

**The Dynamics of Survival and Motherhood in Calixthe
Beyala's *Your Name Shall Be Tanga***

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Abstract

*This essay examines the representation of survival and motherhood in Calixthe Beyala's *Your Name Shall Be Tanga*. Proceeding from Lauretta Ngcobo's concept of motherhood in her seminal essay, "African Motherhood- Myth and Reality", it explores the connection between debilitating economic condition and the failure of a mother and the society to nurture the girl-child. Survival is depicted in the novel as the major motivation for adult characters' actions and misdemeanour while children struggle against them by striving to create an alternative world of self-actualisation. This conflict manifests in the novel through contrastive characterization and extended use of metaphors. Throughout the text, Beyala portrays the pursuit of personal survival by the mother as an antithesis to the child's development. This study suggests that the mother's traditional role as a 'life giver, nurturer, and life coach is neither static nor independent of factors in a society that deforms and exterminates women's aspirations.*

Keywords: survival, poverty, motherhood, girl-child, Beyala

Introduction

Calixthe Beyala's *Your Name Shall Be Tanga* is the story of Tanga, a seventeen-year old girl from a French-speaking African country. She is incarcerated with forty-year old French lady, Anna-Claude, to whom she narrates her life story. Tanga was born into a poor family of two daughters, an uncaring mother, an incestuous father, and a depraved society filled with poverty, squalor and hopelessness. Poverty, a challenge faced by a large majority of African population, is a stark reality which cannot be ignored and to survive it is to triumph over a threat to human existence in the continent. Therefore, this paper examines the depiction of survival as the major for the actions and misdemeanour of adult characters in the novel. The essay underlines the effect of poverty on motherhood and the development of the child. It shows that national issues are closely tied to the development of the child.

Your Name Shall Be Tanga is part of a larger tradition of Francophone women's writing which explores the problems confronting African states. This tradition, in the words of Jean-Marie Volet, focuses "the way people answer the challenge of surviving in rough and often inhumane conditions, how they assess the past to better understand the future, how they devise new strategies, follow new dream, and attempt to make do with the often limited resources at

their diagonal (187). The romanticisation of African past for which Negritude writers are known is clearly missing in this tradition possibly because the realities of contemporary African states have motivated writers to track down some of the political and economic factors which are responsible for their woes (Okuyade, 2013). Being a migrant French writer, for Beyala to write about such a reality, could be seen as a proof of her closeness to and understanding of the continent of her origin. Nicki Hitchcott notes that, "[p]art of Beyala's self-positioning as an 'authentic African woman' involves persistently reminding readers of her impoverished background in the New Bell area of Dounla, Cameroon" (44). Though as exemplified by Hitchcott's study, Beyala has constantly been castigated for concentrating on the negative aspects of African realities; her works are an important contribution to the narration of Africa as a continent. Besides, a major marker of African women's fiction is that the continent's history somewhat compels writers to engage in fictionalising reality not for the sake of it but as a form of critique of cultural practices, socio-economic and political conditions that inhibit the development of children and women's self-actualisation. Apart from centring the predicament of the girl-child, Beyala's *Your Name Shall Be Tanga* is a critique of the decadence in a postcolonial African setting and its effect on motherhood.

Motherhood and Economic Imperatives

Most cultures in Africa define the woman in relation to her status as a mother and this is reflected in many African literary texts. Efuru in Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* is castigated for her infertility, Ihuoma in Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine* is praised for her uncritical acceptance of her role as a child bearer and the Most Royal Lady in Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *Ambiguous Adventure* is "canonised" in the text for being the mother figure that epitomises and protects the traditions of her people. Indeed, feminists' rejection of Negritude's veneration of the woman as "supermother" and symbol of Africa is a critique of an unidirectional portraiture of women and superficial narrative that are not well grounded in their realities.

