

Caucasian Chalk Circle

by Bartolt Brecht

The Caucasian Chalk Circle Summary

The Caucasian Chalk Circle begins with a Prologue that deals with a dispute over a valley. Two groups of peasants want to claim a valley that was abandoned during WW II when the Germans invaded. One group used to live in the valley and herded goats there. The other group is from a neighboring valley and hopes to plant fruit trees. A Delegate has been sent to arbitrate the dispute. The fruit growers explain that they have elaborate plans to irrigate the valley and produce a tremendous amount of food. The goat-herders claim the land based on the fact that they have always lived there. In the end, the fruit farmers get the valley because they will use the land better. The peasants then hold a small party and a Singer agrees to tell them the story of the Chalk Circle.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle is actually two stories that come together at the end. The first story is that of Grusha and the second story is that of Azduk. Both stories begin in a Caucasian City ruled by a Governor, who serves a Grand Duke. The Governor has just had a child, Michael, and his wife Natella is incredibly jealous of the attention that he gives to his son. The Governor's brother, the Fat Prince, stages an insurrection on Easter Sunday. He kills the Governor and forces the Governor's wife to flee. In her haste, she leaves behind her child. The Grand Duke and many of the soldiers flee as well.

Grusha, a kitchen maid, becomes engaged to a soldier named Simon. Soon thereafter, during the coup, she has Michael handed to her. She hides the child from the Fat Prince and his soldiers, thereby saving the child's life. She then takes Michael with her and flees the city, heading north. After spending most of her money and risking her life for the child, she arrives at her brother's house. He allows her to live there over the winter.

When spring arrives, Grusha's brother forces her to marry a "dying" man from across the mountain. They hold a wedding, but during the reception the guests learn that the war is over and that the Grand Duke has raised an army and returned. The "dying" man, Jussup, realizes that he can no longer be drafted into the war. He miraculously recovers and throws all the guests out of the house. Grusha, now stuck with a husband she did not want, is forced to become a good wife to him.

One day Simon returns and learns that she is married. He is even more upset when he sees Michael, whom he thinks is Grusha's child. Some soldiers soon arrive and take Michael away from her, claiming that Michael belongs to the Governor's wife. Grusha follows them back to the city.

The next story that is told is that of Azdak. The plot returns to the night of the Fat Prince's insurrection. Azdak finds a fugitive and saves the man's life. The man turns out to be the Grand Duke. Realizing that he could be branded a traitor, Azdak walks into town and reveals that he saved the Grand Duke's life. The soldiers refuse to believe him and he is released. The Fat Prince soon shows up with his nephew, whom he wants to make the new judge. However, he agrees to let the soldiers decide who the next judge should be. After staging a mock trial, they choose Azdak.

He then judges four very strange cases, ruling in each case in favor of the poor person. Azdak soon gains a reputation for supporting the poor. However, after two years as a judge, the Grand Duke returns. Azdak is arrested as a "traitor" by the soldiers and is about to be killed by them. However, the Grand Duke, remembering that Azdak saved his life, reappoints Azdak to be the judge, thereby saving his life.

Azdak now takes over the case of Grusha and the child. The Governor's wife wants Michael back because without Michael she cannot take over the former Governor's estates. Grusha wants to keep the child, whom she has raised for the past two years. Even Simon goes to the trial and promises Grusha that he will support her.

After hearing all the arguments and learning about what Grusha has done to take care of the child, Azdak orders a Chalk Circle to be drawn. He places the child in the middle and orders the two women to pull, saying that whichever woman can pull the child out of the circle will get him. The Governor's wife pulls whereas Grusha lets go. Azdak orders them to do it again, and again Grusha lets go. Azdak then gives Michael to Grusha and orders the Governor's wife to leave. He confiscates Michael's estates and makes them into public gardens. His last act is to divorce Grusha, thereby allowing her to marry Simon. During the dancing that follows, Azdak disappears forever.

About The Caucasian Chalk Circle

Written in 1944 while Brecht was living in America, The Caucasian Chalk Circle was initially intended for Broadway. It never quite made it there, but was instead premiered by students at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota in 1948. Brecht's source for the play is most likely Klabund's Circle of Chalk, which was based on an ancient Chinese play written in 1300 A.D. with the same name. Brecht adapted this story into parable form and changed the setting to Soviet Georgia near the end of World War II.

Brecht wrote the play for the Viennese actress Luise Rainer, who already had experience playing a figure like Grusha in Klabund's play. Unfortunately, she and Brecht quarreled and parted company forever before the play was produced.

The play was initially translated by Eric Bentley. The first edition of The Caucasian Chalk Circle was mostly true to the German text with the only serious omission being that of the Prologue. The reason for this omission is related to the fact that Brecht was forced to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee in Washington in October, 1947. Since the play was about to be published at this time, the publication of the Prologue was postponed at his request. This caused two false rumors to start: one, that the prologue was written after the original text, and two, that Bentley himself had initiated the omission. Neither of these rumors was true.

The play itself is unusual for Brecht because it has a relatively happy ending; everything works out for Grusha. At the same time, The Caucasian Chalk Circle is clearly a Communist play: whoever can make the best use of resources in order to provide for others deserves to get those resources. Implicit in this Communist moral is also a secularized version of the Biblical Christ story. With typical anti-religious fervor, Brecht parallels Christ's story through the life of the drunken judge Azdak. Furthermore, The Chalk Circle is itself a version of Solomonic Law, based on the Biblical story of Solomon and the baby. When two women came to Solomon, both of them claiming the same child, he ordered the child cut in half. The true mother chose to instead give the entire baby to the other woman, thereby revealing to Solomon that she was in fact the mother.

The play did not gain popularity in the United States until the 1950s. The first professional production took place at Hedgerow Theater in Philadelphia in 1948 and was directed by Eric Bentley. Soon thereafter *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* became Brecht's most popular parable in the United States.

Biography of Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956)



Bertolt Brecht

Bertolt Brecht was born on February 10, 1898, in the medieval city of Augsburg, part of the Bavarian section of the German Empire. Married in 1897, his father was a Catholic and his mother a Protestant. Brecht was their first child, baptized as Eugen Bertolt Friedrich Brecht. His father, Bertolt Friedrich Brecht, worked in a paper factory. His mother, Wilhelmine Friederike Sophie Brezing, was ill with breast cancer most of his young life. He had one brother, Walter, who was born in 1900.

Brecht was a sickly child, having a congenital heart condition and a facial tic. As a result, he was sent to a sanitarium to relax. At age six he attended a Protestant elementary school (Volksschule) and at age ten a private school, The Royal Bavarian Realgymnasium (Koeniglich-Bayerisches Realgymnasium). Like most students, he was educated in Latin and the humanities, later being exposed to Nietzsche and other thinkers. He suffered a heart attack at the age of twelve but soon recovered and continued his education.

Significantly, Brecht was exposed at a young age to Luther's German translation of the Bible, a text considered instrumental in the development of the modern German language. Quotes from and references to the Bible abound throughout Brecht's work and can be found most particularly in *Mother Courage and Her Children* in the mouth of the chaplain.

While in school he began writing, and he ended up co-founding and co-editing a school magazine called *The Harvest*. By age sixteen, he was writing for a local newspaper and had written his first play, *The Bible*, about a girl who must choose between living and dying but saving many others. He was later almost expelled at age eighteen for dissenting about it being necessary to defend his country in time of war. By nineteen, he had left school and started doing clerical work for the war, prevented from more active duty due to health problems.

In 1917, he resumed his education, this time attending Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, where he matriculated as a medical student. By this time, his mother was heavily drugged with morphine because of her progressing cancer. He started to write *Baal* at this time, a play concerned with suffering caused by excessive sexual pleasures. It sensationally depicted what were considered immoral attitudes at the time.

Brecht's own sex life is fascinating in many ways. He is thought to have had no fewer than three mistresses at any time throughout his adult life. When he was a child, the family's second servant, Marie Miller, would hide objects in her undergarments for Brecht and his brother to find. Through Brecht's poetry, we understand that his mother used to smell his clothes to determine the extent of his sexual activities. By the age of sixteen, he began to frequent a brothel as part of a conscientious effort to broaden his experiences. Between sixteen and twenty, he apparently pursued eight girls simultaneously, including Paula Banholzer, the woman who gave birth to his illegitimate child in 1919. He is known to have experimented with homosexuality, often inviting literary and musically inclined male friends to his room on weekends in order for them to read erotic compositions. His diaries, although vague, mention his need for both males and females to fulfill his sexual desires. Brecht's desire for experience was, throughout his life, all-consuming.

In 1921, he took his second trip to Berlin and attended the rehearsals of Max Reinhardt and other major directors. In 1922, his play *Drums in the Night* opened in Munich at the Kammerspiele and later at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin. He received the prestigious Kleist prize for young dramatists as a result. Brecht also entered into his first committed relationship, his marriage with the opera singer Marianne Zoff, at the age of twenty-four. Their daughter Hanne was born the following year. Despite being married, Brecht had extramarital affairs and spent very little time with his wife or daughter. In 1923, his two plays *Jungle of Cities* and *Baal* were performed.

After moving to Berlin in 1924, he met a communist Viennese actress, Helene Weigel. His wife Marianne moved in with her parents after the birth of Hanne, and soon she stopped responding to Brecht's letters. At age twenty-six Brecht fathered his second illegitimate child, with Weigel. Their son was named Stefan. Brecht divorced Marianne Zoff and in 1929 married Helene Weigel. At this point, he was just thirty-one.

Helene Weigel gave birth to their second child, Barbara, in 1930. During this time, Brecht was by no means monogamous. He was obsessed with the idea of abandonment, and as a result,

he abhorred ending relationships. The women in his life were important for his writing career, and modern feminist detractors often try to claim that his mistresses in fact wrote much of what was accredited to him. The allegation is largely untrue, but women such as Elisabeth Hauptmann did write significant parts of *The Threepenny Opera*. In addition, other mistresses included Margarete Steffin, who helped him write *The Good Woman of Setzuan* and *Mother Courage and Her Children*; Hella Wuolijoki, who allowed him to transform her comedy *The Sawdust Princess* into *Herr Puntila and His Man Matti*; and Ruth Berlau, who bore him a short-lived, third illegitimate child in 1944. Weigel was tolerant of his affairs, and she even warned other men to stay away from his mistresses because it upset him when they made their moves. Brecht's writings show the profound influence of many varied sources during this time and the remaining years of his life. He studied Chinese, Japanese, and Indian theatre, focused heavily on Shakespeare (adapting, among other plays, Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*) and other Elizabethans, and was fascinated by Greek tragedy. He found inspiration in other German playwrights, notably Buchner and Wedekind, and he enjoyed the Bavarian folk play. *Mother Courage and Her Children* arguably owes much to Schiller's *Wallenstein* trilogy. Brecht had a phenomenal ability to take elements from these seemingly incompatible sources, combine them, and convert them into his own works.

In 1933, Brecht took his family and fled to Zurich after the burning of the Reichstag, later moving around the world to escape Nazi rule. In October 1947, during the McCarthy years, Brecht was called to appear before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Although not an official member of America's Communist party, Brecht left the United States for Switzerland the next day. He soon reunited with Helene Weigel, and they traveled to East Berlin in 1948 and set up the Berliner Ensemble with full support from the Communist regime. *Mother Courage and Her Children* was the Berliner Ensemble's inaugural production. In 1950, Brecht and Weigel were granted Austrian citizenship.

Brecht's four great plays were written between 1938 and 1945. These included, for one, *The Life of Galileo*, which followed history slavishly. It dealt with the protagonist's self-hatred for giving up his convictions in the face of the Inquisition. The others were *Mother Courage and Her Children*; *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, which in some ways follows from *Mother Courage* in examining the compatibility of virtue and a capitalist world; and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, which introduces questions about power and who is entitled to own things. After this period,

Brecht worked on his famous adaptation of *Antigone* and spent much of his energy recording his theoretical ideas.

Brecht experimented with Dadaism and expressionism in his early plays, but he soon developed a unique style that suited his own vision. He detested "Aristotelian" drama and the manner in which it (at least from his point of view) made the audience identify with the hero without enough analysis of the hero's flaws. To him, when such drama produced feelings of terror and pity and led to an emotional catharsis, the process prevented audience members from thinking. (It is the ancient quarrel between philosophers and poets once again, with another thinker trying to reform poetry.) Determined to destroy what he considered theatrical illusions, Brecht made his dreams into realities when he took over the Berliner Ensemble. In one of his early productions, he famously put up signs which said, "Glottz nicht so romantisch!" ("Don't stare so romantically!"). For further information, see *About Epic Theatre* in the ClassicNote on *Mother Courage and Her Children*.

Brecht received the National Prize, first class, in 1951. In 1954, he won the international Lenin Peace Prize. Brecht died of a heart attack on August 14, 1956, while working on a response to Samuel Beckett's absurdist play *Waiting for Godot*, written the year before. Even at the end, Brecht was very much interested in the modern drama of the day. He provided instructions that a stiletto be placed in his heart and that he be buried in a steel coffin so that his corpse would not be riddled with worms. He also left a will giving the proceeds of his various works to particular mistresses, including Elisabeth Hauptmann and Ruth Berlau. Unfortunately, the will lacked the necessary witness signatures and was therefore considered void. His widow, Helene Weigel, generously gave small amounts of money to the specified women. Brecht is buried in the Dorotheenfriedhof in Berlin.

Summary of "Prologue" or Scene One

Two groups of peasants sit in the ruins of a village in Soviet Georgia in the Caucasus Mountains after World War II. An Expert from the State Reconstruction Commission is there to help them mediate a dispute over which worker's commune should have the land in the valley. Both groups have fought Hitler during the war and congratulate each other on the victory. The peasant group on the right originally owned the valley and herded goats there, and now they want to come back, feeling the valley belongs to them since they had been there a long time. The peasant group on the left is a group of fruit farmers from another valley. They want to

plant fruit trees in this valley and make it agriculturally productive. The government Expert says he will listen neutrally to both groups' arguments and asks them to come to some amicable agreement among themselves.

The peasants on the right from the Galinsk Goat Commune unpack some cheese and invite everyone to taste it. They are complimented on the taste, but they claim that the cheese is inferior since they left the valley. The grass is better here for the goats. They invoke the law of prior possession. They have always been in this valley

The group on the left is the Rosa Luxemburg Fruit Growers Commune. Kato, an agriculturist, shows the irrigation plans that would allow them to produce ten times as much fruit as before the war. They could convert 700 acres of infertile land into fertile land. Everyone agrees the plans look good. The Expert asks the workers on the right if they will give up the valley, and they agree.

The Rosa Luxemburg Commune has brought in the Singer Arkadi Cheidze to sing and perform a play in which they will all take part. This will be a celebration and also comment on their right to have the valley. Arkadi says he will sing a tale called "The Chalk Circle" which comes from the Chinese, but adapted to this situation. The peasants retire into the Club House to eat and hear the play.

Commentary on the "Prologue" or Scene One

Brecht uses the device of a "play within a play." The frame story is set in the Soviet Union in the country of Georgia in the Caucasus Mountains, hence the name "Caucasian Chalk Circle." An earlier version of the play was called "Augsburg Chalk Circle" when it was set in Germany. The main play itself, put on by The Singer, musicians, and the workers from the Rosa Luxemburg Commune, will look back to medieval Georgia with its princes and governors, showing the workers their own history. It will be a parable or teaching story that will make several important points. The Singer, Arkadi Cheidze, takes the part of a narrator, providing the links to the dramatized action scenes. He and the musicians and actors also comment on the action with their songs. In his role as narrator, the Singer often tells the thoughts of characters and

explains the time and scene changes. Many composers have made music to go with the lyrics, but often performers make up their own music.

The play elaborates on the dispute between the two communes who want the valley. The goat-herders use the argument that they were there first and have used the valley for the longest time. This is a key ownership question—who has the right to something? Someone who has held it traditionally, as the Goat Commune has held the valley, and by analogy, the medieval governors and princes who held the land in their families for generations, or should the land go to the one who makes the best use of it for the most people, such as the fruit growers? The decision to let the newcomers, the fruit growers, have the land because they are more productive and have the most to give will have a parallel in the chalk circle story of Grusha and the child Michael.

The political message of the prologue is clearly Communist, for capitalist law would rule for the original owner. Because of the Communist ideas, the prologue was originally not played in the United States.

Summary of Scene Two: The Noble Child

The Singer from the Prologue begins the story of the Chalk Circle: "Once upon a time." The city of Nukha in Grusinia (Georgia) is ruled by the Governor Georgi Abashvili, married to Natella with a baby son named Michael. On Easter Sunday, the Governor and his family are on their way to church, and the soldiers are holding back the crowds who want to see the baby. The beggars and petitioners also line up to ask the Governor's help but are pushed away so the royal family can enter the church. At the entrance Prince Kazbeki, nicknamed the Fat Prince, greets his brother the Governor and says that baby Michael already looks like a future Governor.

The baby Michael has two doctors hovering over him, fussing and arguing about how to care for the precious child. The family goes into the church, but a messenger arrives with important news for the Governor from the capital city. The Governor tells his Adjutant Shalva he doesn't want to hear the messenger now.

A palace maid, Grusha Vashnadze, enters carrying a stuffed goose for the Easter dinner. Simon Chachava, a soldier posted at the church begins to flirt with her. He admits he often hides behind a bush and watches Grusha washing linen. He has seen her dip her bare legs in the river. Grusha scolds him and runs off, angry.

While the Governor is in church, the Fat Prince enters and signs to the Ironshirts (a fierce unit of soldiers or special forces). They go into the palace and soon have taken over the palace and the town. The Governor and his family return to the palace from church. The Governor does not realize there is a trap set for him. He wants to speak with the architects who are building a new section of the palace. The architects come, but standing outside the palace gate, they see that the Fat Prince has taken over. They discuss between themselves how the Princes met last night in the capital city. The Princes are against the Grand Duke and his Governors. Realizing they are in the midst of civil war, the architects run away.

The Ironshirts lead the Governor out of the palace in chains. The Singer, who breaks in with commentary, sings, "Oh, blindness of the great!" (p. 15). People begin pouring out of the palace. All the servants and even the doctors run away.

Simon enters, searching for Grusha. He tells her that he is helping the Governor's wife escape. He will be loyal to the old family. Grusha tells him he is being stubborn to obey orders instead of turning coat with the other soldiers. Simon begins asking Grusha a series of courtship questions. She understands his intent and says yes, she will marry him before he finishes because she is being called into the palace. He ignores what she says and continues his formal courtship explaining that he will deliver the Governor's wife to safety and then will go off to the war, remaining loyal to the old Duke. He asks her to wait for him. She says she will and sings a song promising that when he returns, "no boots will lie before the door" (p. 19).

Simon gives Grusha a silver cross that was his mother's to wear as an engagement present. He then leaves to protect the Governor's wife. The Governor's wife, Natella, enters with boxes of her clothes and the baby Michael. She cannot decide which dresses she needs and makes the nurse hold Michael while she runs around in confusion. She feels she needs more help to pack and tells the nurse to put the baby on the ground. Shalva, the Adjutant, makes Natella leave

immediately. He announces that the Judge of the Supreme Court has been hanged. In order to see to the dresses, Natella forgets her child Michael. The nurse hands Michael to Grusha. They see the city on fire. The Cook tells Grusha to get rid of the child; it is dangerous. The Ironshirts want the child, not the mother. Grusha covers the child on the ground so it is hidden and runs into the palace to get her things.

The Fat Prince enters with his drunken soldiers, who carry the Governor's head and nail it over the door. He does not see the hidden child but remarks that he wants it hunted down through the whole country. When the soldiers leave, Grusha goes to the baby and sits with it all night until dawn, trying to think what to do with it. By morning, their bond is thus forged. She takes Michael away with her. The Singer comments, "Terrible is the temptation to do good!" (p. 25).

Commentary on Scene Two: The Noble Child

The setting is roughly medieval Georgia, called Grusinia then. The city of Nukha is now in present day Muslim Azerbaijan and its name is Shaki. Georgia once controlled Nukha, and at that time it was Christian, as in the play. Georgia is a crossroads between Eastern Europe and Western Asia, of both Christian and Muslim influence. It was annexed by Russia in the nineteenth century, then became part of the Soviet Union. Georgia gained its independence in 1991 and is now a democracy. Brecht is not trying to be historically accurate in the details, but rather, in principle, showing the forces of history in motion.

It is significant that it is Easter Sunday, the celebration of the Resurrection. Instead, it ironically means the Governor's death. The Singer comments to him: "You will not move into a new palace, but into a little hole in the ground" (p. 16). There is little sympathy for the Governor. He shoves away the beggars as he goes to church, an act of hypocrisy. He builds an addition to the palace, an act of insensitive hubris, or pride that goes before a fall. Natella, his wife, says that they will clear the slum houses to make way for the improvements. The Governor is stupidly arrogant by not wanting to hear the messenger who has just come from the capital city with news of the impending coup.

Natella is more heartless than her husband, for she does not care for him or the child. She is jealous of the child (the Governor changes the palace for the son, not for her) and is obsessed with her clothes, unable to comprehend the danger, as she has lived a life of privilege. She treats the servants badly. The quality of family life among the nobility is reflected in the fact that Natella abandons her child, and the Governor is killed by his own brother, the Fat Prince. Michael, the noble child, is first fussed over by two doctors who seem concerned with every sneeze, yet when he is suddenly, through no fault of his own, politically dangerous, he is considered worthless, even by the servants. They leave him to die. He is no child but a pawn in a game of power.

Grusha is the main character in the first half of the play. She is a servant but has more human feeling and courage than anyone else and is thus a heroine. She is unable to abandon a child, even if it isn't hers and means danger to herself. She represents the good, but Brecht explains elsewhere that in a bad world good people are abused. The Cook scolds her to leave the child: "You're just the kind of fool who always gets put upon" (p. 23). Grusha is thus in for a hard time, and hence the Singer's comment that it is a terrible temptation to do good. A cruel world does not reward good. To refuse, however, makes one less than human, and thus, her dilemma.

