

BLOSSOMS OF THE SAVANNAH

DEFINITIVE GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENT

PREFACE 2

THE BIOGRAPHY OF HENRY OLE KULET.....	3
CHAPTER ONE.....	4
SYNOPSIS AND SUMMARIES OF CHAPTERS.....	4
SYNOPSIS OF BLOSSOMS OF THE SAVANNAH.....	4
CHAPTER SUMMARIES.....	5
CHAPTER TWO.....	18
CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERISATION.....	18
CHAPTER THREE.....	40
THEMES.....	40
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ON THEMES.....	64
CHAPTER FOUR.....	65
LANGUAGE AND STYLE.....	65
CHAPTER FIVE.....	76
SAMPLE AND PRACTICE EXCERPTS.....	76
SAMPLE EXCERPTS.....	76
ANSWERS TO SAMPLE EXTRACTS.....	81
PRACTICE EXCERPTS.....	85

CHAPTER SIX.....	91
GENERAL ESSAY QUESTIONS AND SAMPLE ESSAYS.....	91

PREFACE

This study guide provides a detailed analysis of the novel *Blossoms of the Savannah*. The analysis is aimed at preparing KCSE candidates for both the excerpt and the compulsory essay question in paper two and three respectively. This guide is written in a manner that both the candidates and teachers will immensely benefit from it. This has been achieved through the presentation of a succinct synopsis, detailed chapter summaries, as well as deeply analyzed characters, themes and stylistic devices. At the end of each of these sections, there are sample essay questions to guide students in revising and preparing for both the internal and national exams. There are also general essay questions, sample and practice excerpts, all meant to prepare students for KCSE English paper two and three.

This guide might not have exhaustively analyzed the novel, *Blossoms of the Savannah*. Therefore, students are advised to consult other authorities such as their teachers in order to enrich what is contained in this guide.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF HENRY OLE KULET

Henry ole Kulet was born in 1946. He is a veteran and award winning Kenyan writer known for his novels which capture aspects of environment, culture and experiences of Maasai people. He is an established author for he has written eight novels. *Daughter of Maa* is a story of quiet village that is stirred by a frenzy of activities by the arrival of a young and pretty community teacher, Anna Walangh. He authored *It is possible* in 1971, *How To became a Man* in 1972 and *Bandits of Kibi* in 1999. In *Bandits of Kibi*, he created scenes which came out during the Post-Election Violence in 2007 after the disputed elections.

CHAPTER ONE

SYNOPSIS AND SUMMARIES OF CHAPTERS

SYNOPSIS OF *BLOSSOMS OF THE SAVANNAH*

The novel begins as Kaelo, his wife, Taiyo and Resian leave Nakuru for Nasila, a rural area in Maasai land. This is as a result of retrenchment of Kaelo who has been working as the manager of Agribix Limited. On reaching Nasila, Ole Kaelo's are welcomed by uncle Simiren's family which consists of four wives and sixteen children. In a move towards settling in Nasila the new home, Ole Kaelo visits his old friend Ole Sumpeyo. It is thirty years since Ole Kaelo left Nasila for Nakuru.

The Kaelo's hold a homecoming party in which they invite members from the five clans aimed at re-linking the Kaelo family to the other villagers. Taiyo and Resian observe that some young men are suspicious of them for they are not circumcised. In an attempt of acquainting the two girls with Nasila culture, Kaelo informs Joseph Parmuat to teach Taiyo and Resian traditional songs and dances. As the young ones spend more time together, a love relationship begins to develop between Taiyo and Joseph but unfortunately due to cultural demands the relationship is restrained.

Unfortunately, there is an attempted rape on Resian and Taiyo. Consequently, an ad hoc group of men is formed to hunt down the culprits. After it is known that Lante and Ntara are responsible for the heinous act, punishment is meted on them. The novel reveals of how females have contributed significantly to the beginning and continuation of FGM through the Olarinkoi legendary story.

Kaelo opens an agricultural shop and enters into business contracts through Oloisudori who is conversant with shady businesses. Oloisudori's aim is to exploit Kaelo. After realizing that Kaelo has beautiful daughters, he chooses to marry one and organize for the other one to be married by his friend instead of extorting him. Oloisudori comes in a procession and gives gifts and money as dowry for the young Resian. Since Resian disagrees with Oloisudori and her father's plan, Oloisudori plans to use anesthesia to render Resian unconscious so that he may snatch her for marriage by force. However, the girls craft a scheme of shaming Oloisudori in which they return the gifts Oloisudori had given them earlier.

The couple goes to consult Simiren and Sumpeyo on how to deal with Oloisudori's demands as the girls go to the shop. On their way back, the girls are almost raped by two callous young men. Later on, after Resian refuses to cooperate, Oloisudori gets enraged and slaps her mercilessly. It is Olarinkoi

who supposedly saves her by whisking her away before she commits suicide.

Olarinkoi organizes with a pick-up driver so that he whisks Resian away claiming to ensure her safety from Oloisudori and her father. The three have a trek of terror which leaves Resian raped by Olarinkoi in a dark hut in the forest. On regaining consciousness, she finds herself under the care of Nabaru, a nurse who reveals everything that transpired.

Finally, with the help of Nabaru Resian comes face to face with Minik *ene* Nkoitoi, the activist against FGM in the sheep's ranch. She welcomes Nabaru and Resian warmly. Resian learns that Oloisudori has advertised in the newspaper for her search. Minik's pivotal role is evident in that in the ranch there are other five hundred girls who have gone through a similar experience just like Resian. On the other hand, Taiyo faces the painful blade of the Olmurunya. While managing the ranch, Minik meets a new challenge in which the powerful in the government are threatening to close the ranch. However, Minik, the foresighted planner ensures the survival of the ranch. Resian learns of the unfortunate death of Joseph Parmuat. He is killed in his mission of saving Taiyo from a group that circumcises her by force. At long last, Resian meets Taiyo at the ranch

Oloisudori makes his last heinous kicks by visiting the ranch to demand Resian as his wife. He is told off by Minik. With his company, he flees for his life after his cars are burnt down. The ultimate goal is attained when Minik takes Taiyo and Resian to Egerton University where Resian has a chance of studying her dream course.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

CHAPTER 1: THE JOURNEY

As the novel begins, Ole Kaelo is reprimanding loaders for being slow. The couple is relocating from Nakuru to Nasila after Ole Kaelo is retrenched from Agribix Limited where he has been working as the commercial manager. Not long ago Kaelo had denied Taiyo a chance to go to Mombasa to develop her talent. That is why Taiyo sympathizes with the loaders who are receiving strict instructions from her father. The two girls visualize what life in the new environment will be like. The girls are experiencing apprehension. Nakuru town has always bustled with life and they fear the shop that their father aims at starting may not pick.

Taiyo encourages Resian that they should hope for the best. Resian requests Taiyo to plead with their father so that they can join Egerton University. Resian knows her father listens to Taiyo. Through a flash back, the reader learns that Ole Kaelo and his wife Mama Milanoi have lived for twenty two years

since they married. Women from Nasila had earlier visited Mama Milanoi at Nakuru and hinted at the hostility expected especially because the daughters are not married. Kaelo has been a hardworking man, a trait that led to his promotion at Agribix Limited. The retrenchment has triggered ambition to work so as to be rich. A few kilometers to Nasila one lorry breaks down but soon it is fixed and the family reach uncle Simiren's homestead where they are welcomed warmly. It is now thirty years since Ole Kaelo left Nasila for Nakuru. In all this time he has been away, uncle Simiren has been representing his elder brother. Elders are not happy with Kaelo's monogamous marriage. Simiren on his part has four wives and sixteen children

CHAPTER 2: NASILA

Life at the rural Nasila is contrasted with that of Nakuru town. Uncle Simiren is a polygamous man. He has four wives and sixteen children. Each of these wives has a house. The girls are introduced to the sixteen cousins by the senior most aunt, and the eldest wife. The children are aged between three and sixteen years and out of the four wives, two aunts are pregnant. Resian and Taiyo are allowed to go walking. The girls make the observation that the four aunts are not happy as well and the kids are not contented. Resian outrightly says she is not ready to be a parent and that she will first learn. They are accosted by a tall heavysset young man with thick dark beard and a moustache. Resian orders the man to leave Taiyo alone. According to the man, the girls are not decent for they are uncircumcised. The girls keep the ordeal as a secret. Ole Kaelo visits ole Sumpeyo, a famous cattle trader and a longtime friend who supports FGM. Ironically, even though a close friend, Sumpeyo is malicious and envious of Kaelo especially when he learns of his great business plan. He however warns him to be wary of Oloisudori, a business partner, and advises him to keep his daughters away from him.

CHAPTER 3: STRANGE VISITORS

Ole Kaelo ushers his family into the newly constructed house. The Kaelo's are elated by the new house. In a flashback Mama Milanoi remembers how she was married by Kaelo while she was eighteen and Kaelo twenty four years old. The couple has enjoyed peace generally since then but since she does not have a son, Mama Milanoi feels she has failed Kaelo. In a dialogue, we learn that Taiyo and Resian are afraid of undergoing the act and wish to go back to Nakuru and join university. In a dramatic irony we realize that Kaelo has been hard and cruel to Resian for he expected a son to be born in her place. Although Taiyo does not understand the cause of the hatred, she always defends her sister devotedly even when her mother does not offer any protection. Probably Mama Milano is afraid of ole Kaelo.

CHAPTER 4: HOME COMING CEREMONY

In order to re-link himself to the community ole Kaelo holds a big celebration party which is also made for blessing his home. Members from the five Maa clans: Ilmolelian, Ilmakesen, Ilukumae, Ilaiser and illtarosero are invited. The Kaelo's belong to the Ilmolelian clan. Ole Kaelo's are very actively involved in the preparation of the homecoming ceremony. During the dances, Taiyo is attracted to the manager of music, a young local primary school music teacher Joseph Parmuat but unfortunately they belong to the same clan and forging any intimate relationship is an abomination. A carnival mood is witnessed during the party for the generous Kaelo, has offered plenty of foodstuffs.

In the dance Taiyo's talent is brought forth for she is really attracted to the song and dance. We learn that she has always done well in music festivals too. Unfortunately, her father denied her a chance to go for a music extravaganza in Mombasa which would have developed her talent. Lastly, Musanka leads in the blessing section. He calls upon the community to welcome the Kaelo's back home. Kaelo is advised to involve himself in the community affairs and Nasila. He is also advised to take care of his family and children.

CHAPTER 5: DEPRESSED ONE

Taiyo and Resian are distressed. Resian feels Taiyo is taking too long before broaching the issue of their university studies with their father. The issue of FGM makes the two girls have a sleepless night. Taiyo is also disturbed by the cultural law that does not allow her relationship with Joseph Parmuat, the primary school teacher and a music enthusiast. The two girls cry a lot that night. The day before, Joseph had promised to visit her and also coach her in traditional music. The thought of *enkamuratani* (circumciser) and *Olmurunya* (circumcising blade) makes Taiyo shudder with dread. In Resian's mind it is clear that *enkamuratani* and her *Olmurunya* cannot have their way with her, maybe over her dead body.

Contrastingly Kaelo and his wife enjoy a great night after the day of the great party and blessings. They feel fulfilled for the great achievement, getting welcomed as well as being blessed. In her morning thoughts, Mama Milanoi is at a dilemma, whether to force the girls to undergo the ritual and lose their faith, love and confidence or refuse to yield to the traditions and become a pariah in the Ilmolelian clan. Kaelo authoritatively states his demands; mama Milanoi is to counsel her daughters in preparations for circumcision while he is to ask Parmuat to teach the girls home truths and later *enkamuratani* to be called to do her part. Mama Milanoi interrogatively reflects on her stand and that of her family. She feels her husband is turning into a deep Nasilian very fast. Afterwards, the Kaelo's visit their agricultural shop. On arriving home, the three females welcome Joseph Parmuat delightfully.

As the chapter ends, a second male visitor visits the Kaelo's.

CHAPTER 6: OLARINKOI

Kaelo makes a pompous speech introducing Joseph Parmuat. Despite the warning, Taiyo is still infatuated with Joseph and decides to make him a confidante. Resian is critical and dismissive of her father's pompous speech and generally how females are viewed by men. In a defiant mood, Resian expresses her mind on the subject of unfair men towards women. Surprisingly and daringly, she portrays the defiance to her aunt, mother and Resian.

The listeners are deeply embarrassed. Aunt Botorr says Resian has a bad spirit that can only be treated through circumcision. Taiyo's questions who Olarinkoi is and is answered by Joseph by telling a legendary story. Ilarinkon is a legend who was a great fighter who saved the Maa community from being wiped out by an adversary while their morans had gone for a raid. Ilarinkon warriors abused women until one day women discovered how to deal with the problem. Their collective resolution ironically gave birth to *enkamuratani* who was handed over an *Olmurunya*. Hence the birth of FGM and therefore according to Joseph, only women can stop the barbaric FGM.

CHAPTER 7: SHADOWY OLOISUDORI

Resian is in an optimistic mood that all will be well especially about their university education. After Taiyo leaves for the shop, Mama Milanoi broaches the subject of FGM. Even though Mama Milanoi supports FGM, Resian is categorical that it has been used by men as a tool of oppression to women. One Edward Oloisudori visits Kaelo's home. Resian is uncomfortable with him for he is immoral. Mother scorns her for talking ill about him. Father returns and due to Resian's nervousness, he calls her names. Kaelo clearly states that all members of Kaelo family must respect Oloisudori and that he should not be denied anything. Resian learns that her father did not give in to the request about joining university.

Joseph reveals that Oloisudori is a shadowy figure; a Jack -of-all-trades. He is also, a poacher, smuggler, robber, extortionist and a hired assassin. He had survived numerous jail terms and was now incorrigible. Due to the revelation, the girls fear for their father. When Oloisudori leaves, the countenance of Kaelo and Mama Milanoi changes; they are absent-minded and aloof even though Kaelo insists that everything is in control. Mama Milanoi even burns rice without realizing it.

CHAPTER 8: TROUBLED COUPLE

Oloisudori's cruel demand, to marry Resian and organize the marriage of Taiyo renders Kaelo and Mama Milanoi a sleepless night. Although Kaelo knew Oloisudori's past criminal record, he still falls

for his trap due to greed for wealth. Oloisudori's initial plan was to extort money from Kaelo but on noticing his two beautiful daughters he changed his mind. Mama Milanoi suffers great pain and cries for the olden days when demands such as those of Oloisudori would be dealt with accordingly. Mama Milanoi recalls through flashback how women had invoked mass action on men in the past by depriving men food, milk and beating them up while naked. She contrasts those times with the current times when Nasila River is polluted with chemicals. She fears that Oloisudori may kill her daughter. Despite the hard times the Kaelo's are experiencing, the following morning, the members manage to afford smiles as they take tea. Even the entrance of Olarinkoi does not dampen the high spirits embraced by the Kaelo's.

CHAPTER 9: LOVE

Joseph Parmuat begins a routine practice of coaching Taiyo and Resian on traditional songs and dances and the trio enjoy it immensely. Joseph Parmuat guards against any untoward behavior so as to conserve his integrity. The chapter then says a lot about the Maa Culture on different subjects. He explains different types of loves to the two girls; *elangatare* and *patureishi*. Resian boldly asks Joseph to be her *patureishi* but he explains how it is impossible for that to happen due to Nasila cultural norms. Taiyo and Resian question the rigidity of Nasila culture and traditions. They question some negative practices like F.G.M Joseph clarifies that culture had dropped some negative practices like throwing the dead and the dying to the hyenas, abandoning very old and ill in deserted homesteads. In a flashback, Taiyo accounts for her love to Joseph. It began on the day their father organized a homecoming celebration and since then she has even visited Joseph in his house. Joseph also feels strong love to her but traditions shields him from her. They think of falling in love and leaving for a far destination. Taiyo is ready but Joseph is prefers to abide by Nasila culture.

CHAPTER 10: OLARINKOI VERSUS THE RAPISTS

A cloud of apprehension hangs around the couple. Oloisudori does not turn up as he had promised earlier. After procrastinating for some time they find it unbearable. Mother and father leave their home so as to consult their friends; the wife to Simiren and Ole Kaelo to Supeyo, on the issue touching on Oloisudori's callous demand to marry one of their daughters. The two girls go to the shop to have their lunch prepared by the manager, Maiso. On their return journey, they are attacked by two rude young men. On observing the two men, they realise one of the accosters was responsible for the earlier ambush. The two young men are frightening for they are in possession of knobkerries. They attempt to rape them but luckily the girls are rescued by Olarinkoi. The girls cannot thank Olarinkoi enough. The two girls detest the two young men's behaviour. The girls feel terribly shaken. Resian

feels she should leave Nasila for university. The incident strengthens Taiyo's resolve as a combatant in a war zone.

CHAPTER 11: CHANGE OF ENVIRONMENT

Taiyo and Resian wait for their parent's return to tell them of the near rape ordeal as they were coming from their shop at Nasila. Ole Kaelo is very agitated on hearing that his daughters were assaulted with the aim of being raped. Their father storms out of the house while their mother asks them to go to Simiren's house to have a change of environment.

The girls are heartily welcomed at their uncle's home and that enables them to settle very fast. They get used to the communal and polygamous running of affairs at their uncle's home. They learn very many aspects of Nasila culture, both negative and positive. They are told more about Minik *ene* Nkoitoi, the *Emakererei* and their role model by one of Simiren's wives. They are told that she went to Makerere University where she studied veterinary medicine. They admire her opposition of negative Nasila culture and say they would like to be like her. Through flashback, it is revealed that Resian's interest in vet medicine began when she and Taiyo accompanied their father to agricultural show in Nakuru and since then, she has admired the profession. Taiyo plans to compose a song with the help of Joseph Parmuat praising Minik and ridiculing three women who still clung on retrogressive Nasilian culture. Later, they are asked to return home by their parents. A party, which their parents also attend, is held for them after which they return home.

CHAPTER 12: RETALIATION

Ole Kaelo hits the road angry and bitter and complaining to all he meets about the beastly attack on his daughter. He goes to the school where Joseph teaches and explains the events heading to his anger. Joseph parades all pupils, and sends boys from the Ilmolelian clan to go and call their elder brothers and fathers to an urgent meeting at *Oerata* plain.

The search party narrows down on Lante son of Kanyira of Ilukumae clan and Ntara son of Muyo, also of Ilukumae clan as the culprits. They decide to embark on a revenge mission to prevent further provocation from the Illukumae clan. The retaliation is done by the young and old men from limolelian clan and the sympathizers from Limakesen clan. The search party comes across the two culprits who ran and fall under the feet of two old men begging for mercy. According to Nasila culture, a man is spared of any crime if he hides his head between the legs of an old man. Nevertheless, they are

clobbered, slapped and kicked by Kaelo and his men. It is realized after interrogation that one of the offenders was related to Taiyo and Resian for he was son of Mama Milanoi's sisters. A cleansing ceremony is planned and Ole Kaelo is compensated for the trauma he underwent. Ntara Muyo gives Taiyo and Resian each a heifer to remove the shame he caused them. Lante pays two heifers.

Ole Kaelo continues to have mixed feelings about Oloisudori's plan to marry his daughter. He consoles himself that Oloisudori is not an ordinary man. And that his business success depended on him. Thus reasoning, he decides to go along with Oloisudori's plan. He also dismisses negative rumours about Oloisudori assuring himself that his daughter was lucky to get such a man. Meanwhile, the girls' visit to the uncle's home has greatly changed their outlook on life. It reduces their overreliance on their parents. They are finally happy that they are getting acceptance in the highly traditional community.

CHAPTER 13: OLOISUDORI'S GRAND VISIT

Oloisudori changes his plans of coming for Resian in two weeks' time and declares he would do so the following day. He would be accompanied by his three friends and wants Resian to cook for them. Ole Kaelo asks Resian to remain at home and cook for them instead of going to help plaster the kitchen of Teiyo Kiti with Taiyo as they had planned. She is not comfortable with the idea saying she fears Oloisudori and that he is like a monster. Her father hears none of her protestation. Resian seeks refuge in the garden. She wonders why she has been chosen and not Taiyo. She finds injustice in the way her father treated her unlike her sister Taiyo. Taiyo sympathizes with her situation. She knows her father's biasness in treating his daughters. She thinks that the current demand from his father would make him hate her more. She blames the new culture that her father has immersed himself into as the cause of all her problems. Traditionally, a girl was shielded from men and it was rare for a girl to interact with men. Finally, Resian agrees to cook for the visitors after Taiyo is allowed to do it with her.

Oloisudori arrives in a procession of four wheel drive vehicles. He is immaculately dressed and so are his three friends. Taiyo starts sensing that he could be targeting her sister Resian. He gives each of the family members generous gifts including a briefcase to their father. Later after leaving, Taiyo talks to her father to get more information about Oloisudori and his mission in their home but he reveals little. After failing, she plans to ask him to enroll them at Egerton but she does not succeed. Ole Kaelo calls for his daughter Resian. He talks to her pleasantly and tells her he has good news for her. Resian misinterprets this thinking it's about being enrolled at the university. Finding that they are on different pages, he dismisses her and calls for her mother.

CHAPTER 14: THE WEALTHY OLOISUDORI

Ole Kaelo and his wife visit one of Oloisudori's homes in Naivasha. He wanted them to see the home he is building for their daughter so that they can easily convince her to marry him. Oloisudori compares Resian with one of the legendary beauty in the land and this greatly flatters Ole Kaelo. He also compares her with lord Ngata an English lady who drove a legendary gentleman crazy but the lady finally refused to marry him hence making the gentleman hate women forever. He intends to rectify that by building a palatial home that she would not turn down. Oloisudori is even ready to enroll her as a parallel student at Egerton if she marries him. However, she must undergo circumcision before he can marry her. Ole Kaelo regards Resian lucky and hopes his other daughter would find such a rich man who could give him generous dowry.