Lauretta Ngcobo's seminal essay, "African Motherhood Myth and Reality" is useful in understanding the cultural construction of motherhood in African societies. Beginning with an analysis of the development of female children into wives, she highlights the tasks and challenges of African motherhood. Her discussion of the concept of motherhood shows that most of the characteristics of an ideal mother are generated by forces external to her as a woman. For example, the choice of time of marriage, the number of children to have, the privileging of the male child over the female, and her status in old age, among others, are all pre-determined by her culture. The mother is expected to "work hard to feed her family", but "has no rights of inheritance nor can she give legacies to anyone" (144-5). Most importantly, according to Ngcobo, the mother is supposed to be close to her daughter and prepare her for marriage and motherhood. It is also assumed that, "a good mother will have a good daughter, and an evil mother will invariably influence her daughter" (148). Therefore, the mother strives to live up to the image of a role model whose steps are being closely watched and followed by her daughter(s). It is believed that errant daughters are the products of irresponsible mothers who have failed in bringing up their daughters properly. In some cultures, for example, Igbo of Southeast Nigeria, a mother could be ostracised from community gatherings and women's association if it is found that her daughter(s) is/are misbehaving. The mother's life is inextricably linked to the daughter's and in all of this the father is "excused" because his availability or cooperation is not shown to have any effect on the daughter's life though he is a beneficiary of a positive outcome. All of these, cultural constructions of motherhood

and expectations, are done without considering the impact of the economic condition of the mother on her functionality.

African women writers have shown that economically empowered mothers are positioned to perform better than poor mothers and most likely to sustain the mother-daughter bond. For instance, Akachi Adimors-Eavigbo works feature hardworking and economically strong women whose husbands and children benefit immensely from their enterprises (Oloks, 2008). In one of her trilogy, *Children of the eagle*, "motherhood is presented a rallying point" and "the influence of an irrepressible and intelligent mother on the development of female subjects" is also underscored (Huns, 173). In Ama Ata Aidoo's *Changes A Love Story*, the changes that economic empowerment can bring to a woman's life and the choices available to her with respect to issues such as marriage and motherhood is her major preoccupation. Ginette Curry comments that besides this, the novel shows that, "as African women's integration into the market economy has progressively increased, they have gained access to more financial independence and education. As a result, they are now faced with more life choices than their mothers and grandmothers" (181).

Another reason why it is necessary to incorporate economic factor into the conceptualization of motherhood is that over the years, analysts have shown that in developing nations, economic structures favour men more than women. Johanna Kehler argues that "current trends of globalization, economic reforms, World Bank's policy to privatize public services, and the global cut in social spending are only a few of the determining factors which will decrease women's participation in the workforce and increase in their poverty" (42). Moreover, the pressures of upward economic mobility believed to be better accessible in urban centres than rural areas often make mothers send their children into foster care as shown in Nicolas Argenti's study (2011). In his essay titled, "Things of the Ground: Children's Medicine, Motherhood and Memory in the Cameroon Grassfields". Argenti posits:

Today, fifty years after independence, the need for Western-style education and medical care often considered the hallmarks of successful development - coupled with aspirations of access to the urban economy puts pressure on parents to send their children away from home to live a harsh and servile existence as domestic servants for salaried urban elites (Argenti 2010). While in the ideology of Grassfields kinship the mother is still the paramount figure of attachment, fidelity and protection, then, her devotion to her children continues to be frustrated by the necessity of entrusting them to the care of others, often far away from home, and with people little known to her (271).

The example of the Cameroon Grassfields indicates the important perspective that economic survival brings into the concept of motherhood in African societies. Therefore, Beyala's preoccupation with economic disempowerment of mothers in this novel is an attempt to bring to the fore the effect of this condition on children and the society.

Trajectories of Survival in *your Name Shall be Tanga*

Stories of survival are usually marked by an ardent commitment to ensuring that the traumatic experiences undergone by the dead and survivors are not effaced from history. Irrespective of existing perspectives on these experiences, the survivor's story is propelled by an

understanding that the contents of such stories have a bearing on their reception and subsequent survival. This places the survivor in a position of privilege inasmuch as, in the first instance, the choice of events that they include in the story could determine its survival. In Tanga's case, the knowledge that she possesses which Anna-Claude needs to understand in order to live out Taiga's dream has to be delivered aptly. No doubt the age, socio-economic and cultural gaps between the two characters are almost impossible to bridge, as the narrator. on Tanga to recall and make sense of a seemingly senseless life and Roy Ama-Claude, the one-person audience of the storyteller, urges Tanga, "Give me your survivor, the burden story. I'll pour out your dream" (7). In order to be able to ensure that the story survives, both of them will have to fulfil their roles. What follows Anna-Claude's charge is Tanga's narration of the experience of abuse and neglect in a society that does not care about the welfare of children. Since the novel is in a sense the story of the (stunted) growth of a child, the text can be described as an African Bildungsroman which Okuyade regards as one that, "expresses a variety of forces that inhibit or prevent the protagonist from achieving self-realization" (12).

