

My Literature Lesson

An Analysis of Popular Literature in Kenyan High Schools

Caucasian

Themes

THEMES

When a writer creates a story, there is something that he/she wants to communicate to the reader or listener. This message is called a theme. Usually, poems and short stories and poems may contain one or two themes but novels and plays, usually have many themes.

A theme is not stated directly, hence, the author will use different characters and events in order to bring out the message or themes. In the play, 'The Caucasian Chalk Circle', some of the major themes that Brecht addresses are:

- Abuse of power
- Greed / materialism
- Selflessness
- Social class inequality
- Justice
- Betrayal
- Political and social turbulence
- Deceit, hypocrisy and religiosity
- Conflict / antagonism
- Love
- Irresponsibility

Abuse of power / Misuse of power

Abuse of power occurs when people in authority misuse the power bestowed upon them by virtue of their position or office. One may misuse his/her powers to enrich him/herself or to mistreat others. In the text, power is abused by the Governor, Natella, the soldiers / Ironshirts and the Fat Prince.

The Governor abuses power by enriching himself whereas his people remain poor. He is said to be as rich as Croesus, with very many horses and a vast estate yet many of his people are beggars. When he goes to church, he is confronted by many beggars, petitioners and mothers with hungry children. They cry for him to reduce the high taxes (pg. 14). His son has two doctors (p. 15) and he is said to be preparing to tear down slums to start the building of the east wing of his garden. He does not care about where the poor, slum people will go.

Natella is also seen to abuse her powers through her treatment of servants. She orders them around, insults them and even uses physical violence on them. For example, she beats up a young woman whom she accuses of almost tearing up her dress. She tells her, "I'll kill you, you bitch!" (p.24)

The Ironshirts/soldiers also abuse their powers on many occasions. They lash the people with thick whips when they move nearer to see Michael. The Corporal also abuses his powers when harassing Grusha by making sexual advances at her (p.). The soldiers also use violence on Azdak when they beat him on realizing that the Grand Duke is back.

The Fat Prince and the other princes also abuse their powers by overthrowing the Grand Duke and his Governor. The Fat Prince goes ahead and raids his brother's palace and arrests the Governor. He then kills him and orders the Ironshirts to hang his head on the door. He also orders them to look for Michael and to kill him (p.28). He also tries to have his nephew, Bizergan Kazbeki, appointed as the new Judge (p. 71).

Azdak also abuses power by favouring the poor in his judgments. Though his actions are motivated by the injustices that the poor have endured, he misuses his powers as judge in seeking revenge. He, for example, rules in favour of the bandit who is clearly a criminal.

Finally, it is the misuse of power that leads to other social ills such as injustice, violence and political instability. When those who are entrusted with power in society misuse it, it begets social and political turmoil. The citizens will find it difficult to obey authority if those in power do not obey the rules they expect others to follow.

Discussion point

Can you think of people in your society that abuse power? Discuss.

Greed and Materialism

Greed is whereby a person wants to have everything to him/herself. A materialistic person, on the other hand, is one who believes that money is more important than anything else in life. In the text, greed and materialism are evident in the Governor, the Fat Prince, Natella, the Mother-in-Law, the Corporal and others.

Georgi Abashwili is not satisfied with his riches. He is as rich as Croesus and yet he still wants to acquire more land by demolishing the houses of slum dwellers. While, many of the Governor's people and their children are sleeping hungry, the Governor is preparing to have geese for dinner.

Natella is materialistic in the way she values her clothes and jewelry. She is not satisfied with what she has and still complains about her husband only building for his son (p.19). After her husband is arrested, she forgets about him and her baby and instead concentrates on ensuring that

she carries all her clothes. In the end, she only bothers to look for Michael after she realizes that she needs him in order to inherit her husband's estates.

The Fat Prince and the other princes organize to overthrow the Grand Duke and the Governor. This is purely out of greed for power. The Fat Prince is greedy over his brother's wealth and power that he wants to take it by force. Because of greed for power, he plans to have one of his relatives as Judge too.

