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The Verity of the Intelligence of the Drunken Behaviour in Swahili Literature

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Abstract

This article examines the verity of the drunken character's statements by referring to Swahili books. The basic data presented have been obtained by a careful reading method in selected books. A review of the documents used to verify the primary data was obtained by electronic and library methods. The analysis and discussion of the presented data were guided by the theory of Humour. The results show how the drunken character was artistically constructed as one of the methods to avoid communication challenges when he clearly explains the issues affecting his society and government. The drunken character is used to convey the writer's expectations for his society. The position has given the author a wide opportunity to crawl as much as he can to make clear all the things that cannot be said by the characters that are in conscious decision. Issues concerning the real state of the economy, politics, leadership and the basic needs of society are presented without blinking an eye through the drunken character. This article concludes that the drunken character is one of the agents of writers used in literary works for the reason that it reveals and makes clear all the things that cannot be said by the characters while in a state of conscious decision.

Keywords: Verity, Drunken Behaviour, Intelligence, Theory of Humour & Swahili Drama.

1.0 Introduction

The article examines variety of the drunken characters' statements by referring to Kiswahili dramas. The oldest evidence of the use of a drunken character in drama is found in the Greek community which used him in the Ramsa performing arts competition in the 5th century BC in Athens. Mlelwa (2012) mentions and describes Cratinus and Aristophanes as some of the artists who used a

drunken character in their literary works to show and increase their art and creativity in the arts of display and poetry competitions that were held in Uyuni. Shakespeare used a drunken character in his play called *The Taming of the Shrew*. Writers are inspired by what is happening in their communities, the characters have to reflect the contents of their communities. Shakespeare's play has helped

the researcher to examine the drunken character used according to the time and context of his writing (Bakola, 2006). The context of writing selected Kiswahili plays is different from the times of Shakespeare's writing. A time gap has been considered in the research of this article.

Moliere (1911) wrote a play in which he largely used the technique of a drunken character as an artistic medium to convey a message to society. The works of Shakespeare and Moliere have helped build a sufficient understanding of the role and responsibilities of the drunken character in artistic works. As the societies of the world grew and progressed, the various literary works changed reflecting these changes. The use of drunken characters was something that happened frequently in various genres of literature (Makras, 2010). Plays that used drunken characters became more widespread until the 1850s. American writers were able to perform various plays in their country with a drunken character. Some of them are Smith's book *The Drunkard* and a short story called *The Drunkard* that talked about children, drunkenness, alcohol, humiliation and a legend that reflected the real life in their community during that period (Godkewitsch, 1996). Due to the development of fiction and the increasing use of drunk characters, the question that arises here is, what do these characters have extra when compared to other characters? Why is their involvement preferred by writers? These questions are fundamental in building an understanding of the accountability of the drunken character in the nominated records scrutinised.

The author of the book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853) used a drunken character as well. This play was against drunkenness and slavery and was used to show the weakness of the drunken character in works of art. Other later works that used drunken characters include *Ten Night in the Bar Room* (1858) and *Our Town* (1930). The works of these authors, as a whole, have helped to know how the character was perceived by the society in which he lived, how he was seen and how he was counted in his entire conduct. This situation makes some members of society look at the drunk character as a madman or a freak depending on the way he is used in artistic works (Tutuola, 1993). In addition to these Western writers, the use of a drunken character in literature also appeared in African writers (Mlelwa, 2012). Some of the earliest books in African written literature emerged from oral literature. The book *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952) used a drunken character to draw his character from Yoruba folklore. In South Africa, Jordan (1973) explaining African literature, especially the Xhosa community of South Africa, used a drunken character comparing the lives of Christians and non-Christians.

In Tanzania, dramas such as *Rosa Mistika*, *Mabepari wa Bongo* and *Lina Ubani* have used a drunken character according to the context of the author of those books. Targeted plays have been used because they reflect the reality of society in the post-independence period and the death of Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, the Father of the Nation, who founded the principles of Socialism and Independence in Tanzania (Mwakanjuki, 2015). Muhando has identified the social and political challenges after Tanzanians gained independence, especially in the seventies, the period that required the application of the Politics of Socialism and Independence in Tanzania. In addition, Nyoni has highlighted the political and economic conditions of the period of about 10 years after the death of Mwalimu J. K. Nyerere. This article has selected the books of *Mabepari wa Bongo* (2007) and *Lina Ubani* (1984) to

examine the truth of the actions and the role of the drunk character's statements by referring to Kiswahili literature.