Ole Kaelo reminisces his journey with his wife to Oloisudori's palatial home in Naivasha with pleasure. He still remembers with awe the grandeur and magnificence of the house Oloisudori was building for Resian in Milimani area of Nakuru which made him decide that Resian had to be married by Oloisudori come what may. Before parting, they hatch a plan of abducting Resian if she offers resistance and are very happy about it. His wife is not very happy about the idea but has no option. She is unhappy that her daughter would miss a chance of going to Egerton University. Ole Kaelo also seems at conflict but keeps assuring himself that Oloisudori is a genuine man enjoying his own fruits of labour. Later, after a disturbed night, he has a dream in which Resian accepts to marry Oloisudori without any resistance and that raises husband and wife's spirits.

Resian and Taiyo hatch a plan of returning all gifts Oloisudori had given them in his next visit to show him they were not on sale. Resian receives Oloisudori warmly into their home and hands over the carton she and Taiyo had packed all his gifts. This catches Oloisudori by surprise and he is made to believe that the battle has been won. He reveals his plans to marry her and she is shocked by the revelation. They have a nasty exchange of words with Resian telling him that she can only be his wife over her dead body. Resian storms out of the house and confronts her father in his shop at Nasila. Ole Kaelo confirms his intention to marry her off to his friend and says he has no intention of enrolling her to university. She has a nasty verbal exchange after which he slaps her twice. She tells him he better kill her than hand her over to his friend, the monster.

Their bitter exchange attracts a crowd outside the shop. Resian leaves in hurry and heads to the river where she contemplates committing suicide. Just then, Olarinkoi comes to what seems to be her rescue. She tells her that Oloisudori men are looking for her all over and that he can help her reach Minik's ranch. Resian agrees to the idea and they plan to start off very early the following day.

CHAPTER 15: THE REAL OLARINKOI

After a sugarless breakfast served by a kind-hearted old woman, Resian and Olarinkoi gets into a pick up to start their journey to Minik's ranch. The old woman gives Resian a lesso and a blanket to cover herself with. At the beginning, she is very optimistic and happy that finally her salvation has come. Later the hot weather and the bumpy ride makes the journey very uncomfortable while dust, flies, mosquitoes and the fear of wild animals haunt along the way. On the way, Olarinkoi is aloof, he does not communicate with Resian, but this does not bother her for her focus is to reach the ranch and meet Minik her mentor.

The pick- up stops outside a mud plastered house with a rusty tin roof and Olarinkoi orders her to alight. He orders her to follow her into the desolate house which has two rooms Olarinkoi brings several foodstuffs he had brought with him in the pick-up, rudely gives Resian several instructions on how to cook a meal and leaves in a huff. Soon, she falls asleep and dreams where she meets Minik who promises to enroll her as a student at Egerton University and protect her from F.G.M. Her dream is interrupted by a loud bang on the door by Olarinkoi. He reprimands her for not cooking food and tells her she is his wife. He proceeds to take her by force and a struggle ensues. Resian bites his thumb and in defense, he hits her on the ribcage making her pass out before proceeding to rape her.

When consciousness returns, Resian realizes she was in a bed covered with bloody rags and naked. She begins to have recollection of what happened but cannot go beyond biting Olarinkoi's thumb. She faints again and sees alternating images of both Olarinkoi and Oloisudori. When she regains consciousness, she notices another woman who she had been seeing in her hallucinations in the room. The woman is called Nabaru and is the nurse that has been treating her. One evening after she is able to walk on her feet, Olarinkoi's mother comes and admonishes her for biting her son's thumb and abuses her for being uncircumcised. She reveals that she intends to have her circumcised after recovering and that she and Olarinkoi would go to Tanzania to start their marriage. The nurse comes when she is deep in thoughts and tells her that Olarinkoi's mother is an enkoiboni, a prophet and had prophesied that her son would bring one of Ole Kaelo's daughter home, circumcise her and make her his wife. The nurse tells her she has admired her courage and is ready to help her out in whatever plans she has. The news gives Resian a new surge of hope.

CHAPTER 16: HELP

Resian has a life full of torment at Olarinkoi's home from insects, reptiles as well as from the old *enkoiboni*. The *Enkoiboni* has a lot of bitterness directed to the well – to – do in the society such as Oloisudori. Nabaru informs Resian she is under a lot of pressure from Enkoiboni to have her recover

so that she can undergo the initiation ritual. Resian pleads with her to take her to *Emakererei's* ranch which Nabaru agrees to.

When her health improves a little bit, Resian starts venturing out of the homestead. She keeps the company of some two young women who were married early. Olarinkoi re-appears after disappearing for several days and tries to ask for forgiveness from Resian and even assures her that he would never molest her sexually again. He discloses that they plan to have her circumcised in two days' time so that he can marry her. After the revelation, Resian realizes that her only hope is in Nabaru. She waits for her eagerly but does not come that evening. She has a dream in which she fights the *enkamuratani* who wants to circumcise her, *enkoiboni* and when she is about to attack Nabaru, her dream is cut short by somebody calling out her name. Resian at first is unable to stand to open the door for Nabaru but after great effort, she reaches the door and opens it before collapsing. Nabaru administers some medicine through her mouth and she regains consciousness. The two women escape from the advancing *enkoiboni*, Olarinkoi and the *enkamuratani*. As they walk to the main road to board a lorry, they experience a big challenge, the heavy rain. Olarinkoi catches up with them as the lorry is about to leave, exchanges assaulting words with the two women before leaving him standing in the rain.

Finally, they reach the sheep ranch where Minik *ene* Nkoitoi is the manager, and the place where she so longed to go. Resian is very grateful for Nabaru's sacrifices to save her from Olarinkoi saying that only God could repay her for her love and kindness. Three motorbikes catch up with them as they wait for their lorry to cool down. One of the riders is Minik who also recognizes Resian having seen her picture in the papers which advertised her disappearance and promised a big reward to whoever would find her. Minik orders the driver to take her to the farm so that they can talk more. Resian is now towards the end of a torturous journey; homestretch as the lorry heads to the station.

CHAPTER 17: THE PROMISE

Resian finds Minik sitting on the veranda of her spacious house. She is awed by her presence for she reminds her of her high school Principal. She welcomes Nabaru and Resian into her glamorous and elegant house. After bathing, she tells Minik the events leading to her present state. She discloses she has always admired Minik, wanted to meet her and wanted to study veterinary medicine which Minik herself did at Makerere University. She also tells her that she would like to join her in the fight against FGM.

Minik observes that some cultural practices like F.G.M and *emuata* had outlived their usefulness and

should cease being part of Maa's culture. Nabaru promises to join Minik in fighting the practice Minik also promises to have Taiyo and Resian enrolled at Egerton University, their lifelong dream. She also promises Resian a scholarship and gives her a fully furnished house and a job in the ranch for the duration she would be studying at the university

CHAPTER 18: SISTERS' REUNION

On her fifth day in the ranch one mid-morning, a vehicle that Minik had sent on a rescue mission comes in the ranch. Minik goes to see the girl's condition and later sends for Resian. Resian is gripped by anxiety and apprehension on finding Minik angry. Minik is angry at the new culture brought by wealth where men would like young girls and forcefully circumcise them hence lowering their esteem. She narrates the case about the girl. She tells Resian the girl's rescue was not easy for the home where she was circumcised was heavily guarded and after luring the guards, they were able to rescue her but unfortunately, the man who assisted in rescuing the girl was speared to death by the thugs. She tells Resian that the rescued girl was her sister and the killed man was Joseph Parmuat a teacher.

Through recollections, Taiyo remembers how her mother lured her to accompany three women promising they would take her to Resian. When they got to Esoit village she was abandoned in a smoky hut and in the morning was forcefully circumcised. After that she went through several hallucinations. Resian goes to her room and the sisters hug and kiss passionately. The reunion of the two girls is very emotional. Taiyo slowly recovers with the help of Minik, nursing care of Nabaru and counseling by a teacher.

Taiyo fully recovers, she and her sister discuss their dark past events. They blame their mother for accepting to agree to everything their father said. They vow not to be subservient to their male counterparts. They also blame women for the perpetuation of F.G.M arguing that if all women said no to the practice, men would do nothing about it. As the chapter comes to a close, Taiyo is advised to accept what has happened to her and move on. She is also advised to ensure in future her children do not go through a similar experience. The three ladies agree that if they stand by their position the primitive culture would end.

CHAPTER 19: DREAM FULFILLED

Minik calls for Taiyo and Resian later in August that year. She discloses that the contents of the two envelopes she has are about their admission in Egerton University. The girls are elated by the news. Minik organizes a farewell party for the girls. She invites many workers and girls to come and

celebrate with the girls. The girls from Intapuka-e-Maa sing a song that seeks to empower and energize them in their resistance of outdated cultural practices. In the song, they condemn F.G.M and envision themselves as great professionals just like men in the nation. As they sing, Oloisudori comes in a convoy of vehicles to demand to be given either Resian or Taiyo arguing that he has already paid enough to have them both. Minik tells him to leave the place for he would have none of the girls.

Oloisudori starts insulting Minik calling her a spinster who lost a chance to get married and now masquerades as an FGM crusader. Oloisudori orders his men to take Resian by force and a vicious fight ensues between the ranch's workers and Oloisudori's men. Oloisudori's convoy is burnt to the ground and he and his men ran for their lives after a thorough clobbering.

On 5th September the following day, Resian and Taiyo are full of happy sensation as they climb the four wheel drive vehicle belonging to Minik to go to Egerton University, their Nirvana. They think of ways to repay Minik for her kindness but all in all agree that it is well that ends well.

CHAPTER TWO

CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERISATION

A character is a fictitious personage created by a novelist in order to convey an idea. Characterization is the process of selecting suitable characters that suit specific roles by the novelist. Characters are of many types: main, minor, shadow, protagonist, antagonist depending on their role and significance. With themes and style, they form the basic triangle in literary work. The three questions answered by the three basic aspects are what, how and who. The question answered by character and characterization is "who". In this novel, the protagonist, the character every reader would wish to be like, is Resian. The family of Kaelo is a key family; Kaelo, Mama Milanoi and Taiyo. Close people to this family like Oloisudori, Olarinkoi, and Joseph Parmuat are equally key characters in this novel. There are still other characters that help in anchoring thematic concerns, the plot and style and they include: Simiren, his wives especially Yeiyoo Botorr and *yeiyoo-kiti*, Ole Supeyo, Nabaru, Minik, the *enkamuratani* and *enkoiboni*.

Parsimei Ole Kaelo

He is the husband to Mama Milanoi and father to Taiyo and Resian. He is a retrenched commercial manager of Agribix Limited Company situated in Nakuru.

Strict

As the bread winner of the family and a senior officer at the work place Kaelo develops a strict character. As the novel begins, he is reprimanding the loaders of a lorry (p.1). He denies Taiyo permission to travel to Mombasa with other young men and women to attend an extravaganza. He thinks Taiyo's exposure to music extravaganza would make her a harlot (p.45). Taiyo tells Resian they hurry to the lorry before father spoils their day with his sharp tongue (p. 5). He also denies Resian a chance to go to the university saying her education is enough yet his aim is to enjoy the money (p.207). He terms Resian as stupid and myopic for insisting on going to school. (p.207). His daughters fear to report the heinous incident when they are accosted by a callous young man (p.20). When he is away, the house is joyous and comfortable. (p.35). The moment Resian sees him, she becomes clumsy and breaks a glass (p.40). During the homecoming ceremony, he sends a corrosive glance at Taiyo when Joseph approaches her. (p.48). When their father comes at the sitting room, Taiyo and Resian disappear to the kitchen (p.69)

Commanding/ short tempered

He commands the loaders violently (p.1). Taiyo knew the sting of her father's tongue. (p.1) When a lorry breaks down during relocation, he fuses, curses and mutters expletives (p.10). When Resian becomes clumsy and almost breaks the glass he winces, grimaces and struggles to control himself (p. 40). When mama Milanoi shows her dilemma about whether the girls should be circumcised or not, Kaelo commands, "You must immediately start counseling the girls"(p.61). After Supeyo fails to take him to Oloisudori, he gets very annoyed. He shouted in a thunderous booming voice (p.46). On learning that her girls were accosted he takes a sword and froths trembling (p.147). He furiously pursues the men who had accosted his daughters (p.159).

Hateful

He detests Resian from the moment she is born. When she shows early signs of maturity he declares to himself "the earlier we disposed of her, the better" (p.10). This clearly shows his disregard to his own blood. Mama Milanoi attests that Kaelo had scolded and bullied her like half-witted child (p.29). He wonders where in the world they fetched that awkward, overblown, stupid Resian. (p.40). When they make an accident with Resian at the door he curses, "Have you run amok?"(P.96). This is a disregard of the delicate emotional little girl. He brutally slaps Resian for not co-operating with Oloisudori (p.209) He gets dowry from Oloisudori without even informing his daughters (p.209). This is

great disregard to Resian for she is the one expected to be in the marriage yet he does not inform her that he has picked dowry.

Hardworking

Kaelo remembers how while young he worked himself to the bone preparing for his future (p.8). He believes the way to the stars is hard work (p.8). Hard work had seen him through the ranks from a clerk to the coveted position of a manager (p.9). He succeeds in whatever he puts his hands in (p.29). He goes to Nakuru to work and returns to Nasila with wealth (p.38). While organizing for the homecoming event, he wakes up at cock crow. Mama Milanoi informs Yeiyo-Botorr that Kaelo is hard-working and that Taiyo resembles him (p.76).

Sexist

A sexist person is that who discriminates on grounds of sex. Right from the time Resian is born, he detests her for she is not male. It is unfair for a child is always innocent. In this case she did not participate in her birth. He uses abusive language on Resian most of the time. He instructs Joseph to coach her girls on traditional dances. Resian argues that if they were males their father would not have got them a trainer. It had been his prayer to get at least three boys (p.9).

Chauvinistic/egocentric

Taiyo is his pride. When she is born, Kaelo proves his fatherhood (p.10). But when he gets the second girl, he is disappointed. He detests Resian since then (p.10). When he sees Joseph talking to her daughter, he refers her to Mama Milanoi's daughter (p.48) yet we know she belongs to both her father and mother but since he considers the gesture embarrassing he does not wish to be associated with her. He talks to her daughter through their mother (p.69).this is because his gloated manly feeling cannot allow him to address a young girl. He stays for long time without relaying critical information like the intention by Oloisudori to marry one of his daughters (p.114). Since she is a woman and her decisions are not necessary, he first weighs the issue independently.

Enterprising

His mentor is Ole Supeyo (p.20) who is a serious businessman in cattle trading. He owns a pick up for business (p.22). Plans to open the shop at the onset of rains (p.24). He is about to sign a four-year's contract with the government through Oloisudori. (p.24). His mother-in-law is happy to get a son in law who is a businessman (p.28).

Greedy

Even after being warned by Supeyo against the corrupt Oloisudori, Kaelo insists on dealing with him due to financial gains. He views the warning as envy on the part of Supeyo (p.26). Because of greed, he becomes a sycophantic follower of Oloisudori. This makes him mention reckless statements like “There is nothing that he ought to be denied in this home” (p.98). He chooses to deal with Oloisudori the criminal due to greed (p.109). He wishes to deal with the wealthy. (p.109). He does not care the means of getting wealthy (p.111). He takes dowry for his two daughters even when they want to join university (p.111).

Modern

He tells off his brother when elders send him to tell him to marry other wives and get more children and sons. He says polygamy is archaic. He has only one wife and two daughters even when men have many wives and many children. He builds a modern stone house for his family with red tiles (p.27). His shop in Nasila is also furnished tastefully to attract high-class customers.

Traitorous

Though a parent to Resian and Taiyo he betrays them. He does not provide parental love as he ought to. He does not support university education for his daughters and he supports their early marriage. He also supports their FGM so that he can receive dowry and safeguard his businesses.

Patriotic

During the homecoming ceremony, he swears never again will he Live away from Nasila nor abandon its culture (p.40). The twin sub clans of *Ilmolelian Itoorasha Kiheji* and *Lelema* will always be like two chambers of his heart. (p.40). He calls Joseph to train Taiyo and Resian Maa dance and culture (p.121).

Alienated

He had got detached from Nasila life for many years. He has to hold a homecoming ceremony. (p.37). It is now thirty years since he left Nasila for Nakuru. He seems to embrace more of the modern culture than the traditional one. This makes him embrace the likes of Oloisudori

Perfectionist/ Meticulous

He made sure that their furniture was loaded as fittingly as possible so that it does not break on the way (p.14).He organizes a homecoming party without fault (p. 37). He includes guests from all the five clans (p 37).

Ironical

When elders send Simiren to tell him to be polygamous, he dismisses polygamy as archaic yet later he

encourages FGM on her daughters (p.13), which is equally a negative traditional cultural practice.

Stoic

Even when he is retrenched, he goes about the sudden news without physically showing he is beaten. He views the new change as an inevitability (p.7). When Resian runs and leaves Oloisudori at home on reaching the shop, Kaelo attempts not to show his great fury to the girl. When asked about university studies he answers stoically, "I decided I am not sending you there" (p.207).

Stubborn

He stubbornly denies his daughters a chance to study at the university. Taiyo comments 'You know the stubbornness of father' (p. 4).

Sycophantic

When Oloisudori visits, Kaelo stands in order to please him. (p.177). He seems to be worshipping riches and wealth.

Jealous

He is hurt because Simiren is more appreciated and considered as the cultural leader of the Kaelo's (p.9).

Dependable/Trustworthy

Ole Supeyo trusts him. He would entrust him to count his money (p.4). Milanoi's parents find him a dependable protector (p.29).

Corrupt

He is well versed with the murky business of the underworld. (p.23). He is about to sign a four-year's contract with the government through the help of the corrupt Oloisudori (p.25).

Foresighted planner

Mama Milanoi expresses this fact on (p.29) in a flashback. He planned homecoming ceremony meticulously (p.37). He tells Joseph that he had planned his future life when he was young (p.70).

Responsible

Mama Milanoi attests to the fact that Kaelo is responsible (p.28). She says since he married her he has always provided for the family.

Loving

Mama Milanoi confirms this trait (p.29). He calls her '*Lanoo-ai-nayorr*' an intimate expression (p.30).

Taiyo is his favorite daughter (p.111).

The role of Kaelo is to anchor the themes of patriarchy, culture, FGM, greed among others. He is useful in development of other characters especially Taiyo, Resian, Mama Milanoi and Oloisudori. The writer uses him to create flashbacks and his retrenchment helps in developing the novel's plot.

Taiyo

She is sister to Resian and daughter to Kaelo and Mama Milanoi.

Intelligent

She understands her father well (p.1). For example she knows when he is not in the right mood to be spoken to. She knows he does not like having his plans delayed. She observes intelligently that "culture and traditions are never static but by being dynamic, culture sheds off aspects that are irrelevant" (p.127).

Sympathetic

She sympathizes with the loaders who are receiving stern instructions from Kaelo her father. (p.1) She had made it her duty to mop her young sister's tears, sooth her anger and gently reassure her when shaken (p.34). At the homecoming ceremony she sympathizes with the old man who struggles with meat with little success (p.50). She later comes to know he is Ole Musanka, a religious leader. She brings alternative soft food to him.

Bold/ Daring

To the knobkerrie carrying young man she demands. "Let go of my hand." She vows to fight F.G.M even when Nasila culture and her father promote it (p.88). She declares openly to Joseph that she has fallen in love with him. "She does not give a hoot about it." (p.129). She boldly visits Joseph's house even when it is a risky affair (p.130). She thinks boldly that their relationship with Joseph must remain even if it means relocating to Tanzania and becoming people of undefined culture (p.136). The attack by callous young men strengthens her resolve (p.143).

Loving

She loves Joseph. This is even after being warned against having a relationship with him by the father (p.71). She is infatuated and makes him a confidante. She says "If by loving you I offend the sensibilities of Nasila then let me offend them and face the consequences of doing so." (p.133). She sacrifices to go and see Resian so that Resian may eat when her mother lies to her that Resian has gone on a hunger strike (p.272).

Emotional

At the time they are leaving Nakuru for Nasila, Taiyo sheds tears (p.6, p.2). This shows the intimate relationship she has had with this town. She is not ready to let go of the town. She could also be afraid of relocating to a rural town. She is not willing to part with her boyfriend from Nakuru, Lenjir (p.3). When she realizes her relationship with Joseph Parmuat is highly hindered by traditions, she weeps herself dry (p.56).

Responsible

She holds Resian's cheek and registers that she has been devoted to her sister since they were in nursery school (p.34). She takes a lot of time before broaching the issue of going to university for she seeks an apt opportunity (p.54). Kaelo tells Joseph that the girls are intelligent but require cultural studies (p.70). She responsibly and carefully prepares delicious meals (p.75). She advises Joseph that they keep a clandestine relationship and then reveal it later so as not to hurt Papaai (p.134). She advises Resian not to be left alone in the house with Oloisudori (p.197).

Alienated

She feels estranged for she has never visited Nasila before in her lifetime therefore she lacks basics of Nasila culture (p.70). She chooses to fall in love with Joseph even when the culture does not allow. This is because she is ignorant and alienated of the culture. She finds it hard to cope with Nasila culture at first. During the dance she takes a lot of time watching for she has no dancing skills of Nasila dances. She has to be trained traditional dances and culture by Joseph.

Stubborn

She stubbornly puts up a spirited struggle but later the battle is lost. This is when she insists on attending an extravaganza at Mombasa but her father denies her permission (p.2). She stubbornly falls in love with Joseph (p.133).

Sociable

While in Nakuru, with Resian they always stand at the window every Sunday before they go to church (p.2). With Resian, they discuss petty issues like they observe that two out of four aunts are pregnant (p.18). Together with Resian they mingle with women folk and girls of Nasila and learn a lot (p.36).

Optimistic

She hopes that the new shop will succeed. She says Nasila is an Agricultural area and fertilizer and other inputs will be in high demand (p.4). She hopes one day they will go to Egerton University (p.4).

Assertive

She tells the young man who accosts them “We are not the kind of women you have in mind.” (p.19). With Resian, while in the ranch they declare never to be subservient to their male counterparts (P.277).

Hardworking

On arriving in their new house at Nasila, Taiyo works to exhaustion even when Resian is just reading books (p.32).

Flexible

With Resian, they adapt to Nasila’s lifestyle and easily get used to welcoming impromptu visitors like Olarinkoi (p.35).