The Mother-in-Law is also seen to be greedy and materialistic. When Lavrenti goes to seek for a husband for his sister, the Mother-in-Law demands for four-hundred piasters. When she discovers that Grusha has a child, she demands another two-hundred. Instead of hiring a priest to conduct the wedding, the Mother-in-Law goes to look for a monk, who would be cheaper. She also complains about spending money to take care of the mourners.

Greed and materialism is also evident in the Old Man who demands three piasters from Grusha for milk. The Old Man does not care that the milk is for the baby and Grusha is forced to use her two week's wages to buy it. When Grusha leaves Michael on the doorsteps of the Peasant Couple, the husband tells his wife not to feed the baby but instead to take it to the village priest. Even the Corporal is materialistic when he decides to sell their horses and walk instead when pursuing Grusha and Michael (p.33)

A society that is greedy and materialistic becomes morally bankrupt. Greed and materialism leads to other vices such as corruption, exploitation and selfishness. When people value money or property too much, they lose important human values such as generosity, kindness and love for one another.

Discussion Point

Does greed / materialism make people in the society rich or poor?

Selflessness

Selflessness is whereby puts the welfare of others ahead of his or her own. A selfless person will sacrifice what he/she has to the benefit of others who may be less privileged or vulnerable. In the text, Grusha shows a lot of selflessness especially towards Michael who is not her real child.

First, when the Governor is beheaded and Natella takes off, Grusha decides to remain behind and take care of Michael the whole night. She is almost caught when the Fat Prince and the Ironshirts come back to hang the governor's head on the door-way. When Grusha tries to leave Michael, she hears as if it is telling her, "Woman, help me" (p.28)

The following day, Grusha picks the baby and heads for the north with it (p.29). On the way, she has to buy the baby milk. Even though the Old Man sells the milk exorbitantly, she sacrifices her two week salary to buy it for the sake of the baby. When she realizes she can no longer feed

the baby, she decides to leave it on the door-step of the Fat Peasant Woman, who has plenty of milk, a husband and a roof over her head. (p.34)

Secondly, when the Ironshirts, led by the Corporal, discover where Michael is hidden, Grusha risks her life by hitting the Corporal, taking the baby and running away. Grusha, again, risks her life and that of Michael by daring to cross the rotten bridge even after she is warned by the merchants (p.41)

Thirdly, during winter, Grusha has to bear the discomfort of staying in the house of her sister-in-law who is very religious and pious. She is hidden in a small dark room away from the neighbours to avoid being an embarrassment to his brother's family (p.47).

Fourthly, Grusha accepts to get married to a 'dying ma' – Jussup, for Michael's sake. She sacrifices her promise to Simon because she needs to provide food and a home for Michael. When Simon comes back and finds Grusha married, he becomes upset but Grusha decides to stay with Michael rather than follow him. When the soldiers come for Michael, she follows them forgetting the danger she is putting herself into.

Finally, she risks getting arrested by going back to the capital where Natella and the Corporal are waiting for her. Natella accuses her of stealing a child while the Corporal wants to arrest her for injuring him. Grusha is, however, prepared to face Natella in a court of law where judge Azdak decides the case in her favour.

The decision to give Grusha the child is purely based on the kind of sacrifices she makes for him. When the judge orders that the two women pull the baby, Grusha is unable to use force because of fear of destroying what she has sacrificed so much for.

Social Class Inequality

Social class inequality is a situation whereby a society is divided into groups according to their economic, political and social status. In the text, the difference between the rich and the poor is very pronounced. While the Grand Duke, the Governor, the princes and their families are affluent, other members of society are poor and dying of hunger.

Georgi Abashwili, the governor, is as rich as Croesus, while he has many beggars in his doorsteps and petitioners in his courtyard (p.14). He has "a healthy...many horses..." (p.13-14) and yet, many of his people live in slums. When he and his family goes to church, the baby is brought in an expensive carriage accompanied by two doctors. The poor people, on the other hand, display their thin, emaciated babies while others hold up crutches and petitions.