2.0 Theory and Research Methods

This article examines the truth of the drunken character's statements by referring to Swahili dramas. The basic data presented have been obtained by a careful reading method in selected dramas namely, Lina Ubani (1984) and Mabepari wa Bongo (2007). Those dramas have been chosen because they have enough scope that allow us to get the data targeted in this article. A review of the documents used to verify the primary data was obtained by electronic and library methods. The analysis of the obtainable data were guided by the theory of Humour. The theory of Humour has been around since the time of Plato in 429 and 423 BC (William, *et.al*, 1976). The theory was developed by renowned psychologists who specialized in research on the sources of humour, comedy and laughter. They investigated why man is the only animal that can laugh; and why is he laughing. Laughter comes after humour and vice versa. William *et.al* describes three factors that lead to emotions which are a person being at a high level of intense emotions, a complete summation of emotions and a random feeling of arousal state. Humour is caused by biological issues and the use of literary and non-literary methods.

Some of the roles of comedy are to get a visual estimate; and you have a great impact in reducing conflicts within the community, clarifying existing opposition and giving instructions. Through the theory of Humour critical discourse analysis has been used to determine the way a literary work should be. The thoughts of the writers have been explored through a drunken character who presents things without shame and fear of anything that might happen to him. This opinion views literature as a stable entity capable of reflecting systems controlled by social structures (Wamitila, 2002). The researcher examined the drunken character as the raw material of literature. The authors of the selected books were placed in their normal and real context to know the behaviour and activities of the drunken character because their drunkenness is their link. The drunken character was viewed in detail as he reflected and investigated social issues and put them as they are, believable and acceptable through targeted dramas. Also, it has been used to examine the existing relationship between literature and society through the drunken character of a selected book.

3.0 The Verity of the Intelligence of the Drunken Behaviour

This article has examined the truth of the reflection of the drunken character's statements in selected books. This article has presented issues related to drunken character as described in the next section.

3.1 The Politics and Development

The Politics of Socialism and Independence emerged in Tanzania immediately after the establishment of the Arusha Declaration in 1967. All people were encouraged to live in socialist villages working as socialists in a state of unity and cooperation (Shule, 2010). Authors and composers wrote about the construction of a new socialist society that followed the principles of justice and human equality. However, socialist politics did not get a chance to grow and mature because it lacked support from the majority of citizens. Through a drunken character, the views of writers have present belongings without fear of anything that might happen to them. Mwanahago's words in *Lina Ubani* reflect the reality of the failure of Socialist and Independent politics. The author explains:

*Umoja na mke wako mnayejifunika wote shuka moja.
Mwanahego na wewe tutakutana wapi ndipo tuwe na
umoja... Shwaini... wewe juu ya kilima, mimi bondeni....
Unakunywa whiski, Mwanahego chibuku... Umoja....
Akaa! Mie sina umoja (Mlama, 1984: 23).*

Together with your wife, you cover yourself with one sheet. Mwanahego and you where will we meet then we will be united... Shwaini... you on the hill, me in the valley... You drink whiskey, Mwanahego chibuku... Unity... Stay! I have no unity (Own translation).

Mwanahego mocks the pursuit of Socialism and Independence politics that encouraged all people to live in unity and cooperation, especially in their villages. One of the government's goals to bring the people together was to improve the lives of its citizens by providing them with important social services; including health, education, water and roads. The efforts were met with a negative response from the citizens as pointed out by Mwanahego above. This is what shows that when a drunkard speaks, he should be listened to and not ignored. In the poem 'Azimio' Kezilahabi shows how the politics of Socialism and Independence failed to grow and mature due to various reasons that existed at that time. Kezilahabi (2008: 18) explains:

*Azimio sasa ni mabaki ya chakula,
Kwenye sharubu za bepari,
Kalamu inayovuja,
Katika mfuko wa mwanafunzi,
Vumbi zito,
Baada ya ng'ombe kupita,
Hakunyolewa,
Hakupewa kalamu mpya,
Na njia haikuzibwa,
Kilichosalia sasa,
Ni punje za ulezi,
Zilizosambazwa jangwani,
Na mpandaji kipofu.*

The resolution is now leftovers,
On the moustache of the capitalist,
A leaking pen,
In a student's pocket,
Heavy dust,
After the cow passed,
Unshaven,
He was not given a new pen,
And the way was not blocked,
What remains now,
It is the seeds of millet,
Scattered in the desert,
And the blind planter (Own translation).

