

# Tutorial letter 202/1/2017

**Genres in Language and Literature:  
Theory, Style and Poetics**

**ENG2602**

**Semesters 1**

**Department of English Studies**

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BAR CODE

Dear Student

## PRE-EXAMINATION INFORMATION

The examination will be a two hour paper. You will be expected to write two essays. The paper will be divided into two sections: a section on language and a section on literature. You will be expected to answer one question per section.

**NB: Please manage your time carefully. You would have to write one essay per hour. Keep this in mind when preparing for the exam.**

The section on language will have a question on Persuasive Prose and a question on Conversational Analysis. You will be expected to answer one of these questions.

The section on literature will have a question on Prose Fiction, a question on Poetry, and a question on Drama. You will be expected to answer one of these questions.

Even though you will have a choice in the exam, we suggest that you do at least some preparation on all the sections, and perhaps prepare at least two units per section in detail. If you only prepare one unit per section there is a risk that you could find the question on the unit that you prepared to be difficult. If, on the other hand, you are prepared to answer a question on more than one unit per section, you would be able to switch to answering on a different unit.

In each unit, you can expect the following types of questions:

Persuasive Prose: you will be given a short passage from an unseen persuasive text (such as a newspaper article, an advertisement, a political speech, etc.). You will have to write an essay in which you analyse the passage: this means that you will have to outline briefly **what** the passage is about, **why** it has been written, and **who** the target audience is, and then to explain in detail **how** it has been written. Your essay should focus on **how** the author **uses language** to persuade his/her target audience.

Conversation: you will be given an excerpt from a real life conversation which you will be asked to analyse according to specific aspects and features of Conversational Analysis. Refer to the 'Conversational analysis additional resource' document under the 'Additional Resources' tab on myUnisa for a survey of the key facets of this section.

Prose fiction: you will be given a short passage from an unseen prose fiction text. You will have to write an essay in which you analyse the passage, discussing in detail how it uses language, for example, to portray character, shape, tone and setting, for thematic and symbolic effects, etc.

Poetry: you will be given a poem from the list of poems provided under 'Additional Resources' on myUnisa. You will have to write an essay in which you analyse the poem, discussing in detail how it uses language to present and explore its main themes and concerns.

Drama: you will be given an excerpt from an unseen play. You will be expected to write an essay in which you analyse how the passage uses language, for example, to form imagery or reveal the qualities of the characters in relation to the passage's main themes and concerns.

**Use the following additional guidelines to help you prepare for the examination:**

- Read your study guide and the prescribed book. Make notes of the important features of each genre of writing.
- Read as widely as possible, including newspapers, magazines, novels, short stories, poems and dramas. Write notes on the texts that you read, outlining the way they use the strategies that are appropriate to each genre.
- Pay attention to general features of language use, such as point of view, register, diction, tone, irony and figures of speech as you analyse extracts from texts in preparation for the examination.
- Write sample essays in which you examine the way each extract in the reader uses the conventions of its genre.
- Remember to time yourself as you write these sample essays since you will be expected to write two essays in two hours in the exam.

Good luck with your preparations!

## **RESPONSE TO ASSIGNMENT 02**

### **QUESTION 1: POETRY**

The assignment consisted of **THREE** questions. You were required to answer either Question 1, Question 2 or Question 3. If you had chosen Question 1, you would have been required to answer a question on Poetry.

In this question you were requested to respond the question below:

Read Study Unit 4 in your Study Guide before beginning this assignment. The activities in your study guide will train you to provide a relevant and insightful reading of the poem and will guide you in tackling such important aspects of the poem as the poetic subject, form and argument, diction and mood, main ideas and tropes, and poetic language.

Perform a close study of the poem by Simone Stellenboom found in the link below. In a carefully worded essay, analyse how she uses poetic devices (schemes and tropes), syntax, diction and other language techniques to comment on the theme of loss in this poem.