One way in which Okuyade's description of the African version of the Western Bildungsroman aligns with the narration of survival is that both are "expressions" of the survivor's experience of "a variety of forces" that stand against her well-being. Since these forces are inimical to her growth, narrating her experience of them exceeds mere retelling of past events but becomes a critique, review and revision which repositions her no longer as a sufferer" but a "definer" or producer of knowledge. Talking to Anna-Claude about her life, Tanga's says:

Until now the only love that I, girl child-woman, have had is hatred. A blind and ferocious hatred determined to destroy me with the force that brings feelings which know nothing other than the concern for a single being ... How do I explain to others that I hate myself? Some mornings, after spending a night negotiating with the night for sleep to gain upper hand, twisting and turning in a soiled pagne, I pretend I have a migraine... I was born from decay (13).

"Decay" is a strong metaphor that depicts the level of depravity she suffered as a child. However, beyond telling the story of her (stunted) growth she is concerned about presenting her side of her life story because for most part of her life she is denied any form of agency. Most often when the marginalised get to tell their stories they carefully choose aspects of their stories that will best represent their experience, preserve their memory, and expose the perpetrators of their marginalisation. Lawrence Bamblett in *Our Stories are Our Survival* demonstrates that stories of Australian Aborigines that survive are a counter-discourse to lopsided dominant "discourse of deficit" which downplays their contributions to the growth of sports in Australia (34). He states:

My fascination with the social and cultural history of Erarnbie Mission is grounded in the community's oral history tradition. I watched the Storyteller and his peers bring to life the achievements of our community's storied athletes and leaders... I also started to think about the ways other people view and talk about Indigenous people and culture,

with a greater understanding of the importance of sharing positive stories (6)

Though he focuses on sport, his choice of stories generally supports the idea that marginalised groups invest in the preservation of their stories. In other words, using whatever means that is available to them, they should ensure that their stories survive before they can be directed at correcting any deficits as stated by Bamblets. There are at least two deficits that Tanga's story seeks to correct: the romanticisation of African childhood and the image of the mother as an iconic cultural figure whose role as a catalyst in the development of the child is "a given" and unaffected by her material socio-economic realities,

Tanga's first concern is to correct the notion that "Africa's childhood is free, her savannah nourishing" (20). She tells Anna-Claude, "My childhood is populated with bats, blackbirds and woodlice... White people are born in pink ribbons. As for us, we're horn in piles of rubble" (32). Hitchcott reveals that centring of African children's predicament is not to be glossed over in Beyala's oeuvre as it is "part of Beyala's self-positioning as an 'authentic African woman'" (43) who writes back at Negritude's romanticisation of African childhood. "Pink ribbons" and "piles of rubble" are contrastive images of the experience of childhood in Anna-Claude's background and Tanga's respectively. The "piles of rubble" indicate the weight and intensity of the socio-economic realities into which these children are born. Tanga repeats the phrase, "in my country" at different points in the narrative and each time what follows is the narration of a painful or abusive experience that she or other children have had. She tells of a street protest she took part in when she was twelve led by a boy of sixteen, Kamgue, and "an army of children in rags" shouting. "Millet, Millet" (97). Street protests are not likely to be held by children in the world from which Anna-Claude has come but in Tanga's world where are impoverished and made to work to feed their parents, it is a possibility. While as a teenager Anna-Claude "went through books" and "did research on those people who had not invented the gunpowder" Tanga spends her teenage days roaming the streets in search of livelihood (101).

To further dewesternise Anna-Claude's concept of childhood, the stories of Footwreck, Dead-End, Neck-Hold and other children feature. They have suffered forms of abuse ranging from emotional to physical and sexual abuse. Except in the case of her twelve year old sister, none of these children live with their parents. Foot-wreck, also known as Malais left with a sick grandmother who waits for him to bring her food daily. Dead-End and Neck-Hold are members of the illegal children's camp founded by Lame-Leg. Even in the seemingly "ideal" case Tanga's sister, the child has been exposed to prostitution and indeed their mother finds her a better replacement for the rebellious Tanga. Their stories illustrate the "decay" and "pile of rubble" against which children struggle to survive.