The children of the poor are sent to war but when they get injured, they are not compensated. The children of the rich, on the other hand, are not sent to war. Some of the petitioners beg for mercy for their relatives who have been arrested unfairly, "My brother is innocent, Your Grace,

misunderstanding...” (p.). While one of the Governor’s servants collects the petitions, another distributes coins from a purse with the Governor paying little attention.

The poor people in the text are not supposed to intermingle with the rich. When the people move forward to air their grievances to the Governor, the soldiers lash them with whips. Even when they only want to see young Michael, they are forced back by the soldiers violently. (p.14)

Despite all the poverty around, the Governor has employed two doctors to look after Michael even though he is not sick. Poor people such as Grusha cannot get even time to go to church on Easter Sunday as she is forced to go and look for a goose for the family dinner. Despite her hard work, she will not even eat it herself, “I’ll eat the feathers.” (p.17)

The poor people in society have to put their lives at risk in order to protect the rich. Simon Shashava and the Adjutant, for example has to escort Natella to the Capital. Even though he wants to remain behind and marry Grusha, he has no choice but to follow orders. Natella risks the lives of her servants by delaying their exit from the palace that is under attack. She wastes a lot of time sorting out her dresses and jewelry until the Adjutant has to force her to leave (p.25).

The people in higher positions mistreat those below them. For example, the Corporal harasses and intimidates one of the young soldiers because the soldier was unable to beat up the husband of a fat girl they had met. He even tells him that he won’t get promoted (p.33). The Corporal sells the soldiers horses and forces them to walk without limping – even though they are tired. To add salt to injury, he forces them to sing louder and louder.

In the courtroom, Natella says, “At least there are no common people here, thank God, I can’t stand their smell. It always gives me migraines.” One of Natella’s lawyers also describes Azdak as, the lowest fellow ever seen in Judge’s gown.” (p.88) Natella also refers to Grusha as, “a creature” and when she sees Michael dressed in rags, she says that he must have been in a pigsty.

Even though Azdak makes an attempt to address inequality in this society, the return of the Grand Duke shows that class inequality in society cannot be fully eradicated. Poor people in society will always suffer injustices and prejudices in the hands of the rich.

DISCUSSION POINT

Can you think of cases in your community where the rich have treated the poor unfairly?

Betrayal

Betrayal means to hurt an individual, group or country by going against its/his/her trust in you. One can betray another by harming him/her or by helping his/her enemy. In the text, betrayal can be seen in the Fat Prince, the Ironshirts, the Servants, the doctors, the Peasant woman, Natella, Jussup and Grusha.

The Fat Prince betrays his brother, the Governor, by plotting to have him arrested, assassinated and removed from power. When the Governor goes to church, he meets the Fat Prince who wishes him a happy Easter and pretends to be happy to see the governor's baby – Michael. After the Fat Prince gets the Governor killed, he takes over power and sends the Ironshirts to look for Michael and kill him.

The Governor's servants and doctors also betray him. As soon as the Governor is arrested and the war breaks out, they all run away. One of the servants tells Grusha to leave immediately, and not to save Michael. One of the doctors also says that he cannot stay a minute longer in that accursed house "...on that little brat's account." (p.21)

Betrayal is also evident among the Ironshirts. After the Governor's palace is attacked, the guards whose work is to defend him refuse to do so. They refuse to obey and instead stare coldly and indifferently at the Adjutant who tries to give them orders. Only the Adjutant and a few Ironshirts remain loyal by protecting the Governor's wife and escorting her to the capital.

The Peasant Woman betrays Grusha by revealing to the Corporal that Michael is not hers. This is in contrast to what she had promised Grusha about keeping the identity of the child a secret. This betrayal forces Grusha to go back and take the child, hitting the Corporal in the process and hence endangering her life and that of Michael even more.