The Singer comments, "When the houses of the great collapse/ Many little people are slain" (p. 16). Knowing this, the people of Grusinia that Grusha meets during her escape, will mostly be unsympathetic or too cowardly to help her because they will be afraid. Grusha will have to use her wits, because everything is against her if she takes the child. She appears to sit by the baby all night to consider the situation, but it works against her, for a baby is seductive, and by morning they are bonded. Instead of making us identify with Grusha and her tribulation, Brecht plants a seed of doubt about her at the end of the scene, comparing her to a thief in the way she sneaks the child away. This is one possible explanation for her behavior, for Michael is the heir and could be taken for ransom or some other criminal reason. She does turn out to be the good character, but Brecht does not sentimentalize goodness; instead, he makes it a heroic and difficult act.

In this scene we see the Singer and musicians taking a part similar to the Chorus in an ancient Greek play, commenting directly to or about what the characters are doing. Brecht admired Greek tragedy and rewrote some of the famous plays, such as Sophocles' *deAntigone*. Brecht gives the scenes an ancient feel by having the characters speak poetically, using folk proverbs or folk songs to make their points. The courting scenes between Grusha and Simon are charming because indirect and understated. They speak through proverbs, as do many of the common folk. Simon tries to convince Grusha he will not be in danger: "In Tiflis they say: how can stabbing harm the knife?" (p. 17).

Summary of Scene Three: The Flight into the Northern Mountains

Grusha has a brother in the mountains and escapes with Michael to find her brother's farm. The musicians comment: "How will the merciful escape the merciless/ The bloodhounds, the trappers?" (p. 25). Grusha carries the child in a sack on her back, singing "The Song of the Four Generals," in which she evokes the folk hero, Sosso Robadkidse. She sees a peasant's cottage and goes to buy some milk for the child. The peasant overcharges her two piasters, the equivalent of half a week's pay. She does not know how they will get enough food on the way. She had wrapped Michael in a brocade coat worth 1,000 piastras, and seeing a carriage of elegant ladies on the highway puts on the coat and pretends to be a fleeing aristocrat like they are. She joins them as they try to stay at an inn. The innkeeper is charging outrageous prices, and the ladies want Grusha to share the expense. Grusha pretends to be a lady but gives herself away by knowing how to make beds and sweep. They look at her hands and know she is a servant. Thinking she could be a thief, they have her thrown out.

As Grusha goes north on the highway, she is followed by Ironshirts who are tracking the child to kill it. The Corporal and his companion speak crudely and sing a marching song. At the River Sirra, Grusha sees a farmhouse. The peasant woman has milk, so Grusha decides to leave Michael on her doorstep. The woman will be able to hide and feed the child. To make sure he will be taken in, she hides behind a tree to see what happens.

The peasant woman finds the child and takes it into the house. Her husband wants her to give it to the local priest, but she wants to care for it. Grusha thinks Michael is safe and goes in the

opposite direction from the house. She runs into the Ironshirts who are chasing her and Michael. The Corporal makes rude sexual comments to her before demanding to know where Michael is. In terror, Grusha rushes back to the cottage where she left the baby.

She runs inside and tells the peasant woman to hide Michael, to claim it is her own child. The woman says she will, but the soldiers scare her. The Corporal intimidates the peasant woman at the door, and she reveals that Grusha left a child on her doorstep. As she is taken outside by one soldier, the Corporal goes in to find the baby. Grusha grabs a log and hits him over the head, knocking him out. She takes Michael and rushes out of the house.

After twenty-two days, she reaches the Janga-Tau glacier and decides the child is now hers. She takes off the expensive linen and wraps Michael in rags to look like a peasant. At a deep ravine there is only a broken rope bridge where one rope has snapped and is hanging down the abyss. Merchants at the edge are trying to grab the broken rope to repair the bridge. Grusha tells them Ironshirts are following her, and she must get across. They tell her she can't make it; the ravine is two thousand feet deep, and with a baby, it is too dangerous. Singing the "song of the rotten bridge" (p. 39) Grusha crosses, risking their lives. Just as she makes it to the other side, the Ironshirts stand on the opposite shore, and she laughs at them.

Commentary on Scene Three: The Flight into the Northern Mountains

In this scene of Grusha's flight she meets a cross-section of the people of Grusinia (Georgia), many of whom are fleeing the civil war as she is. The peasant who overcharges for milk blames the war for the high prices. He only looks out for himself and makes money on the crisis. The aristocratic women accept Grusha only when they think she is one of them. The innkeeper is making money on the well-born people who need to stay at his inn at any price. The ladies only have sacks to sleep on, but they still keep up their pretense of being important people. They claim they are not fleeing, only going to their summer residence in the mountains, but they drop hints of their husbands being tortured and killed like the Governor was. Grusha begs their help for the child who is also an aristocrat, but they have no mercy.

The peasant woman who would have kept Michael was not courageous like Grusha and broke down out of fear when the Ironshirts came. Grusha's knocking out the Corporal means she is now a criminal. She can never go back to her own life. The Ironshirts think it is their duty to be cruel at someone else's orders and would kill a child because they are told to do it. The merchants at the edge of the ravine have sympathy for Grusha but cannot help her. The merchants' only reason to get across the bridge is that they have to get somewhere to buy and sell. They don't understand her desperation until Grusha says, "Ironshirts." Then, they hide their goods.

The most important moment in the scene is just before Grusha and Michael get to the ravine. She decides the child is now hers, and performs a symbolic baptism with glacial water. When they cross the ravine she sings to him, "The way that I know/ Is the one for your feet/ The bread that I find/ Is all you will eat" (p. 41). She behaves towards him as a real mother would and has taken him on for better or worse, risking not only her life but her appointment with Simon when he comes back from the war, for she can't go back now.

The scene comments on the injustice of the upper classes. The servant at the inn tells the ladies they should be glad to sleep on sacks instead of in a grave like others of their kind. The scene also reveals Grusha's courage and pluck, her wit and talent. She mimics the upper class women by making up a story about her rich husband and servants. She does not hesitate to attack the Ironshirt who threatens Michael. She risks her life at the gorge, though she is given a way out when the merchant woman offers to take the child so she can cross the bridge alone. She decides she and the child belong to each other and makes a ceremony of motherhood. Each sacrifice she is asked to make for the child is more extreme than the last, but she does not turn back, and indeed, cannot turn back. She understands her sacrifice as making the two of them belong to each other, and calls Michael, "son." She tells him that they must bear everything together: "It's not for us, son/ To choose our ways" (p. 41). This proves a prophecy as Grusha is pushed towards choices she does not want to make, because of Michael.

Summary of Scene 4: In the Northern Mountains

For seven days Grusha walks across the glacier until she reaches her brother's house. She has imagined his warm welcoming of her to his home. Her brother Lavrenti and his wife have just sat down to a meal when their stableman brings Grusha and the child into the house. Lavrenti

introduces his wife Aniko. Grusha explains she had to leave Nukha when the Governor was killed. Aniko goes out to see to a cake in the oven.

Lavrenti quickly asks Grusha if the child has a father. She shakes her head, and Lavrenti says they must make up something, because his wife is very religious. Aniko returns and asks Grusha about the child. Grusha says it is hers and then collapses. Aniko starts accusing Grusha of being ill and does not want her to sit down in the house. Lavrenti tells his wife that Grusha is on the way to her husband. They go on eating in front of the starving girl who is not allowed to sit by the fire. Lavrenti goes on inventing a story about how Grusha's husband is on the other side of the mountain. Grusha says he's a soldier and then asks to lie down. Lavrenti tells Aniko that Grusha is on the way to her husband's farm, and he tells Grusha she cannot stay with them long.

Grusha remains through the winter months. She tells Michael that they must be "small, like cockroaches" so that Aniko will let them stay (p. 46). Lavrenti comes into her cold room where Grusha and Michael are wrapped in blankets and says they have been there for six months. He tells her that she has to marry a dying man from the other side of the mountain. That way she will have a home and Michael will be legitimate.

Grusha objects saying she must wait for Simon, but Lavrenti makes her feel she is a burden, unable to work, with her child. He tells her it won't be a real marriage because the man is dying. She will be a respectable widow. She goes with Lavrenti to meet the dying man's mother. Lavrenti will pay the woman 400 piasters dowry for the marriage. When the woman sees the child, she wants more money. Lavrenti pays 200 more piasters so Grusha can stay on their farm for two years after her future husband dies.

The local drunken monk comes to perform the ceremony. The dying man does not look alive in the bed, but his mother answers "yes" for him in the ceremony. The monk then offers to perform Extreme Unction, the ceremony for the dying. The mother says she had to pay too much for the wedding. The neighboring peasants arrive for the wedding feast commenting that they thought Yussup, the farmer, was only faking his illness to avoid going to war, but he appears to actually be dying. As they gossip, it comes out that the Grand Duke has a new army

and will return to fight the rebellious Princes. Grusha gives Michael a piece of cake, telling him they are respectable now.

One of the guests mentions that the Persian war is over and that the Shah is now supporting the Duke, his former enemy to get rid of the Fat Prince. The soldiers are coming home, and things will go back to the way they were. Grusha begins to faint when she realizes the soldiers have returned. Yussup sits up in bed when he hears the news that the war is over. He gets up and throws the guests out. The Singer comments on this unfortunate turn for Grusha: "By day there's the child, by night there's the man" (p. 54).

Grusha holds out as long as she can, but after a while Yussup demands she perform her wifely duty in bed, and she is sad to have to give in. As time passes, Simon's image grows fainter in Grusha's mind. As she is washing linen by a stream one day, Michael plays with the other children. They play they are beheading the Governor (Michael's real father), and Michael says, "Me too chop head off" (p. 17). He refuses to play the Governor, but pretends to chop off the head of the fat boy (representing the Fat Prince).

Grusha laughs at the children, then sees Simon Chachava staring at her on the opposite bank. He greets her. Grusha is glad and says thank God he has returned safely. They begin speaking of unimportant things, such as the weather, and they tease one another as they used to. He tells her he is now a paymaster in the army. Finally she tells him she can never go back to Nukha because something has happened. She tells him she knocked out an Ironshirt and that she had to change her name. He asks if he has come too late. They stand with the stream between them, staring in silence, and the Singer tells us their thoughts. Simon thinks of the horrors of war he has been through. He sees the child's cap and asks if she has a child. She says yes, but it is not hers and that nothing has changed between them. Then the Singer tells her thoughts about why she broke her oath for the sake of the child. Neither of them has explained to the other, however, and Simon tells her to throw the cross in the stream as he turns to go. Just then the soldiers come and take Michael away. The Ironshirts take Michael back to Nukha, and she follows. The Governor's wife wants her child back. The Judge Azdak will try Grusha's case.

Commentary on Scene 4: In the Northern Mountains

Religion is a target in the play. The comical drunken monk and the hypocritical Aniko, the combination wedding-funeral, and the draft-dodging farmer who marries a woman with a seeming illegitimate child are good satire, but tragic from Grusha's point of view, for now she has had to break her vow to Simon in order to keep Michael.

The children's game of playing beheading the Governor is a satirical comment on the past politics of Grusinia, which has now become nothing but a memory among children. It also foreshadows the death of the Fat Prince, which would have already happened during Grusha's wedding, months before Simon comes to her. At the wedding we learned the foreign war was over, and the former enemy, the Shah of Persia, was going to back the Grand Duke against the Fat Prince, thus restoring the country to its former rule. This sudden reversal has sealed Grusha's fate. She realizes then that Simon might come back, but she since she could no longer be his, she eventually gives in to being the wife of Yussup. Yussup's brutal lecture to Grusha on a peasant wife's duty reflects the injustice of both the political and religious structure of society. A woman is nothing but chattel, he essentially tells her and treats her that way.

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When Simon shows up, having been promoted and ready to marry, Grusha is too overcome to explain herself to him. She insists nothing has come between them, but he can see she is married with a child. This is the only time she insists the child is not hers. To everyone else, she has had to say she was the mother to save Michael's life. Both Grusha and Simon have been through the hell of war but are unable to verbalize it to one another. The Singer's summary of their unspoken thoughts is poetic and concise. Simon thinks: "My neck was burnt by fire, my hands froze in my gloves . . ." (p. 59). Grusha thinks: "I had to bend down on the floor for breadcrumbs" (p. 60). The upper classes have wars of power, and the common people have to pay the price.

Yet, Grusha might have run after Simon to explain when the Ironshirts took the child away. Once again, she chooses Michael by following the Ironshirts to Nukha when they take Michael back to his birth mother. Grusha puts herself in danger and now will be tried for kidnapping, but she is unable to leave her adopted child. Though her choices are made from love, each

choice creates a worse life for her because she puts her own needs last, as any true mother does. This is a paradox that Brecht highlights, creating suspense as to how Grusha could come out of this dilemma. The play seems headed for tragedy, but it is not an individual's tragedy as in traditional drama. Brecht's storytelling is "epic" in that he wants to portray the forces of history. Grusha is all the women stranded by war; Michael is all the abandoned children; Simon is all the soldiers.

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Summary of Scene 5: The Story of the Judge

The action goes back two years to the time of the coup when Governor Abashvili was beheaded by the Fat Prince. On that Easter Sunday the village clerk named Azdak finds a refugee in the woods and hides him in his hut, thinking he is a poor man. The man is hungry and eats some cheese offered to him. Azdak demands to see his hands and realizes the man is a landowner. He begins to insult him. The man is wealthy and promises to pay 100,000 piasters for spending the night. The policeman Shauva knocks on Azdak's door and tells him to hand over the "rabbit" (p.62). Azdak begins arguing with Shauva, then slams the door and makes him leave. Azdak sees the refugee is surprised that he didn't turn him in and explains, "I couldn't hand over even a bedbug to that beast of a policeman" (p. 63). The refugee stays the night and leaves in the morning.

When Azdak realizes that he has hidden the Grand Duke himself in his hut, he finds Shauva and asks to be arrested. He goes into the city with Shauva and tells everyone that he has helped the Grand Duke escape and should be executed for treason. He asks to see the Judge, and they show the Judge's body hanging. The carpet weavers in Nukha rebelled when the Governor was killed and decided that the Fat Prince's rule was no better than the Governor's. They hanged the Judge in protest, but the rebellion was quickly quelled. Azdak tells about a similar revolution in Persia where he comes from where all the officials were hanged, and then he sings a song about the cruelty of war. He makes Shauva the policeman sing it with him, who is holding Azdak with a rope. The Ironshirts think Azdak is one of the carpet weaver rebels, but he denies

it. The Ironshirts believe he is crazy. They drag him to the gallows as a joke and then let him go while laughing.

Just then the Fat Prince enters with his nephew, whom he would like to appoint as the new Judge to replace the one who is hanging (usually represented by a dummy hanging onstage). He decides to create good will for his new regime by letting the Ironshirts choose the new Judge, certain they will pick his nephew. Azdak suggests that the nephew be tested with a mock trial. He, Azdak, will pretend to be the Grand Duke. Shauva speaks up for Azdak, saying he is harmless. When they do a mock trial in which the nephew pretends to be the Judge and Azdak pretends to be the Grand Duke, Azdak says it wasn't his fault the war went badly, it was the Princes who are to blame. The Fat Prince is listening to this criticism, and the Ironshirts are enjoying Azdak's fearless and comic performance in which he speaks the truth. The Fat Prince is angry and demands Azdak be hanged, but the Ironshirts make Azdak the new Judge, saying, "The Judge was always a rascal. Now the rascal shall be the Judge" (p. 72). The Singer says that Azdak remained the Judge for the next two years.

Four cases are brought before Azdak. Shauva is now the Public Prosecutor, and he sweeps the floor and runs errands for Azdak. Azdak begins the proceedings in which he will judge two cases at the same time, saying, "I accept," stretching out his hand for bribe money. Only the accused blackmailer in one of the cases pays him cash.

The first case is between an invalid and a doctor. The invalid says the doctor caused his stroke because he paid for the doctor's education and then had a stroke when he heard that the doctor was practicing for free. He wants his investment back. The other case is that of a blackmailer who demanded money from a landowner who had raped his own niece. However, the blackmailer will not tell the name of the landowner. Azdak rules that the invalid has to pay 1000 piasters as a fine, and that the doctor must treat him for no charge if he suffers another stroke. The blackmailer has to pay the court half of his blackmailing fees to keep the landowner's name quiet.

The next case is brought by an innkeeper who charges that his stableman raped his daughter-in-law, Ludovica. He caught the stableman in the act, he says. Azdak hints he would like a bribe

from the innkeeper; he asks for the innkeeper's little roan horse. The innkeeper refuses. Azdak tells Shauwa to drop a knife, and then asks Ludovica to pick it up. Ludovica's hips sway suggestively, and then Azdak rules that the rape is proven. Ludovica obviously committed the crime with her fat bottom. Azdak fines the innkeeper the roan horse and takes Ludovica to the stables to investigate the scene of the crime for himself.

Granny, an old peasant woman next tells Azdak that several miracles have occurred at her house. She was given a cow, a ham flew into her house through the window, and the landlord waived her rent. Three farmers claim, on the other hand, that Granny's brother-in-law Irakli stole the cow, the ham, and threatened the landlord until he waived the rent money. Azdak fines the farmers for not believing in miracles and drinks a bottle of wine with Granny and her brother-in-law, Irakli.

When the Grand Duke returns to power, after two years, Azdak is afraid justice will catch up with him. He tells Shauwa he has been ruling for the poor, and the rich want to kill him. Natella, the former Governor's wife, comes to court to demand her son Michael back, and Azdak bows to her.

Commentary on Scene 5: The Story of the Judge

There is method in Azdak's seeming madness and nonsensical judgments. He takes from the rich landowners and rules in favor of the poor. The Singer and the musicians sing, "No more did the Lower Orders/ Tremble in their shoes" (p. 77). Azdak fines the rich invalid, the blackmailer, the innkeeper, and the farmers who have money.

Azdak is the archetype of the wise fool. He gets away with telling the truth because of his brilliant wit. Yet he is also humble and quite human, a man of ordinary appetites, not pretending to be high and mighty or especially moral. He is so upset he accidentally committed treason by letting the Grand Duke escape. He confesses his guilt, but he is so funny when he does it, and so outrageous when he accuses the Princes in front of the Fat Prince, that he is rewarded by the Ironshirts, who like the joke. Azdak is temporarily immune from being punished by those in power, as traditionally a King's jester could speak the truth without

consequences. Azdak uses this opportunity to help others. He makes fun of the whole corruption of the court by taking bribes openly from the rich. His flagrant mockery of the court system by traveling around like a circus, with the Ironshirts and Shauva dragging the gallows behind, as he hears cases, is celebrated in the legend sung by the musicians: "He took from Wealthy Peter/ To pay to Penniless Paul/ Sealed his illegal judgments/ With a waxen tear" (p. 77).

In the case of Granny, the peasant woman who only has enough to eat because the bandit Irakli sends her "miracles," Azdak treats her and the bandit with great courtesy, and even calls Granny "Mother Grusinia, the weebegone" (p. 79), seeing her as the symbol of the country's distress.

Azdak is the outsider, originally from Persia. He is the town clerk, so he is more learned than the peasants, and he knows the law enough to turn it on its head, symbolized by his using the Book of Statutes to sit upon. How has this miraculous event of true justice happened in a country torn by civil war? "The thug and the blasphemer/ Lounge by the altar-stone:/ Now, now, now Azdak/ Sits on the Judgment throne" (p. 73). Though short-lived, the time foretells the revolutions of the future when the people will come into their own, and the masters will be thrown down, according to Brecht's Marxist myth-making in this tale.

This scene has shown what happened in the country during the civil war that lasted two years with the Fat Prince ruling. The next scene brings us up to the present with the Grand Duke returned to power and Grusha and Natella both claiming Michael as their son. Azdak seems to be intimidated by Natella Abashvili, so there is suspense about what he will decide. He understands he is no longer protected with the old regime returned to power, and his judging game seems to be up.

Summary of Scene Six: The Chalk Circle

The Singer announces this is the famous test of the chalk circle to establish the true mother of the child. In Nukha, the Ironshirts lead Michael into court, and Grusha follows. The old cook comes with her and tells Grusha she is lucky because Azdak is not a real Judge: "He's drunk

and doesn't understand anything . . . he mixes everything up" (p. 83). The cook says she doesn't know why Grusha hangs on to the child. Grusha replies: "It's mine. I brought it up" (p. 83). The cook promises to swear anything to support Grusha, and Simon Chashava, Grusha's former fiancé, comes to tell her he will swear to being the boy's father.

Azdak has temporarily disappeared, and only the boy and two old people are waiting in the court. Two Ironshirts go to look for the missing Judge. A third Ironshirt turns around, and Grusha screams. It is the Ironshirt she hit, and he has a scar across his face. He denies knowing Grusha because he would incriminate himself as having tried to kill the child. Natella Abashvili has two lawyers with her, who tell her things will be taken care of. She says, "At least the common people aren't here" (p. 85). The lawyer warns her to be careful of what she says around this Judge.

Azdak is led in by Ironshirts in chains, and is followed by Shauwa in chains. The farmer landowners are yelling for him to be hanged. He is beaten bloody by Ironshirts and dragged to the noose. Just then a rider comes with a proclamation from the Grand Duke thanking Azdak for saving his life and re-appointing him as the Judge. Azdak faints but is cleaned up, his robes restored, and with a bottle of wine, he begins the trial.

