

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

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

The Child who was Shot Dead by Soldiers at Nyanga

Ingrid Jonker (1933-1965)

Protest poem against Apartheid.

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

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

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

Separate areas that were reserved for blacks to live in.

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

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

Contrast: line 11 & 15.

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

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

Black township in Cape Town.

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

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

Larger black township in Cape Town.

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

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

The child has grown up: lines 21-22.

the child grown to a man treks through all Africa

Final line gives the punch-line: the child is able to travel wherever he wishes "Without a pass".

the child grown into a giant journeys through the whole world

Final line offers hope for South Africa's future.

Without a pass

Connotes power & huge size. The small victim of violence has grown into a strong, powerful figure whose domain is no longer a limited township environment, but the whole world.

"pass" becomes a symbol of racist oppression.

*veld – savannah or grassland

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

*cardoned – fenced off

*saracens – armoured cars or tanks

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

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

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

What is the poem about?

What is the subject of the poem?

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

Who is speaking?

🍏 3rd person narrative.

What is the location/setting of the poem?

🍏 1960's during the Apartheid Era.

Themes and messages of the poem:

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

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

🍏 Protest poem against Apartheid.

Attitudes and feelings in the poem:

Emotions and feelings of the speaker:

🍏

Tone of the poem:

🍏 Bold & determined.

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

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

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

Type of poem:

🍏 Protest poem.

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

🍏 Explained in the poem above.

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

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

🍏 YOUR PERSONAL RESPONSE!