Lavrenti, Grusha's brother also betrays her by arranging to have her married off instead of accommodating her. Grusha expects to be welcomed warmly and given a place to stay until Simon returns but instead she is hidden because her brother's wife does not want embarrassment. She is even forced to lie to her sister-in-law that she is on her way to meet her husband in order to be allowed to stay with a child. (p.47)

Jussup betrays his country by refusing to join other young men in going to war. He instead lies in bed pretending to be seriously sick. Immediately he learns that the war is over, he wakes up, much to the surprise of everyone in the room.

Natella betrays her husband and child when the war breaks out. She escapes from the palace and leaves Michael behind. She tells one of the servants to put the child down and instead go to look for her little saffron coloured boots to match with her green dress. She does not even show remorse for her husband's death and does not bother to look for Michael until she is told that she cannot inherit her husband's estates without him.

Grusha also betrays Simon by agreeing to marry Jussup. Simon and Grusha had made a promise to each other to get married as soon as he returned from escorting Natella to the Capital but when he comes back, he finds Grusha married and with a child. Even though Grusha gets married because of unfortunate circumstances and the child is not hers, Simon is angry and disappointed because he cannot marry her. After realizing the truth about Grusha's marriage, Simon decides to support Grusha even in court.

In conclusion, betrayal is the source of all the major events that take place in the text. It is the betrayal of the Governor that leads to war in the city which in turn forces Grusha onto her

journey. The rich and those in power also betray the poor and those whom they are expected to serve. Characters such as Azdak try to address the injustices of those who feel betrayed.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Does the Governor betray the people? If, yes, how?

Do the Princes betray the country? If, yes, how?

Justice

There is a lot of injustice in the text mostly perpetuated by the rich, the powerful and those in authority. The people seek justice through the courts, through petitioning the Governor and sometimes through seeking revenge on their own. Justice is dispensed primarily through the court system. However, this is not as portrayed in the text.

In the prologue, the Delegate from Tiflis comes to hear and determine the case between the Goat Herders and the Fruit Growers. Justice is seen to be served when, first, each group is given a chance to explain why they deserve the farm. After their presentations, the Delegate decides in favour of the Fruit Farmers because they have more elaborate plans for the farm. Even though the Goat Herders are the original owner of the land, they don't have any meaningful plans for it. The verdict in this case is arrived at on the basis of reasonable consensus rather than strict law. The two parties are satisfied with the decision and they decide to partake in drinking together.

The people also seek justice through petitioning the Governor. However, this not a good option because he does not heed to their cries and instead they are whipped and pushed back by the Ironshirts. The beggars and petitioners have various grievances including; too much tax, corrupt officials, arrested family members etc. When the Governor is overthrown by the Fat Prince, the people feel a sense of justice which is, however, short-lived.

The court is specifically established to dispense justice to all. However, in the text, the people have little faith in the court which is seen to always rule in favour of the rich. After the Governor is killed, even the City Judge is hung because he is also seen to be part of the injustices suffered by the people.

Judge Azdak represents justice, especially to the poor. When he discovers that he has been harbouring the Grand Duke, he tells Shauwa to take him to the City (Nuka) for judgment. Unfortunately, at Nuka, the city Judge has been hung and Azdak cannot get the justice he wants. Ironically, Azdak is appointed judge after he impresses the Ironshirts with his knowledge of the legal system and the injustices that the people have suffered.

Judge Azdak practices a brand of justice that, in some cases, sets the guilty free and punishes the victims. He, largely, rules in favour of the poor as a way of addressing the injustice that they have long suffered. For example, he rules in favour of the Doctor, who is accused of neglecting his patient. (p.77), he rules against Ludovica who is a 'victim of rape', he acquits the Old Woman accused of theft, he rules in favour of Grusha and even 'erroneously' signs off the divorce of Grusha and Jussup instead of the Old Couple.

Some people, like the Farmers, feel aggrieved by his 'unfair' rulings and seek their own justice through revenge. They beat him up when they realize that the Grand Duke is back and the war is over. Surprisingly, the Grand Duke reappoints Azdak as City Judge which saves his life. Azdak enjoys some justice from the Grand Duke for the help he had offered him when he was on the run.