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Natella's lawyers are worried with Azdak in charge and backed by the Duke. Azdak asks for something for his backside, and Shauwa brings him the Statute Book to sit on. He announces, "I receive!" Natella's lawyers are relieved and begin to hand him a lot of money. Then he says he is going to "demand the absolute truth" (p. 88) from everyone, especially Grusha. The lawyers say that Grusha stole the child and won't give it back. They talk about the sacred bond of mother and child between Natella and Michael. Azdak interrupts them and asks Grusha her reply.

Grusha explains what she has done for the child, has brought him up and taught him what she knows. The lawyer points out that Grusha is not claiming any blood tie with the child. Natella then starts to proclaim her agony at losing her child. She is interrupted by the outraged second lawyer who points out that Natella is not even able to enter the old palace because all the property is tied up with the heir. She herself has no rights. The cook testifies that Natella was

only thinking of what dresses to take for the escape and forgot about the child. Grusha tells how she had to take Michael on foot to the mountains, how she married to give him a roof and food while her fiancé was in the war. Azdak asks Grusha what kind of a child it is, a street child or a noble child? She says it is "an ordinary child . . . He had a nose in his face" (pp. 90-91).

Azdak is impressed with this answer, but says he will cut the case short because he doesn't want to listen to any more lies. He knows the lawyers are swindling him too. Grusha gets angry and says no wonder he wants to cut it short considering how much he was bribed. Azdak asks whether he received anything from her? She says no because she has nothing.

Simon then defends Grusha by arguing with Azdak in proverbs. Azdak fines Simon for speaking grossly in court. Grusha says that Natella is too refined to know how to change Michael's nappies. She accuses Azdak of not knowing about justice. He fines her for contempt of court. Grusha then scolds him for being the servant of rich people while she is poor and frightened of him.

Azdak suddenly asks the old couple to come forward. The old couple says they have lived together for forty years but they don't like each other and want a divorce. Azdak says he will rule on their case when he's finished with the first case. He calls forth the child and asks Grusha wouldn't she want Michael to be rich and have nice things? Grusha does not answer, but the Singer tells her thoughts: "He who wears the shoes of gold/ Tramples on the weak and old" (p. 93).

When Michael comes in Natella exclaims, "It's in rags!" She calls Grusha a criminal and wants her flogged. Azdak calls for the chalk circle test. He explains, "The true mother is she who has the strength to pull the child out of the circle, towards herself" (p. 94). Natella pulls the child out of the circle. Azdak accuses Grusha of not pulling. He orders the test again, and again, Grusha lets go. She explains, "I've brought him up! Am I to tear him to pieces?" (p. 95).

Azdak makes his ruling: Grusha is the true mother, but he tells her to take the child and get out of town. He tells Natella that the court takes her estates and that a playground for children will be made there, called the Garden of Azdak. Natella faints and is carried out. He then signs the

divorce papers. Shauwa points out to him he has made a mistake. He has divorced Grusha from her husband instead of the old couple. Azdak apologizes but says he never retracts a judgment. Everyone retires to a dance on the meadow, Azdak's farewell party. Simon takes the child on his back, becoming Michael's father, and free to marry Grusha. Everyone dances, and Azdak disappears among them and is never seen again. The Singer concludes that the people of Grusinia never forgot Azdak and his brief Golden Age.

Commentary on Scene Six: The Chalk Circle

Azdak is the lucky folk hero who is plucky and wins against the rich and powerful. No one can predict what he will do next. It seems hopeless for both Azdak and Grusha at the beginning of the scene. Azdak is on the point of being hanged but redeemed by his good act of saving the life of the Grand Duke. He cleans himself up from the beating and becomes the Judge again, an event in Grusha's favor, but it appears that it could go against her. First, Natella gives a very large bribe, and secondly, Grusha and Simon insult Azdak instead of trying to win his support. Grusha is the only one that has called Azdak to account, and he seems to admire her courage and her fearless telling of the truth.

In the play only Azdak and Grusha speak the truth about social conditions. Grusha's long scolding of Azdak is a radical and revolutionary statement summarizing everything that is wrong with a system of justice that allows the rich to stay in their houses while the common men are dragged into their wars. Officials are just bribe-taking servants of the rich.

Grusha calls Azdak the "cracked Isaiah on the church window" (p. 92). Isaiah was an Old Testament prophet who warned the people of destruction unless they turned back to God. She accuses Azdak of talking like a prophet but of taking bribes. Azdak is impressive in this scene, because he does not respond either to the money and power of the rich, nor to personal insults. With his usual sleight of hand, he finds the just and impartial answer. By sitting on the Statute Book, he demonstrates that justice is not in the book. It is in the human heart. He sees that Grusha and the child deserve one another, and the birth mother only wants Michael to get the estate. Her class prejudice comes out when she speaks of the common people as smelling bad. Instead of running to her lost child, she can only see he is dressed poorly.

Azdak gives the Governor's property back to the people, a response that looks forward to the Communist country of Georgia in the future. The Singer concludes with the moral that brings the action full circle to the decision made in Scene One: "what there is shall belong to those that are good for it . . . children to the maternal . . . the valley to the waterers, that it shall bear fruit" (p. 97),

characters and characterization

AZDAK

-He is a village scribe (recorder) and occasionally steals chicken and rabbits. He is turned into a judge by circumstances.

a) He is intelligent and cunning

-He manipulates the court scene to his advantage and hits back at the rich and mighty on behalf of the poor.

-He cleverly allows Natella Abashwili's lawyer to reveal their true motive for claiming Michael back from Grusha.

-He deliberately signs a divorce decree releasing Grusha from Jussup.

b) He is generous and welcoming

-He takes in the old man (Grand Duke) and hides him in his cottage. He gives him a hunk of cheese seeing that he starved and exhausted from hunger. The singer comments that he gave the forsaken (poor) what he had taken from the rich.

c) He is abusive and insolent

-He talks insolently to the old man. He hurls abuses at the soldiers and farmers after he is arrested when fleeing from the town.

d) He is corrupt

-He openly and deliberately takes bribes from the court clients and lawyers before presiding over cases. He steals rabbits from the state farms. As a judge, he always opens his proceedings by demanding for a bribe, "I accept" He fines people, for example Simon and Grusha. He demands for forty piasters after divorcing Grusha

e) He is immoral

-The way he handles Ludovica, the inn keeper's daughter-in-law, shows Azdak's low moral standing.

-He even invites her along to visit the scene of her alleged rape by the stable so that the court "can inspect the scene of the crime" (pg. 79)

f) He is contradictory and controversial-Azdak makes controversial judgments. In his ruling on the case of invalid against the doctor who not only operated on a patient for free but also treated the wrong leg, he charges the doctor for professional negligence but acquits him as a punishment!

He also acquits the stableman who confesses raping Ludovica, the inn keepers sister in law .He convicts Ludovica for assaulting the unfortunate man with a "dangerous weapon."

g) He is unpredictable

-Everybody believes that the case between Grusha and Natella is in favour of Natella.The lawyers too believe that they have already won the case. They also imagine that the one who pulls the child to her side is the real mother. No wonder the first lawyer congratulates her when she twice pulls the child to her side. Least do they know what is in Azdak's mind. He unpredictably rules in favour of Grusha.

Grusha Vashnadze

She is the Governor's kitchen maid. She is the heroine of the play who rescues the Governe's son, Michael during the civil war.

a) She is loving and motherly

-She seats by the abandoned boy, Michael, the whole night and finally decides to take him into Northern Mountains.
-She sacrifices her week's wages to buy milk for the boy.
-She finally decides to adopt the boy and risks her own life for the sake of the boy' safety.
-She even endures a marriage to a dying and cruel man for the sake of Michael.

b) She is determined and decisive

-She is determined to protect the boy as much as possible .She is equally determined to keep Michael no matter what happens. She fights it out in court with the boy's natural mother and wins.
-She has resolved to adopt the boy and does not intend to go back on her word. She's resolved to get the boy a shelter and that's why she opts to marry the 'dying' man f or the sake of the child.

C) She is courageous/brave/daring

-She faces Azdak, the judge and dares him to pass a negative verdict against her after she notices that he's received money from Natella's lawyer. She does not fear the consequences of her direct confrontation with the judge.
-She hits the corporal who wants to take Michael away on the head.
-She risks and crosses the rotten bridge with a baby.

d) She is abusive/insolent/insulting

-When she perceives the case might not be decided in her favour, she goes on offensive and hurls abuses at Azdak. She suggest that Natella is a pig for abandoning her child.

Grand Duke

He is the ruler of Grusinia who gets over thrown by the princes.

a) He is corrupt and greedy

-Azdak reveals the Grand Duke's greed and his corrupt nature. He says that for the king to have a new province the peasants must give up their savings, for the roof of the world to be conquered, the roof of the cottage should be torn down and that the soldiers are carried to the ends of the earth so that the great ones can eat at home.
-Most of his officials are corrupt. For example, they take bribes and increase taxes.

-Azdak calls him a fraud and a swindler.

b) He is wasteful/extravagant

- He has five hundred lawyers to defend him.
- He wants enough seats to be given to lawyers.

c) He is incompetent/inefficient

- He allows the war to be run by Princes who embezzled the funds, sent sick horses and instead of fighting, they were drinking in whore houses.
- Officers oppressed their juniors at his command.
- He commands the rich to sleep with peasants' wives.

d) He is frank/open/honest

- He reveals that the princes gained from his war while the republic of Grusiana lost.
- They deliberately fail to deliver horses and food supplies to the war thus occasioning the army to lose.
- When accused of talking like a carpet weaver, he says that he has said nothing but the truth.

e) He is fearful/cowardly

- Heflees from the police who are in hot pursuits.
- When Shauwa (policeman) calls from outside Azdak's door, he gets scared and stands still. Azdak says this about him "Now don't tremble because of a cop! so old and still scared?" (pg65).

f) He is secretive

- He disguises himself and does not divulge information about his true identity to Azdak even when negotiating for his safety. Azdak learns it later with regrets.
- He makes a deal with the Shah of Persia to lend him a great army to restore order in Grusinia.

Georgi Abashwili

a) He is incompetent/careless

- He chooses to ignore an official messenger from the capital city thus endangering his life and that of the family. He intends to build against the back drop of war in Persia and will discuss the building plans with the architects after dinner. He ignores military news for a more social event.

b) He is unfeeling/callous

- He has no feeling for the many petitioners who crowd the entrance to the church. The people are driven away forcefully by soldiers using whips. The servants merely distribute coins.

c) He is myopic/shortsighted

- He does not see through the tell-tale signs that all is not well. The coup/revolt catches him by surprise. He postpones receiving the military messenger. He wants the investigations to be done the following day.

Natella Abashwili

a) she is materialistic/selfish/greedy

- She wants Michael back because of the vast inheritance the boy has received from his late father, Governor George Abashwili.

-She is interested in her fine linen and shoes on the day of the revolt and would rather have these than bother about her only child.

b) She is unfeeling/inhuman/cruel

-She easily and readily insults other people. She calls her maids "bitches" despite her efforts to help her. She refers to Azdak who is dressed in a judge's gown as 'a creature'. She uses the same term to refer to Grusha.

-She says she cannot stand the smell of common people. Because they give her a migraine.

-At the sight of her son, Michael, she contemptuously concludes that he must have been living in a pigsty.

c) She is conceited

-She poses as a very important and special person. She says she has endured staying in a slum and it is about time her husband constructed a decent wing to their residence (palace). She completely ignores the petitions of the citizens and only thinks of her son. She says the smell of the common people gives her a migraine.

Lavrenti Vashnadze

a) He is cowardly

-He trembles with fear when Grusha, his sister comes to their house with a child.

-He hides Grusha's real status from his wife and answers with lies on behalf of his sister when his wife, Aniko, interrogates her. He arranges for a marriage to a

b) He is untrustworthy

-He plans to steal Aniko's milk money which he uses for Grusha's wedding.

c) He is clever/calculating

-He covers up his wife's shortcoming by claiming she is sensitive and religious.

-He covers up for the sister by claiming she has a husband in the army.

Prince Arsen Kazbeki

He is a Prince of Grusinia and a cousin to the Governor.

a) He is sly/tricky/cunning

-He pretends to be affectionate with the Governor's family but he can clearly see he is up to no good. He has a secret communication with the soldiers who surround the Governor's place.

b) He is cruel/inhuman/unfeeling

-He has arranged for the murder of the Governor whose head he proceeds to pin above the door with the help of the soldiers. He hunts for Michael in order to kill him.

c) He is presumptuous/ambitious

-He wants his nephew, Bizergan Kazbeki, to be installed as judge. He is confident the soldiers will accept without question.

-Together with other Princes, they overthrow the Grand Duke and take over the reign of power and proceed to make various government appointments.

d) He is corrupt/materialistic

-Azdak says the war has been lost because of the greed of the Princes. They have gained materially from the ongoing war. He wants his nephew Bizergan, fraudulently appointed judge.

Jussup

a) He is a cowardly/fearful

-He feigns illness and lies in bed for a long time because he is scared of being drafted into the army.

He only emerges from bed upon learning that the war is over.

-He even causes his mother to have him hurriedly married to Grusha so that he dies leaving behind a widow.

b) He is chauvinistic

-He bullies Grusha and mother into doing menial jobs for him including pouring bath water on him. He orders the two women about.

c) He is pretentious/insincere

-He lies in bed for a long time fooling everyone that he is extremely ill, when he is all along feigning this. He lies still like one unable to breathe until his mother concludes that he has succumbed to illness. The mother is compelled to answer the monk on his behalf when asked to take the marriage vow.

Simon Shashava

-He is a paymaster.

He is a soldier who remains loyal to the Grand Duke. He falls in love with Grusha and she promises to marry him when he returns from war.

a) He is loyal

b) -He remains loyal to the old family as others participate in the coup.

-He helps the Governor's wife to escape.

-He obeys the adjutant who speaks to him harshly, abusing him (pg 23).

b) He is faithful

-After engaging Grusha and going to the war, he remains faithful to her up to his return.

-He also asks her to remain faithful to him.

-He gives Grusha a silver cross that was his mother's, to wear as an engagement present.

c) He is loving

-He loves Grusha. This is seen when he admits that he goes to the river to watch over her as she washes linen.

-He declares his love for Grusha and remains faithful when he goes to war.

-He engages her before she leaves.

-He supports her during the court hearing.

d) He is witty and humorous

-He teases Grusha by suggesting that she sometimes goes to meet a lover and reveals how he had once stalked her to the river bank where she washed linen and took a bath. He also enquires of Grusha's virginity in a witty way: 'So the door is still in its hinges as they say?' (pg 60)

-In a witty manner, he exchanges proverbs with Azdak in the court scene, for example
When the horse was shod, the horse fly held out its leg, as the saying goes (Pg 6)

Aniko

She is Grusha's sister-in-law and Lavrentis wife.

a) She is unwelcoming/unsociable

-When Grusha comes, she does not welcome her. She reacts indifferently towards her and seems not at all interested. She does not want Grusha to seat in the home.

- She pretends to be very busy with her servant, Sosso.
- She is worried about Grusha's illness because she thinks she will transmit it to them.
- Grusha tells Michael that they must be "small like cockroaches" so that Aniko can let them stay.

b) She is inquisitive

- Immediately she is introduced to Grusha, she starts questioning her. This, she does, regardless of the situation Grusha is in. She is unwell and very tired from the journey.
- These questions show that she is not ready to accommodate her in the house.

c) She is overbearing/domineering

- The husband leaves in fear of her. He cannot do anything without referring to her or seeking her consent.
- He is forced to marry off her sister out of fear of his wife.

Mother-in-law (Peasant woman)

She is Jussup's mother who organizes for his marriage to Grusha before he just "dies"

a)She is greedy/materialistic

- This is shown by her urgency to wed Jussup to Grusha in order to get 400 piasters Lavrent has promised to pay.
- She bargains with him for more piasters when she learns that Grusha has a child. She is thus paid an extra of 200 piasters.
- She hires a cheap monk to make a saving instead of a priest who could have been paid more.
- She pretends she had forgotten the amount they had agreed and asks if they had agreed on seven hundred, when in the real sense they had agreed on 600.
- She does not want to have the extreme unction, that is, the last rites for the dying man.

b) She is hypocritical

- She demands that the monk should be silent about Grusha's child and pretend that he has not seen him.
- She owns up that she had hired a cheap monk to save some money.

The Monk

a) He is untrustworthy

- He sneaks away after receiving part payment before he weds Grusha and Jussup and has to be looked for.
- He gossips with the other guests about Grusha's child until the mother-in-law regrets hiring him.
- He calls the musicians without informing the host.

b) He is hypocritical

- He goes ahead to declare Jussup and Grusha husband and wife yet he knows very well that Jussup has not consented to the marriage. Grusha does not, consent too.
- He is aware of the presence of a child yet he goes ahead with the wedding ceremony

Shauwa

a) He is compromising

- He allows Azdak to go scot-free for stealing chicken and rabbits.
- He allows a common thief to bully him.
- Azdak forces Shauwa to arrest him for accommodating and allowing Grand Duke to escape.

c) He is cruel

- While hiding the Grand Duke in his cottage, Azdak says he would not hand over a human being leave alone a bedbug to Shauwa.
- He refers to Shauwa as a man-eater.
- Azdak accuses Shauwa of planting his fat heel on the faces of men.

Shalva

a) He is responsible

- He requests the Governor to attend to the messenger from the capital who has the confidential papers.
- He insists that investigations should be done immediately about Kazbeki's wishes.
- He receives and gives directions to the official visitors to the Governor's palace.
- He tries to make the visitors comfortable.
- He is over-protective of the Governor and his wife. He escorts her to the safety of loyal troop up North.

b) Ignorant/naïve

- He does not understand what goes on the war front.
- He displays his ignorant when he fails to read the mood of the soldiers and imagine that Persia is far off as to bother them.

b) He is loyal

- He remains loyal to the family.
- He accompanies Natella to the court to claim Michael back.

The Corporal

a) He is abusive

- He calls his junior colleague a "blockhead" and a fool.
- He refers to his juniors as "hollow reed" and a " tinkling cymbal".

b) He is sadistic

- He accuses his juniors for not " enjoying kicking" the husband of the fat girl in the belly at his request.
- He orders him to stop limping after he has sold the horses.
- Even though the Private is tired, he orders him to sing with a loudly.

c) He is inhuman

- He is after the boy to kill him.
- Grusha says, "They'll run through if you hand him over".

d) He is determined/resilient

- Even after receiving a blow on the head from Grusha which makes him collapse, he still pursues her and the child up the Mountains. He is only stopped by the rotten Bridge.

Old Man with Milk

a) He is inhuman

- When Grusha asks for milk, he dismisses her and tells her to go to the soldiers since they have his goats. He is not ready to give her milk for the child.
- He even shuts the door in her face.

b) He is indifferent

-Although he is paid two piasters for the " little drop of the milk" he still grumbles, picks up the pitches and look for her unmoved.

c) He is opportunistic

-He takes advantage of civil war to make the money.

-He overprices his milk thus making the poor unable to afford it.

Irakli (The Bandit)

a) He is sadistic

-When the old peasant woman says that the farmer's servant who had come to claim their cow were forced to turn away by the doorway after bumps as big as fists sprouted on their heads, Irakli bursts to laughter because he is responsible for this.

-He maliciously kills the farmer Shutoff's cow in his field.

b) He is empathetic

-He provides a cow and a ham for a helpless old peasant woman who had lost her son in war.

Poor Old Peasant Woma

a) She is naïve

-She narrates how she received a stolen cow, ham and was spared paying rent through the criminal efforts of Irakli, the bandit thus making her an accomplice. She foolishly narrates this in open court.

b) She is grateful

-She praises the bandits for changing the hearts of the cruel farmers towards her.

-She says she has never received such rare ham before.

Illo Shuboladze (first Lawyer)

a) He is cautious/prudent

-He cautions Natella Abashwili to mind her language until they get another judge

He is careful to make utterances that may not injure Natella's case.

b) He is articulate/eloquent

-He presents Natella's case before Azdak in a convincing' articulate and organized manner in an attempt to prove why it's important for Natella to reclaim the child.

c) He is respectful

-Throughout his presentation to the court, he maintains his respect to the court and the judge.

Sandro Oboladze (Second Lawyer)

a) He is foolhardily/reckless

-He makes unwarranted outbursts during Natella's case when it required keenness and discipline

b) He is indiscreet/insensitive

-He reveals more details than he should in the court thus complicating Natella's case.

-He makes it difficult for the first lawyer to argue the case before the judge coherently by interfering at the most critical moments.

-He makes it clear at the court that it is out of Michael Abashwili's estate which Natella is after that the lawyer will be paid their fees.

The Three Wealthy Farmers

a) They are hardhearted/unfeeling

-The old peasant woman says that the farmers were most cruel until saint Banditus turned them into good men.

b) They are vengeful/vindictive

-The three farmers maliciously and falsely accuse Azdak of being the Grand Duke's enemy.

This is purely revenge for his earlier judgment favouring the old peasant and the bandit against them.

The old farmer orders the judge's gown forcefully removed from Azdak before their attempt to hang him.

The peasant's wife.

a) She is motherly and accommodating.

-When she discovers the child on the door step, she immediately warms up to it and requests her husband to allow her keep it, after all, they have a roof over their heads

b) she is inquisitive.

She subjects Grusha to a series of questions in an attempt to understand whom she is and her involvement with the child found on her doorstep.

c.) She is cowardly fearful.

She panics when the soldiers come into her house and reveals the existence of it. She instead goes on her knees and begs them to spare her.

Theme Analysis

Class Warfare

The Grand Duke of Grusinia (Georgia) is involved in a foreign war in Persia when the play opens, yet the action focuses on the civil war at home caused by the coup of the Princes. While the aristocratic regimes come and go during the action of the play, the common people are always regarded as less than human. They suffer no matter who is in charge.