<http://www.poetrypotion.com/to-the-still-born-by-simonne-stellenboom/>

(Stellenboom, Simonne. 2016. "To The Still Born." <http://www.poetrypotion.com/to-the-still-born-by-simonne-stellenboom/> Accessed: 19 April 2016.)

We expected you to focus on the following keywords :

- **Essay**  
Your response to this question should be formulated in a well-structured essay as outlined in Tutorial Letter 301. In this module you are not allowed to use subheadings for your essay, it should be evident in the manner in which you phrase your paragraphs and the content thereof what each paragraph serves as.
- **Carefully-worded**  
This clarifies that you are not going to be assessed on content and structure only but on cohesion and correct grammatical use of language as well. (Please refer to the Assessment Criteria in Tutorial Letter 101 for further information.)

- **Analyse**

We expect you “to examine critically, so as to bring out the essential elements” (Dictionary.com) of the poem. This means that you were not expected to list, but to give an in-depth discussion that shows your understanding of the poem’s essence.

The next list contains terms that should become part of your daily vocabulary if you are going to succeed in this module.

- Schemes
- Tropes
- Diction
- Syntax
- Language techniques

You need to

- understand the meaning of each feature (aspect)
- know how to identify each feature
- be able to discuss how each identified aspect functions to carry the theme across

Please refer to the poetry slides under “Additional Resources” on MyUnisa for further assistance.

- **Loss**

You were expected to focus your response on this word as it is central to your argument. For each feature in the above bullets that you discussed, your discussion would have been incomplete if you did not relate it back to the theme of “loss”.

What follows is an example of a response that you could have written. Since there are varied interpretations of any sample of literature, not all possible responses to the poem can or will be explored. However, rest assured that all well-substantiated arguments will be duly credited during the marking process.

The speaker has used a conversational tone to address a stillborn child. Other tones, poetic devices and language techniques have also been employed to communicate the message of loss in this poem, as shall be revealed in the analysis that follows.

From the title of the poem it is clear that the speaker adopts a conversational tone, by addressing the poem to the stillborn child. This suggests that the child can actually hear the speaker. This is continued through the use of the second person pronouns “you”, “your”. Combined with the initial address, this reveals how difficult it is to let go of the deceased baby. It could also be a way of showing that although the child is dead, in the hearts and minds of those remaining, she will always remain, therefore, by being alive at heart she is being addressed. (The baby’s sex is implied in the colour “pink” (L.3) as a common colour for girls and through the word, “divas” (L.9), which refers to female celebrities in the music industry.) A collective voice is also used through the use of the words “we” and “our”. This implies that the speaker is addressing the child on behalf of others, who could be family members and it gives an idea that the loss suffered is not only limited to the speaker but to more people, thus making it a significant loss.

An appreciative tone is discerned from the extended metaphor of comparing the dead baby to a flower. The speaker goes into great detail revealing the similarities between the flower and the baby to highlight the baby’s beauty. This comparison makes one feel that it is not right or fair that someone this beautiful should die. Not that beautiful people do not die, however this extended metaphor also refers to the untimely death, through the phrase, “we never saw you blossom and unfold”. It refers to how a flower progresses through to maturity and this is what the child has been denied by being stillborn. This evokes emotions of sadness and sympathy in the reader as s/he imagines what it is like to be in the parents’ shoes and be deprived of an opportunity to see your child grow to maturity.

The alliteration in “proudly pastel and pink” is also connected to this appreciative tone. It draws attention to colours and hues that are associated with babies and their cuteness. This combined with the ribbons and lace gives a vivid image of what the baby is dressed in (even in death). This image reiterates the baby’s untimely death, which intensifies the sadness.