There cannot be peace without justice in society. Those who are treated unfairly and unjustly will always look for ways to get some justice. Even though the courts are the main avenues for seeking justice, they can only be useful if people have faith in them. The courts should also view people as being equal and hence dispense justice without fear or favour.

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Is it right for an individual to seek justice through revenge?
2. Apart from the courts, where else can one seek justice in your community?

Political and Social Instability

Political and social instability in society is a result of poor leadership. Poor leadership on the other hand, leads to other social problems such as hunger, insecurity, injustice and poverty. When the people get fed up, they may choose to forcefully remove those in office through a coup or an uprising. This, in turn, brings about political and social instability through war.

In the prologue, the setting is in the ruins of what was once a thriving Caucasian village before the war (p.7). Everything in the village has been ruined; tobacco is rationed and wine (p.8). The villagers have also lost many people as a result of political warfare. The Goat Herders have been forced to leave their land and go elsewhere on orders from the government.

The effects of warfare are also evident in Nuka where the Governor is confronted with many beggars, cripples and petitioners. A lot of resources have gone to finance the war which has resulted to hunger and poverty among the people. Many soldiers have died with others suffering injuries – this has resulted to many cripples in clutches. To make matters worse, the Governor is contemplating bringing down their houses (slums).

Political instability often affects the poor more than the rich. The singer comments: “when the house of a great one collapses, many little ones are slain” (p.20). Political instability leads to displacement of people as evidenced by the Grand Duke, who has to run and seek refuge in the house of Azdak. Natella also has to run to the capital for her own safety while Grusha heads for the North.

Political instability also creates food shortages as seen when Grusha is unable to get milk for Michael. She is forced to pay two piasters for a little drop. The Old Man says, “We have no milk. The soldiers from the city have our goats. Go to the soldiers if you want milk.” (p.31)

Warfare instills fear in people as evident in Jussup. He feigns sickness to avoid being drafted into the army. The Peasant Woman is fearful of the soldiers that she denounces Michaela and betrays Grusha to the Corporal. The Grand Duke, Natella and Grusha run away from the City due to fear after the war breaks.

Political and social instability give rise to many other social evils such as corruption, violence, irresponsibility, negligence of duty etc. Warfare has many adverse effects to people in society. These include: displacement of people, fear, food shortages, insecurity and injustice.

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Who is responsible for the political instability in the text?
2. How does political instability cause food shortage?

Deceit, Religiosity and Hypocrisy

Deceit is dishonesty whereas hypocrisy is when a person's actions are different from what s/he says. Religiosity, on the other hand, is whereby one pretends to be religious but his/her actions are contrary to the religion that s/he follows. Many characters in the text are either, deceitful, pious or hypocritical.

Georgi Abashwili, the Governor, is deceitful and hypocritical when he and his family attend church on Easter Sunday. On the doorway, they are met by beggars and petitioners, who want help from him. He, however, does not bother to listen to their cries and instead allows his bodyguards to whip them and push them back. This is contrary to what a devoted Christian should do. While the family goes to church, they don't care to allow the servants, like Grusha, time to go to church as well.

The Fat Prince is deceitful and hypocritical when he also attends church and even wishes his brother a 'happy Easter Sunday' and bows before Michael. (p.15). The Fat Prince does all this while he knows that he will behead the Governor after the church service.

Religiosity, hypocrisy and excessive piety is displayed by Aniko. When Grusha arrives at her brother's, she is hungry and worn out but instead of Aniko welcoming her warmly and

sympathizing with her, she questions her especially about the child. When Grusha collapses due to fatigue, Aniko quickly accuses her of carrying scarlet fever – a dangerous infectious disease.

Grusha is forced to lie to Aniko that she is married and that she is going to meet her husband in the mountains. This is after Lavrenti warns her that Aniko is very religious and will not allow her to stay if she has a child with no father. (p.45-46) Aniko's hypocrisy is seen by the way she shouts at her servants and how she wears two pairs of socks to church – ever since her servant was seen in church with a hole in her stocking.