The Singer uses Governor Abashvili who is executed by his brother, the Fat Prince, as a warning to other aristocrats: "Oh blindness of the great! They walk like gods/ Great over bent backs, sure/ Of hired fists, trusting/ In their power which has already lasted so long" (Scene One, p.15). The soldiers or "hired fists," like the Ironshirts, change loyalties with regimes and let themselves be used by the rich to persecute the poor. Simon Chachava is an exception to this, remaining loyal to the Duke. One of the most passionate denunciations of the upper classes is by the maid Grusha in Scene Six when she denounces Azdak the Judge and the justice system itself as a servant of the rich. She complains that the wealthy "drag our men into their wars" (p. 92). Simon's memories of the war in Scene Four reinforce her complaint as he witnessed his brothers slain around him for the sake of the Duke's cause.

Grusha tries to disguise herself as an upper class lady when she escapes, but she is found out when she knows how to make beds. The women look at her hands and know she works for a living. The servant at the inn sympathizes with her, saying, it is hard to

pretend to be "a lazy useless person . . . once they suspect you can wipe your own arse... the game's up" (Scene Three, p. 32). Natella Abashvili becomes the stereotyped and heartless noble lady who can only run around picking out the right dresses to pack and berating the servants while her husband is being executed and her son is abandoned.

In court, Natella's notion of motherhood has to do with station. She wants her son back so they can be restored to their estate. She only notices what the child is wearing and is shocked to see him in rags. When Azdak asks Grusha if she wouldn't like the child to be rich, she thinks to herself it is better for him to be poor than to mistreat the poor: "Hunger he will dread/ Not those who go unfed" (Scene 6, p. 94). He will not always have to be afraid of who is going to chop off his head, as was done to his father, because of a power struggle or because he was unjust to others.

Human Sympathy

What is it that can heal class divisions? The play answers that human sympathy makes everyone equally valuable. Grusha does not hate Michael because he is the son of the Governor, who oppresses everyone. She is won over because he is a baby, like any other: "He looks at you like a human being" (Scene 2, p. 23). When Grusha sits with the baby all night trying to consider what to do with it, she hears it call to her as if saying: "Don't you know woman, that she who does not listen to a cry for help/ But passes by shutting her ears, will never hear/ The gentle call of a lover" (Scene 2, p. 24).

When she risks her life for the child's, the Singer asks, "How will the merciful escape the merciless/ The bloodhounds, the trappers?" (Scene 3, p. 25). Grusha does get some sympathy along the highway. A peasant woman was willing to take the child until the Ironshirts came. The servant at the inn tried to give her food. The merchants wanted to help her cross the ravine or take the child so that she could go on. Her brother gives her a roof for as long as he dares and arranges a marriage for her. Jussup takes in both her and the child without asking questions. She is given partial help but she is the one who has to sacrifice her whole life for Michael. The child would not have survived but for her. She wants to tell Simon this when he comes for her but only thinks it: "I had to tear myself to pieces for what was not mine/ But alien/ Someone must be the helper" (Scene 4, p. 60).

Grusha deserves to be Michael's mother because of what she passes on to him. From her, his inheritance will not be money or rank, but wisdom: "I've brought him up according to my best knowledge and conscience . . . I brought up the child to be friendly with everyone. And from the beginning, I taught him to work as well as he could" (Scene 6, pp. 88, 89). She wants him to treat others humanely, and that is a priceless gift for him and the future. Azdak recognizes this humanity in Grusha, demonstrated by her unselfish letting go of the child's arm so she won't hurt it.

Azdak himself is the other great example of human sympathy as he risks his own life for two years to help the poor. It is a great and comic juggling act he performs with great humility. In the case of Granny, for instance, who claims the stolen cow, ham, and waiving of the rent were "miracles," Azdak fines the farmers for not believing in miracles. He sits on the floor with Granny and the bandit, treating them as equals. He calls Granny "Little Mother" or "Mother Grusinia," seeing her as the suffering poor. The Singer says, "So, so, so, so Azdak / Makes miracles come true" (Scene 5, p. 77). Miracles are not supernatural events for Brecht, but human acts.

Justice

The play uses the dilemma of the child, and the debate of the communes over the valley, to ask, what is Justice? Who should get the child? Who should get the land? Azdak the fool, who is made into a Judge, works his way through to an answer. It is not an expected or a ready-made answer, for, as the Singer comments, "Truth is a black cat/ In a windowless room at midnight/ and Justice a blind bat" (Scene 5, p. 75). Justice will never come from "willing Judges" like Prince Kazbeki's nephew (Scene 5, p. 75). Azdak's antics, such as demanding bribes in the court from the rich, comments on the accepted corruption. He says, "It's good for Justice to do it in the open" as he moves around in a caravan among the people (Scene 5, p. 75). Everything he does or says satirizes the court system. He asks Grusha, "You want justice, but do you want to pay for it? When you go to the butcher, you know you have to pay (Scene 6, p. 91). The rich are used to equating money and rank with truth, but it is their truth, not impartial Justice. Out of Azdak's comic theater in the courtroom, he creates a crazy logic so that the people who need help get it, despite the law. "His balances were crooked," says the Singer (Scene 6, p. 77).

Grusha, not understanding Azdak's intent, scolds him for being corrupt. She claims that what would be true justice is to choose "only bloodsuckers and men who rape children" for judges as a punishment to make them "sit in judgment over their fellow men, which is worse than swinging from the gallows" (Scene 6, p. 92). Judging is a punishment to an unjust man who will only blacken himself with hypocrisy. This is the justice the poor are used to. Azdak's reply to her is, "I've noticed that you have a weak spot for justice" (Scene 6, p. 93).

After Azdak rules in Grusha's favor, the Singer states the principle of Justice that Azdak uses: "what there is shall belong to those who are good for it, thus/ The children to the maternal . . . the valley to the waterers" (Scene 6, p. 97). The play opens and closes with true justice served.

Devastating effects of war.

Any time there is an outbreak of war, the aftermath is devastating. Different sectors of the society are affected, people are killed and displaced, the environment is degraded

and livelihood interrupted. There is also a traumatic impact on the health of the population. In addition, physical and emotional occurrences are experienced.

The play opens with a prologue and a description of a Caucasian village that has been ravaged by war. This follows an invasion by Hitler's army during the world war II.... "The apple orchard was already destroyed." and ... "The beautiful dairy farm a ruin..." pg 7.

In the prologue, we see people's lives destroyed as the goat herders complain of the low quality of cheese they now produce from new settlement. The old man whom Grusha requests to sell her some milk retorts; "Go to the soldiers if you want milk"

As the play opens in act one, we see George Abashiwili, the Governor going to the church for Easter Mass and along the way, hordes of beggars and petitioners are complaining about the hike in taxes and cost of living. They are heard saying... "mercy, mercy, Your grace! The taxes are too high..." pg 14. A guest in attendance at Grusha's wedding has the same feelings... "Now everything will be the way it was. Only the taxes will go up because of the war." Pg 55.

During the war in Persia, there are some casualties. People are killed and maimed. We hear some of the beggars and petitioners lament, "I lost my leg in the Persian war...where can I get...(pg14). A rider for the war who wished to speak to the governor appears with his hand in a sling ...a good example of the aftermath of the war.

Many deaths occur as a result of war. After the prince's regime is overthrown, a series of killings occur, for instance, the killing of George Abashiwili, the governor of Nuka (pg 27), a judge whom Azdak replaces later is killed by hanging and the son of the old woman is also killed in the war.

Apart from dying, people also suffer. The singer summarizes the experiences of Simon during the war, thus: "the battle began, gray at dawn, and grew bloody at noon/ the first man fell in front of me /the second behind me/the third at my side/I trod on the first/left the second behind/one of my brothers died by steel, the other by smoke/my neck caught fire, my hands froze in my gloves , my toes in my socks/I fed on stone, in water" (pp60-61).

War results to the displacement of people . The grand duke is forced to flee, Grusha flees to the northern mountains with the baby Michael, Natella flees also leaving behind her child. The song of Justice in Persian sand by Azdak and Shauwa also shows the many effects of war including displacements.... "our men are carried to the end of the world , so that Great ones can eat at home.(pp68.)

Exploitation is also evident due to war. The old man takes advantage and raises the prices of milk. He says that the soldiers had taken their goats. He demands three piasters for a pitcher of milk.

Corruption Greed and materialism.

Corruption mainly refers to lack of integrity or honesty and is mostly manifested through susceptibility to accepting bribes. Corrupt individuals use their privileged positions they have been entrusted to to make illegitimate gains, thus undermining their moral integrity. They are usually driven by greed. Forms of corruption vary and can include bribery, extortion, cronyism, patronage, and general embezzlement of mainly public funds.

In the play, cases of corruption are rampant. When George Abashwili the governor is making a procession to enter the church, for the Easter service, one of the petitioners says that the water inspector is taking bribes ... "please, Your grace, the water inspector takes bribes" pp14.

The ironshirts are equally corrupt. They use their privileged positions to execute others and in the process make illegitimate gains. One ironshirt says... "this morning, they strung up the city judge. As for us, we beat them to pulp. We are paid one hundred piasters per man. You understand? (Pp69). The killing of the judge points at lack of value for human life. No wonder they relentlessly follow Michael, as they hope to make a fortune. Indeed, the ironshirt tells the corporal that if he reveals any information about the baby, he will get some money. (pp 88.)

Azdak, the judge is overly corrupt and his greed unstoppable. He openly takes bribes in the court before listening to a case. He begins his cases by saying, "I accept," meaning that he is willing to be bribed. In fact, he declares himself corrupt on pg 91 when he solicits for a bribe from Natella's lawyer. He says... "Did you hear? the question is unusual. I ask it because I listen in a different way when I know you are good." This is after he asks for a bribe by rubbing his thumb and index finger.

On pp 77, the stranger tells us that Azdak is crooked. "those who've only got a penny / they have one single sole recourse: Azdak" In another occasion, he takes bribes from the innkeepers so as to listen to his case against Ludovica, his daughter-in-law, "I accept...Good. Now the formalities are disposed of. This is a case of rape. (pp 78).

When the grand Duke makes a grand return to Nuka, Azdak is scared stiff because he knows that his end has drawn nigh. He comes across a corrupt : "I peeped into the rich man's pocket, which is bad test. I can't hide anywhere -everybody knows me because I have helped everybody" Pp84.

As Azdak executes his duties, his deeds do not measure up to the expected standards. He makes controversial judgments that put his integrity into questions. He sits on the statute book when delivering justice, perhaps, a pointer to his contempt for what is just. He also takes wine in public as he executes his duties.

Through the song on page 82, the singer says that though Azdak defends the poor and the lowly, he still has to take a bribe from them. This is affirmed by the cook during the Chalk Circle case. She tells Grusha that Azdak never gets enough bribe from the rich. 'you are lucky, It's not a real judge. It's Azdak, a drunk who doesn't know what he is

doing . The biggest thieves have gotten through by him. Because he gets everything mixed up and the rich never offer him enough bribes, the likes of us sometimes do pretty well. (pp86). The cook goes further to tempt him with a bribe so that he can change his mind on Grusha's case. " I used to look after it for them, your honour . Five piasters. (pp93).

Hypocrisy.

The singer describes the Governor Georgi Abaswili's lifestyle amidst a society of beggars petitioners and invalids. Although he is on his way to church in the company of his well-dressed family, he displays no compassion for his suffering subjects. He even has two doctors attending to his one child. He has numerous servants and many soldiers attending to his needs in the palace.

The fat prince is hypercritical and pretentious. When he meets the Governor's family, at the church entrance, he wishes them a happy Easter yet he is among those who are planning the revolt that will result in the Governor's death on the same day. He even sarcastically remarks that the young boy is a governor from head to foot and later pursues him in order to kill him.

The princes of Gruisina are also hypocritical. Azdak reveals their greed because they go to the war not to fight for their country but for their gain. They embezzle funds meant for buying horses and supplies thus causing the country to lose the war. Azdak says that the country lost but the princes gained. The monk is hypocritical. Even after receiving part payment to wed Grusha and Jussup, he disappears and he has to be fetched to perform the ceremony. He pretends not to notice the presence of the child. He is said to engage in gossip with the guests about the bride having a child. He invites musicians without his host's consent . The fact that he accepts to preside over a sham wedding makes him hypercritical. His host calls him a cheap priest.

Misuse of power.

The governor abuses power. At the beginning, the singer describes him as a leader who would like to surround himself with many soldiers as his subjects suffer the burden of high taxation, injustices and starvation. As they petition him for tax relief and reduction of corruption, he has two doctors attending to his child, Michael.

In the play within a play in which Azdak plays the role of the Grand Duke, his abuse is demonstrated by his hiring five hundred lawyers to defend him. He reveals that the Duke had always commanded his soldiers to steal , his senior officers to flog the soldiers and the rich to rape the peasants's wives." The Grand Duke" also reports abuse of office by the princes whom he had sent to the war. They 'Messed it up' by embezzling funds that would have enabled the call up of more soldiers and buying healthier horses.

As Grusha travels Northwards, the ironshirts whom the singer refers to as 'Bloodhounds', 'Trap-setters' and 'Butchers' are on the highway after her. The corporals' speech reveals a force that is not only cruel, abusive and sadistic but also immoral. He criticizes his junior colleagues for not 'enjoying' the treatment they gave a couple they met the other day. He also reveals that they had sold the horses and that's why they are travelling on foot. When they meet Grusha, they harass her with a barrage of questions, an indication of their vindictiveness and sexual orientation.

Azdak as a judge exemplifies gross misuse of power and position. He exploits court clients by first demanding bribes before presiding over cases. He commonly uses the phrase "I accept" which has become synonymous with his court proceedings. He suggests that he accompanies Ludovica, the innkeeper's daughter-in-law to the scene of rape in order for the court "to inspect it". He fines Grusha and Simon for contempt of court and pockets the proceedings saying he will need the money later. He demands for 40 Piasters from Grusha and Simon after signing Grusha's divorce papers. His other ruling in other cases involving the invalid doctor and the limping man, and the farmer and the old woman are all made with no due regard to the law.

Azdek rarely uses the status book and sits on it most of the time instead. He even asks the old granny to sit on the judge's seat and requests her to judge them. This is a very unusual way of running a court of law.

Prince Kazbeki comes along with his nephew, Bizergan Kazbeki and demands that he should be installed as judge after the previous one has been hanged. There is no reference to his training as a judge and he handles the mock training of the "Grand Duke" incompetently. Azdak, a mere civilian is able to expose his incompetence.

Love and motherhood

When the Governor's wife abandons her child, she flees the palace, it portrays her lack of love and motherhood. She busies herself with packing her special clothes and shoes she wishes to take with her and even orders a servant carrying the child to place him on the floor to get her boots from the bedroom. When she is finally pulled away by the Adjutant, Shalva, she completely forgets about her son. Grusha, of all the servants endures a lonely night by keeping vigil over the child proving her love and motherhood. The writer says that by morning, the seduction is complete between Grusha (mother) and Michael (son). When she rises to head northwards, there is no doubt that her path and Michael's are intertwined.

Azdak is presented with a unique case to prove love and motherhood. Natella Abashwill, the natural mother wants her son back after two years for the sake of reclaiming her husband's estates that are tied to the heir. For the two years she has been away, she has no single thought for the child, making us doubt her love and motherhood. For all this time, Grusha has struggled to bring Michael up and teach him the simple lessons of life. To decide who really loves the child as a mother, Azdek uses the test of the chalk circle in which Grusha declines to pull the child violently to herself which Natella does.

The obvious choice of the one who truly loves the child as a mother is presented to Azdak. He rules that Grusha is the true mother.

As Grusha heads to the northern mountains, she is presented with enormous challenges. Obtaining milk for the child is difficult for the "new mother". However, she uses her one week wages to obtain milk expensively from the old man. To her, Michael must survive. She even gives the child her dry breasts to suck.

As the Iron shirts relentlessly pursue Grusha Northwards, she gets extremely exhausted having carried the child along until she finds him a home with an old pleasant couple. She watches from behind a tree as the old woman takes him inside and then walks away satisfied that he has at last found a home. When the ironshirts threaten to take him away, she hits the corporal on the head and flees with the child. She now vows to adopt him as her own.

The merchant woman is portrayed as motherly. She demands that Grusha give her the baby as she crosses the rotten bridge alone. She admonishes her to think about the baby and risk her own life rather than the baby's. She would prefer to hide the baby herself rather than have his life risked. She even says that Grusha is tempting God, screams when it looks like the bridge is about to collapse and concludes that it was sinful to have taken the risk after Grusha crosses to the far side.

Grusha endures a cold reception at her brother's house because of the presence of the child, Michael. Her sister in law, Aniko persistently questions her about the child and makes it obvious that she is an unwelcome visitor. She even tells Michael that they have to make themselves as small as possible and endure the cold in the workroom by Aniko. She does not waiver in her resolve to be Michael's mother.

Grusha's forced marriage to Jussup is as a result of gaining shelter, a name for the child and acceptability in the society. There have been many questions raised about the legitimacy of the child. Deep within her, she loves Simon and wishes that this 'marriage' will last for a short while to enable her reunite with her fiancé whom she is sure will take care of Michael. Indeed, Simon promises to testify that he is Michael's father.

Difference in social classes

The poor have been mistreated by the ruling class. For instance, the Governor ignores all the beggars and petitioners. Instead of listening to their individual grievances, a servant distributes coins as if this will solve their problems.

Natella mistreats her servants. She refers to them as "bitches" and "creatures". She abuses them and even beats some of them. She says the common people smell and this gives her a migraine.

The Governor and his family are living a lavish lifestyle while the common man languishes in poverty. The royal family intends to build the East Wing which will create room for a garden amidst all this suffering and anguish by the poor.

The rich take advantage of the poor whom they constantly exploit. The poor do not own land but rent it from the rich. For example, the three rich farmers. The old woman is supposed to pay rent from one of the three rich farmers and is accidentally let off the hook by the bandit. Azdak rules on her favour because she belongs to the poor and vulnerable class.

Amongst the lower class, there are several incidences of struggle for survival. For instance, the old man with milk exploits Grusha by overcharging the little pitcher he sells her for the child. There is vicious survival amongst the lower cadres in the army. For example, the corporal sells the horses and insists the price could not be found anywhere else. He commands the private not to limp because he is portraying that he is unhappy with what his superior has done. The peasants are seen to be struggling to make ends meet. Grusha's mother-in-law hurriedly agrees to an arranged marriage between her son, Jussup and Grusha for six hundred piasters. She even hires a cheap monk in order to make saving and Lavrenti complains.

Style and language

Play within a play

The entire story of the **chalk circle** is a **play within a play**. The main story is found in the prologue which is solving the dispute about the ownership of the valley between the fruits and the vine growers, on one hand and the goat herders, on the other hand.

The Germans had displaced the goat herders who ended up on the land which they felt was unsuitable for cheese production. Unfortunately for them, the agricultural group that is laying claim to the valley has elaborate irrigation plans aimed at increasing the production.

At the end of the discussion presided over by the delegate from the state reconstruction commission from Tiflis, the capital, they mutually agree to hand over the valley to the agricultural group.

In honour of the guests who have travelled for three days and three nights, the singer, Arkadi is invited to stage a performance. The story of the chalk circle and the preceding scenes is a product of this song hence the play within a play. Grusha's story is a test of true motherhood that is awarded custody of Micheal instead of the biological mother Natella. Azdak's story stands for truth and justice especially for the poor and downtrodden. The mock trial, being a play within a play illustrates the fact that the Grand Duke's regime and the princess's regime are to blame for the loss of the war and the ills in the society.

The children's play where they act out the execution of the Governor during the princes' revolt is a mockery of the adults' world.

Songs

The many songs in the play interpret the various episodes in the story.

- They summarize the preceding scene, comment on the action, or predict the next scene
- The songs are the end of the chapter and a breathing space between the scenes.

They are the essence of a feeling or an attitude, for example, optimism in the song of the four generals, which Grusha sings as she sturdily stamps on her way – against the movement of the revolving stage.

There is fear and tension, at the same moment in the song of the rotten bridge:

Deep is the abyss, son
I see the weak bridge away
It but it's not for us, son,
to choose the way.

There are also important moments in the song of the commitment such as Grusha's vow to Simon as he leaves the burning city and her decision to be the child's mother in the 'baptism song'.

The singer acts as the commentator. He comments on the event in the play in a summative form. He informs the audience of what is to follow soon. He delivers the internal monologue that characters are engaged in. For instance, Simon's thoughts about the war are revealed by the singer (pg. 60).

Grusha's thoughts on pages 44, 61, and 96 are also brought out. She thinks about her anticipated treatment in her brother's house, the broken oaths between her and Simon and the views about Michael's inheritance of his father's estates.

The singer is a stage manager : he makes introductory remarks at the beginning of all scenes and introduces to us new characters. For example, Georgi, Abashwili, Grusha and Simon. He sometimes directs the action of the characters. For instance, on page 20 he says:

Look about ones more, blind man!
(The arrested man looks around)

The songs reveal the emotional ties between characters, for example, Grusha and child Michael (pg39) and between Grusha and Simon (pg23).

Brecht uses songs as an aspiration, for example, 'the song of the rotten bridge'.

Satire

Bertolt Brecht used the play to criticize the society. The author is critical of the inequalities created by the capitalistic attitudes of the people. This attitude cannot

change even when the accumulation is exposed to the poor, for instance, the case of Azdak who takes bribes. Wealth may change hands but moral justice for all is yet to be achieved or at least improved. Capitalism demands individualism. The peasant, who exploits Grusha a servant from his own class, does so on the grounds that the war engenders economic hardships hence the justification of profiteering and exploiting irrespective of who is being exploited. The rules of commerce shape the exploiter's world view in times of peace, but they work more effectively in times of war for his benefit.

The author believes that capitalism cannot develop genuine human relationship. In the question of the governor's wife who abandons her child because she is more concerned of her material possessions, this shows lack of feelings for fellow human beings. Brecht therefore criticizes the traditional beliefs that the physical mother will of necessity love and protect her child.