Kezilahabi sees the politics of Socialism and Independence as the remains of food on the moustache of the capitalist. This situation means that socialist politics has been invaded by people who are greedy for wealth and money. According to Kezilahabi, this means that the political system of Socialism and Independence has been filtered and completely weakened due to the betrayal by some of the leaders who were in power. In *Mabepari wa Bongo* the author portrays Mr Guduza as a leader who destroys the people's property due to his desire to accumulate wealth. This situation continues to strengthen and is seen as a threat to the current and future generations of Africa. Grandma says:

*Ewe mjukuu wangu uliyelaaniwa,
Kaa kitako huko kuzimu unisikilize.
Hayo uliyofanya kabla hujafa,
Ndiyo aliyokufundisha mwalimu?
Ndiyo aliyokuachia mwalimu?
Ndiyo aliyokurithisha mwalimu? (Nyoni, 2007: 15).*
O my cursed grandson,
Sit down in hell and listen to me.
What you did before you died,
Is that what the teacher taught you?
Is that what the teacher left for you?
Is that what the teacher inherited?
(Own translation).

The story told by the grandmother shows how the politics of Socialism and Independence were weakened by leaders who wanted to accumulate wealth. After socialist politics failed and faded completely, capitalist politics rose and took control causing many people to indulge in the desire to loot and accumulate public assets for personal interests (Mwangosi, 2019). Those desires are what gave birth to the concept of corruption and economic sabotage that turned into a national disaster in many countries here in Africa. The statements of a drunkard should not be ignored but acted upon when necessary (Kedmon, 2010). Despite being drunk, he speaks some things when he is drunk, but what he speaks when he is in that state, is what reflects the real truth of what is in the society in which the relevant work is written.

3.2 The Economy and Development

The economy is an important aspect of the life of any society and nation. The economy has a great place in the process and the whole system of life and development of the nation and its people. Without building a strong and sustainable economy, the development of the nation cannot be a tool to help the people and the prosperity of their nation. Efforts to build a strong and sustainable economy were based on the principles of Socialism and Independence after independence in the country (Shivji, 2007). During that period, people were required to live socially despite the bad economic situation that prevailed during that period. Essential products were scarce in the country. People bought things in queues and sometimes they didn't get what they needed. The situation is expressed by Mwanahego when he says, but my wife knows unity. As he saw that I had no money to feed the children, he took all the children to his mother! You are not the one who

says you are united with Mwanahego. Aka! Land me! (Nyoni, 2007: 46).

Mwanahego shows how the country's economy faltered and collapsed during the period of the construction of Socialism and Independence politics. No one could say that and put it out in the open to avoid the iron hand of the dollar. Manwahego has been able to say them without worry, but they could not be explained by a sane person for fear of power and authoritarian control. Mwanahego was able to say that while he was drunk. Alcohol is what removed his shame, fear and fear and took him to his world that gives him confidence because he is in a state of semi-rationality. Being in that situation, he was also able to say what was in his community. Founding on the selected theory, a drunken character tells the truth without disgrace. The community also admitted that Mwanahego was telling the truth. The author explains:

'Mlevi' 'siyo' 'mlevi'

'Mlevi' si 'mlevi'

'Maneno yake ya kweli' (uk. 49).

'Drunken' 'not' 'drunken'

'Drunken' is not 'drunk'

'Has true words' (Own translation)".

This quote shows how society acknowledges that the words of a drunkard reflect the truth. An important criterion in the presentation of life in realistic works is the concept of realism (Ng'waje, 2019). The emphasis of these works is to try to reach the reality that exists in the concerned society. Mwanahego's ideas are presented in a semi-rational manner and bring humour to the audience. The humour is built by the irony he shows that the leaders have great economic power, but the citizens live in such poverty that they cannot even raise their children. Humour depends a lot on the lack of acceptance of the economic situation of the leaders and their citizens.

