present it in a carefully worded, well-structured, and academic essay.

Prepared by:

Ms EL Nortjé

enortjle@unisa.ac.za

21. AFTER THE BATTLE – SEK MQHAYI

Mqhayi got his inspiration for his poems from listening to the elders as they shared their stories about the struggles and triumphs of Xhosa greats like, Hintska kaKhwutu and Gcaleka kaPhalo. His works consistently called for Africans to be united. He took an opinioned stance on issues that would normally be filed as inconsequential. The narrative poem “After the Battle”, articulate this by beseeching his people to “hear” him. His words are soulful in conveying the message of the impending “Gilikankqo”. He denounces the people’s behavior towards each other and urges them to see the impending colonization of their land as of critical importance. His use of imagery creates a potent tactile, visual, auditory and olfactory sense of participation by his audience. Mqhayi starts his poem off by grabbing the people’s attention, exclaiming; “Ho-o-o-o-o-yini! Ho-o-o-o-yini!” (line one)

He uses exclamation marks to strengthen the tone of his oration to the people. One visualizes Mqhayi standing on a podium addressing his people. He desires their attention and implores the people to listen to his words, ‘although his position amongst his comrades was that of a normal person as opposed to a chief or warrior’. “It’s me that’s talking, a man of no worth! (line 2) It’s me that’s talking, a man who knows how to speak! (line 3) What kind of creature did you think I was’ (line 4) One who says things that can’t be said?” (line 5) The country’s labor is metaphorically linked to a woman in childbirth. There is a direct comparison between the country and a woman about to give birth. The land is given human attributes by having the ability to feel pain. The use of the word “Today” (line 6-7-10) emphasizes the forthcoming hardships of the country as a result of their ignorance and its disastrous outcome. “Today the country’s in labour;” (line 6)

“Today the land’s in pain;” (line 7) “As if a doe who spurns her own fawn will be born.” (line 11) The use of the word “spurn” suggests that the people were not only living in ignorance, but rejected the knowledge that would help them. ‘As if they were shooting themselves in the foot.’ The trumpet was a signal for the warriors to gather together and marked their beginning journey to war. They were “armed to the teeth;” (line 15) and one pictures the warriors in full war regalia, marching to their destiny. Zanzolo was determined in his ferocity to overcome his opponent. His focus would not be deterred by idle chit-chat. Raw

and pure anger emanated from his eyes. His agitation resulted in him breathing heavily as if he was a race-horse biting at the bits at the start line. The fight between the clans was upon them. “We saw the flames flash from his eyes, (line 17) We saw the smoke billow from his nose, (line 18) We heard the shrilling of whistles in our ears.” (line 19) Zanzolo’s face emanated his feelings. His brows are likened to clouds on a thunderous day. These hang threateningly heavy in the sky, just as his brows hangs over his eyes. “Today those brows are like clouds on a thunderous day,” (line 23) No one dare approach him as his anger is so great that his people even feared him. Zanzolo brings chaos to Rharhabe’s land which is the focal point of his chieftom. This is amplified by the statement; “Oh! The things that occur on this earth!” (line 28) In their quest for expanding their territorial domains, brothers turned against each other. The battle was so fierce that the warriors’ deaths were extensive. Warriors wore crane feathers in their head-dress as a sign of their bravery on the battlefield.

The bodies of the warriors are personified in the statement, crane feathers piling up on each other. “Crane feather piled on crane feather, at Hoho;” (line 30) The battle took place in Keiskamma in Ciskei on the Hoho hills. In lines thirty to forty epistrophe is used in the repetition of the word “Hoho” which emphasizes the massacre taking place. In their eagerness to overcome their opponents, their bodies and clubs clashed, this created a thumping sound. One gets the sense that the sound of thumping echoed over the hills. “Iron bit into flesh, at Hoho; (line31) Club clashed against club, at Hoho; (line 32) The oxide thudded, at Hoho; (line 33) There was thumping here and there and there, at Hoho;” (line 34) It is not literally possible for iron to bite into flesh; therefore it is a metaphor for something made of iron with a serrated or sharp edge that is able to cut into human flesh. Such was the force of the battle that when a warrior died there was not even time to acknowledge his passing. “Someone passed on without prayer, at Hoho; (line 35) He joined the multitudes in a moment, at Hoho;” (line 36) Lines thirty seven to forty illustrates the revolutionary cycle of life as the flesh of the dead is broken down. “The vulture fed with his dogs, at Hoho;’ The buzzard fed and left more for the raven, at Hoho;’ The hyena fed and passed on to the wild dog, at Hoho;” The green fly fed and left more for the maggots, at Hoho;” Mqhayi implores the warriors to cease their fighting. He commends them on their

courage, determination and victory. He urges them to return to their homes and families which have been neglected, to set their affairs in order.

“There are rows and rows of things you must tackle.” (line 49) Mqhayi uses rhetorical questions to strengthen his argument to the people on their knowledge of the impending dangers ahead. The colonizers’ brought the Bible with them in order to subjugate and convert the people to Christianity. The term ‘weighty’ (line 53) could lead one to believe that the bible was the epitome of the expected changes, whereas it was the British who brought about the change. He asks the people to send someone to examine and interpret the book (the Bible) because by the time it is important, they would have aged considerably and their anger would have subsided. The prophecies of the prophetess Nongqawuse also exacerbated the winds of change. “Bright Ears” and “these flowing-hair nations!” is a direct referral to Caucasian peoples physical attributes. Mqhayi uses an exclamation mark on his last question to the people. This statement motivates his frustration at the peoples’ erroneous disregard for an undesirable future. “Haven’t you heard of the visions of old man Khulile? (line fifty one) Haven’t you heard what will come to pass in this land? (line fifty two) Haven’t you heard of the weighty Book that’s impending?” (line fifty three) “Haven’t you heard of the prince who will speak?” (line fifty six) “Haven’t you heard of a girl who will speak?” (Line fifty nine) “Haven’t year heard of Bright Ears who are coming?” (line sixty one) “Haven’t year heard of these flowing-hair nations!” (line sixty three) In line ten and sixty seven Mqhayi’s repeats his plea to the people in the poem by reminding them of the impending ‘Gilikankqo’. This is in the hope that the reader will become aware of the central focus of the poem. He uses the word to heighten the emotional impact of the piece and create a set tone for the poem. “Today it’s as if Gilikanqo’ll be born,” (line 10) “When it gives birth I say it will bear Gilikankqo;” (line 67) Anaphora is used in lines sixty nine to eighty two.

The repetition of the group of words “Go home but stay watchful,” is used as a strategic means of producing deeper levels of amplification and emotional impact. There will be war and bloodshed of such intensity that the felled warriors’ blood would form pools. “mankind will come to an end;” (line 70) This figurative statement could mean that when the land is invaded, changes will occur and life as they know it will cease. Times will become so grim

that your own “fathers will sell you;” and vice-versa. “darkness will descend;” (line 79) It is the beginning of the end of life as they know it. This poem aspires to enlighten us to the plight of the Xhosas in the days preceding and during the colonization of South Africa by the British. This colossal event changed the history of the people of Africa. Traditions and culture were irrevocably lost, so much so that the effects can still be felt in present times.

History only ever showed us the white man’s perception of the historical occurrences but never elaborated on what the indigenous people had experienced. Mqhayi seeks to give us a greater understanding and some medium of clarity on the colonization of our people. For this reason he got the title – Imbongi yesizwe jikelele – The poet of the whole nation.