The second stanza brings a second metaphor in which the baby is compared to an angel. This implies purity because angels are believed to be elevated from any type of impurity. This is connected to the untimely death in that the baby did not live to commit a sin and stain her purity, therefore she is angelic. This intensifies the evoked emotions especially through the reiteration of this purity and innocence where the speaker states “for now it is all / it is all we will ever do” in lines fifteen and sixteen. This alludes to the fact that since the baby has not lived to annoy, disappoint or do wrong, the loved ones can do nothing else but love the child since there is no other emotion they can associate it with. This is also emphasized through the repeated form in “it is all / it is all”. The angel metaphor and purity allusions are therefore a consolation to the bereaved that their baby is not ever going to do wrong and face the consequences.

The reference to the angel’s “wings” is connected to the previous idea of purity and by mentioning that the baby is flying, the speaker implies that there is nothing heavy (like sin, is the conclusion) to pull the baby down. This creates an idea of the ease with which the baby will enter heaven, a place that was already alluded to, in “heavenly grace”, as the baby’s destination. In some Christian beliefs it is people without sin; either by default like the baby or through confession, that shall enter heaven. Since the baby has not sinned, she can “fly” into heaven without any qualms. This is another source of comfort to the loved ones that they are assured that their baby is guaranteed a place in heaven, thus lightening the deep loss that they are experiencing.

The speaker juxtaposes the present and the past to emphasize the impact of the loss. By mentioning the past, memorable stages of the baby’s development are brought forth and the reality of the loss is made prominent with the present. Although the baby was growing inside one person, the effect touched others as well and this is again revealed in the pronoun “us”. The alliteration used in “a bud so brazen and brave” alludes to the strong impact the baby’s presence was, already in the womb. This can be discerned from the explosive “b” sound that would be hard to ignore just like the baby’s existence in the mother’s womb. In line twenty, the speaker uses another heavy sound (“g”) in “grew and gave and gaced” that is also spaced to imitate a regular heartbeat, symbolizing the live baby in the womb. It also draws attention to the words that show how as the baby developed she affected the lives of those connected to her. As she “grew”, she “gave” hope and “graced” their lives with the promise of a beautiful life and love to come. The baby may not have given love literally but through its presence it might have brought the couple or family together, thus giving love. This elaboration on the effect of the baby’s presence makes the reader realise how much more painful the loss that the family has suffered is. Had this been an early miscarriage, it would have hurt, but as a stillborn, the family has been exposed to the exciting moments of feeling the baby move and has been that much more aware of its presence, which means that the pain of the loss will be intensified.

It is this brief time spent with the baby while in the womb that will give the bereaved family good memories to reminisce about as indicated through the words “cherish” and “save” (L.22). Lines 23 and 24 reveal that although the family might be comforted by the memories of the baby, the “lost hereafters and tomorrows”, which refers to the possible future that the baby will have had and the memories that go with that, are lost forever. This is difficult to cope with that is why the words “cave” and “give in” are used. They give a vivid image of strong wall being destroyed and that is how the family’s brave front is also affected when they think of the lost possibilities. The word “almost” marks a change from a wistful tone to a much braver and hopeful one. It indicates that they do not totally surrender to the feeling of despair and depression associated with “cav[ing]” and “giv[ing] in”.

The last four lines of the poem returns to a resolution that was alluded to earlier of the child being in heaven. In these lines the speaker mentions “exist[ence] in a place not too far”. This reiterates the “different place” from line thirteen which alludes to the Christian belief of a heaven. The word “knowing” confirms the conviction that the family has that the child is in this place, which brings consolation to them. The line “Hear us as we say” reiterates the idea that the child lives after death, which was initiated in the title, thus emphasizing the family’s source of comfort, that the child now has eternal life and can hear them, therefore implying that she is not completely gone.

The irregular rhyme pattern is symbolic of the irregularity of a baby being stillborn after developing to full-term. It also signifies a seemingly unplanned address from the heart, to show that the message that is being conveyed in this poem supersedes the aesthetic aspects of poetry. This reiterates the idea of how moved the speaker is by the untimely death of the baby.

Through various poetic devices, the speaker has managed to convey the sense of deep loss that is experienced by the bereaved, especially after carrying the fetus to term. The consolation is derived from the knowledge that there is life after death and the baby is guaranteed a place in heaven because she did not live enough to blemish her life with wrong-doing of any kind.