Her role in the novel in the novel is essential in developing the character of Resian. It is through her that we understand the character of Resian as assertive and committed to female empowerment.

Resian

She is sister to Taiyo and daughter to Kaelo and Mama Milanoi.

Inquisitive/ Keen

She inquisitively questions the chances of her father’s new shop picking up (p.3). She questions on the rivalry and apprehension between the four houses of her uncle. (p.16). She interrogates and observes that Kaelo’s cheerfulness has decreased after meeting Oloisudori (p.120). She questions Olarinkoi’s sincerity about taking her to the ranch (p.217).

Critical

She questions why her father sought Joseph to be their teacher of culture “Why not a girl” (p.73). She observes that the arrangement is favoring men. That Joseph is to prepare them to be suitable wives to their husbands (p.73). When mother tries to explain FGM to her, she dismisses it as a myth created by men to oppress women (p.90). She critically observes FGM to be useless in the current times (p.91). She fails to see any difference between the ancient Ilarinkon from the current Ilarinkon (p.91). She questions the intruding tendency by Nasilan’s into their house (p.91). She initially questions the significance of Kaelo – Oloisudori relationship (p.98).

Firm/ Determined/ Resolute

Even when told of their new shop she clearly says she does not want to work in the shop but to go to

Egerton University. She does not just want to go to a university but Egerton University where she will take veterinary science and become a veterinary doctor (p.4). When she is told by Taiyo that she will have a right to have as many children as she wishes she answers immediately saying, "I don't want to be a parent. At least not in the foreseeable future (p.18). She adds, "I want to study." She resolves to face the callous Oloisudori firmly (p.200). Even when she is beaten and denied a chance to join University by her father, she does not lose hope but still focuses on going to the university (p.211). She reminds herself when the lorry breaks down before reaching the ranch that she will not allow other people to sway her from her charted course (p.256). It should be noted that Resian's decision to go to Egerton University began when with Taiyo and her father visited agricultural show. From that time she stuck to the goal till came to fruition.

Bold

On reaching Nasila, with Taiyo they manage to walk around even when they are not familiar with the environment (p.17). She asks her mother directly into her eyes, 'what is the purpose of FGM today?' (p.90). She openly and boldly says she will not allow early marriage to occur in her life (p.129). She does not easily agree when told by her father that she is to wait for Oloisudori and three guests to cook for them (p.171). She comes up with a risky plan of humiliating Oloisudori (p.195). She is most attracted to bold personalities like Minik and Prof. Wangari Maathai (p.250). Nabaru confirms to us that Resian is a brave girl (p.253). Resian inspires the old lady Nabaru with her boldness so that she walks a long distance to organize for a lorry to take them to the ranch. Dr. Minik congratulates Resian for being firm and boldly resisting FGM (p.264).

Assertive

When they are accosted with Taiyo by knobkerrie welding young man she hisses, "Leave my sister alone." (p.19). She strongly declares that she would rather live in the noisiest place than near a vagabond with intention of mutilating her (p.33). She feels Joseph's lessons are taking her to the Stone Age era (p.72). She detests Joseph's teachings on culture and insists she will be taught universal content at the university (p.73). Mama Milanoi thinks of her as a hard nut to crack for she knew her rights (p.118). She knows Oloisudori will not have a walkover on the issue of marriage (p.118). She observes that Nasila culture must soon shed off F.G.M and assertively notes that there are no two ways about it" (p.128).

Aggressive

She bites the thumb of Olarinkoi when he attempts to rape her (p.22). In a dream, she tells the old *enkamuratani* that she will never circumcise again. She twists her hand that is holding the *Olmurunya*

mercilessly (p.245). She descends on the mono eyed witch like a ferocious leopard and disfigures her face. She batters her mono eye (p.245). Resian hits the witch on the head like a snake. The witch sprawls flat on the ground (p.245). All these happen in a dream.

Resentful

She instinctively detects the absence of love from her father. She grows sullen, bewildered and resentful (p.10). She resents Oloisudori's ill-motive and therefore tells him off when he visits and insists that she should serve him (p.205). She resentfully asks what is wrong with being born a woman. (p.205). She contemplates suicide after her plan to go to the university is cancelled by her father (p.210).

Remorseful

When she becomes clumsy and almost breaks the glass she apologizes to her father (p.40). When chided by her mother against using rude words towards Oloisudori and *yeyo-botorr*, she apologizes (p.94). When she learns Oloisudori is heart she says sorry (P.95).

Visionary/ Ambitious

She has a dream of being called Dr. Resian Kaelo (P.94). She is always reading books so as to keep her ambition alive (p.135). When Kaelo tells her with finality that she is not joining university, she screams like one possessed with demented spirits (p.209).

Observant

She observes that her uncle's four houses have rivalry and apprehension amongst themselves. She observes that two of the four aunts are pregnant (p.18). She interestingly observes that there is always a scramble for girls to marry in Nasila (p.128). She observes that the doors are well locked (p.138). Lastly, she observes that the term children always referred to girls in the Maa culture (p.175).

Pessimistic

At time she lacks hope. This is partly contributed by her father who disliked her right from her birth. Mama Milanoi observes that Resian is in a pessimistic mood most of the times (p.29). She hopes for the worst in their new house and requests Taiyo to plead with father so that they can go to university for studies and security (p.33).

Persuasive/ Persistent

She persuades Taiyo to plead with Kaelo her father to take them for university studies (p.5).

She does not change her stand. She always asks Taiyo whether she has talked to father about their

university education (p.89). She persuades the young man accosting them not to harm them, (Taiyo & Resian) (p.18).

Sarcastic

“Wiser indeed!” jeered Resian. (P.72).She mocks her father’s words that Joseph will teach them. When asked by her father why she has left her guest (Oloisudori) alone in the house, she sarcastically answers, “I left him at home enjoying his tea and pancakes” (p.206).

Jealous

She fears Taiyo’s attraction to Joseph may lower her attention to her (Resian) (p.49). She declares to hate anyone who comes in between her and her sister (p.49). She is not ready to be abandoned by Taiyo as she falls in love with Joseph (p.72).

Lazy

In their new house, even when there are many duties to be done, she chooses to read a book (p.32). She tosses into the bed and declares that, “my body belongs to me.’ (p.33). Kaelo comments that she is lazy like an overfed lizard after comparing her with the industrious Taiyo (p.64).

Defiant

She said in a defiant voice that she has no problem with adding knowledge but not traditional knowledge (p.76). Resian does not wish to please male counterparts (p.77). She is mad at Olarinkoi who is always doing nothing in the house (p.77).

Optimistic

She constantly hopes that one day she will join university (p.89). She imagines herself already admitted at the university and walking majestically (p.89).

Secretive

She agrees that they should not inform the father about the incident when they are accosted by a callous young man (p.20).

Resian’s role in the novel as a protagonist is critical. The author uses her to drive central themes like FGM, female assertiveness and determination. She compliments Taiyo her elder sister and a confidante. She also immensely develops dialogue as a style as well as the plot of the novel.

Mama Jane Milanoi

She is the wife to Kaelo and mother to Taiyo and Resian.

Meek/ Submissive

She says she did not resist Kaelo's marriage for traditions did not allow any resistance (p.2). She prays God to open her womb so that she can bear a son for Kaelo (p.29). When she is taken to her new house she exclaims, "Father of all creation!" (p.30). When Taiyo requests her to allow Joseph Parmuat to come and coach her on traditional dances, she fears saying "that's your father's territory." (p.56). She fears to broach the subject of circumcision of her daughters. (p.61). She is disturbed by Resian when she (Resian) uses harsh words on Oloisudori (p.94). She knows very little about her husband for he is a man (p.95). She honors her husband's visitor and his friends (p.179). She burns rice as she is afraid of Kaelo after Oloisudori has just left (p.104).

Religious

Before embarking on their journey to Nasila, she leads in prayers. Kaelo first spotted her at a church service at Nasila (p.9). She is to join women in ancestral prayers and songs of praise, a prayer for exhorting God to open women's wombs so that she can bear a son for Kaelo (p.29).

Cautious

She cautions Taiyo and Resian against strangers who might take advantage of their unfamiliarity with Nasila. (p.17). She wishes to care for her children although she fears Nasila people for their intolerance (p.30). She is torn between her love for Nasila culture and that for her daughters as well as her dutiful role of a faithful and obedient wife. (p.61). That is why she takes the subject of FGM cautiously.

Loving

She loves and cares for her daughters. She is worried by the FGM that is to be conducted on them (p.61). On learning that Oloisudori intends to marry one of her daughters she cries with pain. (p.113). Like a woman in labour, the story about selling Resian to Oloisudori highly hurts her (p.193).

Evasive/ Elusive

She avoids the girls' demand to be taken to university (p.8). Even when the girls make this request she lingers.

Mama Milanoi as a character is important in addressing the issue of women subjugation by men in the patriarchal Maa community. The novelist uses her to demonstrate how women occupy a lowly position in the family. Dialogue and flashback as stylistic devices are used by the novelist through her. She is also used to address the issue of religion in the novel.

Traitorous

Her daughters expect her to voice their requests to their strict father but she disappoints them on the issue. The girls also expect the mother to side with them on the idea of FGM so that they do not undergo the cut but instead she supports their circumcision and keeps quiet about the arranged marriage of her daughters and Oloisudori even when she notes the gender disparity and the girls' relentless desire to acquire university education.

Uncle Simiren Kaelo

He is the younger brother to Kaelo, uncle to Taiyo and Resian and brother in-law to Mama Milanoi.

Responsible

For thirty years, Parsimei Ole Kaelo has been away and during this time Simiren has acted as the head of the Kaelo family (p.11). "He ran all kinds of errands for his brother" (p.12). He purchases livestock for him (p.12). He also sells cattle for him (p.12). He participates in the construction of Kaelo's two buildings (p.12). He always passes any critical information to him and keeps him updated on what is happening in Nasila. An apt example is when elders show displeasure in his monogamous state (p.13).

Humble/peaceful

"There had never been any rivalry between him and his brother ever since they were young" (p.12). He has always accepted his position to be subordinate (p. 12). Even when he has four wives and sixteen children while his brother has only one wife and two children he remains humble (p.12). When Ole Kaelo returns to Nasila, he humbly expects that Kaelo will take up his role as the eldest brother (p.12) When Kaelo gets enraged after he(Simiren) relays elders' concerns to him(Kaelo) on their stand on polygamy, he does not argue with his brother (p.13).

Hospitable

He jovially welcomes the Kaelo's; his brother's family, back home from Nakuru where they have stayed for around thirty years.

Traditional/Conservative

He represents his brother during ritual and practices such as girls' initiation, boys' circumcision etc. (p.11, 12).

The novelist uses Simiren to show the positive aspects of the Maa culture. Humility, generosity, responsibility and hospitality are emphasized. He makes it possible for Kaelo to have a smooth transition to Nasila before and during the migration.

Yeiy-Botorr

She is the first wife of Simiren, and aunt to Taiyo and Resian. She is accorded more roles in the family and has an obligation of leading the co-wives. In Simiren's house, she is the eldest wife of the four wives.

Conservative/Superstitious

She thinks of Resian as a mad girl when she speaks ill about the lazy Olarinkoi. She cannot bear an argument about female freedom and assertiveness (P.77). She believes Resian has a bad spirit because she is not circumcised (p.78). *Yeiyobotorr* is used by the novelist to lay ground for polygamy in a Maa family. She is used to show cohesion in a traditional polygamous family.

Responsible

She introduces the other women to visitors (p.16).

Sincere

When she finds Taiyo and Resian doing house chores she genuinely praises them (p.76).

Soin Ole Supeyo

He is a respected elder of Ilmolelian clan, a longtime friend to Ole Kaelo as well as his mentor.

Honest

He honestly tells Ole Kaelo how much corrupt Oloisudori is and warns him sarcastically against him (p.26). He advises Kaelo to be careful with Oloisudori (p.26). He also warns Kaelo against Oloisudori's immoral behavior by telling him to ensure he keeps his daughters away from him (p.26).

Sarcastic

He uses sarcastic remarks on Kaelo aiming at hurting him. "Supeyo said, scornful smile twisting his lips." (P.26)

Emakererei/ Minik ene Nkoitoi

She is a doctor of veterinary science, manager of a big ranch and a crusader against FGM. She is the mentor to Taiyo and Resian. She is the manager of a ranch and a veterinary expert.

Bold

Though she is hated very much in Nasila, she champions freedom of females and crusades against F.G.M and early marriages (p.62). She boldly tells Oloisudori that none of the girls would leave the ranch (p.283). She looks boldly into Oloisudori's eyes (p.283). She visits Ole Supeyo's homestead to persuade him not to circumcise his daughter (p.22). She orders Oloisudori to leave the ranch for his own safety and the safety of his expensive machines (p.283). She refuse to comply with his demand

to be given either Resian or Taiyo.

Authoritative

She orders the driver to take delivery notes to the office (p.254). Resian observes that Dr. Minik Nkoitoi has an authoritative aura like of a principal in a high school (p.259). She authoritatively makes it clear that Oloisudori and his group did not have a right to receive any invitation letter to the party (p.282). She advises Oloisudori to leave the ranch in an angry tone (p.283).

Generous/ Helpful

She helps Resian and Taiyo get admission letters to Egerton University. She gives Resian a house and a job in the Ranch and saves Taiyo from her circumcisers. She holds a party for the two girls before they go to the university (p.280).

Educated/liberated

Mama Milanoi says she had gone to Makerere University in Uganda (p.61). She manages a vast ranch which requires a lot of expertise.

Loving/ Warm

She holds Resian on her shoulder and speaks to her calmly (p.259). She chooses to address Nabaru instead of Resian directly. (p.262). She develops a warm relationship with Resian (p.267).

Convincing

She convinces Nabaru that FGM is wasteful to females and Nabaru changes her position towards FGM (p.263).

Sympathetic

She feels sad when she sees a traumatized girl; she feels bitter bile sizzle inside herself and burn in her heart (p.269).

Courteous

The narrator comments about her courteous character when she calls the girls for the admission letters (p.279).

Minik is important to the novel for she is the agent of education, female empowerment as well as crusader of women freedom. Without her, the novelist cannot address the central issue of FGM in the novel. The last section of the novel takes place at the ranch and therefore she contributes significantly to plot development.

Edward Oloisudori Loonkiyaa

He is a close friend to Ole Kaelo and a jack of all trades.

Immoral

Supeyo warns Kaelo to keep his daughters away from him terming him as a randy he goat. His initial plan was to extort Kaelo but on noticing the two girls he changes his mind. (p.112). Resian certainly felt the fingers of his lifted hand graze the fullness of her breast (p.93). While in Kaelo's house, Oloisudori's eyes drop from face to Resian's bosom (p.203). Kaelo is advised to keep off his daughters from him.

Cunning

He brings gifts to the girls without telling them he is also paying their dowry (p.179). He entices Resian and Taiyo's parents by taking them for a visit in his own homestead (p. 186). Ole Kaelo had even earlier reported to Oloisudori that girls are reporting at the University but instead he plans to marry them (p.187). He ensnares Taiyo and Resian like antelopes (p.192). He schemes a plan of grabbing Resian to be his wife (p.200).

Corrupt

Supeyo states clearly that Oloisudori's corrupt nature is known by everybody in Nasila. Joseph refers to him as a monster (p.100). He also describes him as a shadowy figure (p.100) and extortionist (p.101). He takes part in hunting elephants and rhinos (p.236).

Authoritative

He authoritatively asks where Kaelo is (p.92). He authoritatively states that Resian is his wife (p.204) and that only death can part them (p.204).

Cynical/ Sarcastic

He tells Kaelo, that he is interested in his girl, Resian and his friend is interested in Taiyo bluntly (p.110). He instructs that only Resian should cook for him and three guests (p.69). He tells Kaelo, "I would like to relieve you of your two daughters (p.110).

Sadistic

When Resian tells him off he laughs sadistically. (P.205). Resian tells Oloisudori that he is stark mad for thinking she is her wife. In response to this, Oloisudori laughs softly. This shows he derives pleasure from her displeasure.

Oloisudori is essential in the novel for he helps in creation of the theme of materialism / greed. The author uses him to create irony as a stylistic device.

Joseph Parmuat

He is a teacher in primary school and trainer of Taiyo and Resian on traditional dances. He is in love

with Taiyo but traditions restrain the relationship.

Bold

He openly tells Taiyo and Resian that he will join them to fight FGM even when the environment is not friendly (p.88). He describes himself as a fish that had jumped out of water... on verge of death” This is when his relationship with Taiyo inclines to intimacy (p.136).

Dependable

Mama Milanoi corrects Kaelo’s thinking by informing him that Joseph is the finest and dependable young man of Nasila (p.48). She does not disappoint Taiyo’s parents (p.132).

Loving

On meeting Taiyo, he falls in love with her. He promises to visit her the following day and also coach her on traditional dance if allowed by Taiyo’s father.

Cautious

In dealing with Kaelo’s two girls, he is cautious of Nasila culture and respects his parents. (p.122). He is alert so that with Taiyo they do not begin a clandestine relationship (p.123). He fears the condition of *Intoiye nemengalana* in the girls. He cautiously weighs whether to fall in love with Taiyo and break his cultural law (p.137). He fears that the uncircumcised Taiyo may be wild and untamable.

Responsible

While dealing with Taiyo he always ensures that Resian is available (p.124). He follows Kaelo closely to ensure the old man was safe during the errands of pursuing his girls’ molesters (p.159). He helps in the rescue of Taiyo from her circumcisers although he dies by being speared to death in the process.

Intelligent/Informed

He observes that Maa culture has already shed off some traditional practices like throwing of the dead and the dying to hyenas, abandoning very old and terminally ill people to animals.” (p.128). He observes how Nasila culture is violent once its sensibilities are violated (p.132).

Patriotic

Although there is a strong wave of marrying Taiyo who is uncircumcised, he sticks to his culture. He strongly feels that “Nasila culture was the father and mother that nurtured.” (p.137). in this case he views the culture as that which nourishes the members of the community. He resolves to decline her love (p.136).

Educated

In his house shelves are neatly packed with books. (P.131). He is a primary school teacher in Maasai land, an area with low education index.

Joseph Parmuat's role is important in the novel. The novelist uses him to anchor the theme of culture. He also helps in the emancipation of women through his sacrifice towards Taiyo's education.

Old Ole Musanka

He is the old man who leads in blessing ceremony of Kaelo's during the homecoming ceremony.

Religious

He leads in blessings of the religious section of the Kaelo's homecoming function (p.51). He blesses Taiyo and prophetically says she will be a mother of the next leader of Nasila (p.52).

Wise

He uses proverbs in his conversations. He describes Kaelo as a tiny strand of hair that had been blown to show the insignificance of Kaelo compared to Maa culture (p.51). He interprets Maa culture to the crowd (p.52). "Home is Maa, Home is Nasila, home is family and home is children" (p.52).

Conservative

He warns Taiyo and Resian not to follow the teachings of Emakererei. He curses Emakererei the wasp, "may she go down with the setting sun!" (p.52). Ole Musanka is an important character in reinforcing the theme of religion as well as culture. His age and position as an elder as well as a prophet make him stand a better position in religion and culture. He also signals future and hope in Taiyo through his prophecy.

Patriotic

He advises Maa elders to cut loose the strings of alien culture from Ole Kaelo (p.52).

Olarinkoi

He is the young Maasai man who stays at Kaelo's home. He is a suspicious character and through him the novelist employs suspense.

Intruding

He intrudes into the affairs of the girls while in the house of Ole Kaelo (p.74). He is not known by the Kaelo's yet he keeps coming to Kaelo's house.

Indifferent

He directs his attention to the girl's parents and not the girls (p.75). While escaping with Resian, they travel for a very long distance in silence (p.127).

Lazy

He is always dozing off at the sitting room or idling somewhere else (p.77). He does not bathe and stinks terribly (p.240).

Secretive

He occasionally brings bundles of food to Kaelo's (P.79). He knows the prophesy which states that he should marry Resian and keeps quiet about it as he waits for the opportune time. **Protective**

He protects Resian from committing suicide after her father beats her and denies her a chance to go for University studies (p.210). He rescues the girls from molestation by two young men

Mysterious

Joseph says Olarinkoi is a mystery (p.80) and only four men know about him. But the four always contradict in their facts about him (p.81). For example one says that he comes from Polonga, 200 kilometers from Nasila (p.80).

Abusive

He uses caustic language (p.211). He uses very abusive language on Resian even after she is emotionally unstable (p.217). He calls Nabaru a filthy woman for escaping with Resian (p.249).

Rough/Violent

On the day he abducts Resian, he goes drinking and comes late in the night kicking the door roughly (p.221).

Beastly/bitter

He rapes Resian while drunk (p.221). He promises to do something nasty to Nabaru in case she returns after taking Resian to the ranch. (p.249). He strongly believes that Nabaru and Resian will be followed by a curse (p.249).

Olarinkoi is important as far as suspense is concerned. The author uses him to create suspense. He is used in the development of F.G.M as a theme as well as exploring the theme of violence.

Nabaru

She is the old woman who takes care of Resian after she regains her consciousness after the rape ordeal done by Olarinkoi.

Caring/Helpful

She encourages and cares for Resian until she regains her health (p.225). She promises to give Resian account of what transpired when she lost her memory (p.231). She is the *enkabaani* who informs Resian of great secrets and even the prophecy (p.232). She saves the life of Resian. (p.236). She also becomes her confidant (p.237) so that the two share a great deal.

Bold

She travels a long distance in a rough terrain at night to search for a lorry to ferry Resian to the ranch (p.253).

Independent minded

She thinks it is none of *enkoiboni's* business to want to circumcise Resian while her parents were still alive (p.238). Her role is vital in showing the possibility of a female helping a fellow female in overcoming challenges of FGM. The author uses her to develop dialogue as a major stylistic device in the novel.

Olarinkoi's Mother

She is the old woman prophetess/*enkoiboni*

Scary

She looks like a witch and has ill motives (p.227). She has a single, red rimmed eye that resembled a monster which is partly stone and partly human (p.227).

