“Broken Temporalities of the 'New' South Africa”: Variegated Rainbow Nation in K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*  
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Transformational Leadership: A Means to Women's Political Agency in Kenya  
*Jacinta Ndambuki*
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“Broken Temporalities of the ‘New’ South Africa”: A Variegated Rainbow Nation in K. Sello Duiker’s The Quiet Violence of Dreams and Phaswane Mpe’s Welcome to Our Hillbrow

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Abstract

Post-apartheid South African literature examines a country which has a history of racial violence engendered by apartheid, and the resultant ambivalent cultural identities. In this article, K. Sello Duiker’s The Quiet Violence of Dreams and Phaswane Mpe’s Welcome to Our Hillbrow are examined as novels which envisage the confusion and vulnerability of the South African youth arising out of broken homes occasioned by the apartheid past and living through a disorienting present. Focusing on fractured narratives of individual disorientation of characters, the article reads the embrace of an expressive subculture as an attempt by the youth to fit into the economic, social, cultural and political uncertainties in the Rainbow nation. The article builds on the confluence of race and class in the social formation of post-apartheid South Africa to illuminate youth unsettlement and disappointment with the transition.

Introduction

K. Sello Duiker’s The Quiet Violence of Dreams and Phaswane Mpe’s Welcome to Our Hillbrow are two post-apartheid novels that largely mirror South Africa’s transition from apartheid to black majority rule. Set in the cities of Cape Town and Johannesburg respectively, these novels, while ostensibly celebratory of urban post-apartheid freedom for blacks, re-echo the complex path to black urbanisation, especially by a youthful South African population. The two texts reveal the violent aftermaths of the apartheid system. The article focuses on Duiker’s and Mpe’s young characters living through the transition from the divisive apartheid regime to the Rainbow nation. It interrogates the
“border lives” of the South African youth, lives that communicate individual disorientation and a “tenebrous sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the ‘present’”, in the post-apartheid dispensation (Bhabha, 1994: 1). It examines the post-apartheid gloom of a young generation without stable families occasioned by violence and destitution. The violent manifestation of youth resistance, as Van Der Vlies (2006: 121) and Raditlhalo (2005: 100) attest to, is the effect of marginalisation and deprivation in post-apartheid South Africa.

What is significant is that the South African youth grew through the transition period traumatised and brutalised by the apartheid regime, and experienced the hopelessness at the unmet expectations of the post-apartheid era. They are the “lost generation” of the 1990s who suffered political, economic and social exclusion during apartheid, and who feel entrapped by their economic, social and political circumstances in the new dispensation (Seekings 1996: 103). Their lives reveal the enduring social fractures of black and marginalised communities that lived through forced removals and other forms of (spatial) dislocations of the apartheid system. In post-apartheid society, youth resistance is revealed through disruptive behaviour, and has been uniquely and largely fashioned through alternative subcultures in predominantly urban environments. In Duiker’s novel, the South African youth, growing up in ghettos and experiencing sexual and physical violation in crammed informal spaces, envisage homosexuality and other forms of cultural expression, as offering them a unique form of individual being. However, as the article shows, this embrace of an alternative subculture is incongruous to the expectations of freedom in a “post-racial” South Africa with a confluence of class and racial dynamics, thus complicating the youth’s attempts to make sense of their contemporary life.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the future of the black children of the townships and other formerly segregated areas are broken apart by poverty and neglect. With the end of apartheid, and with the opening up of cities, young black people moved to urban centres with the desire for education and work. Consequently, the rural areas have remained as places of despondency and wretchedness. Rural black South Africans in the “New” South Africa look at their kin working away in the cities as a security for their survival (Ashforth, 2005). They feel that they are entitled to ask for proceeds from kinsmen in the city. Mpe envisages the problems of family reciprocity and entitlements that establish the poor rural economies as dependent on the new system of rural-urban black South African worker. Having grown up in the rural areas of
Tiragalong, which the apartheid system relegated to poverty and deteriorating agricultural production, Mpe’s young characters residing in Hillbrow are faced with the daunting task of improving the lives of the dependent families back in the village. This is the situation of the black South African economy which establishes networks of kinship ties between urban and rural areas “where relations are premised upon principles of reciprocity” for wealth (re)distribution from family members working in the city (Ashforth, 2005: 32). On the other hand, Duiker’s novel features youths from privileged backgrounds. It explores the social dynamics and the incongruities surrounding the growing black middle class in post-apartheid South Africa. In this respect, Duiker offers a complementary perspective on the stereotypical “South African” distinction between black and white, that whites are rich, while the blacks are poor. Significant in Duiker’s novel is the representation of characters who are victims of family violence and break-up, and the resultant confusion and vulnerability. Consequently, these characters are both victims and aggressors of violence in the “New” South Africa. In the novels, sexual violation and other forms of violence are a metaphor for the attendant social pathologies such as xenophobia, crime, drug and alcohol abuse. Linking xenophobic violence in South Africa to perception of black economic disenfranchisement, this article contextualises the hatred of foreigners to the existence of economic and racial disparities.