In the drama namely, *Mabepari wa Bongo*, the author has used MC Kilevi to illuminate the truth about the economic issue in society. Today's economy seems to be captured and placed in the hands of foreign investors; and not in the hands of the natives as it is in many countries in Africa (Shivji, 2002). Other parties could not ask the question asked by MC Kilevi because it is built in a state of aggression that provokes the government. His words, appearance and sense of humour are affected by the alcohol he uses which puts him in a state of semi-rationality. MC Kilevi explains that this is strong! Are all investors from Usauza? No one from another country? Then all the Europeans (Nyoni, 2007: 19).

MC Kilevi's statement reflects the real-life situation of a Tanzanian economically, especially in this period of globalization and the free market system. Investors are the ones who hold the country's economy through leaders who are greedy for wealth and public resources. The reality of Tanzanian life, despite the artistic one, shows how the people have fallen into a difficult life situation because their leaders, the majority, still have the desire to love money more by ignoring human dignity and the principles of leadership and good administration of justice and democracy (Mgogo, 2017). The work of art is to illuminate to make clear all that affects the well-being of the nation's development. The purpose of the authors is to build and stimulate society so that it can reflect on them and take measures to develop them

productively and remove the ones that are not suitable for the wider public interest.

3.3 The Actual Life in Society

The reflection of the drunkard's statements, society is built by the real things that exist in society. There are things that other characters turn a blind eye to, but the drunkard says them regardless of the consequences that may happen to him. Often a drunkard rushes to introduce the reality of his community's life regardless of where and to whom he says it. The situation is because the art of copying from nature exists in the steps of everyday life and is represented to the reader instead of being shown in images of the imaginary world (Makras, 2010). The accuracy of the presentation is that of the reality that surrounds him every day. For example, in *Lina Ubani's* book, the author uses a drunken character to illuminate the reality of society's life through a dream that is in his mind after he is drunk. He says:

Maneno hayo kamwambie hawara yako anayepanda gari kila anapokwenda... Wakataka kunigonga... Shwaini... "Huyu mlevi." Mlevi baba yako huyo unayetembea naye... Mafuta wanaendeshea magari ya kulalia watoto wetu.... (Nyoni, 2007: 47).

Tell those words to your sidecheek who rides the car every time he goes... They wanted to hit me... poor you!... "This one is drunk." Your father is a drunkard that you are walking with... Fuel, they drive by using our children's sleeper cars... (Own translation).

This quote shows how the drunkard's words reflect the reality of the society where men, especially adults have sex with little girls. It is a way of humiliating someone by telling him 'Your father is a drunkard with whom you are walking'. Those words mean that a father makes love with his daughter. The words evoke humour and laughter in readers and listeners. In addition, it shows how they spend public money in Malaya due to the loading of topics. Public assets were used carelessly for personal enjoyment and personal activities even though they caused great losses to the nation for no reason. This situation has made men create authority and culture to help them in their interests to dominate women (Legulegu, 2016). In the same way, prostitution has made women like commodities. This is what makes Mwanahego angry because public money is not used for the public interest.

3.4 Classes and Aspects of Leaders in Society

In the history of the development of society, leadership began in ancient times when the first humans began to reproduce and multiply (Searle, 2010). The man became the leader of his family. As society grew, the issue of family leadership expanded and people became rulers involving several families. When the development in the society exceeded leadership, it became a very broad concept that took a large part of the linguistic community. It was then that the classes in society emerged more clearly. In literary works, leadership is often portrayed oppressively as those who lead oppress those who lead them. This is demonstrated in *Lina Ubani*. Based on a particular theory, the thoughts of the writers have been sightseen through Mwanahego, a drunken character who presents things without shame and fear of anything that can be wrong. Mwanahego describes:

Kamwambie baba yako hayo maneno ya ugoro. Usituambie sisi kutugeuza bwege. Asiyefanya kazi wewe uliye juu ya kilima. Juu ya kilima kuna mashamba?

*Asiyefanya kazi baba yako anayekula vya bure,
unavyomletea wewe* (Mlama, 1984: 45 - 46).

Tell your father those snuff words. Don't tell us to turn us away. You who do not work, you who are on top of the hill. On the hill there are fields. If your father does not work, he eats for free, what you bring him (Own translation).

