* *The Sand Child* Themes
  + Surrealism
    - It has been said that Ben Jelloun is primarily a poet; therefore his writing style resembles that of a poet.  His work is concise yet full of poetic images and lyrical language.  Ben Jelloun is a story teller, but he also allows the reader to become involved in his magical world.  Dream-like states, hallucinations, and allusions to Andre Breton and the exquisite corpse each give Ben Jelloun’s work a magical intoxicated quality.  Unreliable narrators and different points of view of the same story add to the mystical atmosphere as well.
  + Moroccan Culture (Gender)
    - Situations unfamiliar to his audience may be difficult to relate to; therefore his stories may lose some legitimacy.  An obvious example is that of pretending that one’s daughter is a son in order to preserve one’s property and maintain one’s prestige.  Although this probably seems foreign to most, one could argue that the themes of gender identity and the way in which it relates to power and societal structure are pervasive throughout all cultures.  Not only does Ben Jelloun write about Moroccan situations that may be seen by others as nonsensical and/or uncivilized, but he openly criticizes them.
  + Sexuality/Dysfunction
    - Having received his doctorate for the relationship between sexuality and immigration into France of North African male workers, Ben Jelloun also is quite interested in sexuality and dysfunction.  The majority of his works have the protagonist suffering from some sort of dysfunction.
* Morocco
  + Location and Size
    - Morocco lies on the northwest corner of Africa across the strait of Gibraltar from Spain. About the size of California, Morocco covers 172,413 square miles.
    - Western Sahara, disputed region which Morocco claims and administers, is 102,703 square miles in area.
    - Morocco is dominated by the Mediterranean climate made temperate by the influence of the Atlantic Ocean in the northern and southern parts of the country. In the center, the climate is continental with significant temperature differences. The Atlas region is moist with frequent snow falls. In the South, it's the desert climate. In the South, a desert climate prevails.
* Language
  + The official language of Morocco is Arabic. Although French also have official status and is used widely in business, government and high education. Moroccan Arabic called Darika is the most widely spken tongue. Derija is quite different from the classical Arabis of the Qur’an.
* Moroccan Tradition
  + Tradition
    - Moroccans generally shake hands when greeting, after which one might touch the heart to express pleasure at seeing the other person or to show personal warmth.
    - Moroccans eat with the right hand only.
    - It is impolite to point at people or to let the bottom of the foot point toward a person.
    - Moroccans generally consider it improper to cross their legs. Some might cross the legs at the knees but would not place an ankle over a knee.
    - Dating in the Western sense does not occur in Morocco. In rural areas, young men and women often do not meet their mates until they are to be married.
    - Urban couples meet in various situations, ask permission of their parents to marry, and have time to get acquainted before they get married. When a couple is engaged, the man pays the woman’s father or eldest brother a sum of money to meet her wedding expenses. This payment sometimes inhibits a man from marrying because he cannot afford it. Women usually bring a dowry into their marriage.
  + Role of women
    - Wife is cared for by her husband, even if she is wealthy enough to maintain herself. She cannot spend any of her wealth on the household.
    - Male bears the financial burden
    - Women were originally kept out of sight of the male world
      * Harems
    - Woman in the traditional household have no voice in decisions that affect her life
      * A man may speak for her
  + Inheritance Law
    - Islamic law of inheritance
    - In the Qur’an, Allah says that a male inherits a portion equal to two females
      * If two or more daughters (only), they share 2/3 of the inheritance
      * If only one, her share is half
  + Politics
    - The Kingdom of Morocco is an Islamic, Democratic and Social Constitutional Monarchy. It is an African country and belongs to the Maghreb region. Since the enthronement of His Majesty King Hassan II in 1961, Morocco has played a dynamic role in major international and regional organizations (The United nations, the Arab Maghreb Union, The Arab League, the Al Qods committee etc.)
    - The Constitution: the 1972 Moroccan Constitution, revised on September 4, 1992, guarantees : the freedom of movement, equal rights to education and to employment, multiple political parties, the right to strike and the respect of human rights as they are universally recognized.
    - Imposition of French Culture on Morocco
      * Response to the Industrial Revolution
      * The Moroccan country was beginning to fail and decided to sign the Treaty of Fez
    - Moroccan writer’s use of colonial French language (should write in Arabic)
    - Authoritarian power structures during and after French rule
    - Relations between North Africans and metropolitan France
      * Immigration