Brecht also criticizes corruption in the society, especially in the court of justice. Although Azdak's reign is described as 'almost a regime of justice' we see a judge whose verdicts highly depends on his unpredictable tendencies.

The author sees a leaderships whose reasons for going to war is not based on patriotism and victory but an opportunity for capital gain because the corrupt thrive more in the war situation than in peace time. The princes are said to have thrived materially during the war. That is why the monk at Sura prefers chaos over stability.

"The war is over beware of the peace!"

The author is critical of religion. He paints a picture of a society whose Christian faith is only superficial. Christianity is embraced only as a vehicle for social acceptance. It has nothing to do with humanity and piety religion professes.

Irony

The play is full of instances of irony. These are as follows;

Grusha, not understanding Azdak's intent, scolds him for being corrupt. She claims that what would be true justice is to choose "only blood suckers and men who rape children" for judges as punishment to make them "sit in judgment over their fellow men which is worse than swinging from the gallows"(pg95). Judging is punishment to an unjust man who will only blacken himself with hypocrisy. This is the justice the poor are used to. Azdak's reply to her is, "I've noticed that you have a weak spot for justice.

Grusha also imagines of a very warm welcome from her brother, Lavrenti. She however gets a cold welcome from her brother because she is carrying an "illegitimate" child. The wife Aniko is not welcoming at all. She wants her not to sit in the house.

Lavrenti's constant reference to Aniko as religious and sensitive is ironic. He says that she has a good heart and that she would never forgive herself for letting Grusha and the child stay in the cold. In reality, Aniko is unwelcoming and not concerned about Grusha's health. She wants her out of her house because she has no husband, carries a fatherless child and looks ill. She fears Grusha might transmit the "disease" she is carrying.

Grusha's mother-in-law's assertion that "we're honest people" (pg50) is ironic. Her son has been pretending all through that he is unwell to avoid being drafted into the army. She, on the other hand has organized for a wedding just before his death and she is making money out of it. She is even happy that Lavrenti is ready to add another two hundred piasters and have it in record that the farm will go to her (mother-in-law); like a Grand Duke; and Grusha will be live On the farm for two years.

Azdak warns the Grand Duke not to lick his chops (mouth and cheeks) like a Grand Duke. He does not know that he is in fact, talking to the Grand Duke himself.

Azdak, as the judge acts like he is a fool; does not know what he is doing; gets everything mixed up (pg95). In real sense, Azdak is well aware of what he is doing; for example; he denounces himself publicly in a brilliant way. He proposes the mock trial and he's hence made judge. He judges most of the cases in favour of the poor. He even gives the child to the "mother" who deserves him most.

Azdak does not refer to the statue book when he sits on but rather, he is driven by human sympathy. "justice is not in the book. It is in human heart."

Azdak's cases are full of ironic reversals. The doctor who operates a patient on the wrong leg is acquitted for "unpardonable error" in his profession! Ludovica, who is a victim of rape is convicted of raping the suspect using a dangerous weapon. The farmer who had accused the old woman of receiving his stolen animal is fined whereas the suspect is made to sit on the judge's chair. To make it worse, the bandit, Irakli, is treated to a glass of vodka and referred to as a "pious man" by the judge even after he confesses to his crimes.

Humour

As everyone is running around trying to save their lives, Natella is only interested in her dresses and shoes. She wants her best outfits not to be left behind and thus harasses her servants. She even forgets her own child!

The wedding ceremony is presented humorously. A monk comes to perform the ceremony the 'dying' man does not look alive in bed. It is his mother who answers "yes" on his behalf in the ceremony. When he hears that the soldiers are back and the war is over, he springs up from the bed. He has been faking illness to avoid going to war.

When Azdak is made judge he begins his case with "I accept". This, he says everytime he wants to handle a case which means that he wants to be bribed. It is thus humorous. Moreover, the manner in which Azdak handles the cases is laughable. He says that since there are many cases, he will handle two at a time. His verdict is almost always questionable, for example in this cases of the doctor and invalid, blackmailer, innkeeper, old Granny and the miracles and Grusha's case. His aim is to favour the poor to help them and punish the rich land owners.

The case of the miracle working bandit, St. Banditus (Irakli) is humorous. The old woman's ignorance is presented humorously. She does not know that Irakli has stolen a cow. Ham and threatened her landlord. Irakli has also beaten the servants who had come to take the cow.

The manner in which he begins cases with an open demand for bribery is entertaining. He always says, "I accept" A judge is not expected to take bribes leave alone asking it openly. One can laugh at this expression and act because it appears unique.

Another instance of humour is seen when he handles two cases at a time. He says that there are many cases, so decides to handle two cases at a time. In fact he stops one on the way and starts another. For instance, when he is dealing with the case between Grusha and Natella, he leaves it on the way and shifts to divorce the old couple. Before he even concludes it, he returns to the case of Grusha and Natella. The audience laughs at the unprofessionalism in handling the cases and even the mistakes he makes at the end of this case.

The sentences he gives at the end of his cases (ruling) are controversial and humorous. e.g. the doctor is found guilty but he is acquitted and the invalid complainant is fined one thousand piasters. We are left laughing at this kind of ruling and what kind of judge is Azdak..

In the case of innkeeper and stableman over Ludovica , it is also humorous that he says in public that he would be happy to see the private parts of Ludovica. He says that he would like to handle the case in the open so that if the wind blows her skirts up and see what she is got, he will be happy. He even asks public prosecutor to drop a knife so that Ludovica can pick it up. This means he has an intention of to see her private parts.

In the case of rich farmer and the old woman , Azdak leaves the judge's chair and asks the old woman to sit on it. It is not expected of a serious judge to leave his chair and allow any other person to sit on it and pass judgments on his behalf – this makes us laugh at this incident.

Symbolism

The chalk circle is a symbol of the truth. Azdak uses the chalk circle to make decisions to whom the true mother of the child should be. He places the child in the circle, presenting a level playing ground removing the advantage of money and rank in history. It is thus very clear to Azdak and everybody else in the court that Grusha should have custody of the child. The circle can also symbolize justice. The members of

the collective farms sit in a circle. They are able to come to an amicable solution on who should have the valley. Change of the regime can also be symbolized by a circle (circle of change). For instance, the Grand Duke loses his governor to the princes who in turn lose to him when he regains his authority in the counter coup. The poor benefit from this circle of change especially during the reign of Azdak as a judge.

The characters that are used in this play are symbolic. The Grand Duke symbolizes the misrule by leaders, Azdak represents the era of justice at the time when he served as the judge, but at least would pass for 'almost an age of justice'. Grusha symbolizes the rare humanity that still prevails in society. Michael symbolizes the helpless and vulnerable members of the society who are victims of the social turbulence.

Proverbs and sayings

To show Grusha's developing emotional attachment to Michael, she says about her;
Fearful is the seductive power of goodness! (pg29)

Brecht demonstrates a rich accumulation of folk wisdom through proverbs and saying. For instance, he describes the unfortunate effects of war and misrule thus; *the plunging wagon drags the sweating horses down with it into the abyss.* (pg20). In the effect, the innocent have to share in the mistakes of the rulers who, ironically, never allow them to be share in their good fortunes.

When Grusha suggests that it would be more worthwhile for Simon to join the rebel than remain loyal to the Duke, he replies:

In Tiflis they say, isn't the stabbing dangerous for the knife: (pg21)

This not only brings out Simon's selfless loyalty to the rulers but also the perpetration of violence and oppression of the people using the army. The civilian population is a soft target that would pose less risk to the soldiers.

When Michael refuses to play the role of the executed Governor, Grusha happily remarks:

Even the little duck is a swimmer, they say (pg58).

This illustrates her satisfaction that the boy is learning her clever tactics of survival. It also builds on one of the author's argument that circumstance shapes one's behavior.

Grusha is encouraged to hold on to Michael by a cook who accompanies her to court. What she says actually summarizes the moral of the two parts of the play; the dispute over the valley and Grusha's story.

And even a borrowed coat keeps a man warm. (pg87)

This goes along with the singer's conclusion at the end of the play:

That what there is should go to those who are good for it (pg99)

In the exchange of proverbs and sayings between Simon and Azdak in the court scene, the author gives an insight into their characters as witty and humorous.

Use of Imagery

Similes

The singer says;

“O blindness of the great!

They go their ways like gods (pg20)

This simile highlights the self-righteousness and prejudice in the leaders of this society. They never stop to think of the consequences of their actions or the possibility of an ending to their leadership.

When Grusha discovers that her brother cannot defend her against his hypocritical wife, she tells Michael:

“If we make ourselves as small as cockroaches, the sister-in-law will forget that we are in the house” (pg47).

This illustrates her clever survival tactics as opposed to the sister-in-law’s inhumanity.

The author gives us an insight in the injustice and the level of corruption in the judiciary with the simile used by the cook to warn Grusha.

“With any judge you’d have as much chance as a chicken has teeth”
(pg87)

Idiomatic Expressions

The greed of the iron shirts who pursue and catch up with Grusha is illustrated by the corporal’s statement:

“.....I smell a thousand piasters” (pg38).

The exploitative nature of the ‘mourners’ is revealed by Grusha’s mother in law who says ;

“.....we’ll have the whole village on our necks when they hear Jussup’s end is come!” (pg38)

Azdak realizes that when change comes about, the usual circle of events will follow. He is sure to be among the casualties of the new order.

“.....A new age is upon us. It’ll go thundering over you..... Everything will be gone into(pg67)

Metaphors

During the coup, the panic stricken adjutant refers to Simon as ‘louse’ (pg18). This reveals his abusive character and Simon’s dignified loyalty.

The ‘carpet weavers’ disease’ that the first and second ironshirts refers to illustrates the imminent change in the author’s society. The carpet weaver symbolizes the revolt against the establishment for democratic space and justice.

Personification

Grusha personifies the wind. She tells Michael;

"You mustn't be afraid of the wind. He's a poor thing. He has to push the clouds along..... (pg42).

The use of this imagery serves as a consolation that sometimes it is reasonable to let nature take its course.

When Azdak realizes that his end is nigh, he confesses his guilt in the statement;

"I helped poverty on its skinny legs....." (pg84).

The author's use of this image makes us view Azdak in a more positive light, that although he has been unjust to the rich, he has at least been generous to the poor.

This would make us agree with the singer's last speech;

".....The period of his judging as a brief golden age, almost an age of justice". (pg99)

Paradox

The singer addresses the arrested Governor: look about you once more blind man! (pg20).

He is being told to reawake to the reality of the moment. He is about to be executed, yet the world around him lives on.

The singer described Azdak's personality as having two sides; good and bad:and our good and evil man, he smiled upon Grusinia's Granny. (pg79)

In the incident after Grusha has just left Michael on the old peasant's doorstep, she is said to be cheerful and sad at the same time. She says she is now single and free, yet sad like someone who has been newly robbed.

Contrast

The author uses contrast to illustrate the level of egocentrism and capitalistic attitudes of human beings. For instance, the expensively dressed Governor's family on its way to the church is contrasted with the squalid condition of the petitioners and the beggars at his door.

The next instance is that of Grusha as opposed to Natella Abashwili. The circumstances that prevail throughout the play provide an opportunity to identify their humanity. While Grusha is loving and truly motherly, Natella is opportunistic and cruel.

BETRAYAL IN THE CITY

About the play Betrayal in the City.

The play is a story of a post independent African country that had the misfortune of experiencing the effects of a repressive and a dictatorial regime. It is a sad story of a state failed by bad politics, tribalism nepotism inefficiency and corruption which are perpetuated by top government officials .The play portrays the dilemma and failures of post-colonial African leadership.

The head of state Kafira – Boss is a tragic failure as a leader. He trusts his corrupt and inept advisors who take advantage of their privileged positions to perpetuate corruption and impunity. Boss himself is so rigid that he cannot give room for divergent views. Those who try to raise their voices to oppose his leadership are ruthlessly eliminated.

The death of a university student Adika inspires a chain of reactions from the students and other radicals until the evil regime is finally brought down through a bloodless coup staged by Jusper-a university student. The elimination of Mulili, Boss's advisor, who literary oversaw the elimination of most government opponents and the face of terror brings some hope of a new beginning.; the building of a new kingdom where there will be justice and inclusion of all.

Act One

Scene 1 summary analysis and Commentary.

When the play opens, we are at Adika's grave. His parents, Doga (father) and Nina (mother) have come at the graveyard as they plan to hold a shaving ceremony for their departed son. They are surprised to find a crack in the grave and wonder how it came about and where Jusper -their son who was asked to guard the grave is.

The grief stricken parents cannot come to terms to the fact that the presumed killers of their son have now followed him to the grave. The violation of the grave confirms the rumours that whoever killed him lives amongst them. Nina threatens to hang herself and raise a curse upon a whole clan if they should harm their son Jusper. With Adika's death, Doga is pessimistic and cannot see any hope even in Jusper. " we buried our hope the day Adika was gunned down" (pg 2).

Nina is of the opinion that that they report the matter to the sub-chief but Doga violently opposes this, sure that it was the sub-chief's family that caused adika's death from the fact that it was chagaga, the sub-chief's brother who killed him. (pg3). Doga insists that Nina should fetch soil so that he can use it to seal the crack at the grave. Nina exits.

Through a monologue (pg4), Doga reveals to us the circumstances of adika's death: He was gunned down during a student demonstration in the city. His body was riddled with four bullets. He also reveals to us that during adika's burial, Jusper Adikas brother, was arrested supposedly for being a danger to peace. He was then held in custody for three days .Also from the monologue, we learn that traditions condemn the shedding of a kinsman's blood.

At this time, Jusper arrives (pg5) on the scene and Doga hides briefly. When Nina comes back with the soil, the three, parents and son, talk at cross purposes- they misunderstand one another (pg7). Jusper says that he has killed somebody. He says, *he can't go he is dead* (pg6). He has actually killed Chagaga but the parents believe that he is confused and talks about killing adika, his brother whose grave is there where they are. Jusper then leaves.

Mulili and Jere arrive with order to stop the shaving ceremony (which Jusper's parents are preparing for from taking place in the interest of peace. Doga insists on doing the shaving ceremony. Mulili and Jere reveal to the parents' surprise that Jusper has killed Chagaga (pg 11-12) and is under arrest a reason why the two Jere and Mulili have been sent to guard the grave. A confrontation ensues between Mulili and the couple whereby

Mulili tells them that even the grave doesn't belong to them. Nina threatens to strip naked making Jere to strike a conciliatory tone. Doga reminds Jere that he ought to respect them owing to the fact that he and Jere's father shared the same knife at circumcision. This makes Jere to sympathize with the old couple something that irks Mulili. Mulili and Jere disagree over the issue of the ceremony as Mulili stresses that it should not go on while Jere insists that they should be sympathetic and let it go on (pg13). Nina and Doga leave.

After Nina and Doga exit, Jere and Mulili are left quarrelling. Jere openly tells Mulili he disgusts him for mistreating the old couple. He pleads with him to let the old couple go on with the ceremony. Mulili is adamant and accuses Jere of being chicken hearted. Already boss has promised him a big farm and cattle if he is able to keep law and order. (Pg 13). As the confrontation between the two continues, Jere aims a pistol at Mulili and shoots. However Mulili manages to escape unhurt but not without vowing to revenge.

This scene sets the central conflict in the play. We are introduced to a situation where the rulers and the ruled are in conflict. Death has occurred of a student leader, Adika, and the leadership feels jittery. They prevent the performance of a traditional rite of honouring the dead fearing intensification of political activism. Revenge is witnessed where Jusper, Adika's brother, murders Chagaga, his brother's killer and is arrested. The stage is set for more momentous events.

Scene 2 Summary analysis and Commentary.

The scene is set in a prison cell where we find one silent prisoner, Mosese- a political prisoner. An Askari comes and shoves in Jere who becomes the second prisoner in this cell. The conflicts between Mulili and Jere over the question of whether to allow or not to allow the shaving ceremony to go on has landed Jere in prison. As Jere is being pushed into the cell, there is a confrontation between him and the Askari. From the exchange, the Askari concludes that Jere must be a lunatic. It is learnt that every

prisoner here undergoes some elaborate "rehabilitation" before they are allowed to mix with the others. Rehabilitation in this case meaning some bating or oppression. Jere compares the inner workings of the prison to a meteorological department as no one is supposed to ask questions.

It is also learn that Jusper is still in custody and is set to be released the following day as he has shown some cooperation with prison authorities (pg 20). We get to know the bitter news that Doga and Nina- Jusper's parents, have been murdered in cold blood and that Jusper's impending release won't sooth him at all. (Pg20).

Mosese is prompted to speak by the Askari but he says he see it prudent to remain silent. We learn that in prison, one is not sure of what should be done. Despite Askari's high handedness, he nevertheless shows some grudging respect to Mosese. It leaves Mosese wondering how such an understanding Askari accepted such a job as a prison warder. According to the Askari, one ought not to have a hot mouth in order to survive in Kafira.

When the Askari leaves, Jere the new prisoner in the cell remains with Mosese, the other prisoner. They engage in a conversation. Through this conversation, we learn of a play Jere conducted with another prisoner. The play was a biblical story where Pilate whipped Jesus- a person of low status whipping a king (one with higher status.)This story highlights the disillusionment the people of Kafira are in. The fact that Jere wishes for a chance to whip the king shows how he is fed up with Boss's administration. The story is also possibly a flash-forward of what will possibly in this play (where it ends with ordinary people like Mosese, Jere gaining powers and dictating terms to the leaders of Kafira. Jusper actually kills Mulili and Boss is brought under command. Through this conversation, it is also learned that Jere is well versed with the Bible having been once a religious Knowledge teacher for three years before he joined the army. His moment of reality in the army however came when he was deployed to his own sub location to restore peace. That is when he changed his mind.

Through flashback, we learn how Mosese came to prison after making a speech unacceptable to the leadership during Adika's burial. The administration used Nicodemo to plant opium on his car leading to his arrest and imprisonment.(Pg 25). Mosese has since changed his names from Nicodemo Mosese to Mosese Wa Tonga .He feels uncomfortable to share a name with his betrayer. It also learnt that Jere was initially a soldier but because he is principled, he often clashed with authorities.

Mosese tells Jere that Regina , his sister often visits him but in her most recent visit , he learnt that she was intending to betray him by pleading to the administration for his release (pg25-26).This is if he accepts to act in a play meant to entertain a visiting head of state .

Mosese is loath to do this job though the Askari tries to convince him to accept to act so that they get pardoned. Successful acting will also allow the release of 600 prisoners. At last Mosese falls in to a reverie in which he agonizes over the present depressed state of the nation. Oppression of the common man continues unabated.

This scene reveals how corruption is rampant everywhere in Kafira-even in prison. The common form of corruption seems to be nepotism and tribalism .This is seen when the Askari brings tea with Milk in a mug to Mosese and laments, " here tea with milk in a mug, yet you don't even belong to my tribe. You need a tall relative to get anything these days." (Pg 27).

Mosese's disillusionment is seen when he says that for years, they waited for the Kingdom.. ' ...then they said it had come at last , but no...it was all an illusion' (pg 27-28). This shows that the political leadership under Boss in his country has not only failed to ' bring the Kingdom' but also is busy destroying the present and the future of Kafira. Mosese feels that the past (perhaps colonialism) would be preferable to the current order which offers little hope for change hence... " it was better while we waited . Now we have nothing to look forward to" (pg 28).

Scene 3. Summary analysis and Commentary.

This scene takes place in Regina's house. Regina is Mosese's sister. She is Juser's and Tumbo's lover. She stays in a rented house belonging to Mr Tumbo. Juser noisily strides in startling Regina. She tries to warn him to be careful with powerful people. She is aware that her brother, Mosese is in custody and she wishes to help him gain freedom. Juser stresses that he is now alone in the world after the death of his parents, Doga and Nina, and his brother Adika. He therefore states that he has only remained with two friends; Regina and her imprisoned brother Mosese. In this case, Juser reassures Regina that he is not mad like the others have said. He vows he can never rest with the death of his entire family.

In their conversation with Regina, one cannot fail to notice that student's idealism is in Juser. While Juser feels that those who speak out are heroes, Regina feels that heroism is everywhere and one does not necessarily have to shout the loudest to become a hero. Regina emerges as a person who is more concerned with survival like everyone else. Thus she does not see the need for one to be vocal as it all brings trouble as it did to Adika. To her, the beggars who insulted the rioting university students were right. " They know better than to fight stones" pg 34. Fighting stones here is symbolically used to mean fighting someone who is impervious to voice, reason or dialogue.

In this scene, we also learn that Regina is using Tumbo, a senior functionary in the government to help release Mosese. However, this is conditional upon the prisoners successfully performing a play to entertain a visiting dignitary. Juser may be out of prison for this same reason though we are told that that the murder of both his parents is the main reason for his release after murdering Chagaga. Regina had earlier approached Tumbo seeking his help to have her brother released. He is thus supposed to speak with Boss on Regina's behalf. Juser reads mischief in Tumbo's magnanimity. He thinks that " there must be something they want to know" (pg37) and he thus swears to beat them at their own game.

Initially, Juser like Mosese is apprehensive about acting in the play before the foreign dignitary. He thinks they will be stooping too low.

Mr Tumbo whom Regina has been expecting shows up (pg37.) Initially Regina is afraid not knowing how to behave in the presence of her two lovers , Tumbo and Juser, who have met in her room. However, she and Juser successively feign blood acquaintance as cousins and everything then runs smoothly. We also learn here that Juser is the organizing secretary of the national students' body.

The talk Tumbo and Juser engage in about education and success embarrasses Tumbo so much. This is because he didn't go to university as he purports - may be the reason why he has low opinion for university students. His dim view about education is further revealed when he says ` I had to work, but I don't regret it. Education no longer matters these days.(Pg 41). Regina occasionally interrupts this conversation to apologize for Juser's ill-formed motifs. The extent of mediocrity in national affairs is seen when Juser reveals that changing of names is item number three in the new development plan of Kafira. Tumbo cuts the conversation short by sending Juser for drinks and remains with Regina (pg41-42).