Lavrenti is hypocritical as well when he pretends to help Grusha by marrying her off to a 'dying man' instead of giving her a place to stay in his own home. He even uses his own money to pay off the Mother-in-Law to accept the marriage to take place.

The Monk is hypocritical when he accepts to be paid to keep quiet about the existence of a child. He is also dishonest because he is drunk instead of being a role model for others in society. The mourners are also hypocritical by the way they seem to be concerned with the food being served instead of the impending death of Jussup.

Jussup is deceptive when he pretends to be a person who is sick and whose death is imminent. He fools everybody, including his own mother, to the point that a funeral is arranged. When he learns through what the guests are saying, that the war is over, he makes a sudden recovery much to the shock of the guests.

Grusha suffers as a result of the deception, hypocrisy and religiosity around her. She suffers under the roof of the Governor, she is mistreated in her brother's house and because of Jussup's deception, she gets a husband she does not want.

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Is Azdak hypocritical / deceptive?
2. Are the Ironshirts hypocritical/deceptive?

Conflict / Antagonism

A conflict is a disagreement between two or more individuals or groups. The text addresses several conflicts such as: the conflict between the two land owning groups; the rich and the poor; the Governor and the Princes; Grusha and Natella; and Grusha and Jussup.

Firstly, the play begins with a conflict between the Goat Herders' Collective Farm and the Fruit Growing Commune. These two groups quarrel over the ownership of the valley that has been left by the Soviet army after the end of the war. The Fruit growers want to develop the land for farming while the goat herders want it because it originally belonged to them. A Delegate from the State Reconstruction Commission is sent from Tiflis – the capital, to hear their case. A decision is made to award the fruit growers because of their good plans for the valley.

Secondly, the poor and the rich are in conflict over resources. The Governor, George Abashwili, is extremely rich yet he ignores the plight of those under him. His courtyard is filled with beggars and petitioners who want his assistance but he gives them the deaf ear. He ignores the pleas from the beggars and parents holding emaciated children in their hands. Instead, the Ironshirts whip and push back the poor to give way for the Governor and his family. In contrast, the Governor spends a lot of money on his son's clothes, carriage and even intends to build him a palace. He also has plans to demolish slums belonging to the poor to give room for his garden. The poor welcome the death of the Governor and support the coup that also overthrows the Grand Duke from power.

Thirdly, the Princes have a conflict with the Governor and the Grand Duke. The country is at war which is being fought by the Princes. The Princes, however, feel that they are not receiving enough support from the Grand Duke and the Governor. They devise a plot to overthrow the two leaders by killing them. While the Grand Duke manages to escape, the Governor is caught and beheaded in his palace. Eventually, the Grand Duke secures support from other countries and he manages to take back his seat and kills the Fat Prince and the other conspirators.

Fourthly, there is the main conflict which is between Natella and Grusha over who should keep the baby Michael. Their case is taken before judge Azdak who orders that a chalk circle be drawn on the floor of the court and the two women ordered to pull Michael from the centre. After Natella wins twice, the judge rules that the child be given to Grusha since she shows motherly love by not pulling too hard.

Finally, there is a conflict between Grusha and Jussup. This happens after she gets married to him while thinking that he is about to die. After it is announced that the war is over, Jussup wakes up and starts to mistreat Grusha by ordering her to treat him like a husband. "...Get the brush! To hell with you! Are you the wife here? Or are you a visitor?...you're my wife and you're not my wife....God has given you sex – and what d'you do? I don't have ten piasters to buy myself a woman in the city." (p.56-57) Grusha, finally, manages to divorce him.

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT

Is there conflict between:

- Grusha and the Corporal?
- The Monk and Jussup's mother?

Love

Love is presented in the following ways: parental love i.e. the love that parents have for their children, filial love i.e. the love that exists between siblings, and romantic love which is the intimate love between two people of the opposite sex who are not related by blood.