Cynical/Wicked

She shows mockery and disregard to Resian. She abuses her for biting her son's thumb. She calls her names for being uncircumcised. She says Resian is not yet a woman because she is not circumcised (p.228). She shamelessly uncovers Resian's stomach to check whether she is pregnant (p.235).

Sarcastic

She remarks sarcastically, "We have been trying to feed you from your bed with a silver spoon." This is not true for Resian was always treated roughly by the witch. (p.228). She laughs sarcastically. She mocks her for her father has money (p.228).

Contemptuous

She has contempt for the rich corrupt people in the society (p.236). She feels political leaders and wealthy people in the country are responsible for the unequal distribution of resources.

In the novel, she represents women who are responsible for being stumbling blocks to their fellow

women in the society. She is used by the writer to bring out the theme of women as enemies of themselves.

Lebutu/ Lorry Driver

Meek

He politely asks for more work from Dr. Minik (p.254). On their way to the ranch he uses polite language to address the two ladies. He is contrasted with the other driver who drives a pick up earlier in the novel carrying Olarinkoi.

CHAPTER THREE

THEMES

Themes are issues that are consistent in a creative work. They are sub categories or sub topics of the subject matter or the main idea in a work of art. They constitute the entire message the writer wishes to put across to his or her readers. Therefore, themes are the messages put across by a writer in a work of art. There are major and minor themes. Major themes cut across the text and are the main ideas the writer intends to pass to the readers. Minor themes are minor ideas which are still important in the text.

POSITIVE NASILIAN CULTURE/TRADITIONS

Culture refers to the customs, habits and behaviors that characterize a society's, community's or nation's way of life. On the other hand, traditions form part of the culture of a people and are handed down from one generation to the next.

Positive aspects of culture in Nasila are important in holding people together. There are many aspects of Nasilian culture which are positive. The songs the young people and children sing during Ole Kaelo's homecoming ceremony attest to the rich Maa culture. The narrator says, "From the children's performance, it was evident that the cherished Nasilian traditional dance would stand the test of time." (p.44). The writer says that the party was full of pomp and gaiety. This is brought out by jewelry won by the guests such as ivory, beads, coloured lesos, kangas and shukas (p.47), all attesting to the rich

cultural heritage of the Maa. Generosity as a virtue is seen in Simiren who invites all those present in the party to savor his brother's lavish hospitality (p.46). Food and drinks are served in generous measures to all those present (p.47). Ole Musanka, an elder who blesses Ole Kaelo's home, glorifies Maa's culture saying that it was the blood and marrow that gave sustenance to the body" (p.51). According to him, home is Maa, Nasila, family and children (p.52). His only problem is that he supports FGM, a cultural practice that does not assist women in any way.

When Resian and Taiyo go to stay at their uncle's place for some time, they witness some positive aspects of communal life and unity at their uncle's home. We are told that, "Life and work in that home was communal. Although each mother had her own house and cooked her own food, all grown up daughters helped each one of them" (p.148). There is well laid down chain of command with the first wife being the deputy to their uncle. There are hardly any disagreements and virtues of selflessness and sharing are emphasized (p.149). When Ole Kaelo's daughters are assaulted by two men, the communal way of life comes in handy. All Ilmolelian men join him in pursuing the men and meting punishment on them. He is not left alone to deal with the matter. During Ole Kaelo's homecoming ceremony, young men and women from the clan work together to make the day successful. Ole Kaelo is touched after discovering that brotherhood, honour and selflessness still existed in Nasila and this makes him swear that he would never abandon the culture of his people or live outside his clan (p.40).

Nasila culture clearly defined relationships. "The founder had intended that the culture would regulate the lives of the people...It charted out the way for everyone, from cradle to the grave. It defined relationships, it created laws that governed the ownership of property and settled disputes. It did not discriminate, it did not favour anyone over the other, it gave everyone a chance to live a full life; it protected everyone within its confines and provided cleansing procedures for those who defiled it. It was simply a cherished way of life for all the Maa people..." (p.118).

Mama Milanoi appreciates Nasila culture which spares her nephew from death. She "...began to see the wisdom of the Maa founder who ensured that justice was always tempered with mercy" (p.163). According to Nasila culture, if a man sought refuge between the legs of an old man, he was to be spared despite the crime committed (p.162). Anybody who violates cultural values of Nasila culture is faced with laid down punishment. Both Ntara Muyo and Lante who had attempted to rape Resian and Taiyo are forced to pay fines to the girls and their father and somehow, justice is done. "The two boys had been fined two heifers each" and Ntara Muyo "...an extra heifer to cover the shame that he had occasioned by accosting his own sister" (p.164). Mama Milanoi also reminisces the old aspect of her

culture which gave room for mass action in case somebody misbehaved and went against the expected conduct. A case in point is where an old man got infatuated by a girl of fourteen years. When women realized it, they attacked the man, stripped him naked and beat him up to death. That served as a detraction to any other man who would harbor such intentions. Mama Milanoi wonders where such good aspects of Nasila culture had gone for they would shield her daughter from being forced to marry an old man like Oloisudori (pp.115-117).

A girl was always protected from men with evil intentions. Girls were kept away from male visitors in their homes and there was hardly any interaction between fathers and daughters (p.175). The rich Maa culture has different types of love. There is *elangatare* where boys did anything possible to win girls' admiration (p.124). The *elangatare* love included feats by boys such as killing lions and defending people and their cattle from their enemies. There is also *patureishi* type of love where a girl and a boy were allowed to have a love affair alongside the conventional love. Such boys were the darlings of the girls and a song of praise would be composed by the girlfriend in praise of the valorous deeds of her boyfriend (pp.124-125). This relationship ended in marriage after a marriage ceremony. On the other hand, the *patureishi* did not end in marriage. It was meant to check the conduct and behavior of young people and keep them disciplined (p.126).

NEGATIVE CULTURE/TRADITIONS

Negative aspects of culture in Nasila are strongly opposed by the young generation. To them, such practices should be shunned because they have outlived their usefulness in a society that is slowly but surely embracing modernity and civilization.

Female Genital Mutilation (F.G.M) is an outdated cultural practice that has no standing in the changing Nasila. To those that support it, it is meant to tame a wild gender just as cattle that require to be dehorned (p.22). When it was discovered several years back, it was to find a lasting solution to the exploitation of the Maa women by the Ilarinkon warriors. "...that gave birth to *enkamuratani* (the female circumciser). And her *Olmurunya* was shaped, sharpened and handed to her" (p.87). Mama Milanoi also affirms the origin of this cultural practice saying, "It was the shame and anger that was provoked by Ilarinkon taunts, lewd teasing and provocative posturing that made the women do what they did to curtail those desires the worthless predators exploited to prey upon them" (p.90).

Resian is very much opposed to this retrogressive practice. She says, "I would rather live in the noisiest place on earth, than live anywhere near a vagabond who would accost me...with the intention

of mutilating my sexuality (p.33). At this early point, she makes her stand clear that she is opposed to the practice that disfigures and damages female sexuality. She is bitter and has pain in her heart due to threats of undergoing F.G.M. The *olmurunya*, the instrument used to conduct is scary. The writer reveals that it "...was a bladelike tool shaped like a smoothing plane blade" and the *enkamuratani* "showed the way she went about her profession of transforming young girls into young women through the cut of *olmurunya*" (p.58). She wonders what the use of F.G.M in today's woman is (p.90). She observes that the practice is being fueled by men who use it to continue oppressing women. "...one of their ways of oppressing us is to demand that F.G.M be perpetuated against us forever" (p.91). The *enkoiboni*, mother to Olarinkoi tells Resian, "As soon as we clip that erogenous salacity from you that destroys homes, you will become a respected woman..." (p.229). This was not the original reason why F.G.M was invented but the practice has been maintained to purportedly keep women faithful.

F.G.M is so highly regarded that no girl would get married before getting circumcised. Such a girl was derogatorily referred to as *entaapai* and her family was not spared ridicule. To make matters worse, if she got pregnant, she would be circumcised at birth and married off to the oldest man in the village (p.63). According to *enkoiboni*, no mother would want an uncircumcised girl as a wife for her son (p.235). This would prevent any other girl from doing such a thing. Circumcising the girl at birth is painful, dehumanizing and traumatizing. Joseph Parmuat opines that negative aspects of culture such as throwing the dead and the dying to hyenas or abandoning the old and very sick in deserted homesteads to be eaten by wild animals have already been expunged from Nasila culture (p.128). Resian is optimistic that soon, Nasila culture would do away with F.G.M as a cultural practice. Minik cites horrible and outdated cultural practice such as *emuata* that forced young brides to wear heavy copper around their limbs, legs, arms to make them beautiful and which had been discarded hence freeing women from pain. She opines that even girl child circumcision should be discarded for it has outlived its usefulness (p.263).

Sexism refers to preference given to either the male or the female gender child. It is an outdated tradition that is still embraced by individuals such as Ole Kaelo. We are told that he wanted at least three boys but instead gets two girls. This shows his preference for boys. When his wife gets pregnant again, he hopes for a boy who would carry his name to the next generation but instead, he gets a girl that he lives to loathe (p.10, 174).

The communal way of life in Nasila and clanship system also has negative effects. Its major negative effect is that it offered no privacy to those who needed it. Taiyo and Resian realize that in Nasila,

home belonged to all members of the clan. We are told "It was not an unusual thing to get up in the morning to find the living room full of men and women who came that early...to share a sumptuous breakfast with their kith and kin" (p.35). Some intrude their homes even without being invited (65). Although they adjust to such a negative aspect of culture, it still remains a bad aspect of culture for it interferes with their privacy.

Taiyo is unhappy with the tradition that disallows marriage of young people from the same clan, however remotely related they are. According to Nasila culture, if such people married, there would be untold consequences (p.49).) Taiyo finds this as a "gross unfairness of the outdated culture" and "a searing torment to her and to all others who were of progressive minds" (p.56). Joseph fears going against that tradition because he would be castigated and punished for doing such a thing. He would also be forced to pay cattle to Ole Kaelo as compensation and undergo a demeaning cleansing ceremony as well as a public rebuke (p.123). On the contrary, according to Taiyo, culture and traditions are never static but are dynamic in that culture "...shades off aspects that become irrelevant with time" (p.127). She cites F.G.M and the clan system that prevents people from the same clan from marrying (p.128). She observes that such practices should "...have disappeared at the turn of the last century" (p.128).

Another aspect of culture that Resian and Taiyo condemn is the practice of booking unborn baby girls (p.129). This denies women a chance to choose their marriage partners based on love but not what is dictated upon them by their parents. Apart from booking unborn baby girls, young women are also subjected to early marriages. Resian and Taiyo are the best cases in point. Ole Kaelo forces Resian to marry Oloisudori, his business friend against her expectations. She undergoes several challenges in order to overcome this plan. When she escapes from Oloisudori's net, she is subjected to another forced marriage to Olarinkoi but she also escapes it. Taiyo is also not spared the practice. She is forcefully circumcised in order to be handed over to Oloisudori as a wife, although she is rescued by Minik.

ALIENATION

Alienation is becoming a stranger to what one initially belonged to or being isolated from others. Alienation in the novel, Blossoms of the Savannah is as a result of embracing new culture.

Ole Kaelo and his family have lived for thirty years in Nakuru where he has brought up his daughters until his retrenchment. This has alienated him from many cultural practices which he comes across with once he returns to Nasila. During his absence from Nasila, it was his brother Simiren who represented him in the Ilmolelian clan in sacred rituals such as girls' initiation (p.11). While his brother

has married four wives for the culture permits polygamy, Ole Kaelo has one wife and is contemptuously likened to a mono-eyed giant who stood on legs of straw (p.13) showing that his position and stand in Nasila is precarious and unstable. He regards himself as civilized and calls the clan elders “megalomaniacs” who were still trapped in archaic traditions that were better buried and forgotten” (p.13). During Ole Kaelo’s homecoming party, his daughters jokingly observe that he does not know how to dance and that he should be coached (p.45). His inability to dance, perhaps, is a result of being away from Nasila for many years. After settling in Nasila, the writer says that a new Ole Kaelo was emerging and he was becoming a Nasilian very fast (p.62). Mama Milanoi reveals that her husband was not a strict follower of Nasila traditions only prescribing to those aspects that he considered decent (p.60). Perhaps, that is why he allows Oloisudori to marry his daughter Resian, a thing that goes against the cultural grain of Nasila. She asks, “How could a man who was the age of her husband be her son-in-law? Where was Nasila culture?” (p.114).

Resian blames the tension which continues to be witnessed at their home to their father. She blames these developments and changes in their home on “a newborn mongrel; a new culture that was partly Maa and partly a combination of a myriads of cultures found in Nakuru town.” (p.174). She argues that that was the animal her father introduced into his home in Nasila and which was “...threatening to devour her first and thereafter everyone else, one by one” (p.174). By embracing the two cultural divides, he sees no problem in planning to marry his daughters to an old man, a plan that costs his family a lot including losing the trust of his two daughters.

One of the cultural practices he embraces is Female Genital mutilation. It is a practice he didn’t think about in Nakuru but which confronts him after he returns with his two daughters as *Intoiye Nemengalana* or uncircumcised. This has made them alienated from the people of Nasila. They contemptuously refer to them as *Intoiye Nemengalana* and they cannot be easily married in the culturally rich Nasila community (p.8, 58). Being not circumcised earns the girls constant ridicule and contempt because they are unlike other girls. The *enkoiboni* asks Resian contemptuously, “Are you not ashamed to be among *intoiye nemengalana* at your age” (p.228). Their state, which physically alienates them from other girls, has been a constant cause of harassment from all sorts of people “...all trying to discredit them for not having undergone the cultural rite of circumcision” (p.261). As a result of not having circumcised his daughters, Ole Kaelo is derogatively called the father of *Intoiye Nemengalana*.

Ole Kaelo has also alienated himself from his culture by marrying only one wife while the community allows polygamy. He is likened to a mono-eyed giant who stood on legs of straw (p.13). He is in

constant clash with the Nasila culture which if he adhered to; he would not give his daughters to an old man like Oloisudori. For instance, culture prohibits girls meeting with male visitors but he insists that Resian should serve Oloisudori and his friend during his visit (p.175).

Both Resian and Taiyo clash with FGM tradition, forced early marriages and coaching about Nasila culture. Resian is very rebellious of FGM and forced marriage to Oloisudori. She also rejects cultural coaching saying, "I refuse to be taught to solely please male counterparts" (p.77-78). Resian and Taiyo have lost touch with Nasila culture as a result of being brought up in the city of Nakuru and being educated. They don't know the types of love that exist in the rich cultural heritage of their community. Resian asks Joseph Parmuat whether *patureishi* really exists (p.127) showing her ignorance about the matter. Taiyo's modern cultural values clashes with traditional Nasila culture. She falls in love with Joseph who is of her clan, a thing not allowed in the Nasilian culture. She does not care about her disregard of such a cultural restriction arguing she cannot care about a primitive culture which also violates her right to marry anybody she falls in love with (p.133).

The positive aspects of Nasila culture are under threat from the imposing modern culture. The writer puts that this culture, "was no more ... and just Nasila River has been polluted by chemicals, by the likes of Oloisudori. It had ..." become mutable and now it contained defiant mutants that it could not regulate and which were above Nasila laws" (p.118). Mama Milanoi admits that her daughters were operating under a different culture from hers. She says they, "...knew very little of Nasila culture. They were children of a new undefined culture. Theirs was a mutant of another kind" (p.118).

Education is one of the causes of alienation. The Kaelo's, for instance, want their daughters educated but at the same time are wary of the influence of education on them. We are told that the sons of Nasila who got educated "...got alienated and hardly came back home" (p.150). There is a clash between formal education, which is an aspect of modern culture, with traditional Nasilian culture. This clash makes Nasila culture to be "...grappling with the changes education brought." These changes, according to the narrator, were "...threatening an explosion in the not too distant future" (pp.150-151).

CULTURAL CONFLICT

Several characters undergo cultural conflict or dilemma in the novel as a result of encountering and embracing the modern culture. Nasila culture, which is part of the larger Maa culture, is also in crisis as a result of clashing with modernity.

Mama Milanoi, wife to Ole Kaelo, is at cultural crossroads. She is in dilemma as far as the question of FGM is concerned. She understands the danger she would expose her daughters in Nasila where there

are both positive and negative cultural practices and wishes she could "...shield them and protect them" (p.30). She knows this would not be possible because "Nasila people were very intolerant of those who ignored their cherished cultural sensibilities" (p.30). She knows that she is in breach of Nasila traditions by not having circumcised her daughters by then (p.60). While back in Nakuru and before her husband's retrenchment, Mama Milanoi admits that FGM was a non-issue in the family for "She had regarded the practice as an archaic rite that had been discarded and forgotten. But there it was now, rearing its ugly head and threatening to wreak havoc in the young innocent lives of her daughters" (p.63).

Mama Milanoi is torn between yielding her daughters to the barbaric culture and losing their faith, love and confidence and going against Nasila culture and becoming an alien in the clan. She fears doing anything that would wrong her husband and hence chooses to tread carefully around the matter. She comes out as a weak woman who shies from declaring her stand on Nasila culture when she meekly tells her husband, "Our culture is everything and its rules, our lives" (p.61). Her dutiful role of a faithful and obedient wife to Ole Kaelo comes before her duty to her daughters hence chooses to obey his edicts. She wishes to join forces with the likes of Minik or *Emakererei*, and fight against practices like FGM but then fears for her marriage, "If she aligned herself with a person who Nasila regarded as having such an obnoxious reputation, where would her marriage stand?" (p.62). She even wonders whether as a family, they are traditionalists or modernists especially by embracing retrogressive cultural values (p.62).

Joseph is faced with cultural conflict when he falls in love with Taiyo who is from his clan. His culture does not allow such a union and hence he is torn between loyalty to that culture or love for Taiyo. He asks himself several questions that reveal this crisis. "Did he have to abandon Nasila culture in exchange of a woman who sneered at its tenets? He considered running away from Nasila and its culture but that left a sour taste in his mouth." (p.137). He finally opts to stick by Nasila culture arguing that it was too valuable to be abandoned in exchange of a woman's love. He finally resolves this conflict by declining Taiyo's love (p.137).

Ole Kaelo's alienation from his culture and embracing a culture that was neither modern nor traditional creates internal conflict in him. He is torn between marrying his daughter Resian to Oloisudori or turning down his request, thereby losing his business. He keeps wondering what sort of a man Oloisudori is and at some point, he has to assure himself that he is a morally upright man so that he can marry his daughter to him (p.194).

FEMALE ASSERTIVENESS

At the centre of fighting retrogressive cultural practices is Resian, Taiyo and Minik *ene* Nkoitoi who is commonly called *Emakererei*.

Both Resian and Taiyo resist F.GM and do all they can to fight the outmoded practice. Resian says she would not live anywhere near a man who would want to mutilate her sexuality while Taiyo says she would only be mutilated if only she were dead (p.33). This declaration sets the mood and tone in the rest of the novel where the girls fight various individuals that try to force them in taking a path they do not wish. Resian resists being circumcised by force in a dream by fighting the *enkamuratani* and the *enkoiboni* (pp.244-254). She tells Minik that she had heard of her relentless fight against F.G.M and underage marriage (p.262). Her stand is that girl child circumcision should disappear from Maa language and regarded extinct and that *Intoiye Nemengalana* (uncircumcised girl) should stop being derogatory (p.263). Minik is bitter and angry about the continued practice of F.G.M at a time she believes the rite has stopped being useful to women. She blames the practice on the neo-culture of wealth which was dampening the fight against such outdated practices. Her take is that "...there was need to plan new strategies to battle the new monster that was rearing its ugly head" (p.269). Resian has a different way out of the problem. She believes that if all women said no to the detestable culture, men would do nothing about it (pp.277-278). Women who have undergone F.G.M such as Minik and Nabaru agree that they are not different human beings hence downplaying its importance.

Resian is opposed to cultural coaching by Joseph Parmuat. Her father observes that though they may find some cultural demands detestable, it is such practices that nurtured and bound their people together (p.71). To Resian, the coaching is worthless and she says that if they were sons, they would not be subjected to cultural coaching. She says, "I refuse to be taught. I will either be taught at the university what is universally beneficial to all mankind or be taught nothing" (p.73). She is opposed to informal education to girls meant to please men saying, "I refuse to be taught to solely please male counterparts. They can also cook, and they can, and should also learn to please us females" (p.77). She is described as someone who knows her rights by her mother and that she would not allow anyone trample on them (p.118). Later, she accepts to be coached but only after Joseph introduces interesting topics such as those of love.

When Taiyo falls in love with Joseph, she does not care about what others or the culture says about it. She boldly tells Joseph, "No, I don't care about the oppressive Nasila culture. Why should I care about violating the backward culture when it does not care when it violates my own rights?" (p.133). She says this despite knowing very well that her culture does not allow inter-clan marriage. She assertively

tells Joseph she does not care about her culture's position on the matter when he tells her they cannot marry (p.134). She is ready to defend her love for Joseph including eloping with him to join others who share with her neo-cultural persuasion.

The two girls are ready to fight and resist forced marriages and Oloisudori's advances on them. They plan and succeed in returning the gifts that he had brought them saying, "Woe to him if he thought she was a chattel to be secured by the content of a briefcase!" (p.198). She flatly rejects Oloisudori's plans to marry her saying, "You are stark mad if you think I am your wife. I can only be your wife over my dead body" (p.204). She boldly tells her father that she would rather die than get married to a monster" (p.209). When Resian is abducted by Olarinkoi, she continues in her fighting and resisting spirit. The writer says, "Olarinkoi and his demonic mother may physically take her to Tanzania...take her as his wife...physically circumcise her, but mentally she was going to resist... She was going to refuse to be subdued...she was going to physically resist" (p.230).

The song by the girls from Intapuka-e-Maa during Taiyo's and Resian's farewell party is full of female assertion. They say they are proud to be uncircumcised and that they would be doctors, teachers and engineers and would build the nation together with men (p.281). This is a song of hope and optimism hence revealing a generation of young people that are not ready to be daunted by retrogressive cultural practices.