Regina tells Tumbo that Juser writes plays and this makes Tumbo say that he has then got the right person to write a play to be performed for the expected head of state. He is so excited to have Juser. His happiness is money motivated as he knows he is going to benefit as he wants to take advantage of Juser's student status. "... you don't come by that kind of money easily.(pg 44). Mr Tumbo is in charge of the committee for entertainment being its chairman.

Here we also learn that Mulili who is Boss's cousin is his advisor and has received huge farm for his service to the nation (pg44). We also learn that Mosese has been persuaded to act in the play.

When Juser returns with the drinks, they start drinking. Tumbo asks Juser about his play writing experience and when Juser admits that he writes plays during his free

time, Tumbo gives him the chance of writing the winning play and he goes ahead to declare him the winner of the competition. He then shares out the money proposed for the competition.(pg 48-49). This is an indication of the mediocrity with which things are done in Kafira.

In this scene, it is revealed that Kafira is clearly a typical society where the leaders are out to accumulate as much individual wealth as possible in a typical man-eat-man society. This philosophy is best captured by Tumbo who says "You were born alone. Why then do you want to ruin your chances by pretending to talk for the others?" (pg 42).

That Tumbo and his ill government swim in money is seen when he sends Juser beer instead of coffee that Regina offers them. " Don't let her limit us ...money is not a problem; the problem is how to spend it."(pg43). The disorganized nature in which things are done in Kafira state is clearly demonstrated. Three men, Boss, his cousin Mulili and Tumbo do things without consultation to satisfy their puffed up egos without any fear of punishment. It is further a satire that a play writing competition is won and the winner gotten without the competition itself. Further, an instance of misuse of power and corruption comes in as Tumbo uses his post to declare Juser a winner without a competition and also sharing out the money meant for the competition.

In this scene, it is seen how wasteful the government is in spending. " the whole entertainment programme is to cost the government a quarter of a million shillings."(pp44). Greediness of government official like Tumbo is highly demonstrated. In the money proposed for play writing competition, Tumbo retains two thirds of the six hundred pounds that were set aside and Juser and Regina share only two thirds. It is further learnt in this scene that Boss is not bad after all but his main weakness is that he gets scared too easily. This explains why his poor advisors are the ones ruling.

Incompetency of leaders in Kafira is also brought out through Tumbo –the chairman of the entertainment committee. He doesn't seem to be learned. This is gotten from the way he is embarrassed by the discussion concerning education in Kafira. It is ironical

that he is chosen the chairman of the entertainment committee and also to organize a playwriting competition yet he doesn't seem to know who Wole Soyinka is. He thinks he is a politician. Democracy is also satirized from the way Tumbo declared Jusper the winner of the play writing competition. The unilateral way in which he does it smirks corruption and a mockery of principles of democracy where ideally every competitor could have been given a chance to participate.

ACT 2

SCENE 1. Summary analysis and Commentary.

This scene takes place in an office. It is the office of the entertainment committee with which Tumbo chairs. Kabito, a member of the committee is already here. He is joined by Nicodemo (Mosese's betrayer).From the beginning, one gets the impression that these people are not that serious but are most probably here as a formality. The two discuss about Kabito's frustrations. He had secured a tender to supply milk to the university. However, Mulili-Boss's cousin has gone to Boss and convinced him to snatch the tender from him and instead he secures it. This is despite Kabito's efforts to bribe the university officials so that the tender goes his way. He says, 'I spent the whole of last night being nice to people, only to lose the tender this morning.' (Pg 51).This further reveals the extent of corruption and nepotism. While someone might first

sympathize with Kabito over his predicament, we soon realize that it is a case of a thief crying foul only after another thief has stolen from him.

Nicodemo is apprehensive about the prospects of the release of the prisoners as he doesn't want Mosese to be freed. However, the decision has already been made by higher authorities.

Tumbo, the chairman of the committee arrives then and says Mulili is yet to come. This irks Kabito who inquires why Mulili is in the committee and is informed that higher authorities wish it to be so. The influential role Mulili plays in Boss's government is seen here when Mulili is put in the entertainment committee, despite him lacking any competency. He has been put here strategically for security reasons. When Tumbo begins the meeting, Kabito insists that they be told their terms of service. This brings out the greedy nature of the government officials in Kafira . Their foremost concern is the money they can get and not the service they will offer to the public. Their aim to milk more money out of their present engagement is seen where Nicodemo and Kabito suggests that it is necessary that 'they meet every day until the visitor arrives'.(pg 53) Kabito even suggests that they meet after the visit to review the success of the entertainment.

After a while, Mulili arrives and confirms that he has actually secured the university Milk supply tender after wrestling it from 'unkown small man' (Kabito) using his closeness to the Boss as a ram rod. The committee deliberates on various issues. These are as follows;

- ✓ Children to line the streets from airport to the government house to welcome the visitor.
- ✓ The committee cannot discuss the possible upcountry trip of the visitor as this is outside their mandate.
- ✓ Prisoners to act out a performance for the visitor, not university students as they look opposed to the visit.

It is also said that the university students have sacked Juser , their organizing secretary for accepting to act in the play.

During the discussion, a row erupts between Kabito and Mulili (pg 56-57). This is after Kabito openly accuses Mulili of trying to force grown-ups to do things they don't believe in. He further accuses Mulili of commanding people to say 'yes' like primary school kids. Mulili misconstrues Kabito's utterance and he becomes very infuriated. Kabito refuses to apologize to Mulili and the quarreling continues. The tension is broken when Nicodemo suggests they go for a break. The chairman calls for a one hour break to allow members to cool their tempers. This is not before Mulili yells at Kabito that he is playing with fire. "You play with fire you goat!" It can only be guessed what will happen to Kabito given that Mulili is not only Boss's cousin , but also the most trusted man. From this quarrel, it is learnt that Mulili is functionally illiterate.

In this scene, other effects of a poorly governed government are seen for instance cases of nepotism whereby Mulili wins the milk supply tender to the university because of his closeness to the Boss. Also corruption comes in from what Kabito refers to as spending the whole night to make people happy. This is in reference to the money he spent the whole night. This scene also shows the domineering nature of Mulili as he feels he is very close to the seat of power. He wants everything to go his way. His narrow outlook on issues and the shortness of his temper help push events to a climax.

Scene 2 Summary analysis and Commentary.

Here, we meet Mulili at Boss's palace. He has just come from the entertainment committee meeting and is set to go back after the one hour break. He has come to report the events of the committee to Boss exaggerating and distorting information. At first, Boss dismisses Mulili saying Kabito is one of his loyal subjects but Mulili manages to convince him that Kabito is indeed a bad man. This is after he reports that;

- ✓ Kabito has told the committee that Boss robbed him the Milk tender supply to the university.
- ✓ Kabito says that Boss has ruined the economy of Kafira by stashing away Millions of Money –This charge disturbs Boss so much that he wishes to know how Kabito knew this fact.- a clear indication that there is truth in it.
- ✓ Kabito says Boss is trying to get Regina by force.

These charges force the hasty and imprudent leader to order the elimination of the otherwise straight faced officer –Kabito. Mulili organizes for a stage managed road accident and Kabito is Killed.

This scene exposes the evil machinations of the people in authority in Kafira. Another effect of poor governance-political deaths or assassination is seen here whereby Kabito is killed in cold blood after Mulili lies to the boss that he (Kabito) spoke bad of him .Misuse of power is also realized from the way the boss uses his power to steal the government money-which is gotten from one of Mulili's lies which seriously disturbs the boss that he wishes to know how Kabito knew this fact. In such a government, at a slight provocation, or no provocation at all, stage apparatus are mobilized to eliminate perceived threats .Real and imagined enemies are eliminated this way and safety in such a nation is a mirage.

What emerges in this scene is that Kafira's regime under Boss is evil and tainted with blood. Boss himself is an evil man who likes to dispense favour to his favourites . That he is easily scared, thus allowing his advisors to mislead him comes out clearly in this scene. Mulili emerges as one of his worst advisors

Scene 3. Summary analysis and Commentary.

This scene takes place in the entertainment committee office. The meeting that was briefly suspended to cool off tempers resumes after an hour's break.

Jusper is in attendance and suggests to Tumbo that he may not participate in the acting. This is because (Regina his and Tumbo's girlfriend) and Mosese's sister is reported to have escaped Boss's lecherous pursuits by jumping out of a ten feet window at Boss's palace. Boss had intended to rape her. His wife then raised a stink about it and Boss then locked her up in a cell (pg61). Tumbo is apologetic about the whole incident but warns Jusper against pulling out of the play at that crucial stage as this will be perceived as sabotage. Jusper then leaves to collect the rehearsal schedule. Nicodemo enters and asks Tumbo if he has heard the news about Kabito's death. Both are secretly aware that Mulili is behind it.

Mulili enters and reports about Kabito's death feigning sympathy. He also says that Boss is shedding tears due to Kabito's death. That he has even declared one of the roads be named after Kabito. This is hypocrisy of the highest order coming from leaders who know very well they are behind the killing. As a result of Kabito's sudden death, the scheduled committee meeting is suspended indefinitely.

Greed among the government officials again is shown here in that despite Kabito's death, Nicodemo has still the guts to ask whether this day will be counted.

In this scene, also the callousness and shamelessness of Kafira's administration is seen from the manner in which they effect the elimination of their real and imagined foes. Death seems so near in Kafira society and particularly for those who display any inclination towards rebelliousness. Intolerance is the hallmark of the Kafira's leadership.

Scene 4 Summary analysis and Commentary.

This is the final and the climax scene of the play. The scene is at the play rehearsals stage. Jusper is present with Tumbo who is finding out the level of preparedness of the

actors as the D day is close and also the future of six hundred prisoners depends on the success of the play. It is also learned that Mosese who had previously vowed never to act has shown some cooperation due to his participation in the previous night's rehearsals. The actors are to make final rehearsals of the play.

It is evident that Jusper sees the release of six hundred prisoners as futile to change Kafira's image. For Tumbo, this will create a positive image of Kafira in the eyes of the world.

Boss enters. His mission is to know the level of preparedness towards the performance of the play. It is learnt that he was once a good actor and is eager to participate in the rehearsals (pg 66). He asks Tumbo to summon the palace staff to witness the rehearsals. It so happens that one of the actors, the chief of staff, in the play is sick. There is therefore need for replacement. Mulili is part of the government staff who have come to witness the rehearsals.

Boss engages Jusper in some conversation as he wants to know what the play is about. Unlike his earlier conversation with Tumbo, Jusper is this time a bit calculating in the way he answers Boss. Boss pour scorn on Jusper and the students in general about their demonstration. He tells Jusper that when he goes back, he should tell the students that it is the duty of the Boss to decide on the magnitude of the Africanization programme. From the way he speaks, it is learnt that Boss indeed is a typical big man in Kafira.. '...My arms are long. My eyes see far and my ears are the sharpest in the continent' (pg 68). To him, students lack understanding and do not reason like leaders of tomorrow.

Mosese and Jere are brought in in handcuffs and as they are actors, it is decided that they should be untied. Due to the fact that one of the actors is sick, Boss agrees to assume the role. It is immediately realized that some of the props (wooden guns) are not yet ready from the carpenter and so the guards are asked to hand in their live weapons - for the rehearsals.

One of the key points in the play is an argument between Jere (the captain) and Mosese the (lieutenant). They argue that one of the guns a.32 automatic is shorter than the other a.28. Because the captain and the lieutenant can't agree over the point, they seek guidance from the chief of the staff (Boss). The chief of staff requires that before he resolves the argument, the two guns be brought before him. Jere, the captain and Mosese, the lieutenant go to fetch the guns.

Once the guns are on their hands, Jusper is so excited. They have all the powers to do what they want to anybody around.

Boss realizes the mistake too late when his enemies already have the weapons. Mulili who has also realized the mistake wants to take off in pretext of a short call but Jusper orders him to sit down (pg72). He then orders an imaginary squad to shoot at Boss. Mulili appears so sad as things now become so tough for both of them. When Mulili is asked whether Boss is his cousin, he denounces saying that he is only a distant cousin and that he can be killed for the ills he has done. The ills according to Mulili are:

- a) He monopolized everything in Kafira.
- b) He has ruined Kafiras economy.
- c) He has overstayed in leadership.
- d) He has killed Kabito.

When Boss hears this betrayal, he is taken aback, he feels he should better die than be allowed to remain to witness this betrayal. Jusper says he will put Boss in a government coffin which he will design himself. As he goes away in a trembling voice to design the coffin, Mosese tells boss to look at what he has done to Jusper-turning him mad or a psychological wreck through torture in prison by Boss's agents. This part is somehow meant to make Boss come in to terms with reality about what he has done to others. This is a moment of reckoning to him.

Jere and Mosese look sympathetic as they feel they don't need to sacrifice more lives for Kafira but feel to chart new and fair course in the life of Kafira. 'Kafira needs each one of us, you included' (pg 73). Boss is told that the whole exercise was meant to

'provide a mirror to Kafira that will reflect the real face of Kafira's front men.' (Pg 73). Jere offers himself to be shot by Boss as a sacrifice but Boss refuses. However, Juser who is more aggrieved has no compunctions; he receives the gun from Boss and executes Mulili -who is still exonerating himself by pointing an accusing finger to Boss- hence effecting his revenge.

Finally, kafira has been ridden off the evil that destroyed the past and Killed the future. With Mulili's death, the stage becomes reminiscent of the very first scene of the play as Mulili's body takes the place of Adika's grave. Revenge for the ills done has been accomplished. The dictator Boss finally ends up overthrown in a dramatic rehearsal of the play meant for the state visit.

In this final climax scene of the play, the folly and unwariness of the kafira rulers which blinded them to any logic and common sense has been clearly demonstrated by the brilliance, determination and unwavering resolve of the unwavering majority.

With Mulili's killing, it becomes not only a revenge to Juser but also a sigh of relieve for the entire Kafira. In a way, the fact that the plot ends with where it started could imply that life has gone full circle and a new life has to start again hence a new Kafira.

CHARACTERS

Mulili

Mulili is the most important character in the play. He is almost everywhere from the start to the end. From the start of the play, he is presented as Boss's cousin until the end of the play where he denounces him. His character traits are as follows.

He is an **influential** person. His being influential is felt far and wide. This is because he is a cousin of Boss and holds a lot of power. For example, when Kabito secures the university milk supply tender, Mulili quickly calls Boss who in turn calls the university staff thereby effecting its cancellation in Mulili's favour. (pg51). It all goes without say that the entertainment committee headed by Tumbo may not sit and deliberate on

anything serious without Mulili's presence. When Tumbo enters carrying a big file in his hand ready to chair the meeting, he retorts (pg 52). "Just as expected, Mulili is yet to come." When Kabito inquires what Mulili is doing on the committee, Tumbo, the chairman replies, *You know better than that Kabit ...*

This means that Mulili's role on the committee is crucial. Indeed, when the meetings are in progress; he seems to dominate the proceedings.

In the argument with Jere whether Doga and Nina should be allowed to conduct the ceremony for Adika, Mulili has the last laugh as later, we find Jere in prison and the two Doga and Nina dead. Indeed, Mulili has a lot of influence in Kafira but the influence is mainly for ill and not for better.

Mulili is **greedy**. When he comes to Adika's grave, he is busy drinking beer yet the situation is hardly suitable for drinking (pg 8). His greed drives him to the tender award already secured by his colleague Kabito. This intensifies the conflict between them leading to Kabito's murder.

Mulili's apparent loyalty to Boss is purely informed by greed and not by any magnanimous posturing. When Jere tries to convince him that they allow the harmless shaving ceremony to proceed, he fears that by doing so, he is certain to lose a farm promised by Boss. He says (pg 13).

Me count out, I doesn't want to lose that farm. Boss promise my acre of farm and grade cattle.....

Mulili is a **mediocre** person. All he says and does appears to be below our expectations particularly for such a highly placed personality. The utterance he makes are humorous and irritating due to his poor linguistic ability. For instance, when Jere blasts him for behaving unacceptably before Adika's grave, he says: *Alright, am sorrowful. I honest doesn't know it will affect you (pg 15)*

Mulili is directly or indirectly the mastermind of the death of Adika and his parents hence he is a murderer. He actually admits affecting the murder of Doga and Nina (pg

60). He also plans and executes Kabito's death. A leader worth his salt is expected to find better ways of coming to terms with his detractors short of murdering them.

Mulili as a character is also a very **hot tempered** man. This can be learnt from his action; the assassination and incarceration cases e.g. Jere's imprisonment and also from his quarrel with Kabito.

He is corrupt. He uses his influence and closeness to the Boss to influence the university Milk tender which had been given to Kabito. He uses favoritism to let Mustafa escape across the border yet he cannot poor peasants to hold a shaving ceremony. In addition, we are told he is to be rewarded with a big farm and exotic cattle by Boss for his service. It is difficult to exhaust Mulili's character traits. However, one thing is clear about him. Almost everything about him is negative.

Mulili's significance in the play

- He is both a comic and tragic figure. His behavior and broken English brings humour in the play hence comic relief despite the critical issues in the play. His life ends tragically but there is little sympathy for him as he has killed many people.
- His role in the start of the play serves to show the conflict between the African culture and the inherited systems of government in African states.
- Being so selfish and greedy himself, he exemplifies the theme of selfishness and greed and other social vices.
- Through the take that overtakes him finally, the reader/ audience appreciates the rewards of bad leadership. Society feels appeased for the wrong done.
- He arouses in the reader/ audience the urge to effect revolutionary change in a misgoverned society.
- He is a symbol of oppression in Kafira and his eventual death signifies the end of this regime and perhaps the emergent of a new one. He plays a big role in bringing up most themes in the play.

- He exemplifies personalities that give wrong advice to leaders who then misrule and corrupt nations. Thus he has also been used to satirize leaders and their advisors. This is best exemplified through plays in this government. He is the villain in the play.

Jusper

Jusper is another important character in the play. He is Nina and Doga's only left son. He is **vengeful** as he is eager to take revenge when offended. He searches high and low for Chagaga, the killer and eventually gets even with him. He knows that it is Kafira administration led by people like Mulili who have killed both his parents. He continuously vows for revenge. When he gets a chance during the play rehearsals (in the final scene of the play) he doesn't hesitate. He kills Mulili right away becoming even with the killers of his parents. Jusper's passion for revenge for the ills done on the society forms part of the action in the play from start to end.

Jusper is **imaginative**. He is the one who carefully weaves out a play to be performed by the prisoners to entertain the foreign visiting dignitary. We discover that the play is so deftly and skillfully planned and executed that it finally effortlessly emasculates the Kafira leadership bringing about the conclusion of the near bloodless revolution. Mulili is killed and Boss disrobed of power in a trice. It is Jusper's rich imagination that achieves this. He also imagines, plans and executes the mission that brings about Chagaga's death.

Jusper is also **uncompromising**. He is firmly opposed to Kafira's administrations and its policies. He is completely unwilling to compromise with them on any issue except the one he feels will save his purpose. The Kafiran authorities know this and that is why he is put in prison during Adika's burial. At the end of the play, no form of compromise on the part of kafiran leadership can assuage his indignation and when he gets hold of a gun, he kills Mulili with no compunction.

Jusper is sarcastic. He a lot of times uses sarcasm to ridicule the government. He is so sarcastic when he tells Regina in the presence of Boss that the students prayer was to ask God help them drop their Christian names. (Pg39).When they are discussing the play for the entertainment committee, he is sarcastic. He replies to Tumbo about the kind of development he has highlighted in the play. He says, "The number of external expatriates professionals has greatly increased over the years, signifying the full extent of our potential progress.(pg 48).

The significance of Jusper

- He exemplifies the theme of revenge and resistance to oppression.
- Through him we learn that even in the darkest and the most desperate periods of life, we should never despair but be hopeful as victory awaits.
- Through him we learn that the youths of a nation have a singular role of correcting the ills done.
- Courage as a theme is conveyed through Jusper.

Mosese

He is an **intellectual** - a university don and so he has a high level of education. The level of education of his brain is therefore higher than many of other characters. Being a university don, we expect that his outlook of life is expansive.This is the reason he is able to identify so many weaknesses in Kafiran leadership and when he articulates his opinion (e.g at Adikas funeral) , it disgusts the authorities and hence his present status as a prisoner.

He is **principled**. During Adika's funeral, he makes a fiery speech condemning the administration's ways , not afraid of any consequences. (Pg25).This results in his imprisonment though the administration cannot get a plausible excuse for its action.

When the regime suggests to Mosese that he needed to relent so that he is pardoned, (pg 25-26), he flatly refused believing that by so doing, he would be kowtowing so low.

When it is suggested that prisoners act before a visiting head of state, in order to be pardoned, Mosese is Loath to do so. He says,

I will not bend so low.

He remains **adamant** on this. He actually doesn't accept to perform in the play to gain his release. What happens is this, at the end, he sees a golden opportunity in the Juser scripted play for prisoners to seize control of the situation. It eventually turns out so during the rehearsals. The truth is that he eventually doesn't perform in the play before the foreign head of state. He is true to his principles.

Mosese is **patriotic**. He is very much angered by what is happening in Kafira. He speaks out against it. Disgusted at the way the leaders are ruining Kafira, he tells Jere (pg 28).

It was better while we waited. Now we have nothing to look forward to. We have killed our past and are busy killing our future... our children will never have such memories.

This is the speech of a person that is bitter about what he sees around him. He agitates for change and that is why he is currently in prison.

Mosese is **courageous**. He is not afraid to answer the prison Askari face to face. The askari asks him why he is sitting with his back towards them and Mosese gives an epigrammatic response.