**TOTAL: 100**

Best wishes for the exam!

Lungelwa Phakathi

## **QUESTION 2: PROSE**

The assignment consisted of **THREE** questions. You were required to answer either Question 1, Question 2 or Question 3. If you had chosen Question 2, you would have been required to answer a question on Prose.

Below is an extract from the 1950s short story *Kwashiorkor* (1972) by Can Themba. The extract describes the experiences of a man called Abner after he moves from rural South Africa to Johannesburg during the apartheid era.

Write an essay with an introduction, body and conclusion (without sub-headings) on the extract in which you show how the literary features of the passage (such as diction and poetic devices) develop the **theme, the changing of identity**. Discuss how the extract suggests **the ways in which identity changes** in these circumstances and the **reasons why** these changes occur. Your essay should also show how the extract **contrasts the city with rural South Africa** and suggests the **significance of these differences** in relation to the changes undergone by Abner.

Ensure that you support your discussion of the theme with quotes from the passage and explain how the quotes support your statements. Do NOT discuss anything in your essay that you cannot relate to thematic development.

First, there were the ordinary problems of adjustment; the tribal boy had to fit himself into the vast, fast-moving, frenetic life in the big city. So many habits, beliefs, customs had to be fractured overnight. So many reactions that were sincere and instinctive were laughed at in the city. A man was continually changing himself, leaping like a flea from contingency to contingency. But Abner made it, though most of the time he did not know who he was, whither he was going. He only knew that this feverish life had to be lived, and identity became so large that a man sounded ridiculous for boasting he was a Mopedi or a Mosuto or a Xhosa or a Zulu—nobody seemed to care. You were just an African *here*, and somewhere *there* was a white man: two different types of humans that impinged, now and then—indeed often—but painfully.

(Themba, Can. 1972. *The Will to Die*. Cape Town: Africasouth Paperbacks, p. 16.)

For this question, you were asked to write an **essay** (without sub-headings) on the extract in which you show how **literary features** function to develop the **theme**, the **changing of identity**. Your essay needed to:

- Discuss the ways in which identity changes in the circumstances portrayed in the extract and
- Explore the **significance** of the contrast created between the city and rural South Africa

You were told **not** to discuss anything **unrelated to thematic development**. Your essay needed to have an introduction, body and conclusion. What follows is some feedback on how this question might have been answered. Note that it is **not** a model essay, but a discussion on the correct way to approach the question, using the WHAT, WHY, HOW method of writing a critical analysis.

## 1. WHAT

Your **introduction** should have briefly explained to your reader what your essay is about. This answers the WHAT question in the WHAT, WHY, HOW method of writing a critical analysis, and should show your reader that you **understand the extract in very basic terms** before beginning your analysis. Below is an example:

The extract describes the experiences of a man called Abner after his move from rural South Africa to Johannesburg during the apartheid era [**Note: In your introduction your explanation does not need more detail than this.**]. In this essay I am going to discuss how the language and literary devices in the given extract function to develop the theme, the changing of identity.

## 2. WHY

You should then have read the extract very carefully to determine the answer to the next question: WHY? In other words, WHY has this piece of writing been written? In prose fiction, the answer to WHY the text has been written is always the **theme** or themes being explored. For this question, you have been asked to discuss a specific theme, the **changing of identity**. This does not mean that you could not have discussed other themes in order to develop your main discussion, as long as you stayed on topic and only used your discussion of other themes to **support** your main argument about the changing of identity. After a close reading of the extract, you also should have come to logically derived conclusions about HOW identity changes and why. Your close reading of the passage should help you come to these conclusions in your **planning** stage.

**Discussion 1:** In your **planning** stage, you could have made a list of the significant information given in the extract, underlining important words (i.e. words that relate to the changing of identity and that describe the city and rural areas). However, please note that your actual essay should contain **NO LISTS** of any kind; your essay must be written as a continuous piece of writing separated into paragraphs.