MORAL DECADENCE

Despite the rich cultural setting of the novel, there are many cases of immoral conduct or behavior that falls short of the morals of any society. This can be largely attributed to the clash or encounter between the traditional culture and modern culture. Many evils are perpetrated by Oloisudori and other characters with warped morality.

Oloisudori is totally morally decayed. He engages in all sorts of vices in order to amass wealth. He is corrupt, immoral, an extortionist, a smuggler, a poacher, a blackmailer, a thug and even a killer (p.101, 236). He is also suspected by Ole Kaelo to belong to the cult of ilmasonik, a cult that thrived on extortion and blackmail (p.107). These vices, allegedly associated with him, point at his moral deficiency.

When Ole Kaelo asks his friend Supeyo if Oloisudori is a man of integrity, he replies, "Don't trust him any further than you would a hyena in your homestead...keep the fellow away from your daughters" (p.26). When Oloisudori meets Resian for the first time, his amorous character is evident. He openly scans her body (p.92) and cranes his neck to watch her (p.95). In his presence, Resian is

uncomfortable for she felt from his looks as if her blouse was unbuttoned (p.96). She also feels as if he was caressing her entire body with his hands against her will (p.96). He tells Ole Kaelo his intention to marry his daughter very callously and as if he was talking about a goat or a sheep (p.110). In his first visit to Ole Kaelo's home, "...he took a long time washing his hands as he gloatingly peered at her" (p.179). He has no shame taking the hand of Resian and kissing it without her consent. He looks at her in a sexually suggestive manner "...his gaze deliberately dropped from her face to her bosom and lingered there" (p.203). This is before he drops the bombshell; which is marrying her and making her the happiest woman in East Africa. He shamelessly tells Kaelo of his intention to circumcise Resian before marrying her. Ole Kaelo regards such talks as very abnormal between a father-in-law and a would be son-in-law. From such immoral talk, Ole Kaelo believes that the world had come to an end (p.112).

Apart from Oloisudori, there are many other morally rotten characters in the novel such as Olarinkoi warriors, Olarinkoi, and *enkoiboni*. The Olarinkoi warriors, who subdued the Maa for long, are morally rotten. They forced the Maa women to "...compose lewd songs which they had to perform in the most outrageous and indecent postures and styles" (p.86). They took advantage of the compromising situation of the Maa women to exploit them sexually knowing that "...they were not able to resist their natural instinctive desires..." (p.86).

Taiyo and Resian's near rape by two men as they come from their father's shop in Nasila points at moral decay in Nasila. (p.140). This incident causes the girls mental torture. Some of these deeds are done to them because they are uncircumcised. Olarinkoi is also immoral. He abuses Resian by telling her: "Today we shall see how educated your body is" (p.221). This is before physically assaulting and raping her after she passes out.

The foul language that *enkoiboni*, the mother to Olarinkoi, addresses Resian with is full of moral rottenness. Her language is full of abuses and bitterness. *Enkabaani*, Resian's nurse does not support *enkoiboni's* foul language and urges Resian to ignore her. She does not respect Resian's privacy when she feels her stomach with her hands to check whether she was pregnant. All this time, "Resian seethed with anger at the blatant intrusion of her privacy and total disregard for her feelings" (p.235).

BETRAYAL

Betrayal is breaking of the trust that existed between individuals before. The greatest betrayal in the novel is that of Ole Kaelo to his daughters. On page one, we are told that Ole Kaelo refused to allow his daughter Taiyo to travel to Mombasa with other young men and women selected by an FM radio

station for a music extravaganza (pp.1-2). He refused to allow her saying that no daughter of his "...would so demean herself and her family as to perform in public in exchange of monetary gain" (p.45). To him that would be like engaging in harlotry. In addition, he betrays his daughters' ambitions to join Egerton University preferring instead to marry them off to Oloisudori, a very rich man. This shows he is not ready to help them realize their dreams as a father should do.

Ole Kaelo has betrayed Resian in many ways. He has not loved her as he should from her birth. We are told that "From the moment she was born, mute and helpless, he detested her" (p.10). This has contributed to Resian growing up "...sullen, bewildered and resentful" (p.10). He is biased in his treating of the two daughters for he does not love her as he loves Taiyo. Taiyo admits this emotional betrayal: "For reasons she did not understand, she had always found their father strangely and harshly impatient towards Resian" (p.34). However, she knew that he despised her ever since she was young (p.173). Ole Kaelo is strongly hateful and unappreciative of her: "...he wondered where in the world they fetched that awkward, overblown, stupid child...And the very look in her eyes, half-fearful, half-defiant and wholly troubled, was always enough to raise his temper to the highest pitch" (p.41). He also abuses her at the slightest provocation. He tells her: "While Taiyo works herself to the bone, she lazes about like an over-fed lizard in the hot afternoon sun!" (p.64). He goes on "Look at the way you slouch...I'll not be surprised if you soon become a hunchback" (p.64). Even her mother fails Resian for we are told: "Even stranger was their mother's failure to come to Resian's defense. It was as if her motherly instincts could not extend her protective wings to cover Resian. Seeing her parents' betrayal of her sister, Taiyo takes over to comfort Resian and reassure her when hurt especially by her father. Her role in Resian's life is very important because she relies on her to make requests to their father on her behalf for she cannot approach him directly. The case in point is her quest to join university which she keeps pestering Taiyo to ask their father to do on her behalf. A parent that cannot communicate with his child has definitely failed in his parental responsibility.

Ole Kaelo and Oloisudori mercilessly hatch a plan to abduct Resian and marry her off without her consent if she does not cooperate. The plan is "If she declined, he would leave it at that until the evening when his men would pounce on her and abduct her" (p.191). After such a heinous plan, "The three of them ...roared with rich laughter" (p.192). He is even ready to have her circumcised so that she can get married to a man she does not even love. Mama Milanoi is not blameless because she is inwardly opposed to the abduction plan; but does not speak out to condemn such a wicked plan. When Oloisudori reveals his plan to marry Resian, it "dawned on her that her father had already sold her" (p.204). This greatly shocks her because she never thought that her father could go to the extent

of selling her (p.205). He confirms the plan to marry her off to his friend Oloisudori and also shatters Resian's dream of enrolling as a student at Egerton University. He tells her: "I thought about it alright, but decided that I am not sending you there!" (p.207). This discovery makes her cry, "accusing her father of hatred and betrayal by betrothing her to Oloisudori" (p.208). Resian does not absolve her mother from blame for she believes she also failed her (p.230) especially due to her silence when all those plans against her were being devised. She reasons that her mother should not have been silent when her daughter was being sold to the highest bidder for "Even the hyena's greed spared its own young ones" (p.231).

Mama Milanoi also betrays her daughter Taiyo by allowing her to accompany three women to take her to Resian only for her to end up being forcefully subjected to F.G.M. We are told that "When she came to, two days later, she was sore, bitter and angry" (p.273). Her mother does all this out of her docile submission and fear of her husband. In addition, she has to play along with Ole Kaelo in his devious acts so that they cannot lose the wealth Ole Kaelo has corruptly acquired by doing business with Oloisudori. Later, when Resian and Taiyo are reunited, they blame their mother for their ordeals saying "She was an example of a wife they never wanted to become" and that they knew she was always in "awe of their father who held her captive and never for once allowed her to express her own opinion on any matter however small it was" (p.277).

MATERIALISM/GREED AND OPULENCE

Materialism is putting material possession before anything else in one's life while greed is insatiable want for material possessions. Opulence in this novel refers to exaggerated display of wealth by characters.

Ole Kaelo's house in Nasila is so magnificent that Mama Milanoi exclaims, "Father of all creation! This is but a dream" (p.30). Taiyo says that the house is magnificent while Resian exclaims she had never seen anything like it before (p.31). He has furnished his shop at Nasila extravagantly. We are told "It was splendid, large and well stocked. The décor was discreetly and fashionably done while taking into consideration the kind of customers that were expected" (p.65). This is a show of extravagance and opulence which the rich in this society strongly believe are indications of a wealthy man. Taiyo tells her ever critical sister: "It's important that the shop displays a certain measure of opulence" (p.65). This is so that their father can attract rich customers.

The genesis of Ole Kaelo's troubles is his signing of a contract with Oloisudori to start a business in Nasila. We are told that "He had long realized the choice was between remaining a nobody; self-

righteously and accepting, sensibly, that the man with the meat was also the same man with the knife” (p.25). He therefore gets into business with him. His friend, Supeyo, warns him in advance what kind of man Oloisudori is “...and Oloisudori is probably the most corrupt...keep the fellow away from your daughters” (p.26). Despite the early warning, he is unheeding a thing which makes him lose his two dear daughters finally. Oloisudori has his hands on all sorts of businesses both legal and illegal. These are; agriculture, finance, tourism, import and export, mining and motor trade, extortion, poaching, smuggling and robbing (p.101). When he comes visiting Ole Kaelo, his show of extravagance cannot fail to be noticed in his extravagant dressing. He has a pin-striped designer suit, a gold watch, gold bracelet and a gold chain. (p.177). He shows off his wealth by giving generous gifts to Ole Kaelo, Mama Milanoi, Resian and Taiyo. (p.178). He also hands over a briefcase to Ole Kaelo which is later revealed to have contained a half a million shillings (p.188).

Despite these ugly businesses, Ole Kaelo still deals with him in order to save his business from collapsing. He is not sure whether Oloisudori does not belong to a cult that thrived on blackmail and extortion and which after helping a businessman grow his business, would come back making outrageous demands like sacrificing their beloved ones to the gods of the cult (p.107). Despite knowing all these about him, Ole Kaelo comforts himself in order to defend the material path he has taken. The narrator observes: “He knew it was pursuit of success that made him interact with Oloisudori....Success was attainment, fortune and prosperity; it was triumph and it gave one happiness. It did not matter how it was obtained....the end...justified the means” (pp.108-109). He consoles himself for having decided to marry his daughter to Oloisudori saying, “Where else would he ever get such a business offer as the one Oloisudori had offered him” (p.165). He decides that he is not ready to lose his business premises and home for these were a matter of life and death to him. In order to survive, “...he realized with finality, he had to change his attitude towards Oloisudori; he had to embrace him” (p.165). He sees the material side only if his daughter married Oloisudori, saying, “...she would soon have her own establishment and a wealthy husband who had much ambition” (p.166).

When Ole Kaelo visits one of the homes of Oloisudori and the house he is building for Resian, he falls instantly in love with the might of wealth that he witnesses. Ole Kaelo’s house is lavishly furnished and the writer says it “...must have been done by a person whose mind must have been preoccupied by the need to be showy, and ostentatious. On the other hand, the house being built for Resian leaves Ole Kaelo speechless and Mama Milanoi stupefied by its grandeur and magnificence (p.190). Attracted by wealth, he concludes that “...it was only a stupid woman, like his daughter Resian, who would turn down the offer to own the riches they saw in Oloisudori’s home” (p.188). He also hopes that Taiyo, his

other daughter would get a rich man to marry her and give him hefty sums of money just as Oloisudori had done. (p.188). After witnessing Oloisudori's wealth, he decides that Resian must be married by Oloisudori and that "...he was not going to allow his daughter's ignorance to destroy her future" (p.191). He so much wants the marriage plan to work that he devises a plan with Oloisudori to abduct Resian by force if she did not cooperate (p.191).in fact they agree on usage of a anesthesia to make her unconscious. The only saving grace that can prevent losing his business and house is the success of the marriage. He admits that, "the success or failure of the event would determine the fate of his business" (p.194). He fears being reduced to poverty by Oloisudori and therefore, betrays his own daughter in exchange of material possessions.

DETERMINATION/OPTIMISM

Not giving up in whatever one decides to do is very instrumental in achieving success. Resian's determination to go to university from the beginning of the novel to the time her dream is achieved is remarkable. This determination is seen from the time they are in Nakuru to when they relocate to Nasila. As her father and family is busy packing so that they can go to their rural home in Nasila, she tells her sister "I don't want to work at the shop...I want to come back to Nakuru and join Egerton University. I want to take a course in Veterinary Science and become a veterinary doctor" (p.4). She keeps urging her sister to talk to their father so that they can be enrolled at the university. To escape FGM, she tells her sister: "That's why it's imperative that you persuade *Papaa* to allow us go back to Nakuru and enroll at the university" (p.33). She is worried that her father had spent all the money in decorating the shop and left with nothing for their university education (p.65). Sometimes, she would imagine herself admitted at the university "...and walking majestically with other students into one of those awesome lecture theatres, while donning her academic regalia" (p.89). After their near-rape by two young men, Resian tells Taiyo to use that incident to compel their father to take them to university (p.144).

She dreams of graduating and getting a chance to work with Minik *ene* Nkoitoi, her lifelong role model. (p.153). She is determined to face Oloisudori and resist his advances on her. We are told that "She had vowed to face the monster gallantly...She was in the battle front and success or failure was in her hands" (p.200). Her optimism to join university does not reduce even at her lowest moment when she realizes her father's intention to marry her by force to Oloisudori. She says, "If I don't die and live to be eighty, I will still go to the university. I'll go to Egerton University, *Papaa*...I hope you will be there to witness my graduation" (p.210).Even in her dream while held captive by Olarinkoi at his hut, she has a dream that showcases her gallant and determined nature. "She was determined that the old

enkamuratani would never circumcise another girl again” (p.244). In the dream she fought both the *enkamuratani* and *enkoiboni* with a mallet.

Resian’s determination to get university educated and resistance against FGM start bearing fruits when she and Nabaru reach Ntare-Naaju sheep ranch. “She remembers the Maa adage that said: home was never far for one who was still alive” (pp.256-257). Her dreams of joining Egerton University are fulfilled when Minik promises that she would ensure that she and Taiyo get enrolled at the university as they wanted. This is fulfilled when she brings them letters of admission to the university towards the end of the novel. The song that the girls from Intapuka-e-Maa sing is full of determination. The girls are proud of being uncircumcised and have hopes of being doctors, teachers and engineers and contribute in building the nation with men (p.281). Taiyo is determined to be married by Joseph. She says she won’t be dissuaded by Nasila culture that prevents inter-clan marriage saying, “...I cannot accept its verdict...I am too, ready to face any eventuality that may arise out of our love for one another” (p.134).

HELP/BENEVOLENCE

The overcoming of difficult situations by some characters would not be possible without help and benevolence from other characters. Some of these incidents of help and benevolence, though coincidental, are very important in not only shaping characters’ lives but also in shaping the novel’s plot. When Taiyo and Resian are about to be assaulted sexually by two men, we are told, “Suddenly and unexpectedly, a third man sprang out of the bushes like a ghost” (p.141). This man is Olarinkoi and he is the one that saves them by fighting the two men. The girls cannot imagine what would have happened to them if he had not come at that moment (p.142-143). Later, it is the same Olarinkoi who saves Resian from Oloisudori’s men. His appearance is timely because Resian has even been contemplating to commit suicide by jumping into a river (p.210).

Resian is nursed by Nabaru, a motherly woman after her sexual abuse by Olarinkoi (p224). “At times she held her up, giving her drinks of water, or milk, or feeding her; putting bits of *olpurda* dipped in honey into her mouth...” (p.224). Nabaru also promises to help Resian in whatever her plans are: “ I am willing to help you to do what you intend to do or go where you want to go once you are back onto your feet” (p.233). She keeps her word by coming to rescue Resian when Olarinkoi’s mother is just about to attack and have her circumcised (p.246).

Further, Taiyo and Resian get help from Minik when she promises to have her enrolled at Egerton University (p.264). She keeps her promise when she gives the two girls letters of admission to the

university. Resian also qualifies for a scholarship from the ranch which is managed by Minik to fund her education. She in addition gives her a job in the ranch, an advance salary, as well as a fully furnished house. Resian is sincerely appreciative of Minik's benevolence, saying, "Your voice dear Emakererei is truly the voice of God" (p.265). Taiyo is rescued from the hands of her circumcisers by Minik. Both Nabaru and Minik are very instrumental in the physical and psychological healing of the two girls. We are told that with Nabaru's nursing care, Minik's encouragement and counseling sessions from a teacher from Intapuka-e-Maa school, Taiyo is able to fully recover (p.276).

MALE CHAUVINISM

Male chauvinism refers to the feeling of superiority by men and their domineering attitude over women in the society as a result of general male domination or patriarchy in a given society. Ole Kaelo is a male chauvinist. He beats his wife to submission to coerce her follow his decisions without any resistance. When his wife reasons that they should think of the family interests first with regard to adhering to Nasila culture, he irritably asks her, "What do you mean?" (p.61). When she realizes that he is getting angry, she beats a hasty retreat saying, "Our culture is everything and it rules our lives" (p.61). Although Mama Milanoi realizes when it is too late the role Oloisudori has played in shaping their material lives, she admits that she would not have helped to separate him from such a man because it "...Was the man who made decisions as to which direction their lives took" (p.114).

According to Resian, the ancient Ilarinkon were no different from the current ones. She is of the view that the current Ilarinkon are worse and that they are despotic oppressive tyrants who oppress women by ensuring that they are subjected to FGM for ever (p.91). The current Ilarinkon include Ole Kaelo, Oloisudori and Olarinkoi. Ole Kaelo forces Resian to attend to and serve his friend Oloisudori when her mother says nothing about it. He orders: "You have to be there...it is important to me that you are there" (p.171). Olarinkoi's chauvinism is seen in his changed attitude towards Resian when he takes her to his house far from Nasila. He tells her, "You woman...You can either cook or keep standing stupidly or die of hunger...and Resian stared "...at the man who seemed to have suddenly turned from a person she had known for quite some time, to a beast" (p.218). He later molests her sexually after returning drunk. Oloisudori is a male chauvinist. This is seen in his address to Resian when she refuses his marriage offer. He tells her "You can never escape Resian...Whether you scream your heart out, or jump into the deep sea...you are mine. You are my wife from now henceforth" (p.204). He arrogantly tells her: No one plays games with Oloisudori. Ask your father, he will tell you" (p.204). (add more illustrations).

GENDER INEQUALITY

Men and women are not equal in this novel. Women's position is lower than that of men who dominate over everything and suppress women. This is especially seen at the family level where the husband is the sole decision maker and the wife just accepts those decisions without question. Ole Kaelo has a very easy time courting and marrying his wife. A woman is not supposed to resist a man who wants to marry her as per Nasilian tradition whether she loves him or not. We are told "She accepted him without any resistance. Tradition did not allow her to offer any and as expected of her, she did not resist" (p.29). Mama Milanoi is an unequal marriage partner to Ole Kaelo. She leaves decision making to her husband and does not oppose any of his decisions. She refuses to be drawn into the discussion about the coaching of her daughters by Joseph saying "It was Taiyo's father's territory" (p.56). Mama Milanoi cannot oppose him for "...in her culture there was no room for dissent, especially if the subject was in conformity with the culture" (p.61).

In this society, "...women had no say. It was a patriarchal society where the Emakererei and her ilk were fighting to find relevance with little success" (p.62). Such gender imbalance uplifts the man over the woman. In their case, it leaves Ole Kaelo with the sole responsibility of making final decisions on all matters affecting the family. We are also told that Mama Milanoi has been held captive by her husband who "...never for once allowed her to express her own opinion on any matter however small it was" (p.277). This suppression has prevented her from speaking her mind and opposing the subjection of her daughters to outdated cultural practices. Resian is opposed to her father's hiring of Joseph to coach them about Nasilian culture. She says "I am beginning to think it is disadvantageous being a woman in this society" (p.73). She finds fault with the plan reasoning that if they were sons, they would not be subjected to such cultural coaching. Resian regrets living in a society where men thought they had right to every woman's body (p.143). This is after their near-rape by two men. Such unjustified rights emanate from the fact that men deem themselves as superior to women and can do whatever they want with women.

CHANGE

Change refers to transition or transformation of characters or situations. Most of the changes in the novel *Blossoms of the Savannah* are caused by the erosion of the Maa culture as a result of its coming into contact with modern culture or civilization. This causes alienation in characters and as a result they change.

The Ole Kaelos are forced by destiny to relocate to Nasila after his retrenchment. This came as a thunderbolt at midday (p.7). The environment in Kaelo's new home in Nasila is different from that in their urban home in Nakuru. Taiyo and Resian are woken up the first day in Nasila by "...a lively chatter

of birds in the trees surrounding the house...What a contrast to what they were used to in Nakuru!" (p.14). In Nakuru, they were always woken up by hoots from Matatus, touts' shouts, engine revving and banging on vehicles.

Nasila culture is changing due to alienation. Mama Milanoi cannot believe she can have a man as old as Oloisudori as her mother-in-law. She observes that in the past, such a thing would not have happened for "Culture would not have allowed it to happen" (p.114). She feels that if Nasila culture was intact, such a thing would not have happened and she wonders "...where that culture had fled to "...Had the culture become moribund, useless and impotent?" (p.117) This could be true because forced marriages to old people were not there in the past and any old man who showed interest in a young girl was met with much retribution from women and the entire society." pp.115-117). The traditional Nasilian culture had many advantages to the people. It regulated lives of people, defined relationships, did not favour or discriminate and above all, was cherished by all. Sadly, according to Mama Milanoi, this culture was no more. "It was defiled and polluted by the likes of Oloisudori ...had become mutable and contained defiant mutants that it could not regulate and which were above Nasila laws" (p.118). One of the causes of this great change in Nasila culture is education for Mama Milanoi goes on to observe that she had seen changes in her daughters. "They had gone through a school system that intermingled them with children from other cultures." (p.118). As a result, her children know very little of Nasila culture. "They were children of a new undefined culture. Theirs was a mutant of another kind" (p.118). Indeed, Resian best exemplifies the epitome of this new undefined culture.

Joseph Parmuat observes that "Individualism, petty jealousy and lack of trust killed that once important aspect of Nasila culture" (p.127). The individualism of the likes of Ole Kaelo and Oloisudori are very central in eroding the culture of Nasila hence bringing many changes in the society. According to Taiyo, culture and traditions are never static. She says, "By being dynamic, culture shades off aspects that become irrelevant with time" (p.128). She hopes that the outdated FGM and restriction on inter-clan marriage should be abolished from Nasila cultural practices. Joseph and Minik cites cultural practices like throwing the dead to the hyenas, leaving the elderly and sick in deserted homesteads to be devoured by wild animals and *emuata* (pp.128, 263). This ascertains the dynamism and transformational characteristic of Nasilian culture over the years an aspect that gives hope to fighters against outdated practices such as F.G.M.