Often originality is added with creativity to give the text a literary flavour. Those flavours are what make the work in question a literary work. Since the words spoken by Mwanahego seem to be of a madman, then they seem to have literary flavours, including humour which is part of those flavours. The humour makes the work attract the attention of the viewers and readers of the work. Humour blends with the originality of the creative work itself; thus, making the audience laugh at the same time as they learn from the truth accompanied by humour (Mrikaria, 2010). If mistakes or errors are not recognized or understood, they create comedy. However, spotting the same error is a compelling situation for humour as well. This is demonstrated by Mwanahego's words which show that there is a big difference between leaders and ordinary citizens.

3.5 The Daily Requirements

The issue of basic human needs affects the daily life of any member of society in the concerned society. Some of the most important daily needs for every person are shelter, clothing and food. Those needs are what make anyone busy so that he can make a living. The issue of demand is closely related to the issue of economics, but there is little difference between the two, especially when you examine the needs of the parties involved. The author has tried to show that difference by using all his characters. The lack of daily needs, made Mwanahego's wife go to them with all her children so that they could support themselves in food needs. This issue caused Mwanahego to curse many words in front of the leaders, but he was ignored for what he was saying.

The presence of extreme economic sabotage in the community made Mwanahego just say it regardless. His courage to speak without fear made him look like a drunkard. This is due to the state of the alcoholic's brain being damaged by alcohol (Senkoro, 2004). A drunkard just talks without being aware of what he is talking about, and it does not make him realize that he has spoken the truth. It is clear that drunkenness removes the shame of self-control, but it does not make a drunken person tell the truth in all matters by expressing feelings that are not usually spoken aloud. Drunkenness is not the reason, to tell the truth more than a sober person, but it just makes it easier to express some of the feelings that all people have in everyday life. However, it has been different from the character himself who expresses what is in his heart. The author draws him by saying:

*Hela za kigeni...unazitaka wewe unayekula vya kigeni.
Mie nataka hela za hapa hapa...nipate nauli
nikamchukue mke wangu... na mwanangu Kidote.
Mchicha nanunua kwa shilingi tu... ukimpa ya Malkia
anakataa... hela ya kigeni? Aka! (Nyoni, 2007: 27).*

Foreign money...you who eat foreign money want it. I want money from here... to get a fair and take my wife... and my son Kidote. I buy spinach for just shillings... if you give it to the Queen, she refuses... foreign currency? Aka! (Own translation).

The words of the drunk character reflect the reality of the Mwanahego community and illuminate it while showing that daily

needs are a problem. Also, he shows that leaders use foreign currency, but ordinary people do not even know the importance of foreign currency and how it is used in this country (Mwakanjuki, 2015). Lack of money is what made Mwanahego's wife go to them with all her children. Mwanahego's words bring humour by mocking the leaders who cling to foreign currency, but the people do not even know what it is. The sarcasm is what creates the humour that makes the audience happy. People live with food shortages and struggle in vain; leaders want people to continue cultivating commercial crops to provide the government with foreign currency. Humour can be used as a method to humiliate a person, group or institution (La Fave., *et.al*, 1976). Humiliation is caused by the degradation of a person due to social or physical issues.

Humour is defined as what is expressed by the speaker of a literary work. Also, it happens after discovering the truth in the statements of the drunken person. The capitalists also seem to have strong strategies and plans that work to prevent people from gaining the rationality to make a strategic and lifestyle revolution. The strategy of removing the knowledge of the ideas of the respective classes so that they cannot think of liberating themselves economically is carried out by capitalist nations. This thing makes Mwanahego panic and starts to blurt out what is true. Others fear that Mwanahego will be imprisoned due to his strong words. The idealism of making people think about liberating themselves at all levels of life is filled with ideas to bring fear to the people, to tell the truth.

4.0 Conclusion

This article has examined the reflection of the truth of the drunkard's statements by referring to the books of *Lina Ubani* and *Mabepari wa Bongo*. The examination absorbed the legitimacy of the drunken character's declarations by mentioning the stated accounts. It has travelled how the actions and speeches of the drunken character were replicated in literal works. That reflection has been viewed as more literary. This situation shows that the drunken character is the speaker of the things that plague the writer. That situation gives the writer a wide opportunity to creep as far as he can make clear all the things that cannot be said by the characters that are in a conscious decision.

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