The novels visualise the post-apartheid society in two ways. Mpe reconstructs the apartheid spaces of neglect envisioned through the underdeveloped rural areas. This perspective looks at the borders between the rural and urban South Africa, drawing in it the stagnating and muddled in-between spaces that have remained as legacies of apartheid. Mpe shows the ambiguities of a transition, envisioning a “new” apartheid of rural South Africa where traditional attitudes and practices have remained as a watermark of the old apartheid. Because this novel also critiques traditional attitudes, the “New” South Africa is rendered through a microscopic lens of self-questioning and conscious stock-taking of the past. As texts that speak to the urban imaginary and the redefinition of the South African cities, Mpe’s *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* and Duiker’s *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* build up South African cities as symbolic landscapes. These novels provide exposés of highly tensile spatial structures of Johannesburg and Cape Town respectively. In this engagement, the article visualises South Africa’s urban spaces, of the privileged suburbs/ rich neighbourhoods, and of the neglected and the poor peripheral, predominantly black areas. Mpe’s and Duiker’s texts are located within a body of black South African writing that takes on the black experience, especially in the portrayal
of the poor and disparaged spaces such as the rural landscape and run-down cityscapes. This is the “black story” that is projected in the new black post-apartheid writing as anticipated by Donadio (2006), revealing a growing corpus of black writing that portray blacks’ experiences with delicate sensitivity after apartheid. Black South Africans, whether from poor backgrounds or from elitist ones, are all subjected to the complex legacies of apartheid in a country embracing a new constitutional order. These texts encompass the contradictory nature of South Africa today.

Exploring an Alternative Youth Subculture: The Utopia of the “New” South Africa
Duiker and Mpe bear witness to the ambiguous building of the Rainbow nation. The two writers belong to a generation of young South Africans who lived through the eclipse of apartheid to witness the fledgling democracy grow. They reflect the discordant realities of young South Africans who grew out of the violence and destitution of the apartheid system. South Africa’s youth subculture reveals this tensile and ambiguous transformation. Recognising the importance of a youth subculture to a country’s social formation, Hebdige contends:

> The complex interplay between the different levels of the social formation is reproduced in the experience of both the dominant and the subordinate groups, and this experience, in turn, becomes the “raw material” which finds expressive form in both culture and subculture. (1979: 84-5)