Example of planning:

- Life in the city is described as vast, fast-moving, and frenetic.
- Habits, beliefs and customs have to be fractured very quickly (“overnight”) in the city.
- Reactions are sincere and instinctive in the rural areas, but this sincere and instinctive way of reacting to things is laughed at in the big city. (Note that if sincerity and acting on instincts are laughed at, how is one supposed to react in the city?)

- A man has to change himself continuously in the city. A simile, 'leaping like a flea', is used. A man has to leap from 'contingency to contingency'.
- Abner is successful at this life, though he does not know who he is or where he is going most of the time.
- Identity becomes enlarged in the city, and identities like 'Mopedi', 'Mosuto', 'Xhosa' and 'Zulu' become insignificant.

**NOW** that **planning is done**, the task of writing the essay can begin. Notice that the plan is a list of observations that can be used in the essay, but by itself **has no cohesion or logic**. In essay-writing, the information in the list needs to be **organised** into a **discussion** about one thing, **the changing of identity**.

**Discussion 2:** You might have noticed that all the observations of differences between city and rural area contribute to a single theme, that identity in the city becomes something capable of quick change and becomes less fixed. It can be said that the main message in the extract is that identity in the city is elusive, something that cannot be depended on or grasped because it is always changing, always needing to be something different than what it was before. WHY IS THIS? This happens because city-life itself is constantly changing and full of energy and the unexpected, requiring the ability to change constantly. Now that I know that this is the central message about the changing of identity, I need to explain in the Body of my essay HOW this theme/message is developed.

### 3. HOW

The next and **most important question** you need to ask when writing a critical analysis essay is HOW. In other words, **how** is the theme shaped and developed throughout the extract? In order to answer this question, you need to closely examine the language and structure of the extract. What diction has been used and why? Why is the information in the extract ordered in a specific way? Note that the supporting instruction in your assignment gives you a hint about how to go about doing this by telling you to **focus on the differences** Abner experiences **between city and rural countryside**.

**Example of the body of an essay:**

**Note: I have underlined the linking words and phrases that give the essay logic and cohesion. These phrases also sometimes highlight where analysis is taking place, rather than paraphrasing. You should not underline these words in your essay, but please note the importance of these phrases.)**

The extract explores the way the character, Abner's, understanding of identity changes when he moves to the city. The conditions that lead to this are implied in the contrasts between city and rural South Africa. The differences between city and rural area contribute to a single theme, that the ability to change is necessary for success in the city. It can be said that the main message in the extract is that identity in the city becomes less fixed because it always needs to change. This happens because city-life itself is constantly changing and full of energy and the unexpected, necessitating the ability to change constantly.

The differences between city and rural South Africa are already signalled when the narrator tells us that Abner has to 'adjust' and 'fit himself' into life in the city, which suggests that he has to change. We are told that Abner had to 'adjust' to the city's 'vast, fast-moving, frenetic life in the big city' which implies that life in the rural areas is by contrast small, slow-moving and controlled or highly structured. Habits, beliefs and customs have to be fractured 'overnight', implying that habits, beliefs and customs in the rural areas remain unchallenged and unchanged. The idea that habits, beliefs and customs need to be disrupted in this way is the first indication that identity in the city cannot be built on anything constant or stable.



Another difference Abner experiences is that reactions are sincere and instinctive in the rural areas, but this sincere and instinctive way of reacting to things is laughed at in the big city. There is the suggestion that Abner feels compelled to be more cautious and secretive about his thoughts and feelings in the city, and perhaps compelled to hide behind a persona of some kind. We are told that a 'man has to change himself continuously in the city', suggesting the persona Abner adopts varies from moment to moment. A simile, 'leaping like a flea', is used. The image of the flea suggests the smallness and insignificance of an individual in the city. A man has to leap from 'contingency to contingency' because as things change, new plans have to be made. Finally we are told that identity becomes 'enlarged in the city', and identities like 'Mopedi', 'Mosuto', 'Xhosa' and 'Zulu' become insignificant because people in the city do not care about them. These identities are absorbed into the overarching identity of 'African', something defined in relation to what the narrator calls a 'different type of human being', a white man. The idea that Africans and white men are 'two different kinds of human beings' is possibly one of the effects of apartheid, which emphasised differences between racial identities rather than shared humanity, and the word 'painful' is a hint at the conflict and suffering that results from this.