I have no front (pg 18)

By this reply, he is suggesting he has no freedom and no future and so he seems to be a nobody. He means he is inscrutable and so unworthy of so much worry by a government officer. In the tense atmosphere at Adika's funeral, he gathers **courage** and condemns the leadership for its dictatorial, careless and freedom-limiting policies (pg 25).

Mosese's significance

- He is symbol of intellectuals and scholars who pursue for change in a rotten society .
- He represents the strong desire for change in Kafira.
- Through him, we understand that to get any substantial change, sacrifice is necessary.
- Through his travails and suffering, we get to understand the operations of brutal and unfocussed administration.

Boss

Boss is the supreme leader of Kafira. From the plenary authority he possesses, he embodies power over life and death in Kafira. In exercising these powers, he has made Kafira a very unattractive and a dictatorial state.

He is a **nepotistic**. He uses his powers to favour his relatives (and people close to him). We are told that he has appointed Mulili, his cousin, to hold a key state position in his government. He uses him to supervise and oversee all other areas. Because Mulili is basically **inefficient and narrow- minded**, the whole Kafira administration is a by-word of inefficiency.

He is **authoritarian**. He leads with an iron fist and is not ready to seek other people's opinion. He unilaterally issues orders for the imprisonment and assassination of others and his orders are carried out expeditiously. A case in point is the death of Kabito falling to Mulili's false accusations. He simply tells Mulili, (pg 60).

Come, report to me he is silent.

Kabito is then eliminated with no scruple.

He is **hasty and imprudent**. He does not stop to think before making any important decision. Kabito's death is clearly a case in point. He doesn't investigate Mulili's utterances. He also rushes into joining the play to be performed by prisoners without understanding the basic points and essence. This results into the emasculation of his leadership.

He is also **unpatriotic**. We learn that he keeps large sums of his country's money in foreign banks (pg59). When Mulili lies to him that this is part of Kabito's accusations, he becomes so affected and so irate that he orders for immediate elimination of Kabito. He swamps his country with foreign workers at the expense of his people who may be unemployed. In reacting to students grumbings, he says this, "Because they shouted against the appointments, five of which were my own personal appointments, I deliberately sent in an order for three hundred more expatriates, just to put them in their place" (pg68).

Boss is so **irascible**. He very easily gets angry. We are told he was so upset when his wife complained of his lecherous behavior that he locked her in a palace cell, and almost slapped Tumbo (pg64) when he said the props of the play were not ready.

In warning Juser about Boss's irascibility Tumbo says (pg65),

Boy, you still don't understand the principles of survival. When he loses his temper, he can hardly tell a human being from a rat. The man is an animal ; I tell you and this one of his bad months if you read astrology.

Boss's significance

- He represents poor leadership (in Africa).
- It is through him that we witness why leadership in Africa creates so much resistance and rebellion.
- He typifies the theme of men's cruelty to women.

- It is through his fall from power that we appreciate the struggle against defeat of despotism.
- He exemplifies lack of respect for human life and un-patriotism.

Adika

We meet this character posthumously. He is dead before the play starts and we only witness his grave. He was a university student before he died. He comes out as a **revolutionary** person. He wants change from the static and unprogressive administration. Being a student leader in the university, he leads other students to agitate for change. As they actively demonstrate, he loses his life in a confrontation with state security apparatus. Despite his death, the spirit of revolution is kept alive till the end.

He is ill-starred. He is unfortunate. Among a large crowd of demonstrators, he is the only one who is picked by the four bullets and drops dead.(pg4). Adika is also **popular**. This is why students elected him and why they heeded to his demonstration call. Also during his burial, attendants in the funeral included politicians, administration officials, the locals, lecturers, students, etc. He is also **intelligent**. Whatever enabled him to attain university status attests to his intellectual ability. To mobilize other university students to agitate for change calls for intellectual brains. A common stripling will simply be brushed off.

The significance of Adika.

- ✓ He represents the idea that resistance to oppression has a high cost.
- ✓ He represents the voice of the youth in trying to assert themselves.
- ✓ His grave is the symbol of Kafira at cross roads.
- ✓ Through his death and his parents resultant bitterness, we get to understand the depth of sorrow and suffering in Kafira.

Nicodemo

Nicodemo is **traitorous**. He plants drugs on the innocent Mosese who is then arrested and imprisoned unfairly. He is a tool the administration of Kafira is using in its oppressive fight against its own people.

He is **unprincipled**. He doesn't try to understand the consequences of his actions. He is told to carry out a destructive action and does so thoughtlessly.

Nicodemo is a **greedy man**. His decision to betray Mosese is informed by the profit he will gain by taking such action. His main interest is only to get the payment or gain associated with his action. He is on the entertainment committee and keeps thinking of what size of 'potato' he will get (pg53). He is therefore not interested in the efficiency but the profit he will get as a member. After Kabito's demise, and the meeting planned is postponed, he asks if the day will be counted or not (pg63). His profit motives outweighs the efficiency element.

He is also **selfish**. His desire to get money from whatever assignment he is given is an indication of his selfish conduct. He wants money to satisfy his personal needs and doesn't mind about the public and others. His decision to betray the innocent Mosese is informed by selfishness. He wanted to earn a profit at the expense of somebody. He is apprehensive about Mosese's release from prison. He wishes that Mosese stayed in prison forever so that he himself lives comfortably. Mosese's release badly menaces him. He is therefore not interested in other peoples welfare.

Nicodemo's significance

- He represents the base tools the administration uses in its oppressive machines.
- He reminds us that in any struggle there always are traitors who undermine the noble cause.
- He exemplifies themes of greed and selfishness.
- He typifies inefficiency in government (he appears on important boards but makes little sensible contributions).

Jere

Jere is initially a soldier but later becomes a prisoner. When we first encounter him, he has been sent together with Mulili to forestall Adika's shaving ceremony, from taking place. They come with the orders which somehow, Jere is uncomfortable with.

He emerges as a **sympathetic** person. Although he is a government functionary and has accompanied Mulili to forestall Adika's shaving ceremony, he has other ideas in mind. He wishes that they sympathize with Adika's poor parents and let the harmless ceremony go on. However, Mulili, partly for personal reasons, isn't ready to hear of that. Jere's sympathy makes him an appealing character; at the same time, it sets him at odds with his superiors. He lands into trouble. His sympathy is also graphically revealed when during the rehearsals; he gets the gun and doesn't use it against his enemies but pleads for magnanimity and brotherhood (pg73).

He is **magnanimous**. unlike Jusper, he is not vindictive. When he handles the gun during the rehearsals, he does not take revenge. He requires Kafirans to reconcile, avoid shedding of blood and encourages mutual understanding (pg73). To demonstrate the magnanimity further, he hands over the gun to Boss wisely but shamefully declines (pg74). This is an indication that he is fully committed to total reconciliation.

Jere is **rebellious**. He refuses to effect the orders he is sent to carry out at Adika's graveyard. Instead, he encourages his colleague to renege on those orders, a proposition Mulili scoffs at. He shoots at the rapidly escaping Mulili; this eventually lands him in prison. While talking to the Askari in the prison cell, he makes utterances that can easily land him in jeopardy and when the Askari warns him, he takes no heed (pg16-17). His rebelliousness reaches its epitome when the prisoners including him rebel and put Kafiran authority under their thumb (pg74).

Jere, just like Jusper and Mosese, is **courageous**. First, to disobey constituted authority like the Kafiran administration requires guts. Jere has the guts since he rebels. When he is with Mulili, he feared Boss's blue-eyed boy, he talks to him roughly without

any fear (pg14-15). Similarly when talking to the Askari in the prison cell, he shows no fear and sometimes he embarrasses the Askari.

The significance of Jere

- He is one of the pillars of resistance in Kafira.
- He is the voice of magnanimity in an otherwise embittered environment.
- He enables us to see the strength of the oppressed side by defecting from the oppressive ruling group.
- His consistency from start to end enables others who partly depend on him solidify their action leading to eventual victory.

TUMBO.

He is the chairman of the committee charged with organizing the entertainment of the expected head of state. He looks **submissive**. He is afraid of both Boss and Mulili yet he is a man holding a high office. When a vote is to be taken whether children should line the streets to receive the visitor or not, and there is confusion, Tumbo quickly rushes to Mulili's side as chairman and unilaterally declares that Mulili's side has won.(pg55-56). He does this realizing that if Mulili's side loses, then he will be in trouble.

When Kaboto inquires what Milili is doing in their committee, Tumbo replies....

You know better than that Kabito.pg52

By this, he means that mulili's membership is obvious in view of his influence and notoriety in Kafira. In replying to Juspers inquiry as to why he looks nervous about the play, Tumbo replies painting Boss as a very cruel, animalistic creature capable of doing terrible harm.(pg 65).

Tumbo **is boastful and snobbish**. He has so much respect for people with wealth and high social positions and despises common people. In this play, he is the one with

money and he would like to show off before those without. For instance, while at Regina's house, he wishes to show off about his vehicle, a jaguar, by asking Juser if he knows how to drive.(pg42). Elsewhere he boasts of being a top government official (pg 46).To impress his girlfriend Regina, he says,

...and who knows ..your cousin here (Juser) may even sit on the dais with the rest of us... pg 50. When Juser tries to hand over him the change, he retorts....

....Oh, that...Keep change...I know students have money in theory...bye.

Tumbo is a **mediocre** person. He does not measure to the expectations of an officer of his rank. When Juser talks of Soyinka, the Nigerian maestro writer, Tumbo quips..(pg 47.)

...who is Soyinka? ...oh...I see...the prime minster of ...oh I forget the country.

He professes ignorance of common place issues. His mediocrity is also evident when he declares Juser the winner of a competition before the competition takes place. He awards him and Regina his lover the prize for winning the competition before the competition takes place.

The significance of Tumbo.

- ✓ He represents corrupt and incompetent leadership.
- ✓ He represents the self-serving non patriotic personalities who mislead or fail to advice their superiors on corrupt, incompetent administrations.
- ✓ His allegorical name help promote certain themes in the play (greed, selfishness, monopoly).
- ✓ He enables us to understand how wealth blindfolds and misleads.
- ✓ His lack of intelligence and foresight enabled the rebels to subvert Kafiran leadership by using the carefully and skillfully woven plot of the play to carry through the required change.

KABITO.

Like Tumbo and Mulili, he is a government functionary. He has intense bitterness. He hates Mulili with passion. In the entertainment committee meeting, the issue of the milk tender becomes an immediate spark in their conflict. During the whole meeting, he is constantly at loggerheads with the domineering Mulili. (pg 54-57). However, his bitterness with a very influential person become his main undoing. He loses his life as a result.

He is **realistic**. He seems to wonder what an inexperienced person like Mulili is doing on their committee (pg51-52). When Mulili suggests that children should line streets to welcome the visitor, he says that they are in their exam season and therefore should be allowed to waste no time (pg55).

Kabito is also **sarcastic**. During his quarrel with Mulili, his remarks become laced with bitter sarcasm. When Mulili complains that he has called him a primary school kid, Kabito, unfazed counters (pg57).

Alright professor, tell us the day you stepped inside a secondary school classroom.

The significance of Kabito

- He reminds us the dangers strait-laced persons face in a misgoverned society.
- From him, we learn that conflict does not ease even among state functionaries.
- He makes us know that in an ill governed state, life is not worthy a penny and with real or imagined reasons, life can easily be cut short.
- Through him, we learn of the corrupt deals and set ups in a misgoverned society.

STYLE

Satire

The playwright has extensively employed satire to convey his intended message. He uses satire through the character Mulili to criticize leadership particularly in Africa.

Mulili is a character who invite laughter from us wherever and whenever we encounter him, both in the way he uses his language and the actions he engages in. From his poor language and narrowness of outlook, we are left wondering and questioning the quality of leadership in Africa . Are people like Mulili the type we do entertain as our leaders? It is all laughter. As we laugh at Mulili, we laugh at the whole administration he serves and by extension the whole African leadership experiment.

Tumbo is another character whose actions cause laughter and mockery. During his engagement with Jusper, he refers to Soyinka (a well-known Nigerian writer) as the prime minister of some country. This is a mistake that excites, disgusts and cause laughter. He also declares Jusper the winner of a playwright competition without following any procedures. (Pg48). Before the competition is done, he has already declared Jusper the winner and releases the prize money.

Elsewhere, Boss's conduct towards Regina and even with his own wife excites awe, laughter and scorn for a person with such status.

Nicodemo is also another character who is satirized. He keeps insisting about the size of the potato in the play showing how he is money motivated. He cannot even hide his greed for money when he asks openly whether the day when the meeting has been cancelled after Kabito's death is going to be counted.

The way the government conducts its business is ridiculed. The issues that are given more weight are less important as personal interests override everything. For instance it is satirical that the changing of names is item number three in Kafira's development agenda. No wonder Jusper takes advantage of this to ridicule the government now and again. Tumbo says that " A leader needs a mysterious name that common tongues will bleed pronouncing' (pg40). Jusper sarcastically confirms this when he says that even Boss exchanged his Christian name with something none of them could pronounce.(pg 41). When asked by Regina what he prayed for during Adika's funeral, he replies that he asked God to help them drop their Christian names.(pg 39)

Democracy is satirized from the way Tumbo declares Jusper the winner of the play writing competition. The unilateral way in which he does it smirks corruption and a mockery of principles of democracy where ideally, every competitor could have been given a chance to participate.

The way Tumbo describes to Jusper on how he wants the play to look like is satirical. He says that Boss prefers each and every page to be full of the words, 'progress and achievement'. This is to show the visitor that indeed Kafira has experienced major development. This coupled with the fact that the release of 600 prisoners will signify development is hypocrisy of the highest order.

Soliloquy.

This is another aspect of style the playwright uses. It is a case where a character talks alone. He addresses no visible object. A good example is a case where Doga has sent Nina to collect soil for sealing the crack in Adika's grave. He remains alone on stage and talks alone. (Pg 64.) Through this soliloquy, we learn about :

- ✓ Doga's intense bitterness which makes him urge Adika's ghost to pursue his killers unremittingly till condign revenge is attained.
- ✓ The actual cause of Adka's death during the demonstration in the city.
- ✓ Adika's actual killer.
- ✓ Jusper's conduct during the burial and his arrest.

Another case of soliloquy is Jusper's speech when he arrives after killing Chagaga. (Pg 5-6.) He indulges in a soliloquy where he reveals his knowledge of people's thinking about his sanity. This soliloquy helps to understand Jusper as a determined person to restore human dignity.

Flashback.

There are several instances of flashback. First, we have Doga's speech as he soliloquizes over Adika's death. (pg 4-5). Through this instance of flashback, we get to

know how Adika died , the fathers wish that Adika's ghost pursues his killers and events during and after Adika's burial.

As the story unfolds, we get to know about Adika's death through Jusper in a flashback. This is when he is chiding Regina over the loss of the fighting spirit.(pg 33.) This flashback helps to bring out the theme of disillusionment as implied by loss of fighting spirit.

Mosese recalling the events at Adika's funeral, how he was arrested and made a prisoner is brought about in a flashback.(pg 24-25). He says, 'I had never seen anything like it before. The atmosphere was tense at the funeral. I thought for once that things will never change in Kafira....i told them my mind. So the following day they came for me.

Another example is when Mosese –when in prison , has nostalgia about the good times they had in the past when there was hope unlike now when that hope has turned sour. He says, ' It was better we while we waited...sometimes, I sit here and look far into the past. There I see my mother slaughtering the biggest family cock.... our children will never have such memories. Now there is blood everywhere. Cocks are slaughtered any day, many times a week.' (Pg 28). From this flashback, the theme of disillusionment comes in. Also, it is fact that the slaughtering of cocks any day refers to assassinations. Flashback is also used when Jere who is also a prisoner like Mosese remembers the play he acted with another inmate to offset boredom.

Sarcasm.

This is use of bitter remarks that are meant to wound one's feelings. Whoever who is a target of sarcasm gets angered as a result. This urges the targeted person into some form of reactions.

For example when Mulili complains that Kabito has equated him to a primary school kid, Kabito sarcastically counters by saying ...(pg 57) "Alright professor, tell us the day you stepped inside a secondary school classroom." This remark becomes an insult to Mulili who immediately requires an apology from Kabito. When no apology is forthcoming, Mulili goes to see higher authorities and next we find Kabito dead.

In Jere's conversation with the prison Askari, the Askari says(..pg 16).

"My God, this is the wrong place to for you. The place for lunatic is three doors down the corridor." Jere then sarcastically says.. "You mean three doors up the corridor?" This deliberate distortion of speech ires the Askari since he knows that three doors up the corridor is the office of the head of the institution. This makes the Askari to warn Jere that he will educate him if he goes on that way.

Another instance of sarcasm is seen when Regina and Jusper are talking about Boss's visit. Jusper remarks " Can't you see he is on a do-it-yourself Kind of mission?" (Pg 36). This sarcastic remark is intended to criticize the idea of Boss's visit for he thinks in Kafira there is no man power apart from bringing expatriates from his country. It highlights the theme of bad governance where the consequences can be seen in terms of lack of development.

Jusper is also sarcastic when he tells Tumbo the kind of achievements he will highlight in the play. He says " The number of expatriates professional has steadily increased over the years, signifying the full extent of our potential progress. (Pg48). In real sense, Jusper knows that increased presence of expatriates in a country is not an achievement but a mark of underdevelopment.

While at the grave side after killing Chagaga, through in a cross purpose, Jusper tells Nina-his mother that " he will go and recommend a government coffin with many handles so that everyone can help lower him to the grave." (Pg 7.) His statement is sarcastic in the sense that it is attacking the way the government buries its 'important' people.

Jusper,s remark implies that the dead person (Chagaga) ranks as an important person at least in the eyes of the government.

After Tumbo declares Jusper the winner of the play writing competition, Regina seems not ok with it. When she wants to show her displeasure, Tumbo cuts her by telling Jusper to give her some lessons which Jusper does with sarcasm. (Pg 49).

Tumbo :Jusper, tell your cousin life is not a straight line.

Jusper :Regina, life is not a straight line....

Tumbo :Jusper, tell your cousin that we are here for only a season.

Jusper : Regina, we are here for only a season.....

From the conversation above, Jusper's remarks are meant to show Tumbo's mediocrity in making him a winner of a competition that never was which ironically Tumbo never realizes.

Puzzles.

This is a use of a language which makes the reader or audience to search their brain in order to understand what it means. Here are a few examples as used in the play.

Jere: Has it ever occurred to you that outside of this cell may also be the inside of another one ?pg16.

By this, he means that in a poorly governed society, being free out is just similar to serving prison sentences .Oppression pervades everywhere.

Jusper: If there is...we have no future until we see in the past. That is the only way we may know we once had a future. Mosese once had a future until he came to my brother's funeral. pg65.

He means that we can only have future if there is a basis for supporting it. You can't have hope that is built on nothing. Mosese was once hopeful. He was employed and was socially recognized before he fell foul for the authorities.

Jusper: *That means that the release of a few prisoners will not change Kafira. The sun will still rise in the east and set in the west.pg 66.* He means that things will remain unchanged –oppression will still continue.

Boss: But someone dies.

Jusper: *It is possible to have a death that is not tragic. Pg 69.*

Death of someone insignificant doesn't count much. Death of a stranger doesn't affect one.

Puzzles are used to infuse a sense of wisdom in the play.

Coincidence.

This is a situation where two events unexpectedly occur to influence the course of the story.

- ✓ During the rehearsals, it so happens that the two wooden guns are not yet ready from the carpenters and so the need to use real live guns arises.pg 70.These live guns are the ones the prisoners (Jere, Mosese and Jusper) need urgently to upstage the Kafiran authority.
- ✓ It also happens that the character to act the part of the chief of staff is sick. This part being vacant, then Boss assumes it. (pg 70). Boss then joins the rehearsals as an actor.
- ✓ It is also surprising that Boss who was supposed to watch the rehearsals claims that he was once a good actor and is actually the one who requests for the guns to be brought.(pg 71).
- ✓ Elsewhere, it is coincidental for Tumbo and Jusper (Two rivaling lovers) to meet at Reginas house and plan for the performance.
- ✓ It is also coincidental that a Kafiran government functionary, Jere meets in prison with a hardcore dissident, Mosese and then they become one.
- ✓ It is a coincident for Mulili, an avowed supporter of the Kafiran administration to be sent for the same duty with Jere, a man who develops a divergent opinion.

- ✓ Adika's death in the city is coincidental since out of the crowd of demonstrators, he is the only one picked by four bullets. His killer also happens to come from the same locality with him back at home.

Irony

These are a number of cases of irony in the play. Mostly, the various cases of irony help to highlight the government's inefficiency and poor governance.

It is ironical that in this government, most officials entrusted to run sensitive matters are incompetent. A perfect example is Mulili. From his use of language, it is clear that he is illiterate. His illiteracy can also be confirmed when Kabito sarcastically tells him to tell them when he stepped into a secondary school- which means he did not go to secondary school. Despite this, it is ironical to find that Mulili is the most trusted Boss's advisor, the eye and the ear of the Boss. Also another case is Tumbo. Despite the fact that he is not that learned, he is also one of Boss's close officials. Due to this, he is given a chance to chair the entertainment planning committee. It is through his incompetency that he fails to go through Juspers play which finally results to a coup during its rehearsals.

It is further ironical that Jusper is declared the winner of a playwriting competition that never was. For a visitor of such a magnitude, the play writing competition was supposed to be conducted and the best play gotten for his entertainment. Due to his being money motivated, he ends up using a short cut which paves way for a play that results to overthrow of the government.

Mulili's use of language is most of the time full of irony. For instance, the poorly stated reversed expressions, a green grass in the snake and also his constant misinterpretations. His ironic instances are symbolic as they symbolize at large how the government is ironic in its delivery of services to the public.

