

# Comparative Analysis: An African Thunderstorm vs This Is the Dark Time, My Love

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## Introduction

David Rubadiri's *An African Thunderstorm* and Martin Carter's *This Is the Dark Time, My Love* both use nature and darkness to represent colonial oppression. Rubadiri presents a storm coming from the west, sweeping through a village with violent, chaotic force. Carter presents a land under political darkness, where an invader threatens the dreams and safety of the people. Both poems show oppression as overwhelming and destructive, but Rubadiri builds one extended storm metaphor, while Carter uses a series of symbolic images to create a mood of fear and occupation.

**Central shared theme:** colonial oppression, especially the way invasion creates fear, damages communities, and turns the natural world into a symbol of political violence.

## Colonial invasion

Both poems present oppression as an invading force.

In *An African Thunderstorm*, the storm comes "from the west," a direction that can suggest Western colonial power. The clouds move "like a plague of locusts," making the storm seem destructive, numerous, and impossible to stop. The village is vulnerable before a force that arrives from outside and takes control of the environment.

In *This Is the Dark Time, My Love*, Carter refers to the "strange invader" and the "man of death." These figures suggest foreign authority and violent surveillance. The invader does not only occupy land; he threatens emotional and national life by aiming "at your dream."

## Nature as symbol

Both poets use nature to express political suffering.

Rubadiri's storm is both literal and symbolic. Clouds, wind, wings, and rain become images of invasion and disorder. The storm strips dignity from the villagers, drives women into panic, and makes the environment feel hostile. Nature becomes the language through which political violence is imagined.

Carter's nature is wounded rather than attacking. "Red flowers bend their heads in awful sorrow," and the "slender grass" is trampled by a "boot of steel." These images suggest that the land itself mourns under oppression. Unlike Rubadiri's storm, Carter's natural world is not the invader; it is a victim and witness.

## Fear and community

Both poems show fear spreading through a whole community.

In *An African Thunderstorm*, the village responds with frantic movement. Children scream, women dart "in and out," and babies cling to their mothers' backs. The storm disrupts ordinary life and produces panic across age and gender. The whole community is caught in the force of the event.

In Carter's poem, fear is quieter but equally widespread. "Everywhere the faces of men are strained and anxious." The repetition of public fear creates an atmosphere of suffocation. Carter's community is not running from a storm; it is living under constant political pressure.

## Imagery of dehumanization

Both poets dehumanize the oppressive force.

Rubadiri compares the storm to "a plague of locusts" and "sinister dark wings." These images make the approaching force predatory and destructive. The storm seems less like weather and more like a hostile army.

Carter uses images such as "brown beetles" and "man of death" to reduce the agents of oppression to pests or deathly figures. The dehumanization suggests moral corruption. The oppressor is not presented as noble, rational, or legitimate, but as invasive and destructive.

## Tone and structure

The poems differ in movement and structure.

An African Thunderstorm builds from approach to impact. The storm gathers, advances, and enters the village. The poem's short, irregular lines help create speed, panic, and instability.

This Is the Dark Time, My Love is more still and brooding. Its title already announces a condition rather than a single event. The poem moves through images of darkness, invasion, sorrow, and threat, creating a mood of continuous oppression rather than sudden arrival.

## Conclusion

Both An African Thunderstorm and This Is the Dark Time, My Love use symbolic nature imagery to present colonial oppression as destructive and overwhelming. Rubadiri imagines invasion as a storm from the west, violent and chaotic in its impact on a village. Carter imagines oppression as darkness and death, a political condition that wounds the land and aims at the people's dreams. Together, the poems show that colonial violence attacks not only bodies and communities, but also hope, dignity, and the natural world itself.