**AXE 1 IDENTITIES & EXCHANGES** **FOCUS 1: A poet’s response**

**DOCUMENT 1:** Meet Kayo Chingonyi (1987-……)

Born in Zambia and raised in the UK, Kayo Chingonyi’s poetry explores notions of loss, belonging, identity and masculinity.

**Task 1: What can you say about this man?** Make a short paragraph including the answers to these questions: date and place of birth – country of residence – profession. Then, read the **caption** under the photograph and comment on it.

*“I am Zambian with a London accent. I see myself as a kind of mixture of different identities”.*

**Task 2 :** **Rhythm and identity**

1. Watch the interview and find more information about Kayo

**Journalist:** I am here with Kayo Chingonyi, who is the writer of a beautiful collection of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ titled Kumukanda. So Kayo, I wanted to start by asking ‘Why \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and not\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’?

**Kayo:** I think \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_was what I first started writing when I was kind of ten years old, starting to write things on my own time. But there’s something about song \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_that has always appealed to me, the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. And when it came to writing poetry, there was something of that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ quality in it and so I could tell \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ if I wanted to but I could have that musicality in it as well. And I think that was the first \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that led me to poetry and led me away from prose. That’s not to say that I don’t write prose any more but I think poetry captured my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in a particular way because of that relationship to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Journalist:** So, looking at that collection and looking at you as a poet, and looking at your videos and your work, loads of that forms this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ identity but I just wondered what you thought your identity was and what you see yourself as.

**Kayo:** I think I see myself more and more not in terms of a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ identity but a kind of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of different identities. So I would see myself as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I suppose between being born in Zambia and raised in the UK but also that is again \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, because I came first to Newcastle and then I moved to London so there’s a kind of north and south split as well. And I have an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with Sheffield because I lived there for some time. So, I think I see myself in terms of these kind of … they don’t have to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I suppose, they can also be more interesting, - rubbings up against each other, those kind of … yeah … I don’t see them as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ always. So yeah, I see myself in a hybrid \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ but I would say I’m Zambian and I’m British if somebody asked me.

1. Read again the 1st part of the interview and say why Kayo chose to write poetry?
2. Read the 2nd part. How does Kayo define his identity?

**Task 3: Discover his poetry. Listen to Kayo.**

**Naturalized citizens*, Kayo Chingonyi (2015)***

**Watch and enjoy the poetry reading**

✶ Try to make sense of the poem through:

* the tone
* the rhythm
* the words that stand out
* the use of repetition

✶ Explain in your own words the difference between a citizen and a subject.

**Naturalized citizens** :

People who were not born citizens of a country but who are awarded citizenship in this country.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1    5      10     15      20 | To be subjects somewhere we waited in the shadow of municipal buildings that we might learn a mania\* for queues\* each of us with a story and those behind glass the harshest critics—who have forgotten what it takes to make the worst days of your life catchy; a tune children might sing.  To be subjects somewhere we shortened our names or, better still, changed them wholesale: KiKi for Christabel, Victor for Wojtek the histories we carried given over, like passports of lesser standing\*, until we didn’t know memory from myth and no one lived who could say.  To be subjects somewhere we stood, out of place, so long we dreamed of going back to where our names were not some bitter herb added to the local cuisine, to where people did not watch us with suspicion as if genes could hold a flag. |

\*Mania : a passion.

\*Queues : a reference to the reputation British people have for queuing politely.

\*Lesser standing: lower reputation

**Task 4: Analysing the poem**

**VERSE 1**

Line 2: “we waited in the shadow of municipal buildings”

1. Who is “we”?
2. Why did the have to go there?

Line 3: If these people need to learn a typically British behaviour, which is a “passion” for queues, what does it suggest about their identity and where they are from?

Line 5: “those behind glass”

1. Who do you think “those behind glass are”?
2. How are they depicted by the poet?

**VERSE 2**

Line 10: “We shortened our names”

1. Why would they need to shorten their names?

Line 11: “Or better still change them wholesale”

1. Better for whom? A name is part of our identity so how might it feel to change your name? How would you interpret the poet’s tone here?

Lines 13-14: “the histories we carried given over like passports of lesser standing”.

1. What “histories” could the poet be talking about?
2. How do you understand the expression “like passports of lesser standing”?

**VERSE 3**

Line 18: “we stood, out of place, so long”. Look at the punctuation and listen to how this line sounds out loud.

1. What feeling does the poet convey?

Lines 19-20: “we dreamed of going back to where our names where”.

1. Explain this sentence

Lines 21-22: “not some bitter herb added to the local cuisine”

1. What do you think the poet implies?

Lines 23-24: “to where people did not watch us with suspicion as if genes could hold a flag”.

1. Why might people watch them with suspicion?
2. How do you interpret the association between “genes” and “flags”?

**Task 5: Conclusion. Complete the missing information.**

The poem deals with the /ɪkˈspɪəriəns/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of people who /maɪˈgreɪt/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to a new country and the /ˈtʃæl*ɪ*ndʒiz/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ they have to /ˈfeɪs/ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to fit in and be /*æ*kˈsɛptɪd/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It particularly /ˈkɒnsəntreɪts/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on the experience of those coming from less /ˌiːkəˈnɒmɪkəli/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ developed countries to more economically developed ones.

***Naturalized Citizens*** /ɪˈvəʊks/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ notions of /ˈlɒs/ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of identity, memories, /ˈsækr*ɪ*faɪsis/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that have to be made to adapt to a new place as well as the hostility faced in the new environment.

The poem suggests that /ˈiːvənˈðəʊ/ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ every person is an individual with “a story”, an identity and a rich history, in the context of /ˌnætʃər*ə*laɪˈzeɪʃən/ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, they lose some of that and are sometimes just seen as /ˌaʊtˈsaɪdərz/ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the new local culture.

/ˈhɪərɪŋ/ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the poet himself read the poem is /ɪnˈvæljuəbəl/ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for not only does it give the poem more /ˈstrɛŋθ/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by making the alliterations and repetitions /ˈɔːd*ɪ*bəl/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but it makes it easier to understand since the poet /məˈtɪəriəlaɪzɪz/ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the natural breaks in the lines with pauses, and /kənˈveɪz/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ his feelings through the /ˈstrɛsˈpætərn/ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (=\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) and the intonation.

**Task 6: Compare and contrast the content of Kayo Chingonyi’s poem with what he says in his interview.**