LOVE, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Ole Kaelo has effectively played his role as a father by providing and putting up a house for his family

in Nasila. The house he has built for his family in Nasila is so magnificent that Mama Milanoi exclaims, "Father of all creation! This is but a dream" (p.30). Taiyo says that the house is magnificent while Resian exclaims she had never seen anything like it before (p.31). At another level, both parents fail in their emotional obligations to one of their daughters, Resian. Ole Kaelo for instance has instilled fear in her such that there is no free interaction between father and daughter, has hated her from birth, keeps reprimanding her, abuses her and finally greatly betrays her by conspiring to marry her off to his friend Oloisudori (pp. 206-210) and when this aborts, he turns to his favorite daughter Taiyo but not before he has her forcefully circumcised (p.273). The hitherto good and peaceful family especially when he was in Nakuru has fallen apart at the end of the novel due to his greed for wealth.

In the traditional Nasilian culture, love is not entirely a prerequisite to marriage. Although Ole Kaelo was smitten with love for Mama Milanoi the first time he saw her in the church, her feelings for him are not required for them to marry. We are told that "From the moment he saw her, he had been obsessed and he was still obsessed twenty-two years later" (p.9). On his wife's side, we are told, "She accepted him without any resistance. Tradition did not allow her to offer any and as expected of her, she did not resist (p.29). What she considers is his character. We are told she knew he was a good man, a great provider, a planner and a man with the will to succeed. She also knew he loved her genuinely (p.29). He continues loving his wife many years after their marriage showing his satisfaction with her. When he wakes up he says, "Oh, did he not have a wife there. He was elated" (p.59).

Simiren, brother to Ole Kaelo, is a polygamist but he treats all his wives equally. "It was only *yeiyo-botorr*, who occupied a special position in the home and who received favour from her husband without anyone frowning. Communal life, selflessness, and respect characterize this family and there are few disagreements and disputes. The family in general is a haven of peace, a thing that makes Resian and Taiyo admire traditional way of life in their uncle's polygamous marriage (p.154).

Taiyo puts love first before cultural dictates on who one should marry. Their culture does not allow inter-culture marriage but nonetheless, she falls in love with Joseph Parmuat, who belongs to her own clan and hence they are not allowed to marry. Taiyo is assertive enough for she is the one who approaches Joseph saying, "I know you are in love with me the way I am in love with you" (p.133). Joseph reciprocates her love for him saying, "I loved you the moment I saw you during your father's homecoming ceremony" (p.134). When Resian asks Joseph to be her *Patureishi*, he says that culture does not allow it for she is like his sister (p.127). Taiyo loves her sister so much that she has stepped in to fill the vacuum that has been left in Resian's heart due to her parent's cold attitude towards her.

Resian has relied on her sister for protection since primary and Taiyo has made it her duty to mop her tears (p.34).

SUFFERING

There are several characters who suffer in the hands of the blunt Nasilian culture. Resian is slapped by her father for refusing to marry Oloisudori. After this, she undergoes a series of mental and physical suffering. She suffers as she is transported to the assumed Minik's Sheep ranch by Olarinkoi. At night during the journey, she fears attack of wild animals. She also had "...a layer of dust in her mouth, in her nostrils, in her ears and on her eyelashes" (p.215). She suffers in the hands of Olarinkoi and his mother. She is physically assaulted by Olarinkoi until she passes out after which he proceeds to rape her. After the sexual assault, she falls sick and has hallucinations. We are told that when "...she later came to, confused fleeting impressions registered on her awareness" (p.223).

Taiyo also suffers the blunt of archaic retrogressive Nasilian culture. She is forced against her will to undergo FGM. During the painful rite, we are told "She screamed and screamed, but nobody came to her rescue. Then she fainted. When she came to, two days later, she was sore, bitter and angry" (p.273).

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITIONS

During the homecoming party of Ole Kaelo, an elder is expected to bless his home before Ole Kaelo can be received back in Nasila. We are told "The elders would also bless the wife, children and property that he brought back and which were all henceforth going to be the wealth of the Ilmolelian clan (p.38). The ceremony is conducted by Ole Musanka who is to conduct the sacred ceremony of officially receiving him into the Ilmolelian culture and offer blessings for his family's well-being (p.50). Apart from blessing Ole Kaelo, the elder had special blessing for Taiyo. He even prophecies that she would be the mother of the next leader (p.52). This man also curses Emakererei, the wasp, whose real name is Minik for fighting F.G.M. He says "May she go down with the setting sun" (p.52).

Teiyo Bottor, Resian and Taiyo's aunt tell their mother that their daughter Resian has *Olkuenyi*, a bad spirit and it is only circumcision that could get rid of it (p.78). Mama Milanoi remembers that when she was young, diseases were treated through "...a blood-letting ceremony known as *angam*. "Several nicks were made on the ailing sections of the body and the blood sucked out" (p.79). Curses are indications of the superstitious nature of this community. The *Enkoiboni*, is a diviner. It is said that she

had prophesied that Ole Kaelo would move to Nasila with his two uncircumcised daughters and that his son would go to live in that home and finally bring with him one of Ole Kaelo's daughter to be circumcised before marrying her. Going by that, it is evident that her prophecies and predictions are true (p.232). As Nabaru and Resian escape from Olarinkoi, Olarinkoi curses her saying, "My mother's curse will find you there" (p.249). He also boasts that his mother's predictions always come to pass" (p.250).

WOMEN AS THEIR OWN ENEMIES

Much as the modern woman opposes retrogressive cultural practice such as F.G.M, majority of women support these practices. Mama Milanoi is in support of F.G.M even as her daughters fight to resist the harmful practice. The writer puts: "Did she not support female genital mutilation that was prevalent among her people in Nasila?" (p.63). Despite being a woman, she betrays her daughter by giving her over to the *enkamuratani* to be circumcised (pp.272-273). She also keeps quiet and does not speak to oppose her husband's plans to marry off her daughters to an old man. This is despite the fact that she is inwardly opposed to the whole idea. According to Maa oral tradition, it was women who came up with the idea of F.GM. They made a lasting resolution to sexual exploitation of women by the Olarinkoi and that gave rise to *enkamuratani*. "And her *olmurunya* was shaped, sharpened and handed to her" (p.87). The same practice that was useful then comes to haunt young girls such as Taiyo and Resian.

Nabaru also finds fault with the Maa women. She believes that they were the perpetrators of FGM and that no woman had taken up the *olmurunya* to circumcise a girl. (p.277). Resian says that if all women said no to the detestable culture, men would do nothing and the practice would stop (p.278). However, women are not speaking in one voice hence it has becomes very difficult to fight cultural practices that harms them. Olarinkoi's mother also greatly serves in oppressing fellow women. She is planning to have Resian circumcised before she can be married by her son. The three women that Taiyo composes a song to ridicule also serve in oppressing women. We are told that they collaborated with men to oppress women (p.153).

WAR/ VIOLENCE

The traditional Maa community in which the novel is set takes pride in engaging in external battles and wars to protect their territory or as an economic undertaking. There are many cases of violence reported in the clan.

One remarkable war is that between Olarinkoi and Maa warriors that led to the Maa people being ruled

for many years. After many years under the Ilarinkon rule, we are told that “the Maa people eventually revolted and overthrew the Olarinkoi despotic rule” (p.87). Ole Kaelo attacks his daughter Resian for refusing to cooperate in his plan to have her married to Oloisudori. “After a moment of frozen immobility, her father suddenly pushed his chair, moved fast from behind the desk and slapped her face, sending her reeling back so that she almost fell” (p.209).

The fight between the girls at Minik’s ranch and Oloisudori’s men ends the protracted oppression of the man on Kaelo’s daughters. We are told that his convoy “...was reduced to smoldering shells and acrid smell of burning tyres” (p283). There is also a fight between Olarinkoi and the men that wanted to rape Resian and Taiyo. The bravery of Olarinkoi saves the girls from being raped. When the two young men are caught up by Olarinkoi and his men, they are beaten up before being spared. Women are also violent. The case in point is the old man they punish for being infatuated by a young girl. We are told “Then all the women proceeded to the homestead of the accused, armed with all kinds of weapons that included firewood...and their husbands’ knobkerries” (p.115). They go on to “...beating him thoroughly and stripping him naked” (p.116). Finally, this man dies and the women feel satisfied that they have avenged their anger.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ON THEMES

1. Explain four good aspects of Nasilian culture.
2. Discuss four cases of culture conflict in the novel *Blossoms of the Savannah*.
3. Identify and illustrate instances of alienation in the novel.
4. “Determination is the key to success.” Write a detailed composition to illustrate the statement.
5. Resian, Taiyo and Minik are justified in their fight against FGM because many cultural practices have been abandoned. Do you agree? Support your answer with illustrations from the novel.
6. Illustrate cases of betrayal in the novel *Blossoms of the Savannah* and their impact on characters.
7. Discuss four evils present in a morally decadent society.

CHAPTER FOUR

LANGUAGE AND STYLE

The language used in literature is different from that used in other disciplines. Language in literature goes a notch higher because it is not only used originally but also innovatively. This contributes to

aesthetics or beauty in literary texts hence appealing to the readers. Style on the other hand can simply be defined as the unique manner of doing something. Just like everybody has a walking style and hair cutting style, playwrights have unique ways which they use to pass their messages to the audience. There are a number of stylistic devices in the novel *Blossoms of the Savannah*. This guidebook will enumerate some of these devices.

Vivid Description

The writer uses words to paint clear mental images on the readers' mind. This enables the audience to understand the text better. As the Kaelo's are preparing to depart from Nakuru for Nasila the scenery is vividly described. "He was gesticulating violently, apparently reprimanding loaders for being slow and inept (p.1). This description points out clearly the character of Kaelo as stern. The welcoming ceremony of the Kaelo's family by uncle Simiren's family is vividly described "Chunks of meat went round...selected a piece from the tray" (p.12). The description helps in showing the generous nature of Kaelo as well as his meticulous planning abilities. Life at Nasila is vividly described "the intermittent crowing of roosters... a rare atmosphere of tranquility and serenity..." (p.14). The description is used to contrast the peaceful mood of the rural Nasila and the urban town of Nakuru that is characterized by hustles and bustles.

Simiren's polygamous setting is described vividly "Three main houses stood within a well-tended and a evenly trimmed kei apple perimeter hedge... (p.14). "The sixteen or so children aged between three and sixteen were perched on benches, stools and chairs" (p.16). This description shows high birthrate in the family. It also paints a polygamous family in Nasila. The vivid description of Ole Supeyo (p.23), "he lifted a corner of his shirt and scratched his belly while his other hand stroked the stubble on his chin..." shows his wealthy status in the society.

Oloisudori is described in uncomplimentary terms "wide gap...black eyes....looking like a warthog" (p.92). The description signals Oloisudori's mean character and the readers can even form a picture of a criminal before much is disclosed to them. There is a vivid description of how women in the past dealt with an old man who sexually mistreated a young girl (p.117). Taiyo's bold visit to Joseph's bachelor house is vividly described (p. 130). It shows the feelings of the two lovers who are restrained by culture. The attack of the two girls by two men in which Olarinkoi saves them is vividly described. "He sprang like a ghost" (p.141). This shows the risk the girls are going through in the hostile Nasila environment.

The search conducted by thirty men with Kaelo and Joseph is vividly described to show the urgency of

getting the girls' molesters (p161). The resigned Resian is vividly described after she is required to serve Oloisudori and his group (p.172). "She walked to an *oloponi* tree at the centre of the garden. Finding a log underneath it, she sank down...her shoulders drooping..." It shows Oloisudori's insensitive character. The journey by Oloisudori and the couple is vividly described (p. 190,191). It shows Oloisudori's cunning and scheming character. The journey by Resian, Olarinkoi and the pick-up driver is vividly described to show the ill manners of the two young men (p. 212, 213). The escape by Resian and Nabaru is also vividly described to show the risk involved by the two females with strong character (p. 247).

Similes

A simile is a stylistic device that compares two things indirectly with an aim of drawing a mental picture in the mind of the reader. Before the Kaelo's relocate to Nasila, some women from Nasila visit Mama Milanoi. They signal a future menace since the girls are not circumcised. The author says, "The words came to haunt her like a demented spirit" (p.8). This is later seen when mama Milanoi and Kaelo have to live alone in their old age after Taiyo and Resian go to the ranch and later to the university (p.13). "They had likened him to a mono- eyed giant who stood on legs of straw."(p.13).Kaelo is compared to a giant because he holds a senior position in his home, as the head in his house yet he has chosen to be very weak by having only one wife and two daughters. The elders feel Kaelo is not stable. He should be supported by many sons like Simiren. Ole Supeyo compares effects of FGM with effects of dehorning cows. "Like cattle that required being dehorned to reduce accidental injuries to each other, a certain docility was required to keep more than one wife in one homestead" (p.22). This simile shows the chauvinistic nature of Supeyo.

"The sense of foreboding from the threat was still hanging in the air like the sword of Damocles." (p.27). This simile shows the apprehensive mood in which the girls are in after they are accosted by the callous young man. Mama Milanoi says her husband had bullied and scolded her "like half-witted child" (p.29). This shows how Kaelo considered her as a child. It also reveals the low position of a wife in a Maa family.

Uncle Simiren danced, his bald head shining like a piece of iron sheet in the afternoon sun." (p.45). The simile shows the industry, age and alienation of Simiren as well as the celebratory mood in the event. After the drinks, voices of laughter of the revelers are described as: "they rose and fell like sound of waves beating upon flooded river banks to show the exuberant carefree mood (p.50). A simile describes Resian's condition of insecurity, "Lonely stalked her like a lost young leopard." (p.57). This shows the danger that looms in the new environment. Kaelo comments, "Your daughter Resian is

like an overfed lizard in the afternoon sun” (p.64). The simile is used to comment on the lazy character of Resian.

Olarinkoi is described as “sitting quietly and staring unblinkingly like a leopard would while stalking an antelope (p.75). This shows Olarinkoi’s antisocial nature. It also indirectly reveals his real intention in Kaelo’s home. Yeiyu Botorr expresses her contempt for Resian’s assertive character in a simile. “One with *olkuenyi* (bad spirit) was shunned like plague” (p.78). “It was easier to fall in love with a serpent than with Olarinkoi” (p.80). Taiyo’s statements shows that Olarinkoi is antisocial and nobody would wish him to be their friend. Mama Milanoi cannot bear the pricking language of Resian on Oloisudori. She says, “You spoke like one with a demented spirit?” This shows Mama Milanoi’s fear towards Oloisudori and her meekness to Kaelo.

Kaelo comments, “Why do you run like one who has seen an apparition? (p.96). In this simile, Kaelo-Resian cold relationship is shown. After Oloisudori’s visit, the couple has sleepless nights. “They turned and turned like *ilmintilis* being roasted in the fire” (p.107). The simile shows the torture that the couple undergoes. After Oloisudori informs the couple that he is to have their two daughters, “a disaster loomed large like ominous black clouds” (p.121).

To express her aggressive character, Resian is described by use of a simile. “She sunk her teeth into the flesh like a ferocious animal” (p.221). After the ordeal, the writer says, “thoughts came back like a remote collection” (p.223). This simile evokes a sympathetic attitude on the part of the reader. To show the caring, sacrificing and protective nature of Nabaru, the writer says, “Nabaru scooped Resian like a little baby” (p.246).

Metaphors

It is a style which employs direct comparison of two things without using “as...as” “like” etc. with an aim of forming a mental picture in the reader’s mind. Ole Sumpeyo terms Oloisudori as a randy he goat so as to show the height of his sexual immorality. He warns Kaelo to keep off his daughters. (p.26). Ole Musanka describes Kaelo as a tiny strand of hair that has been blown away from its owner’s head by a gust of wind. (p.51). This shows that Kaelo is part of Maa culture and is owned by the Maa culture.” (p.51). It also brings out the wise character of Ole Musanka. To express her contempt and annoyance, Resian describes Oloisudori, “what an ill-mannered devil this man is.” (p.93). After the heinous act by Olarinkoi on Resian, rape, the sun is described as a bowl of red (p.226).

Personification

It is a stylistic device in which a novelist uses human attributes on non-living things with significance

to the novel. For instance Nakuru is described as “That beloved town that was the mother of all flamingoes” (p.2). It is evident that the flamingoes make the area very attractive and probably that is one of the reasons Taiyo sheds tears and is hesitant to leave it for Nasila a rural set up. It could also be interpreted that Nakuru is enlivened by the flamingoes making it relaxing. On reaching Nasila, the tranquility is expressed, “a cool fresh breeze swept in and caressed her face soothingly.(p.14).The breeze in this case is emphasized by being given a human quality of caressing. A pot of ugali is said to hiss cheerfully at the side (p.280).The exaggeration is aimed at emphasizing on the significance of the happy event.

Dialogue

It is a novelistic style in which the writer presents the actual conversation between characters. It brings a break from prose and therefore breaks monotony on the part of the reader. Taiyo and Resian converse about their new residence (p.3). The dialogue shows their mixed attitudes towards Nasila. Resian is afraid of the new home. She fears that the new shop may not pick something which may make the family needy in the future. However, Taiyo encourages her to have faith.

While taking a walk around Simiren’s compound, Taiyo and Resian converse on the apprehension and rivalry among the four houses. This exposes the enmity in a polygamous marriage. The dialogue between Joseph and Ole Kaelo serves to warn Taiyo and Joseph against having any love relationship (p.70).

The heated conversation between *yeiyo-Botorr*, mama Milanoi, Taiyo and Resian on p.77 reveals Resian’s assertiveness and daring character. It also shows *yeiyo-botorr* as conservative. The dialogue between Taiyo, Resian and *yeiyo-Kiti* gives the girls more information about Minik Nkoitoi and adds curiosity on the part of the girls to see her in the future (p.151).

On the other hand, the heated dialogue between Kaelo and Resian (p. 210, 211) brings out Kaelo’s character as mean and abusive while it portrays Resian as sentimental. Lastly, the conversation between Resian, Taiyo and Minik on (p. 280) in Minik’s office brings out the manager’s character as courteous.

Flashback

It is a style in which a novelist takes us back to a time in the past with an intention of informing the reader on past occurrences. It reveals critical information to the audience as well as helping in plot development. We are informed of how the Kaelo’s got married twenty two years ago and how Kaelo got employed by Agribix Limited. In order for mama Milanoi to view the future in the right perspective,

she first recalls on the past (p.7). Kaelo flashes back how he had first spotted Jane, his wife in a church service (p.9). The flashback helps in identifying Mama Milanoi as religious.

Through a flashback we are told of the humorous story of how Ole Supeyo would take Kaelo to the forest and instruct him to count a lot of money. From this flashback, we discover their deep rooted friendship (p. 21). The flashback in this case is also a source of humour. Mama Milanoi flashes back to a time when Kaelo married her twenty two years ago and how her parents were happy to get a wealthy son in law (p. 28). The flashback informs the audience of the concern Jane's parents had for their daughter. Taiyo has a flashback on how she excelled in music festivals and was awarded and garlanded. An FM radio station sponsored her to attend an extravaganza (p.44). This flashback is essential in revealing Taiyo as a talented girl. It explains why she is interested with the Maasai dance as well. Mama Milanoi flashes back when an old man like Oloisudori would not have been allowed by culture to marry young girls. (p.114).in such a case Mama Milanoi would have appealed to an elder's court which would rule him out of elders. It would also fine him.

Irony

This stylistic device entails a writer depicting what is contrary to what is expected by the reader. For instance, Mama Milanoi optimistically thinks that it would be easy for the couple to marry off their two girls at Nasila than Nakuru town (p.8). However, this proves to be difficult later in the novel. The two girls put up a spirited fight against their marriage to Oloisudori. Resian escapes from her prophesied marriage to Olarinkoi while Taiyo escape shortly after undergoing FGM.

It is ironical that Kaelo detests his daughter Resian simply because she is born a girl instead of a son as he wishes. Since the baby is innocent and did not contribute in her sex, we expect the father to appreciate her. Furthermore, according to biological sciences it is the man who carries male genes (p.10). It is ironical when Kaelo dismisses elders as practitioners of archaic traditions when they mount pressure for him to be polygamous yet later he supports F.G.M on his daughters which is an equally archaic humiliating practice. This clearly portrays greed that overwhelms him as well as his weak character (p.113). It is ironical that Kaelo had been warned against the criminal record of Oloisudori from Supeyo but still falls for his snare (p.108). It is ironical that after Joseph wins the hearts of Resian, his heart is filled with frightening premonition (p.136).

Although the first day at Simiren's place begins happily, it ends while the girls are disappointed after they are accosted by a callous young man. It is ironical that mama Milanoi feels she has failed in giving Kaelo a son and even praises and praise God for a baby boy (p.29).It is ironical that the idea of

Enkamuratani and *Olmurunya* was hatched by women themselves (p.87). Many years later this practice becomes a source of humiliation and pain to the female population. It is ironical that FGM that adversely affects women in the Maa community is practically done by women (p.227).

It is also ironical that Olarinkoi, the mysterious young man Resian detested later saves their lives. (p.142). Still, it is ironical that when Kaelo calls Resian to inform her of marriage to Oloisudori, Resian thinks she is being called for admission in the university (p.182). Lastly, it is ironical that *Emuata* (a heavy copper ring is primarily made to make brides beautiful yet it is heavy and uncomfortable to the females (p.263).

Symbolism

The physical appearance of the two sisters and their mother is symbolically expressed, "Taiyo and Resian both head and shoulder taller than their mother, stood on" (p.11). The height of the two girls is physically compared to that of their mother. The height could be interpreted in terms of their contribution to female emancipation. The deeper meaning is that Resian and Taiyo's role in fighting gender inequality is greater than that of their mother.