It is ironic that Tumbo instructs Jusper to write a play that has the words 'progress and achievement' all over in order to show the visitor that Kafira is indeed developing

whereby in real sense there is a lot of underdevelopment signified by a lot of external expatriates.

It is ironical that Tumbo says he could have written the play to entertain the visiting head of state himself were it not the fact that he is generous, yet the reason is that it is due to his intellectual handicap. He is not genuine about giving the opportunity to others.

It is ironical that Mulili says that Kabito was drunk when he met an accident yet it is barely an hour since they left the meeting for a break.(pg 63).

- Tumbo** : What could have happened?
Mulili : Driving under influential alcohol.
Nicodemo : Just how drunk can one get in a space of one hour?
Mulili : I also ask that. Then people say his breath smelled full of spirits. The hard stuff.

These are all lies already Tumbo and company know that it is Mulili who masterminded the killing.

Finally, it is ironical that Kabito says that he doesn't want to sit with thieves at the same table while he himself is not clean. This can be realized from the way he says how he spent a lot of money trying to bribe the university official to award him the milk tender. Also he is always in the first line always asking about the size of the potato.

THEMES

Betrayal

To betray is to be disloyal to someone, one's country, organization or ideology by acting in the interest of the enemy. As the title of the play suggests, the theme of betrayal is very evident in the play. The incidences of betrayal range from cultural, interpersonal to political betrayals

In act one, the first instance of betrayal witnessed is cultural betrayal whereby we find Jere and Mulili have been sent by the government to stop a shaving ceremony at Adika's grave. They have a signed document by the government stopping the ceremony. This is betrayal in that the people who are supposed to protect their culture are the ones who are destroying it. It is reported that the ceremony is "cancelled in the interest of peace." To make matters worse, the two soldiers declare that even the grave no longer belongs to the old couple.(pg9). According to Nina, this betrayal can only be met with a curse. "You took our all, but you will not take the grave from us.....I shall strip to show you the poor naked bones you have left in me."(pp9).

The government through Boss betrays its people who have given them powers to serve by not serving them well. They instead use power to make themselves rich. The public officials-the likes of Tumbo, Nicodemo, Mulili Askari and Kabito- are seen stealing governments money and misusing resources at the expense of the public.

Boss further betrays the public by using the state resources to reward his kitchen officials with tenders and other goodies for helping him stay in power. While at Adika's grave, Mulili tells Jere that Boss promised him a big farm if he maintains law and order. The law and order here can be equated to his being the boss's eye and ear. Those who help Boss stay in power do a lot of harm to the public. The murder of people like Doga and Nina, Kabito and Adika is attached to the government hence a betrayal of the public who expect to be protected by this government.

Another veritable case of betrayal is witnessed when Nicodemo secretly places opium in Mosese's car and policemen are sent to arrest Mosese as a drug peddler pg(25). This actually lands an innocent person in prison. All of us know what Nicodemo has done is wrong. He has betrayed an innocent citizen and created disaster for Mosese and his family and relatives. While in prison, Mosese shows the extent of the government's betrayal to its people when he says "For years, we waited for the kingdom of heaven, then they said it had come. Our Kingdom had come at last, but no . It was an

illusion.”(pg 27-28).This shows that the government the people longed for so long to bring a positive change has done nothing hence people’s suffering.

The act of Regina pleading with the authorities to release Mosese from jail is betrayal. This is because Mosese makes it clear as he says “ I saw betrayal in her eyes. Stood in front of me and said she wanted to go and plead for my release. I nearly slapped her.” (Pg 25-26).To him this is a sign of weakness equivalent to kneeling in front of Boss pleading for mercy.

Cultural betrayal is also seen where Chagaga kills Adika, his Kinsman, yet traditions condemn the shedding of a kinsman blood.(pp4).

Mulili betrays Kabito a fellow government official which eventually leads to his death. This happens after Mulili misconstrues Kabito’s utterances which are partly motivated by the milk tender that Mulili snatched from him. He thinks Kabito has called him a primary school kid. It is from here that Mulili rushes to the Boss and gives him false allegations against Kabito something that makes Boss to command Mulili to silence him.

Mulili further, despite being Boss’s trusted agent and cousin betrays him at the end when there is coup. It should be realize that Boss trusts him so much. Despite his lapses of character, Boss has bestowed on him great authority and confidence. He is almost the mouthpiece of Boss in the Kafira establishment. All sensitive issues in Kafira are directly under the control of and easily accessible to him. However, when things go awry during the play’s rehearsals (in the last scene of the play), Mulili does not hesitate to deny Boss, his superior and cousin. He denies being his cousin and says there is no reason why he (Boss) cannot be killed. He goes ahead to expose the ills he has done in Kafira. The conversation with Jere goes like this (pg73).

Jere: *I will show you why This man is your cousin*

Mulili: *He is only a distant cousin, that is all.*

Jere: *Give me one good reason why he should not be killed.*

Mulili: *No reason he can be killed.*

Jere: *Do you agree that he should be got rid of.*

Mulili: *Kabisa! One he has taken everything in his hand*

Mulili so badly betrays Boss, his benefactor that Boss requests to be shot rather than witness such betrayal.

Corruption

The theme of corruption manifests itself in a number of instances in the play. The first instance of corruption is seen in prison. When the Askari brings a mug of milk, his actions reveal that corruption is a common thing in prison. He says " You need a tall relative to get anything these days". (pg 27). A tall relative suggests someone big in the government or close to power. Even Tumbo himself says that what matters these days is for someone to have a tall relative or to get the right contact to get anything showing that even merit does not count in Kafira.

Boss is presented as a weak and corrupt ruler who uses his corrupt officials to rule. To effectively use them, he rewards them with bribes. A good example is his cousin Mulili who has been promised many acres of land and exotic cattle. Also from Mulili's false – true allegations against Kabito to Boss, it is evident that Boss is a master of corruption. Mulili says he has stashed a lot of Kafira money in foreign accounts.

Boss also practices open corruption when he favours Mulili his cousin. In the play, we are told that he is Boss's advisor and hence his eyes and ears. Mulili exploits his closeness to Boss to peddle influence so as to win tenders like the university milk tender -that Kabito had won.

The unilateral way in which Tumbo announces Jusper the winner of the play writing competition, smirks corruption and a mockery of principles of democracy where ideally, every competitor could have been given a chance to participate. To show that the whole deal is suspect, Tumbo intends to retain the two thirds of the six hundred pounds set aside for the competition to 'put the records straight'. (Pg 49). It can be inferred that this money is being set aside to anyone who may raise an eye brow over the matter hence okay the deal.

Corruption among the public officials is presented as the order of the day. In the entertainment committee, it is seen that everyone is concerned first and foremost about

the size of the 'potato' and not the services they will offer to the public. Mostly, the talk that dominates the meeting session is about money and tenders. Mr tumbo-who is the chairman confirms this to Jusper through his philosophy of eat-and-let eat. To show how they are money minded, these men in the entertainment committee even have plans to meet daily till the visitor arrives (Pg 53). This is after they are informed that they will be paid per day. Their greed for money is further seen when Nicodemo asks whether they will be paid-the day when kabito is Killed and the meetings suspended indefinitely.

Tumbo himself is a product of corruption in the government as evidenced from the large wealth he has amassed. His advice to Jusper ,” to learn to fight for yourself and then when your presence is felt , you can risk shouting for others’ (pg 42), shows how he is a master of the game –where one ought to make a lot of money through any means possible.

It is clear that corruption is everywhere in Kafira. Virtually, everyone is corrupt and the few who are clean like Mosese are not spared. Corrupt methods are used to make them look bad for instance in the case of Mosese where opium was planted in his car to nail him as a drug peddler.

Poor governance.

Poor governance is seen in the play in that Boss’s regime does not safeguard the interests of the people it is supposed to be serving. People’s rights are violated and even individual freedom curtailed. For instance, when Nina and doga protest the government’s directive to stop them from performing a shaving ceremony for their departed son-Adika, they are even told that even the grave does not belong to them. Other people are sent to jail without cause. For example, Jusper, Jere and Mosese. To show lack of freedom of expression, Mosese is sent to prison after drugs are planted in his car just because he has criticized Boss’s regime.

Boss is presented as someone who rules with power hence poor governance. According to Mulili, ' He take everything in his hand.' (Pg73). Further, he has ruined the economy of Kafira and hence many of his subjects are Jobless. Many parts of Kafira are also undeveloped. (pg36). As a result, there is genuine concern whether the country is headed to the right direction.

Poor governance makes Boss not to rule from the front but through his advisors. The fact that most of these advisors are inefficient like Mulili and Tumbo questions the Kind of leadership they offer and the Kind of advice they give him. Most of the time, these advisors take advantage of their excessive powers to loot from the government.

Another thing is that they mis-advice the Boss to execute several people thought to be threat to his regime. The execution does not even spare the youths who are leaders of tomorrow. The fact the boss has excess power over kafira is confirmed when he tells Jusper, " They should have Known my arms are long , My eyes see far and my ears are the sharpest in the continent." (Pg 68.).

Poor governance has rendered Kafiran citizens voiceless. Many things seem to go wrong but they cannot raise any voice. Those who dare are met with the full force of the law. For instance Adika is killed, Mosese jailed, Jusper jailed and Nina and Doga Killed. The fact the citizens are voiceless is confirmed by Jusper who says, "It doesn't matter what the masses think if they have no voice. That is why Adika had to go. That is why Mosese and Jere are in.: Because they tried to provide voice to the masses." (Pg 35.)

The way important things are handled in Kafira also suggests poor governance. Boss is clearly a maker of this with his making of unilateral decisions that affect the whole country. He tells Jusper to go and tell his student "...leaders that it his duty to decide on the magnitude of Kafira's Africanization programme." (Pg 67.) Poor government makes him and his regime to give priority to unimportant issues at the expense of the Major issues in Kafira. For instance it is funny that name changing has been given priority number three in the development agenda. Boss himself had to change his name to something no one could pronounce as put by Jusper. Even Tumbo rubber stamps the

name changing when he says that a leader should have a name a common man will bleed to pronounce. As evidenced, minor things are the ones that are given priority over the major things like employment of the jobless hence leaving citizens to suffer.

Inefficiency

Inefficiency in Kafira is highly prevalent among the officials .Whenever there is inefficiency, it translates to poor delivery of services hence underdevelopment.

A number of characters are inefficient in the play. Boss is the leading example. As a leader and the head of Kafira, it is expected of him to manifest a very a high degree of competency. This however is not the case as his administration is full of incompetent leaders. It is gotten from the play that he depends on his officials now and again for advice. It is even worse that most of these officials led by Mulilli and Tumbo are incompetent. Even more worse is that these officials have been put to lead Kafira's sensitive offices.

Although there are qualified people in Kafira to take up state jobs, the government is employing expatriates. When the university students protest against these expatriates, they are repulsed. All this translates to inefficiency in this government.

Further, the fact that the officials at the entertainment committee members are concerned of the size of the potato they will get out of the meetings and not the services they will offer all translates to inefficiency. It should be noted that most of the time spent in this meeting is used in discussion of the money they will get.

Inefficiency coupled with incompetency makes Tumbo fail to read Juser's play about 'Betrayal in The City' which results to a coup. In (pg64), Tumbo tells Juser that .. 'I have not had the chance to go through the script.' If he could have read the play, perhaps he could have known what its live performance required hence making sure that everything is ready. This could have lessened the chances of a coup happening.

Mediocrity.

Something is said to be mediocre if it lacks the quality of being good.-it is below the level generally accepted by people. Mediocrity is the quality present in the leadership of kafira.

In Kafiran society, mediocrity is realized at a higher level. It is expected that leadership in a society should be selected from the top cream of persons. They should be refined, polished, disciplined, and well natured individuals who are able to understand and effectively respond to the challenges facing the society. However, in Kafira, we find it different. For instance, Mulili who is an exceptionally highly placed person in the Kafiran establishment displays qualities that are so below par. The following examples testify to this assertion.

- ✓ His level of his education and personal efficiency is wanting .This is clearly exemplified in in the quality of language he shamelessly uses. Among many disgusting utterances he produces are as follows.
 - *We want no anymore bloody bloodshed. We have seen enough. Just who you want to murder next? Pg 9.*
 - *You people full of primitive. Instead of going to see how the other is they come and get stuck with the dead one pg 10.*
 - *You see he now being pretend. All they want is the bloody ceremony.pg11.*
 - *All right, I am now sorrowful. I honest doesn't know it will affect you. Pg15.*
 - *I objection Mr chaiman. Children should must see for themselves. Pg 55.*

The shameless use of such disturbing utterances in public by a senior government official without any scruples is a clear indication of how the Kafiran administration has sunk low in the estimation of the public. It's a mediocre administration.

Elsewhere, Nicodemo shamelessly places opium in Mosese's car occasioning his arrest and imprisonment. He does so with total impunity.(pg 25). He knows that he is fully

protected by the leadership. This is mistreatment of innocent and straight forward members of the society. There is no justice or fairness. This is also a characteristic of a mediocre administration.

The way Boss acts when he gets Regina to his place and the subsequent treatment of his wife (as reported by Jusper (pg 61) is also a case in Point. A leader of such a status should be beyond reproach. However, Boss is demonstratively below our expectations.

Also, the events leading to Kabitos death(Pg 56-60) are indications of a sick and very badly governed society.

To entertain the visiting head of state, a competition is staged to get the winning playwright. However, Tumbo unilaterally pronounces Jusper as the winner without following the laid down procedures.(Pg48.) The way this is done and the announcement of the winner is so funny and mediocre.

Revenge.

Revenge is a case whereby one retaliates or pays back to an action that had been done to him/her in an unfair manner. The theme of revenge runs throughout the play.

The first action of revenge involves Jusper. When his brother Adika is killed by Chagaga, during the students demonstration in the city, this affects him so much that it is feared that he is likely to create chaos during his brothers burial. This however does not diminish the intensity of his bitterness towards Chagaga. When he is released after a brief imprisonment and his parents ask him to watch his brothers grave, he sneaks away in search of Chagaga whom he gets and murders. He has no regrets over the killing as he says, " Now I know how they feel when they do it. Can I go to confess I did it? (Pg 9). After his parents have been murdered, he swears that he can't rest with the death of his entire family on his mind.

Doga is burning with a desire to avenge his son's death. He feels wounded by people who killed his son and now they have followed him to the grave. To show his anger and the need for revenge, he curses Mulili when he says, 'Empty words will be your

downfall. May you die the way Adika died.” (Pg 10).At the end of the play, this curse is fulfilled.

The disagreement between Jere and Mulili when they are sent to guard Adika’s grave results in Jere using disrespectful language against Mulili and even shooting at him as he speeds away.pg 15. Mulili does not just stop at this. He promises that he (Jere) will, pay for it. “ You shall pays for it.” (Pg 15) He later revenges by instigating Jere’s arrest and imprisonment.

During the meeting for planning for the foreign head of state’s visit, it is made clear that 600 prisoners will be pardoned if the play some of them are to act is successful. However, Nicodemo is very apprehensive. He says ..

‘If that man Mosese is pardoned, it will be personal tragedy for me. I oppose this whole idea of prisoners sharing the dais with the rest of us.’ Pg 52

He is afraid of Mosese revenging against him because he is the one who betrayed him by planting drugs in his car.

At the entertainment planning committee, Mulili has differences with Kabito. This is after Mulili mistakes Kabito’s utterances to calling him a primary school kid. Kabito goes ahead to sarcastically tell Mulili to tell them the day he stepped into a secondary school. Mulili is so angered. He tells Kabito that he will pay for this. “ You plays with fire you goat. (Pg 57). These words are later reign forced by Boss when Mulili gives him false accusations against Kabito. He says, “When a man plays with fire, he gets burned.” Pg 60. He immediately commands Mulili to stage manage an accident and later Kabito is found dead.

Towards the end of the play, Jere and Mosese revenge the suffering the people of kafira have suffered under the Boss’s regime by executing Mulili and taking power (symbolized by the guns) in their hands.

Jere also executes Mulili on personal grounds of all he has suffered from him.

Traditions.

Traditions are cultural and societal practices that are characteristic of a certain community. The Kafiran society is characterized of certain practices. For instance, following Adikas death, the parents Nina and Doga feel obliged to conduct a shaving ceremony. It is this shaving ceremony that the Kafiran authorities are afraid of, feeling it will rekindle the memories of Adika which can easily arouse communal emotions and ignite agitations. This tradition is meant to satisfy and assuage the emotions of the parents and close relatives of the deceased and is therefore majorly harmless. Other than letting it go on, the heedless Kafiran administration bungles everything creating more problems in itself. These events contributes to the disastrous turn of the events for the leaders at the end.

There is also a traditional belief that the killers of a human being are normally haunted by his/her spirit or ghost. To escape this, the killer schemes to secretly burn the grave of the deceased symbolically burning the spirit preventing it from hunting him. This is exactly what happens when Juper who is left to guard Adika's grave slipped away to kill chagaga. By slipping away and leaving the grave unguarded, Adika's killers got humble opportunity to burn the grave and hence the crack on it when Nina and Doga visit it at the start of the play.

While Nina is admonishing Mulili and Jere who have been sent to announce the cancellation of the ceremony and guard the grave, (pg 9), she tells them she can strip naked before them causing them blindness. According to traditions, stripping naked by an age mates parent is regarded as an abomination that can be attended with disastrous consequences. Though uncommon, it is therefore a traditional step warning or at worst meant to punish the errand and disobedience people of a younger age .

Neocolonialism

Kafira is an independent state, however, the staff at the university of Kafira is still predominantly expatriates. (Pg 14-15).This is a case of neo colonialism as kafira cannot control sensitive institutions like universities by employing its professionals.

Foreign powers still exert a lot of control on Kafiran affairs. Regarding the foreign head of state who is due to visit kafira, Jusper reveals to us through his conversation with Regina, (pg 36).

Yes, with so many of his subjects unemployed, he is virtually jobless himself. He comes on a survey mission.

While Tumbo is explaining to the entertainment committee the importance of the foreign head of state visit, he says,

...Boss himself stresses the need to delight the visitor. Remember it is through his visit that the voice of our negotiators may continue to be heard.

This is a clear manifestation of how dependent of foreign masters kafira and its administration is.

Favoritism and nepotism.

Favoritism is a practice of favouring a person or a group at the expense of the others. Nepotism refers to the act of favouring people who are relatives. Both favoritism and nepotism do exist in this play.

The supreme leader of kafira state is Boss. He practices favoritism and nepotism. For instance, he has appointed Mulili who is his cousin and given him a very high and influential position in the government although Mulili is a very incompetent person. Mulili's performance in the administration is pathetic; however, he very confidently retains his banking on his consanguinity with Boss.

During the award of tenders for supply of milk to the university, Kabito initially and fairly secures the tender but when Mulili visits Boss, the decision is revoked in favour of Mulili who is Boss's cousin (pg54).

In prison, we meet with another case of favoritism when the Askari comes with a mug of tea (pg27) and offers it to only Mosese, excluding Jere. He favours one person and excludes the other.

Elsewhere, a competition for writing a play for the entertainment of the state guest is announced and various entries are received. The plays are supposed to be read and analyzed so that the winning one is selected and its winner awarded a prize. However, Tumbo, the chairman of the entertainment committee unilaterally announces Jusper's play the winner without following the procedures (pg48); He favours Jusper against the other competitors believing that Jusper is the cousin of Regina his girlfriend.

Favoritism and nepotism are social vices. A combination of these vices and other make Kafira an unattractive society to live in.

The Role of The educated and the elite in a society.

Throughout the play, students feature prominently as a powerful force to change the society. The conflict in the play builds up following a student's- Adika's death. Here, the students are struggling to liberate Kafira from dictatorship. As we are told in the play, Adika died "for the truth". His death however sows seeds of determination in students- the likes of Jusper to continue fighting for Justice in Kafira.

Therefore one of the crucial role of students is to fight for proper governance. This is where we see them protesting over poor governance policies that have seen the country populated by expatriates instead of Africans contrary to the Africanization programme. The students are also ready to fight over any burning issue that seems of no interest to the public good. For instance we are told that students are opposed to the foreign dignitary's visit (pg 68) as it will be of no use to them. They are also seen ridiculing the government over what should be given priority in the development agenda. Jusper who represents the students satirizes this by saying that during the prayers, they asked God to help them drop their Christian names. All in all, the students

therefore are seen as people who are always keeping this government in check each and every time and also provide a voice for the voiceless in a society.

Students are also brought out as spokesmen of truth and Justice. During a conversation with Jusper, Boss asks him who appointed the students spokesmen of truth and justice. Due to this, Boss and his officials do not hide their disgust for students as they think they talk too much and waste a lot of time over nothing gainful than concentrating on their studies. Boss (pg 68) accuses them of being unreasonable, clueless and disgusting. Tumbo (pg41) says they are a 'pain in the neck' and drink too much alcohol. This hatred sparks from them criticizing the government now and again. They are even described as people who lack understanding since they think they will remain students forever.

The educated elites on the other hand are portrayed as people who are not interested in struggle for a better change. While students are always keeping the government in check, the educated - the likes of Mosese remain hopeless and disillusioned and have nothing to do about their situations. (Pg 28) he says, 'It was better while we waited . Now we have nothing to look forward to. We have killed our past and are busy killing the future.'" Mostly, these people are used of their comfort zones and hence cannot gather enough courage to question anything that seems wrong. When students initiate a protest however, that is when you will see them come up. These elite also do not want to participate in politics which is presumably a dirty game. They leave it to the dumbest and illiterates like Mulili and stay back lamenting as things go bad not offering any solution.

The message Imbuga therefore wants to pass is that both the students and the educated elite should collaborate and corroborate for a common purpose. They ought not to shy away from politics but should participate towards bringing the desired changes in a country. They should realize that intellectual component is required in politics and not leaving illiterates to take charge of government hence spreading terror on innocent citizens.