Another means of correcting the blissful image of African childhood is Tanga's narration of mothers' neglect of children. The mother is an "other" in the novel and an "other" in the words of Caroline Brown is "a metaphor of lack, loss, disorder, and dysfunction, a symbolic space that permits the establishing of the parameter of normalcy through the articulation of its opposition" (94). "Candy" is a metaphor for money and is used to describe the pleasure that Tanga's mother derives from accumulating material wealth at the expense of her daughter's well-being. It is also used to symbolise the reversal of roles between daughter and mother. It is Tanga's mother who waits for Tanga to bring the proceeds of prostitution to

her, whereas under normal circumstances, the child should be the one waiting for her mother to being her "candy"

Mother old one is waiting for me, sitting on a mat, banknotes, collected and crinkled for months clutched in her fingers... Only money protects her from decay and holds death bay - She has become a child stuffed with candy... Emotions accumulate Pleasure clambers up. And she hangs on to the money always-her lifebuoy, (23)

Mothers are known in traditional African societies to possess some spiritual powers which could be used to either bless or curse children. Writing on the conception of motherhood in African cultures and literature, Remi Akujobi states that in most African traditions, as shown in Yoruba tradition, "the kneeling position assumed at the moment of birth confers special spiritual privileges on a mother" (3). It is therefore interesting to see Tanga's mother invoke her "spiritual powers" when the child announces that she wants to take a break from prostitution. Tanga recalls her mother's reaction to the news:

"Get the hell out! Bitch! You want me dead... But you'll go before I do. Day and night I'm going to be praying to heaven. It will fill your vagina with stones. And the words I speak today will come true as the fact that I carried you in my belly for nine moons. She spits on the ground three times, claps her hands so that the owls will carry her voice way beyond the treetops and the waters (38).

As a mother, she is an agent of death. She invokes motherhood, symbolised by her 'belly', not to nurture the child but to put her in bondage to prostitution and ensure that everything contrary to life, for which the mother is known to give through childbirth, is given to Tanga. This threat completes the image of Tanga's mother as the oppressor who exercises her maternal powers to the detriment of the girl. It is after this scene that Tanga declares that her life is a "deconsecrated room" (38).

Each time Tanga mentions her mother and other mothers, the reader should expect images of destruction, depravity, squalor, and death. Camilla is another mother in this paradigm. Being a child born to alcoholic parents and having a very traumatic childhood just like Tanga, Camilla dreamt of living a better life than her parents and also wished to give her children the love and care she was denied as a child. She gets married but is later abandoned by the man, Pierre, after which she launches herself into the sex trade with two children to cater for. She would "load them with valium and whiskey" and eventually, Tanga says, "Later, I will learn that her two children died in an explosion of bottled gas. I respect her for that. May God forgive me"(87). Camilla commits infanticide as a way of escaping the hardship she and the kids were facing. For her, just as Tanga's mother demonstrates, motherhood means sacrificing the children's lives that the mother may survive.

Within this community of mothers of pain and death is Foot-Wreck's mother who locks up her new-born child in house with the intention of getting him killed. There is hardly any mother in the novel that conforms to the positive image of motherhood. Even grandmothers' acts are despicable and unspeakable. Tanga's grandmother was a village whore who was repeatedly raped by passers-by, the fruit of which is Tanga's mother. There is no positive or loving

memory of Tanga's grandmother, and the little that we know of her only goes to buttress the projection of terrible mothers. Tanga's grandmother cursed her own womb, so also did Foot-Wreck's mother and those who procreate do it for commercial purposes. Tanga comments that "in Iningue, the woman has forgotten the child, the gesture that brings love-she's just an egg-laying hen" (57). Tanga herself takes to her heels the moment her short-time lover, Lame-Leg hints at the issue of procreation. She is not interested in having children in a world that has been so cruel to her. In all of these cases, the concept of the mother as a joyful child bearer and nurturer is eroded. Survival takes the place of motherly love and tenderness. However, a closer look at these "motherly dissidents" shows that Beyala features them as tools for transgressing patriarchal cultures and systems which demand certain mores from mothers while denying them access to means self-sustenance and actualisation. As succinctly put by Catherine Kroll, contemporary African women authors write against "[t]raditional patriarchal norms dictate that women serve as bearers of tradition, regulators of the moral compass, and providers for the family" (137). With a retinue of absent and irresponsible men in the novel, the women are left to devise means of either coping with their conditions or transcending them by taking drastic and most often, damaging actions.