At the time of the planned circumcision of Resian, the sun is described, "it's sad yellow light ... discordant howls of hyenas..." (p.243). These symbols reinforces the mood. Also, as Nabaru and Resian leave the desolate village, there is a heavy downpour. The rain symbolizes hope in future. (p.248). At the ranch, Resian is led to a house with a soothingly cool carpet which cools her tired and thorn pricked feet (p.260). This symbol assures the comfortable life the future holds for Resian.

The conspicuous departure for Egerton University by Resian, Taiyo and Minik is symbolic. (p.246). They leave behind Oloisudori's burnt vehicles. It symbolizes their victory over Oloisudori's army, patriarchy, FGM and stereotype.

Local Dialect

It involves the use of Maasai and Swahili words in the novel by the author. The usage enriches the setting of the fiction; the Maasai geographical area of settlement and the rural set up aspect of the novel. It makes the story credible, authentic and alive as well as anchoring the elaborate theme of culture. In depicting the serene atmosphere, the author says, "Interspersed were the olive- green *ilorienito* (brown wild olive) trees whose fragrant...cluster of bushes of *olobaani* ... *Ilkilenya* climbers grew..." (p.15). *Yeiyo botorr* (p.16), means eldest wife. Her presence portrays the different level of power in a polygamous marriage.

Still to emphasize the beauty and serenity the writer says about Kaelo's home, "clusters of *oleleshua*, *osinoni* and *olkirpanyany* bushes dotted the compound. (p.31). People visit Kaelo's new home so as to observe the girls with an aim of commending them as *inkainito* (p.36).

Enkaitoyoni and *enkamuratani* came to make acquaintance with potential clients.(p.36). After feeding and dancing, people take *esuguroi* drink to gladden their hearts (p.46). *Esuguroi* is a fermented honey beer spiced with aloe. It is believed that Resian has *Kisirani*, an evil ominous harbinger to a terrible thing (p.78).

There are many other instances of use of local dialects such as *intoiye nemengalana*, *olmurunya*, *papaai*, *enkoiboni*, *inkainito*, *shuka*, *olbitirr*, *mzee*, *mheshimiwa*, *patureishi*, *elangatare*, *oloiboni* and many others. The meaning of these Maasai and Kiswahili words has been provided in the text or in the glossary of terms at the end of the novel.

Foreshadow

It is a stylistic device in which something ominous is signaled to happen in the future. Mama Milanoi experiences a pang of strange premonition that twists her nerves unpleasantly (p.17). This suggests the lurking danger especially because her daughters are in the status of *intoiye nemengalana*. Once they arrive in their new house, Resian says, "I feel an oppressive silence."(p.32).This points at the rough episodes she encounters later (p.32). Taiyo and Resian experience a long night characterized by mournful calls of night birds (p.55). This signals the bad experience ahead. On page 138, *Olmultut* (a bird of bad omen) coos sorrowfully at Resian's gate. This bird is a harbinger of bad news. Its cry is ominous (p.138).

Rhetorical Questions

It is a stylistic device which employs questions which do not necessarily require answers but are aimed at stimulating critical thinking. To show that Kaelo is going through a hard reflective moment, he asks, "Was not everybody doing business with him? Was he really that bad? Was it the usual business rivalry and envy? (Oloisudori) (p.27). These questions show the dilemma in which Kaelo is in. Mama Milanoi wonders what they stand for as a family. Are they traditionalists or modernists? (p.62). This shows her dilemma towards F.G.M and her daughters. Resian asks, "Was there a curse for being born a woman?" (p.205). She rhetorically asks, "Was it jealousy consuming her? (p.49). This is about the growing love between Taiyo and Joseph. Nabaru argues on page 277, "if the *Enkamuratani* threw away the *olmurunya* and refused to wield it again, what would happen?" it is a call for women's awakening to rise to the occasion and fight F.G.M.

Oral Literature Devices

Narratives

Kaelo had learnt that *Odomongi* and *Orok-kiteng*, the legendary twin homesteads of the founder that begot of the five clans of Nasila: Ilmolelian, Ilmakesen, Ilukumae, Ilaiser and Itarrosero were the cradle of Nasila people (p.37). Mama Milanoi's dilemma is aptly described in a summarized narrative. Her situation was like that of ole Nkipida who was chased into a deserted hut by a lion just to be confronted by a hungry python at the door (p.60). This describes the conflict brought about by F.G.M. There is a common myth that by spilling blood through F.G.M bad spirit is purged away" (p.78). Joseph narrates a moving story of the legendry Olarinkoi (p.81). In the story, women entertain Ilarinkon warriors who demeaned and sexually exploited women (p.86). The story also tells the origin of F.G.M (P.87).

Song and Dance

On page41, during the homecoming ceremony, a bevy of beautiful young women dance exciting traditional dance. Men also do a springy dance (p.41). It is from this dance that Taiyo falls in love with Joseph Parmuat. He leads primary school children into a song about welcoming the returning hero, Kaelo (p.42). Taiyo composes a song which she sings in her heart. The song is dedicated to three women who collaborated with men to oppress women folks (p.153).

Girls from Intapuka e Maa sing a song (p.281). This song makes the two girls shed tears for it praises intoiye nemengalana. (p.281). It also reveals women assertiveness and readiness to fight oppressive cultural practices as well as song of hope, victory and equality.

Proverbs

They are short statements laden with a deep meaning. They are mostly used by the elderly people as a measure of wisdom and experience. Ole Kaelo on p.25 says, "The man with the meat was the same man with the knife." This signifies that for him to get contracts, he must work with the corrupt Oloisudori. On p.25 Ole Musanka quips, "When an old rat begins to smell, it returns to its mother's home" (p.52). Meaning that Kaelo is old and had to return to Maa culture as well as home for a sense of belonging. What the superstitious *Yeiyoo Botorr* says to mama Milanoi about Resian is in form of a proverb, "To hide a boil that is under the armpit is unwise" (p.78). Meaning the girl's condition of *intoiye nemengalana* is vicious and will soon burst. While encouraging Resian to escape to the ranch

Olarinkoi says, "Home is never far for one who is still alive" (p.211).

Suspense

It is a device in which the writer creates a pleasurable emotion of anticipation and excitement regarding the outcome of events or phenomenon. In the novel, an air of suspense surrounds Olarinkoi. Kaelo does not introduce him to us at any point in the novel nor does he mention him. (p.79). The audience is let to think about him evoking curiosity which keep them reading. The breaking down of the lorry near the ranch attracts suspense (p.252). Readers wonder what is to happen next. They worry of the character's safety. When Minik calls Taiyo and Resian in her office and stays for long without breaking the silence, suspense is created. Especially because she is holding two letters with unknown contents (p. 279). The readers remain in suspense for long as to whether Resian will agree to be married by Oloisudori or not. They also keep reading and to see whether she will be circumcised by force by Olarinkoi's mother and be married by Olarinkoi as his mother had prophesied.

Dream

Kaelo has a dream in which Resian consents to marriage by Oloisudori (p.195). The dream shows the level of greed in Kaelo. While in a strange room belonging to Olarinkoi's people, Resian has a dream in which she meets Minik. The dream fires her ambition. (p.220). Resian dreams a triumphant dream where she battles *enkamuratani's* crew who want to circumcise her by force (p.244, 245).

Allusion

It is a style in which there is a reference to something which is supposed to be known but not explicitly mentioned. A writer can refer to history, politics, the bible, literature and so on. In this novel, there are literary and biblical allusions. Resian quotes from a famous speaker, "What pained one most was not the injustices carried out against one by the adversaries but the silence of those who called themselves his or her friends at the time the injustice was done" (p.231). This literary allusion is in reference to her mother who kept quiet all the time they were being exposed to barbaric Nasilian cultural practices. There are several cases of biblical allusion. Resian remembers the tribulations of the Biblical Job. (p.230). She suddenly fell on her knees and hugged the legs of the old woman washing them with tears" (p.234).The allusion in this context is that of Mary in the St Luke in the Bible where she chooses to anoint Jesus using her hair. In this context, the respect Resian has for the *enkabaani* is emphasized. Still, Resian reminds herself of what the Bible says, (p.257). Some scriptures on optimism are quoted. The Joseph in the bible alludes to the Biblical Joseph who sacrificed for Christ by offering his tomb to be used by Christ (p.277). Joseph in the novel finally sacrifices by dying for the sake of Taiyo.

CHAPTER FIVE

SAMPLE AND PRACTICE EXCERPTS

SAMPLE EXCERPTS

1. Read the extract below and answer the questions that follow.

"No Joseph," she said in an **infantile** whimper. "I can't bear that we can't express the love that we have for one another because of some **primitive** culture. If by loving you, I offend the sensibilities of Nasila then let me offend and face the consequences of doing so!"

"I also love you very much," Joseph Parmuat responded finally. "I loved you the moment I saw you during your father's homecoming ceremony. But then the clan matter came to separate us. It is true we have no blood relation. But Nasila culture dictates who are related and who are not. We are slotted among those who cannot marry."

"No, it can't be, I cannot accept its verdict," she said **petulantly** her words agonised. "No way, never!" She stopped, confused and angry with herself at her inarticulate outburst. She took several long steadying breaths and then said, "I cannot accept that a culture that does not feed, clothe or house me comes to control my life. Our lives belong to us, Joseph. The **destiny** of our lives is in our own hands. We should guard it jealously." At last they drew a little apart. His eyes were open, honest and steady upon her face.

1. What happens before this excerpt? (3mks)
2. For both Joseph and Taiyo, give and illustrate two character traits. (4mks)
3. How is dialogue significant in this excerpt? (4mks)
4. Explain any two thematic concerns addressed in the excerpt. (4mks)
5. From elsewhere in the novel, how does Joseph sacrifice for his love for Taiyo?(4mks)
6. Explain the meaning of the following vocabulary as used in the excerpt. (4mks)
 - a) destiny
 - b) infantile
 - c) petulantly
 - d) primitive

7. What happens immediately after this extract?

(2mks)

2. Read the excerpt below and answer the questions that follow

You are **mad!**” Resian screamed at him. You are stark mad if you think I am your wife. I can only be your wife over my dead body. Yes, you and my father can kill me and carry my dead body to your **palatial** home.”

He was stunned by those harsh words. He winced as if he had been struck. Then already harsh line of his mouth tightened and he stood tense for a moment. Then he relaxed and watched her mockingly. “You can never escape Resian,” he repeated quietly, smiling. The very normality of his voice as he spoke those monstrous words was most shocking and disturbing to her. Whether you scream your heart out, or jump into the deep sea, Resian, you are mine. You are my wife from now henceforth”

“I want to go now.” Resian announced angrily shuddering with **disgust** and terror.

“You want to go?” he asked, the contemptuous quiet of his voice a menace by itself.” Go! You want to be persuaded, coaxed and **pampered** to marry Oloisudori Lonkiyaa? Sorry I will not do that! If you want to go, please yourself. You may opt to go, but when you are mine, you will do as I please. No one plays games with Oloisudori. Ask your father, he will tell you.”

“Stop it! Stop it! Resian screamed excruciatingly pained by the disdainful remarks of Oloisudori. Putting her hands over her ears, she made a dash for the door. He made no effort to stop her but she flung it open and turned to glare at him with tearful eyes

You are mad! She screamed again sobbingly. “You are stark mad! You hear me? You are nothing but ol-ushuushi.” She walked away and as she did so, she heard his soft laughter behind her.

1. Say what happens before this excerpt.

(3mks)

2. How is Oloisudori portrayed in this excerpt?

(4mks)

3. Describe the feeling of Resian in this excerpt

(3mks)

4. From other areas of the novel, state other crimes that are practiced by Oloisudori. (3mks).

5. How does the writer utilize irony in this excerpt?

(3mks)

6. "You are my wife from now henceforth" Rewrite in the reported speech. (1mk)

7. Explain the meaning of the following words (4mks)

a) Pampered

b) Disgust

c) Mad

d) Palatial

7. What happens immediately after this extract? (3mks)

3. Read the following excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

They were silent as they climbed the hill on their way back from Nasila river to draw water. The water containers that they carried on their backs were now heavy. The straps that supported the containers pressed down their heads with a painful exhaustion.

As they walked, each one of them allowed her mind to fleetingly roam the fanciful land of wishful thinking.

Resian thought how wonderful it would be, had she had a chance to enroll at the Egerton University and after graduation had a chance to work with her role model, Minik ene Nkoitoi, the Emakererei at the sheep ranch that she managed. She imagined herself already there driving a large flock of sheep. And when she thought of sheep, her mind flew back to fifteen years or so earlier and **reminisced** the first time she saw a sheep. It was a childhood memory, a memorable picture from the swirling scene around her which had been captured and preserved by her mind when she and Taiyo accompanied their father to the Nakuru Agricultural Show. She could still see in her mind a group of big, docile, tawny woolly animals that stood panting drowsily in a green pasture, with the sun beaming down brightly from a clear blue sky. She had then admired the white long overcoats that the handlers wore.

Taiyo also thought of Emakererei. She would ask Joseph Parmuat, to assist her compose a song in her praise. She had already put words to a tune she had composed to ridicule the three women who she thought **collaborated** with men to oppress the women folk. They were Nasila's three blind mice who, she thought, did not seem to know that the world was changing. Those were the *enkasakutoni*, who threatened to curse *intoiye nemengalana* and ensured they did not get husbands nor children: the

midwife Enkaitoyoni who threatened to spy on the young women as they gave birth to ensure that any who was still among *intoiye-nemengalana* had her status altered there and then; and the **dreaded Enkamuratani**, who would never tire of wielding her *olmurunya* **menacingly**.

1. Place the excerpt in its immediate context. (4Mks)
2. Identify and illustrate two aspects of style in this excerpt. (4Mks)
3. Discuss two themes evident in the excerpt. (4Mks)
4. Discuss one character trait of Resian and Taiyo in the excerpt. (4Mks)
5. The straps that supported the containers pressed down their heads with a painful exhaustion. Rewrite beginning: with..... (1Mk)
6. How do Resian's thoughts now come to be fulfilled in future? Briefly explain. (4Mks)
7. Explain the meaning of the following words as used in the excerpt. (4Mks)
 - (i) Reminisced
 - (ii) Collaborated
 - (iii) Dreaded
 - (iv) Menacingly

4. Read the following excerpt and answer the questions that follow

"Yes, Papaai," Resian said **apprehensively**. "I am here. Taiyo tells me you are calling me?"

"Yes, yes," her father replied. "Please take a seat."

"Yes, *Papaai*," Resian repeated as she sat on a chair far away from her father.

"Come nearer...child," her father said pleasantly.

"Why do you **sit a mile away**? Come nearer."

Resian moved her chair hardly an inch from where it was and then she looked up into her father's face with eager expectation.

"If I do remember well," her father began in a low even tone, "you will be nineteen in September this

year, am I right”

“You are quite right, *Papaai*.” Resian answered eyeing him curiously. His face was unusually kind. His eyes held hers as he smiled broadly. That’s it! she thought triumphantly. “That must be it!

“You and I have not discussed important issues for a long time,” he said with a friendly chuckle that was intended to bring her closer to him. “I thought today would be the best day to break the news. Your future is very important to me, my dear child.”

Resian thought the concern in her father’s voice, rang false. She hesitated, but could not **hold herself** any more. The anxiety was too great.

“Papaai, is it Yeiyo or Taiyo who spoke to you?” she asked sensationally, thinking she was stating the obvious. But seeing her father’s face cloud, she added quickly.

“Who between them spoke to you about our enrolment at the Egerton University?”

“What are you talking about, child? Her father, who seemed dumbfounded, asked after a long and uncomfortable silence.

“Both Yeiyo and Taiyo promised to talk to you about it, and I thought she had.”

“What, in the name of God are you talking about, child?” he repeated, this time **agitated** and shaking his head vigorously. “No, I have never spoken to anybody about any of you enrolling at the university. Never! When I said I wanted us to discuss your future, that isn’t what I meant at all. Of course not!” Resian looked at her father’s face enquiringly.

1. What has happened before the excerpt? (3mks)
2. What is so ironical in this passage? Explain your answer referring to elsewhere in the novel. (3mks)
3. “Your future is very important to me, my dear child” From elsewhere in the novel, explain why Ole Kaelo tells his daughter so. (3Mks)
4. Discuss two aspects of character in Resian in this excerpt. (4Mks)
5. What major issue is addressed in this excerpt? (2Mks)
6. Explain what happens after this excerpt. (3Mks)
7. “Who between them spoke to you about our enrolment at the Egerton university? “Rewrite in

the direct speech.

(1Mk)

8. A part from irony, discuss any other aspect of style evident in the excerpt. (2Mks)

9. Explain the meaning of the following words and expressions used in the excerpt. (4 Mks)

(i). Apprehensively

(ii). Sit a mile away

(iii). Hold herself

(iv). Agitated

ANSWERS TO SAMPLE EXTRACTS

Sample excerpt 1

1. Taiyo visits Joseph's bachelor house. She expresses her infatuation. Joseph feels infatuated too. She sobs uncontrollably

2. Joseph is responsible. He has self-control aimed at preventing the duo from messing up.

He is patriotic. He chooses to take sides with the Nasila culture. He feels they should not break the norms

Taiyo is loving. She has strong feelings for Joseph.

Assertive. She is ready to offend sensibilities of Nasila culture for love.

Sacrificing. She is ready to risk herself for love.

3. It brings out Taiyo's interrogative nature. She skeptically questions the enslaving nature of Nasila culture. "I cannot accept culture that does not feed me." She poses that culture should be beneficial.

4. He accepts to be the contact man in the mission of rescuing Taiyo. He makes her captors drunk leading to her escape. The captors later kill him.

5. Love. Taiyo and Joseph express their views towards love. She feels it should be let to grow while he feels culture should restrain love feelings.

Culture. Their love relationship is held at ransom by culture that objects love between people of the same clan.

6. a) Fate

b) Childish/ immature

c) Grudgingly

d) Fate

7. Joseph says he is ready to face any eventuality that may arise out of love. Taiyo appreciates the new stance of Joseph. She sheds tears.

Sample excerpt 2

1. Oloisudori informs Resian of the benefits she will get for marrying him. Resian gets very annoyed and speechless. Resian learns that her father has already received dowry for her marriage to Oloisudori. He reports to her that their fate is sealed.

2. Contemptuous. "He asked, the contemptuous quiet of his voice a menace by itself."

Proud. He feels superior and egocentric. "No one plays games with Oloisudori. Asked your father, he will tell you."

3. She is feeling disappointed and desperate of her father's action of receiving dowry with an aim of sealing her marriage with Oloisudori. She feels really betrayed.

4. Extortion, assassinations shadowy businesses, sexual immorality, robber, smuggler, poacher

5. It is ironical that Oloisudori who is older than Resian's father plans to marry Resian a young girl even after he is told her wish is to study at the university. It is also ironical that Kaelo has already picked dowry from Oloisudori and has never bothered to inform Resian of it.

6. He told her that she was her wife from then henceforth.

7. a) Insane

b) Grand/ like a palace

c) Strong loathe

d) Treat with excessive care

8. Resian rans blindly knocking a chair and a table and disappears past Oloisudori's driver. She goes to her father's shop. She is raving mad with indignation. She becomes very disappointed with her father.

Sample excerpt 3

1. Before the excerpt, Taiyo and Resian go to the River to fetch water. They remember their discussion with their aunt and admire Minik's fight against women oppression by men. They muse that men must be very angry with her for snatching five hundred girls from her. After the excerpt, Taiyo sings the song she has composed about three women whom she refers as mice silently in her heart. One of those women is the *enkamuratani* chasing a woman with a knife.

2. Flashback- Resian recalls fifteen years back when she and Taiyo accompanied their father to the Nakuru agricultural show and she saw sheep the first time.

Vivid description-The sheep are vividly described as big, docile tawny wooly animals.

Metaphors-She calls the three women who collaborated with men to oppress women as Nasila's three blind mice.

3. Theme of Determination or optimism. Resian is full of optimism that one day she would join Egerton university.

Women as their own enemies. The three Nasila women collaborated with men to oppress women.

Negative cultural practices. The three women propagate negative cultural practices against women such as F.G.M.

4. Resian is visionary. She thought how wonderful it would be, had she a chance to enroll at the Egerton University. She dreams of going to university.

Taiyo-critical-she wants to compose a song ridiculing three Nasilian women who collaborated with men to oppress women.

5. With a painful exhaustion, the straps that supported the containers pressed down their heads.

6. Later, she is rescued from a planned marriage by Nabaru and is taken to Minik's ranch. There, she is

given a house and a job. Minik also helps in securing their admission at Egerton University. She also gives a scholarship. The novel ends when she and Taiyo are going to University.

7. Recall/Recalled

Worked together

Feared

Threateningly

Sample Excerpt 4

1. Ole Kaelo sends Taiyo to call Resian for him. Resian feels hopeful and excited that she is being called to be informed about admission to the university. She thinks that it is her mother or sister who has talked to her father about the matter.

2. It is ironical for Resian to think that her father is going to tell her about her dream wish of joining Egerton University but he has plans to marry her off to his friend Oloisudori. This is even as he says “your future is very important to me”

3. He says this because he has plans to marry her to his friend Oloisudori. If this succeeds, his business would be saved because Oloisudori had helped him establish the business and even building his house in Nasila.

4. Ignorant- she thinks that her father has good news about joining university which is not the case. She says, “That’s it!” She thought triumphantly. “Is it Yeiyo or Taiyo who spoke to you?”

Apprehensive. She replies to her father apprehensively.

Fearful- she is in fear of her father. She sits on a chair far from her father.

5. Determination/optimism. Resian is very much determined to join Egerton University. She thinks it is the reason why her father has called her. “Who between them spoke to you about our enrollment at the Egerton University.”

6. After the excerpt, Ole Kaelo hesitates telling Resian what he wanted to tell her and tells her to go to the kitchen. He tells her to tell her mother to come.

7. She asked him who between them had spoken to him about their enrollment at the Egerton University.

8. Suspense. The reader is left in suspense wanting to know why Ole Kaelo had called his daughter.

Dialogue- there is dialogue between Resian and her father. It reveals the strained relationship between daughter and father.