Parental love is the love that a father or mother has for the child. However, the text shows that one does not need to be the real parent in order to have parental love for a child. Natella, who is Michael's real mother, does not show much love for him. She is more concerned with her material possessions than her child. She, for instance, wastes time packing her clothes and jewelry that she does not know that Michael has been left behind when war breaks out in the city. The Governor, on the other hand, shows an extreme form of parental love by showering Michael with a lot of care and wealth. He wants to construct a palace for him and has even hired two doctors to take care of him.

Grusha displays parental love when she takes Michael as her own son and protects him from the Fat Prince and the Ironshirts who want to kill him. She spends all her money on him and even risks her own life when she hits the Corporal on the head and dares to cross the rotten bridge for his sake. Even though she had promised Simon that she would wait for him, she goes ahead and agrees to marry Jussup so that Michael could have a home. Grusha's love for Michael shows itself before the court when she is unable to pull him too hard out of the chalk circle and that is why judge Azdak rules in her favour.

Filial love is evident between Grusha and her brother Lavrenti. This is when Grusha walks on foot to the North in hope that her brother will shelter her and the child. Lavrenti tries his best to protect Grusha from his wife, Aniko, who is a pious Christian. He lies to his wife that Grusha's child has a father who lives in the North and that they are on their way there. He even arranges a bogus marriage between Grusha and Jussup to enable his sister get a place to live and a home for her child. Even though, Lavrenti appears cowardly and his actions seem immoral, his intention is to see that his sister is safe and gets a comfortable place to stay.

Romantic love is evident in Simon and Grusha. Before Simon leaves for the capital, he leaves Grusha a necklace as a symbol of their engagement. They promise not to get into other relationships but to wait for each other. However, when the war is over and Simon returns, he finds Grusha married and with a child. He is angry and demands his necklace back. On realizing the truth about Grusha's marriage and the child's identity, Simon decides to support Grusha during her case with Natella and even volunteers to tell the court that the child is his. In the end, the judge gives Grusha the child and grants her a divorce from Jussup which allows Simon to have a wife and a child.

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT

- Is there parental love between Jussup and his mother?
- Is there romantic love between the Governor and his wife?

Irresponsibility

This is refusal to attend to one's duty or failure to do what one is expected. In the text, the leadership, especially on the part of the Governor is portrayed as very irresponsible. Georgi is very rich and yet his people are extremely poor. He does not want to listen to their pleas even

though it is his responsibility, as a Governor, to ensure that they have all the necessities of life. Instead of improving the poor people's houses, he wants to demolish them to give way for his own garden.

When the Governor attends church, he finds many beggars and petitioners waiting for him on the doorway. He shows no interest in them and instead they are whipped back by his Ironshirts. On the contrary, when it comes to his own son, he spends a lot of money on his clothes and even plans to put up a palace for him. He has hired two doctors to ensure he does not fall sick and he is even driven in a golden carriage.

The Governor shows no interest in the ongoing war and when the injured Rider comes with a message, he does not want to listen to him. He says that he does not wish to receive military news before dinner. Surprisingly, he finds time to speak with the architects. Perhaps his refusal to receive the confidential papers from the Rider may have resulted to his death. The Rider may have been carrying a warning for him to run just as the Grand Duke does.

Natella is an irresponsible mother who not only neglects her duties as a mother but also concentrates more on clothing and jewelry instead. After the Governor is killed, Natella runs away with the Adjutant but she forgets to check whether she has the baby with her. She spends time quarreling with her servants and picking her clothes and shoes that she does not confirm where the baby is.

The Governor's servants are also irresponsible by abandoning the palace and even leaving Michael behind when they run away. The two doctors charged with the responsibility of taking care of Michael are also irresponsible when they keep blaming each whenever the baby cries. When the palace is under attack, they also take off leaving it behind.

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT

- Is the Monk irresponsible?
- Does irresponsibility lead to conflict in the text? If so, how?