This is probably why Beyala presents Mother old one as a woman who strives to transcend poverty and traditional norms. Beyala contrasts her character with three other women who end up tragically because they seem not to have devised a pragmatic approach to survival. Kadjaba Dongo is Tanga's grandmother whose story of rape and neglect becomes a lesson to learn from. Taking a cue from Kadjaba's experience whose body was used by men for their pleasure, at thirteen, Mother old one decides to escape the "curse" by refusing to lose her virginity to any man and instead,

She left and crossed the forest, found a palm tree that was losing its fruit. She took off her old rags and gathered up the nuts. She crouched down, spread her legs. She pushed every one of the nuts inside her vagina. She felt the burning, scratching, still she continued... She was in pain, blood was dripping down her hands, her fingers... She said that pain was a condition in which to forget about the pleasure invented and constructed in bed. (26) For a rural girl, her act is at once subversive and liberatory. Her choice of this mode of sexual pain as a means of puncturing the male ego and asserting an autonomous self is crucial to the image of Mother old one. It means that at an early stage she has developed a resistance to traditional norms as they relate to female sexuality. As Bell Hooks has brilliantly argued, sexual oppression will end only when women exercise their freedom as to the kind of sexual relations and pleasure they choose. She explains that:

There are some feminists (and I am one) who believe that for feminist movement to end sexual oppression will not change destructive sexual norms if individuals are taught that they must choose between competing sexualities (the most obvious being heterosexuality and homosexuality) and conform to the expectations of the chosen norm... A liberatory sexuality would not teach women to see their bodies as accessible to all men, or to all women for that matter. (155) (emphasis Hook's).

The example of Kadjaba inspires in Mother old one a rebellion against the notion that her body is for male consumption. Indeed, we are not surprised that even at a later age

when she gets married the rebellion continues as she denies her husband sexual pleasure, According to Tang's recollection

He said that mother old one's sex had set before the sun and that she ought to let the goat graze where the grass grows, he told her she had rained him She had stolen his oxygen pump, and that from now on he'd get himself dirty in other women's asses in order to survive. (29)

Interestingly, Tanga's father justifies his infidelity as an act of survival; we see that his life comes to an abrupt end early in the narrative while his wife survives. Almost every character in the novel is struggling to either transcend certain debilitating economic condition or fighting against attempts to exterminate their personal aspirations. The stories of Mama Mede and lady Dongue are another set of examples from which Mother old one has derived tenacity for materialism. By her reckoning, these women lost their lives to poverty because they could not break boundaries and norms. These women attempted to survive by engaging in labour; Mama Mede a peasant worker and the latter a spiritualist. For both women labour fails to sustain their lives so, Mother old one insists she "does not want to end up like them" (23) and therefore trades in her daughter's body for survival.

Despite the depravity that Tanga has suffered as a child and the abuse by her mother, she is willing to be a good mother to her adopted son, Mala, also known as Foot-Wreck. Tanga's image as a mother contrasts with her mother's. She looks after the boy, buys things for him, him with attention and interacts with him in a manner that underscores the possibility of being a caring and responsible mother in a society that is so dysfunctional. It is as she sources for money to take care of the boy that she is arrested. By doing this, Tanga indirectly vilifies her mother's failure to provide necessary maternal love and care for her as she grows up. Another unusual environment where there seems to be "mothering" of some sort is in Lame-leg's illegal camp for children. Here, children take care of other children. Even though they are to work and bring money to Lame-Leg, the boss, the children still prefer the conditions of this camp to what obtains in their homes. It is strange that in the novel, only children show the slightest tendency of being able to give what adults have failed to give their children - care and love. This implies that age and biological ties are by no means the ultimate indices for determining motherhood. If a child can show better capacity for "mothering" than an adult, then the traditional definition of motherhood is destabilised in the novel.