Nervously/worriedly/fearfully

Sit far away

Control herself

Troubled/disturbed

PRACTICE EXCERPTS

1. Read the following excerpt and answer the questions that follow

However, the notion that he was about to hand over his own daughter to a gangster continued to **gnaw** at the conscience of Ole Kaelo relentlessly. He felt guilty, especially when he recalled the atrocities that were known to have been committed by Oloisudori over the years. But another voice told him quietly that he was being foolish and unreasonable to question his own conscience over the matter of Oloisudori, for he was just one among many who were enjoying the fruits of their labour. And it was hardly anybody's business to know how honest that labour was. After all, the small voice reassured him tauntingly, those who committed bigger crimes such as Goldenberg and Anglo-leasing, were still enjoying the 'fruits of their labour.' Had they not invested the yields of their ill-gotten money in housing estates, in shares, in import and exports in tourism, in transport and in other trades, just as Oloisudori had done?

When he went to bed later that evening, he remained awake for many hours **pondering** over those disturbing thoughts that went through his mind fleetingly, like water that churned violently in a turbulent sea. He thought of Oloisudori's **impending visit** and his intended marriage to Resian. He knew the success or failure of the event would determine the fate of his business. Even his continued ownership of that house where he and his family lived, depended on the outcomes of that event. Should Oloisudori fail to get Resian and recall the loan he had extended to him to buy that house, **he was done**. And knowing Oloisudori, he could very easily draw the rug from beneath his feet, leaving him vulnerable to all kinds of vagaries. And the thoughts gave him anxious moments.

At dawn when sleep overtook him, Ole Kaelo had a pleasant dream. Resian had consented to Oloisudori's proposal. After Oloisudori reported that to him, he was greatly pleased and relieved. His

wife was rapturous. Although they were astonished at the turn of events, they were relieved to know that they would not have to live with the guilt of having forced their daughter to get married. What a wise child his once hardheaded daughter had turned to be after all! And how devious! After all those years of sullenness, awkwardness and tactlessness, she had finally brought relief to their life and ushered in a period of peace and tranquility. But then, it was just that. A dream!

1. Place the excerpt in its immediate context. (4Mks)
2. Discuss three major issues in this excerpt. (6Mks)
3. Discuss two character traits of Ole Kaelo in this excerpt. (4Mks)
4. "And the thoughts gave him anxious moments" Add a question tag. (1Mk)
5. Discuss any three aspects of style in this excerpt. (6Mks)
6. Explain the meaning of the following expressions from the excerpt. (4Mks)
 - (i). Gnaw
 - (ii). Pondering
 - (iii). Impending visit
 - (iv). He was done.

2. Read the following excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

Her dream was rudely and violently interrupted by a thunderous bang and a loud roar of laughter. She woke up with a start, jumped up to her feet and stared at the door with wide panic-stricken eyes. For a moment she could not figure out her surroundings and called out the name of her sister Taiyo. She was terrified. The door flung open and Olarinkoi staggered in. He was stone drunk. Resian stared at him **unblinkingly** as he walked towards her and she backed off terrified, squeezing herself flatly against the wall. He followed her there and got hold of her shoulders and shook her violently glaring at her with his glittering eyes.

"You silly thing," he thundered angrily. "I tell you to prepare food and you refuse to do so, eh? Today you will know who is the owner of this home. If you are still in doubt, let me tell you frankly that from today on you are my wife, hear that, eh? You are my wife. For a long time you have been sneering at me, showing how highly educated you are. Today we shall see how educated your body is! Yes, we shall see!"

He got hold of her hand and began dragging her into the other room. At first she did not understand his intention until he began unfastening her buttons with his rough trembling hands. Then the truth came, and with it, terror and panic. She tried to get away from him, but he held her **effortlessly** as he brutally continued fumbling with her dress, trying to loosen it. She screamed as loudly as she could while she pushed him away and thrashed frantically about. But that did not deter him and he totally ignored her screams holding her more firmly with his strong arms. Against her loud protest, he tore her garments and began to push her towards the bed.

Then desperately she took the last chance of self defense and self-preservation. **Mustering** all her strength, she thrust his thumb into her mouth; sunk her teeth into the flesh like a ferocious animal and tenaciously held onto it, tugging at it fiercely like a lioness. She could feel the flesh tearing and she tasted the salt of his blood as it filled her mouth but she clung unto the thumb as Olarinkoi **howled** with pain.

1. Make notes on the contents of Resian's dream. (4Mks)
2. Discuss one character traits of Resian in this excerpt. (2Mks)
3. What has greatly changed in Olarinkoi in this excerpt compared to his earlier conduct in the novel? (3Mks)
4. Identify and illustrate two aspects of style in this excerpt. (4Mks)
5. Explain two major issues raised in the excerpt. (4Mks)
6. Explain what happens immediately after the excerpt. (3Mks)
7. "Today we shall see how educated your body is" Rewrite in reported speech. (1Mk)
8. Explain the meaning of the following expressions in the passage. (4 Mks)
 - (i). Unblinkingly
 - (ii). Effortlessly
 - (iii). Mustering
 - (iv). Howled

3. Read the excerpt below and answer the questions that follow

“Nothing is wrong with me,” Resian **retorted** furiously. And pointing at the living room, with her figure, she fiercely charged, “I have no quarrel with my father for whom, I have tremendous respect. It is the likes of Olarinkoi I am mad at, and all those other males who come here ordering us to do that or the other for them, simply because they are males. When women visit us, they give us the **leeway** to respond to their requests. But as we burn our fingers here Mr.Olarinkoi is dozing off comfortably in our living room waiting for his lunch and possibly a little angry and impatient with us for delaying it.’

“It is enough,” cried Yeiyo – Botorr viciously. She instantly abandoned the peeling of potatoes and threw the knife into the pail that held the peeled potatoes. Supporting herself by holding onto a nearby wall, she painfully lifted a large, heavy body. “My enkaini, I agree with you that something is wrong with our child, and I think I know what ails her. Come along with me and I will tell you what I think ails her. “I am not sick... ” Resian was saying that when she was cut short by Taiyo.” Even if you are not sick, you cannot argue with Yeiyo Botorr,” Taiyo told her **sternly** as soon as they were out of earshot of their mother and Yeiyo Botorr,“there are things one has to learn on their own. One of them is that you cannot **antagonize** the older people by arguing with them, however, untenable their argument may be. That goes without saying, my dear little sister.”

1. What happens before this extract? (3mks)
2. Comment on any two stylistic devices used in the extract. (4mks)
3. Explain any issue brought about in this extract. (3mks)
4. What is the character of Yeiyo Botorr from this extract? (4mks)
5. From elsewhere in this text how does Olarinkoi contribute to the plot development of the novel? (3mks)
6. Re-write and add a question tag. (1mks)

Nothing is wrong with me.

7. Write the meaning of the following vocabulary. (4mks)

a) Sternly

- b) Antagonize
- c) Retorted
- d) Leeway

8. What happens immediately after this extract? (3mks)

4. Read the following excerpt and answer the questions that follow

At seven o'clock in the evening after the lights had been put on, and the traditional esuguroi drink had been served in generous measures, tongues loosened and hearts gladdened. Soon after, the party gathered momentum and voices rose. Within no time, one could hardly be heard over the hubbub of talk and laughter. And as the pleasurable and lively celebration progressed, voices became animated; hands and arms gesticulated vigorously while heads turned more often. Eyes searched out acquaintances within the throng of revelers.

And it was all pomp and gaiety as ivory adorned and bejeweled fingers fluttered; bare shoulders gleamed in the light multicoloured bead ornaments glittered upon elaborately bedecked necks: pendulous *ilmiintoni* of all colours **dangled** loosely down extended ear-lobes: and the bright colours of lesos, kangas, red shukas and multicoloured blankets, all turned the Ole Kaelo living room into a kaleidoscope of shifting light and colour.

- 1. Place this extract in its immediate context. (4mks)
- 2. State and explain two thematic concerns in this context. (4mks)
- 3. What is the significance of the use of words like esuguroi, ilmiintoni, lesos, kangas, and shukas? (3mks)
- 4. Identify and explain two character traits of ole Kaelo. (4mks)
- 5. Eyes searched out acquaintances within the throng of revelers. Rewrite to form a question (1mk)
- 6. Which other party has an equal weight from the rest of the novel. What is its significance? (3mks)

7. Comment on the prevalent mood in the context. (2mks)
8. Explain the meaning of the following words: (4mks)
- a) Hubbub
 - b) Gesticulated
 - c) Gaiety
 - d) Dangled

CHAPTER SIX

GENERAL ESSAY QUESTIONS AND SAMPLE ESSAYS

1. *Blossoms of the Savannah* is a novel about hope that leads to victory; write a composition to illustrate on this statement.
2. "In Oloisudori and Olarinkoi there is no lesser evil." Write an essay to illustrate on this statement.
3. "One has to know which side of bread is buttered." By referring closely to the lives of Kaelo and Oloisudori show the truthfulness of this statement.
4. "Kaelo digs his own grave." Write a composition to show the truthfulness of this statement
5. "Though Resian goes through the valley of death, her determination leads her to a victorious life." Write a composition to show the validity of this assertion.
6. Maa culture has not completely shed off archaic practices and traditions. Support this statement with illustrations from the novel.
7. "Strong selfless friendship is the remedy to stormy times." Using the lives of Taiyo and Resian, write a composition to illustrate truthfulness of the statement.

8. Oloisudori, Kaelo, Mama Milanoi and Olarinkoi are to blame for the traumatizing life led by Resian. Write an essay in support of this argument.
9. By referring to the lives of Oloisudori and Olarinkoi, show how bad deeds are paid with bad deeds.
10. "*Blossoms of the savannah* is a novel about women fighting for their redemption." By referring to the lives of Minik and Nabaru support the assertion.
11. "*Blossoms of the savannah* is a novel about patriarchy." Write an essay to validate this argument using the character Oloisudori and Olarinkoi.
12. Optimism and ambition leads to victory support.
13. "Women are their own enemies" Write an essay exemplifying this position.
14. "The strong bond between Resian and Taiyo contributes significantly to their triumph." Write an essay in support of the statement.
15. The old and the young generations in *Blossoms of the Savannah* are in conflict. Discuss.
16. Bad decisions can adversely affect our future. Write an essay in support of the statement with illustrations from the novel.
17. Change is as good as rest. To what extent do you agree with the assertion as far as *Blossoms of the Savannah* is concerned?
18. "Persistence, focus and determination is the secret behind success." Expound on this position drawing your illustrations from the novel.
19. Some cultural practices have no place in the current Nasilian society. Discuss.
20. "Not all aspects of culture and traditions are bad." Drawing your illustrations from the novel *Blossoms of the Savannah*, validate the assertion.
21. "There is need for women to unite in their fight against harmful cultural practices" Discuss.
22. "Greed for money is the source of most evils in the society." Show how valid this statement is by getting supporting evidence from the novel *Blossoms of the Savannah*.
23. "Our greatest enemies are those close to us." Support this statement with illustrations from the novel.

24. "Failure to take one stand on matters to do with culture can be very detrimental." Write an essay reacting to this assertion.
25. Write an essay showing why Mama Milanoi is to blame most for the ordeals her daughters go through.
26. Write a composition in agreement with the assertion that harmful cultural practices against women would be history in Nasila if there were more women like Minik.
27. "Women should speak and act in order to have their way in the society" Write an essay in support of the statement with illustrations from the novel.
28. The rich cultural heritage of the Maa is under attack by modernity. Discuss
29. Nothing is impossible to somebody with the will to succeed. Discuss
30. "Resian has been wronged more by her father than the Nasilian society." Write an argumentative essay reacting to this statement.
31. Material security does not guarantee happiness.
32. Gender inequality is tantamount to violation of human rights. Write an essay in support of the assertion drawing your illustrations from *Blossoms of the Savannah*.
33. Cultural erosion is the root cause of most evil things in Nasila. Discuss.
34. Help can come even when least expected. Discuss.

SAMPLE ESSAYS

1. "Though Resian goes through the valley of death, her determination leads her to a victorious life." Write a composition to show the validity of this assertion.

Resian in the *Blossoms of the Savannah* seems to experience several challenging situations in her life. In the scenarios she seems resolute in her actions as shown in the following ways

Oloisudori declares his intention of marrying her at an early age. This follows after he changes his initial plan: extorting Kaelo. He demands that she should first be circumcised so as to get rid of her state as *nemengalana intoiye*. He intends to use anesthesia to make her unconscious and grab her. Resian resolves not to be married. She tells Oloisudori point blank that she cannot be his wife. She

returns the gifts that he had earlier brought and escapes to her father's shop. Her father beats her so as to submit to the marriage, but Resian remains steady is her decision.

A number of callous youth in Nasila wish to assault Resian and Taiyo. In the first days, Resian and Taiyo take a walk around uncle Simiren compound. All of a sudden a young man emerges from the blues and grabs Taiyo. Resian order the callous young man to release Taiyo immediately. The Young man has no option but to give in though he promises to revisit his grave decision.

Though in a dream, *enkamuratani* and other two women surround Resian to circumcise her holding an *olmurunya*. Although Resian is in a strange land and is defenseless she does her best to combat the situation. Determined, Resian twists *enkamuratani*'s hand with an intention of ensuring that she does not initiate other girls in the future. She knocks the old witch using a mallet as well as fights the third woman until she disappears.

Olarinkoi disappears with Resian to a far hut in the forest. He locks her up and returns very late in the night while drunk. Once he returns, he is in his mission of raping her. He unzips and this gesture sets her trembling. She bites Olarinkoi's thumb so that the pain reduces his action of rape. Owing to the fact that Resian had earlier witnessed Olarinkoi's fiery attacks when he dealt with two callous men, it calls for a lot of determination on the part of Resian to tackle him.

In summary, from the above illustrations it is evident that Resian suffers rough challenging times in her life but she deals with all these situations with determination.

2. "The strong bond between Resian and Taiyo contributes significantly to their triumph." Write an essay in support of the statement.

No man is an island. Human beings were created to relate mutually. The close friendship between Resian and Taiyo is the key to overcoming stormy times that present themselves in their lives as follows

In their new environment at Nasila, the girls meet unique challenges. They are not used to the communal life for all along they have stayed in an urban set up where life is individualistic. At Nasila, they have to get used to impromptu visitors and superior male counterparts. It is the love between the two girls that helps in these scenarios. The duo stay together most of the times. By so doing, they share a lot Taiyo counsels Resian on using kind language on Yeiyo Botorr her aunt. The two girls discuss about danger that lurks from the hostile youth especially because of their uncircumcised condition.

In overcoming the challenge of female genital mutilation (FGM), their friendship bond comes in handy. When Resian goes on a hunger strike she says it is only Taiyo who can change her stand. When Taiyo is informed of Resian's condition, she does not hesitate to offer herself for Resian's redemption even when there are risks all over. While at Nasila, they have a lot of time sharing their views towards FGM. The discussions must have strengthened their hard stands towards FGM. It is from these discussions that they vow never to give in to FGM.

In the incident when Taiyo and Resian are accosted by two callous young men their coordination and friendship save them. The incident finds them while they are walking together where they had visited Maiso for lunch. If the struggle had been between two men versus one girl probably she would have been surmounted. Although most of the salvation is largely brought by Olarinkoi the fact that the two girls were together makes it easier for them to go about the ordeal. Their joint screaming and their escape unhurt is partly contributed by their togetherness.

The two birds of a feather hatch a scheme to outwit Oloisudori. They wrap the gifts he had brought them into a box and title it as a gift. They then plan how to execute the plan. They arrange on how Resian is to thank Oloisudori and give him the gift. They discuss the aim of the gesture; to clarify to Oloisudori the fact they cannot be cheated with gifts. From this co-operation, Resian manages to trick Oloisudori and tells off her father and later with Olarinkoi, they manage to leave Nasila.

It is clear from the above illustration that strong friendship bonds can help friend go about hard experiences and overcome them in their lives.

3. Bad decisions can adversely affect our lives. Write an essay in support of the statement with illustrations from the novel.

The Choices we make can affect us positively or negatively. Bad choices definitely have adverse effects on our future. A character like Ole Kaelo makes several bad choices which not only affect his life but also his daughters.

Ole Kaelo is advised by his friend what kind of man Oloisudori is. He is told that he is not a man of integrity and warns him about doing business with him. He even warns him to keep his daughters from him. Oloisudori is unheeding to this warning. He goes on to sign business contracts and receiving a loan from him. Later, this man causes him great worry when he threatens to bring his business down if he does not give him his daughter in marriage.

Ole Kaelo makes the bad choice of agreeing to give his daughter Resian in marriage to Oloisudori. He

does this to save his business empire and to acquire more wealth as dowry from him. This unleashes a myriad of problems in his family. He keeps assuring himself that his choice of Oloisudori is good and that the man is not all bad but inwardly, he has reservations about such a marriage. His decision worsens the already poor relationship between him and his daughter, who ran away and gets into more trouble with Olarinkoi. Taiyo also has her life ruined by being forcefully circumcised before being forced to marry Oloisudori. Finally, he loses his daughters trust and his fate is unknown because Oloisudori might come for him in person.

Olarinkoi is not known by the Kaelos yet nobody asks questions about him. He seems a mystery and with time becomes like a member of the family. This earns him trust among the Kaelos to the point that Resian trusts him to take her to Minik's ranch. This man who the family trusted so much turns into a beast by raping Resian and even planning to circumcise her by force before marrying her. If the Kaelo's had not trusted the stranger, Resian suffering in his hands would have been avoided.

Mama Milanoi makes a bad choice of giving over her daughter Taiyo to three strange women cheating her that she was being taken to her sister. Her plans is to have Taiyo circumcised before being married by Oloisudori. This action makes her lose the trust her daughters had for her. The wound she has caused them will definitely take time to heal. They too are angry with her that they vow that they would not want to be like her in marriage.

Bad decisions made knowingly or unknowingly will definitely have negative impact in our lives or on those that are dear to us.

4. Gender inequality is tantamount to violation of human rights. Write an essay in support of the assertion drawing your illustrations from *Blossoms of the Savannah*.

Today's position on the male and female gender is that men and women are equal and none of the gender should dominate over the other. In *Blossoms of the Savannah*, women are culturally forced to be subservient to men, a practice that denies them some fundamental rights as human beings.

A wife has the right to state his position on any matter even if it is contrary to the husband's position. This is not the case with Mama Milanoi, wife to Ole Kaelo. She admits that she did not know which man her husband was doing business with and even if she did, she would not do anything about it for he was the one who carried the family's vision. She thus leaves every aspect of decision making to him whether those decisions are good or bad.

A woman is a being to be loved and not to love back. Although Ole Kaelo genuinely loved Mama

Milanoi when he saw her first, her feelings on him are immaterial. Women were not expected to resist a man's advances according to Nasilian culture. This is a great violation of her right to love or hate. In her case there is no room for that. It is also expected that Resian should give in to Oloisudori's plans to marry her. Refusal is regarded as stubbornness. In fact, Oloisudori claims that none of his wives put any resistance in his interest in them. This means that their feelings for him did not matter a great violation of their freedom to choose their marriage partner.

Resian and Taiyo are forced to undergo cultural coaching by Joseph Parmuat. Resian rebels this citing inequality in the plan. She opines that if they were boys, such a thing would not be done on them. Instead, they would be freely roaming Nasila with nobody bothering them. In their case, there is no such option simply because they are girls. Their right to choose what to and not to learn is violated. Girls are taught how to cook for their men but there are no lessons for boys on how to please women. Resian opposes such arrangements saying she would not be taught to solely please men. She claims that even boys should be taught how to please women.

Gender inequality in this society elevates man over the woman to the extent that Resian says that it made men assume that they had right over the body of any woman. This has reduced women to be objects of sex to be exploited by men at will. This practice started with the Ilarinkon warriors who sexually exploited women after arousing their desires. Taiyo and Resian undergo several rape attempts with Resian ending up being raped by Olarinkoi who assumes he has every right over her body. These inequalities have greatly undermined women's right to privacy and to choose whom to have sexual relation with.

Gender inequality does not just stop at that. Instead, it is a major cause of violation of basic human rights that all should be accorded a chance to enjoy. Women in the novel have most of their rights curtailed as a result of gender imbalance between men and women.

5. Help can come when least expected. Discuss.

Most people reach the end of the tether in difficult situations and are just about to give up when help comes. Most instances of help appear coincidental but nonetheless; they change the course of life of the character as well as shaping the rest of the novel.

Olarinkoi seems to be at the right place at the right time. He happens to be the savior of Resian and Taiyo when they need help most. He comes to the rescue of the two girls when they are coming from their father's shop and are about to be raped by two men. Olarinkoi single-handedly saves the girls by fighting the men. Resian and Taiyo are much grateful and would not want to imagine what would have

happened if he had not come at that time, even fearing that they would have been infected with HIV.

Olarinkoi again comes to the rescue of Resian when she discovers her father's betrayal by planning to marry her off to Oloisudori. He comes to her rescue when she is even contemplating committing suicide by drowning herself into the river. At the same time, Oloisudori and his men are looking for her to abduct her. Olarinkoi promises to take her to Minik whom she had been yearning to meet someday. Although the help turns disastrous with Olarinkoi turning against her, she is able to escape the current wrath of Oloisudori.

Taiyo is rescued from the hands of her circumcisers by Minik's men. Minik's rescue team use tricks to rescue her from the well-guarded home which she would not have escaped in her sickly state. Were it not for Minik's intervention, Taiyo would surely have been forcefully married off to Oloisudori after healing. The rescue gives Taiyo a new lease of life, reunion with her sister and of course quicker physical and emotional recovery.

Minik's help to Resian and Taiyo perhaps is the most important event that completely changes their lives. She gives refuge to the girls in her ranch hence protecting them from marauding men like Oloisudori and Olarinkoi. She gives Resian a job in the ranch hence giving her something to live on and promises her a scholarship from the ranch. Most importantly, she is able to have the two girls enrolled at Egerton University, their dream university. These kind gestures create a happy ending in a novel that has been dominated by sad events.

When people are about to despair, that is usually the point when help comes. No matter how belated characters like Resian and Taiyo get help, their lives are greatly impacted and changed by those interventions.