### Example of a conclusion

**(Your conclusion should sum up the main points of your essay. It should not contain any new information or further analysis.)**

The passage thus explores how identity changes when an individual moves from the structured, unchanging rural area to the city, where the fast pace and unpredictability of life forces identity to become more adaptable. Contrasts between the two spaces of city and rural area are emphasised to show why and how identity needs to change in this way.

**TOTAL: 100**

Regards

F. Ismail

### QUESTION 3: DRAMA

The assignment consisted of **THREE** questions. You were required to answer either Question 1, Question 2 or Question 3. If you had chosen Question 3, you would have been required to answer a question on Drama.

The play *I Will Marry When I Want* (1982) by Kenyan writers Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii is a political satire which decries the neo-colonialism and imperialism that engulfed Kenya just after its attainment of independence in 1963. The aim of the playwrights is to conscientise the working masses of the injustices of the current political system which works in cohorts with the former colonisers to rob African people of their lands. In Act One of the play, the playwrights provide a detailed stage direction which sets the scene for the actions to follow. In a well-structured essay, analyse this stage direction below in terms of how it projects the aim of the playwrights. In your essay, be sure to discuss the major themes projected in the stage direction and how these themes relate to the playwrights' aim. Include in your discussion any stylistic elements which enhance the thematic concerns, such as contrast, descriptive language, and atmosphere.

## Act One

*Kiguunda's home. A square, mud-walled, white-ochred, one-roomed house. The white ochre is fading. In one corner can be seen Kiguunda and Wangeci's bed. In another can be seen a pile of rags on the floor. The floor is Gathoni's bed and the rags, her bedding. Although poorly dressed, Gathoni is very beautiful. In the same room can be seen a pot on three stones. On one of the walls there hangs a framed title-deed for one and a half acres of land. Near the head of the bed, on the wall, there hangs a sheathed sword. On one side of the wall hangs Kiguunda's coat, and on the opposite side, on the same wall, Wangeci's coat. The coats are torn and patched. A pair of tyre sandals and a basin can be seen on the floor.*

(Ngugi wa Thiong'o & Ngugi wa Mirii. 1982. *I Will Marry When I Want*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, p.3.)

I hope your experience of doing this assignment has been enriching. Congratulations if you received a pass mark. If you did not achieve a pass, I encourage you to read this tutorial feedback letter carefully to see where you missed the point and how you can improve to be able to pass in the exam. The information provided herein will benefit all students planning to answer the drama question in the exams. It will not be difficult for you to earn a pass if you carefully consider and apply this feedback.

The assignment question required you to analyse an extract from a play, *I Will Marry When I Want* (1982), by Kenyan writers Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii. As clearly indicated in the contextual information which precedes the extract, this kind of play falls under the category of drama known as political satire. Any number of dictionaries will tell you that a satire is a work of art which exposes the ills or misdeeds of a system by using irony, humour, innuendos and exaggeration. In this case, we are dealing with a political satire, which means it directs its criticism at political authorities – the government, politicians or a ruling elite class. The play therefore attacks these authorities by dramatising the suffering experienced by their subjects.