Tanga strategically refers to herself as the girlchild-woman. She is able to look into both the world of adults and children. This in-betweenness is a metaphor to represent her as a "transitional character". As a child, she is not catered for, rather she is the breadwinner; she has no opportunity to grow and enjoy her childhood. As a woman, she is continually abused by men and condemned by the society. It is interesting to note that while she does not really lament over her mother's cruelty, she mourns over two important losses in her life: the loss of her clitoris and the loss of Hassan. She links up these incidents at the beginning of her story because her story has two components- the life of a child in a depraved society and the life of a woman in a patriarchal society. Both are tales of survival which overlap in her story as a "girlchild-woman" shown as being inseparable and tales that "confront" the circumstances and sufferings that they both undergo. The other component which is the woman's life is mostly encapsulated by her encounter with Lame-Leg. Fleeing from her mother and the crowd that seek to punish her for an offence she never committed, she roams the streets for two nights

and meets Lame-Leg The man promises, "I want to live a dream with you, I want to love you always forever (108-9). However, this love does not include freedom as Tanga is abducted by the same man and held by a rope around her neck. The rope is one of the metaphors used to depict the condition of the woman in *Your Name Shall be Tanga*. Lame-Leg promises to love her but refuses to release her to live her life as she wills. He claims that "Theedom is nothing but a dream" and throughout her stay with him all he does is to command her, demand her body and at last he demands that she bears his child. Lame-Leg's character is typical in Beyala's works where she "portrayts) men as essentially weak, violent and exploitative, controlling women with their material and/or physical advantage" (Hitchcott, 130). The woman, Tanga, is not allowed or expected to have her opinion and for the fear that he might hurt her or even kill her, she pretends to be in agreement and that night, she escapes from his camp

Lastly, survival narratives are marked by the confrontation of unpleasant pasts which helps the narrator to revisit that past with the aim of connecting events and people and sometimes drawing conclusions that were elusive initially. Writing about the protagonist in Samuel Bellow's 1964 novel, *Herzog*, Lauren Cardon argues that Herzog engages in letter writing as a means of confronting his trauma and reasserting his ability to think rationally. Cardon observes that "the need to explain" leads to Herzog's letter-writing, a self-prescribed therapy with the aim of organizing his thoughts, varying emotions, and past events into some coherent form" (n.p.). In Cardon's opinion, Herzog's letters are survival literature because they do not end with the expression of his sufferings but they show the strategies he adopts in transcending the traumatic conditions. Herzog is a survival narrative because the protagonist "has successfully confronted each of his losses and overcome them" (n.p.). To be sure, to overcome is not the same as "triumphing" but rather indicates a successful interpretation of the painful past and coming to terms with it. Moreover, the fact that the story exists shows that it has survived. Tanga tells her story to Anna-Claude in the hope that the latter would outlive her and possibly perpetuate her story and life. The story is very important to her because she feels it is "something" by which she would continue to exist and which neither her mother nor the society could take away from her. According to Tanga, she does not want to end up like other "girlchild-women who go through life without leaving any traces other than the ephemeral vibrations of a butterfly" so she determines, "I'll live 'something nobody will be able to take from me" (21). The story is in itself a "life" that continues to be narrated after the death of the narrator. Tanga does not have any respite, no lasting experience of joy or fulfilment and does not triumph over the forces that are inimical to her self-actualisation but she envisions the story as a "life" that could be lived by another - Anna-Claude and this is the reason behind the naming of Anna-Claude as Tanga in the novel. Tanga overcomes by bequeathing her life to Anna-Claude and she eventually dies and escapes the clutches of oppressive adults, including her mother.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the cultural inference that the mother-daughter bond is sacrosanct and a determining factor in the course of the daughter's life takes is antithetical to the realities of contemporary African countries. Economic empowerment is central to the functionality of African mothers. This paper has shown that jobless and unskilled mothers are not likely to fit into the culturally constructed mold of motherhood. Their status as nurturer, provider and children's guide becomes threatened as seen in *Mother old one* and *Camilla*. The poverty of

the mother has multiplier effects on her, her children, and the society. Morality and even cultural semibilities are jettisoned while she strives to survive,

As a survival narrative, *Four Name Shall Be Tangga* shows the potency of self-expression in perpetuating the survivor's side of the story and providing an alternative to well-known official and public knowledge about the events that are survived. Most important, the novel supports the propagation of child rights and the recognition of the need to adequately equip them before thrusting them into adulthood.

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