You would notice, though, that this attack or criticism is not always direct; often it is done subtly through language that is humorous but revealing. In Ngugi and Ngugi's play, the characters' very appearance on stage is an indictment of the Kenyan government's failure to uplift the lives of Kenyans many years after independence has been won. (Note: if Kenya gained independence in 1963 and this play was published in 1982, then it is already 19 years that the country has been under the leadership of its own people.) This criticism of the government is achieved effectively through (1) the characters' costume and (2) the stage setting. Remember that drama is primarily meant for performance, as brought out in your study guide. Therefore, what you see on stage in terms of the setting and the characters' costume tells you a lot about the play's ideological framework. In this case, the playwrights aim to alert the Kenyan masses, especially the working class, to the injustices inflicted on the people by both the government's failure to provide satisfactory working conditions and its partnership with foreign companies to exploit the wealth of Kenya. This process of bringing awareness to people is called conscientisation within the context of political satire.

Looking at the stage direction provided in the opening scene of the play, this conscientisation is conveyed through the abject poverty of a family. There are several indicators of this abject poverty in the extract:

- The house where Kiguunda and his wife and daughter live is a small one-roomed house that is obviously cramped for space. The painting of the house is fading, indicating not only the effects of the passage of time but also the inability of its dwellers to refurbish it.
- Gathoni the daughter sleeps on a "pile of rags on the floor" since her parents cannot afford a bed for her, and there is no space for a second bed anyway. The floor therefore becomes a metaphor for the degrading living conditions of this working class family.
- The family cooks on a fireplace, using three stones to support their pot. This means they cannot afford an electric stove or even a gas stove.

- Kiguunda and Wangeci's coats "are torn and patched" and they wear sandals made out of discarded car tyres. While the torn coats can be read as a symbol of their physical deprivation, the sandals symbolise their status as "the wretched of the earth", an expression used by Algerian scholar Frantz Fanon in his 1963 book bearing the same title.
- This family's only asset is "a framed title-deed for one and a half acres of land", a miniscule piece of land compared to the vast areas of land occupied by the ruling elite and the foreign investors. The title deed is a mockery of Kenya's failure to use its own resources to enrich its people.

Having identified the different stage props which convey the abject poverty of the characters, it is important to note that the playwrights' aim in painting such a gloomy picture of the life lived by the Kiguunda family is to convey a deep sense of betrayal of the people by the ruling minority. Using the contextual clues provided in your Tutorial Letter 101, you would know that the play is an attack on the ruling elite which conspires with the former colonisers to exploit the people of Kenya whose labour goes into building wealth for these rulers while they themselves live in degrading conditions.

A major theme in the given extract is therefore the neo-colonial exploitation of the working masses. Although Kenya has attained independence, the benefits of independence are enjoyed only by a privileged minority. The majority of those who fought for independence live in dire poverty and severe deprivation. Kiguunda's title-deed exposes a major flaw in the politics of post-colonial Kenya wherein independence has not resulted in equal distribution of land for all citizens. The disparity between the possibilities that independence held and the present disillusionment is captured beautifully in the statement "although poorly dressed, Gathoni is very beautiful". In a figurative sense, Gathoni comes to symbolise a beautiful country endowed with natural riches but which has been rendered impoverished by the greed of its own black leaders. The stark contrast between Gathoni's beauty and the ugliness around her mirrors the contrast between Kenya's rich human and natural resources and the nefarious activities of the ruling elite. The stage direction employs highly descriptive language to paint vivid images of poverty, congestion and dehumanization in the Kiguunda household.

Considering that this was an assignment, you had ample opportunity to do research (and I do not mean a Google search) on the concept of decolonization which informs the play's thematics. The works of scholars such as Fanon mentioned earlier, Achille Mbembe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o himself would have assisted you in writing a sound essay in which you clearly point out the ways in which the play uses stage direction to transmit its condemnation of the effects of bourgeois politics in post-colonial Kenya. The information in the study guide as well as the activities on stage directions would also have given you some direction on the function of stage directions in a play. What I have given you in this feedback letter is not an example of a model essay but a template of important points you should have addressed in your essay. Obviously some of you made very insightful readings of the extract, with your arguments adequately substantiated. Should you put in more effort in preparing for the exams, you will surely do well.

**TOTAL: 100**

Best wishes

Naomi Nkealah