Hebdige locates a subculture within a form of “generational consciousness” that arises out of polarising and disjunctive pasts. Hebdige draws from the suffering of the youth and working class youth cultures after the Second World War in Britain, which parallels the way in which the South African youth grew up through the apartheid system. As is the case with respect to the British youth, South African youth have demonstrated a breakaway attitude from the past “on the plane of aesthetics in dress, dance, music: the whole rhetoric of style” (45). There is a conscious attempt to create unique codes “to discern the hidden messages inscribed in code on the glossy surfaces of style, to trace them out as ‘maps of meaning’ which obscurely re-present the very contradictions they are designed to resolve or conceal” (45). Hebdige draws our attention to the need to read, decipher and interpret South African youth aesthetic forms.
In significant ways, Duiker represents the crisis of youth identity in post-apartheid South Africa. This is the dilemma represented by his protagonist, Tshepo. In his post-racial aspirations, Tshepo looks for a different aesthetic mode when he identifies with Cape Town’s “club culture”, a mode that is not inflected by race. As he shares with Mmabatho, Tshepo believes that Cape Town’s joints and clubs offer a unique opportunity to “get away with being yourself” because there is a carefree atmosphere that appeals to cultural inclusiveness (Duiker, 2001: 3-4). He notices that these social places signify a cohesive environment in which a confluence of cultures may offer a glimmer of peaceful co-existence. Black people co-exist peacefully with the whites as they embrace the rhythms of the ghetto’s “kwaito” music. Tshepo aspires for racial inclusiveness and cohesive harmony, despite the legacies of racism:

When you go out in some places in Cape Town no one really cares that you’re black and that your mother sent you to a private school so that you could speak well. No one cares that you’re white and that your father abuses his colleagues at work and calls them kaffirs at home. (34)

Tshepo’s embrace of “club culture” is, therefore, an attempt to accept an inclusive Rainbow nation where race and its negative connotations have been discarded in favour of a freer non-racial democracy. Tshepo believes in an inclusive society, where youth style and “club culture” become the new narrative to replace race:

People want to be seen eating croissants at a chic coffee shop at the Table View, rollerblading in Clifton or going for aromatherapy in bohemian observatory ... so that colour becomes secondary to the person you present. They want to say ah you’re cool and not ah you’re black or white ...You must know all these things and more in a culture pushing to be hybrid and past gender and racial lines ... These are things that define club culture in Cape Town, not racial politics. (35)

Looked at in this way, Tshepo’s view of “club culture” is in line with the nation’s ideals of multicultural and multiracial acceptance. This is the belief that underlies his wish for an alternative style to reflect “a culture pushing to be hybrid and past gender and racial lines”. In this respect, Tshepo seems to be advocating for a class-based consciousness on a matter of youthful style in the hope that it would help erase the tendrils of race. This reflects Hebdige’s view that a subculture is motivated by class at the economic and ideological level (1979: 75). This is the advocacy that Tshepo shares:
In some clubs a person will chat you up because you know what drum & bass is and can dance to it while appearing sexy, not because you match the same race group like some arbitrary prerequisite. They want to live out their Train spotting odyssey of excess in a culture rapidly blurring the borders between the township and the northern suburbs. Some people are just sick of the expected. Me Tarzan, you Jane has become monotonous. People want to make their own references about who they are and where they fit in or not. It’s not enough to simply offer them certain variables, hoping that they’ll fit in there somewhere. And Cape Town is not what it used to be. Foreigners have left their imprint on our culture.

While Tshepo, Mmabatho and others find Cape Town’s “club culture” as providing them with a new urban expressive culture envisioned through the recognition of style and cultural inclusiveness, Chris embraces Cape Town’s Rastafarian culture as a form of escape from the oppression and economic depression of the “New” South Africa. His acceptance of the ideals of Rastafarian culture parallels his own hatred for whites, whom he constantly blames for oppression and slavery.

Chris identifies easily with the expressive ghetto culture that speaks to the many levels of colonial/ apartheid oppression and economic exploitation meted out to the ghettos, including the Cape Flats where he grew up. He fits into the Rastafarian culture as envisioned by Hebdige (1979). He is a Rastaman, “the living repudiation of Babylon (contemporary capitalist society), refusing to deny his stolen history [...]. By a perverse and wilful transformation, he turns poverty and exile into ‘signs of grandeur’” (34). Chris takes Tshepo to Khayelitsha township, where he (Tshepo) finds the peaceful and respected rastas celebrating their blackness with ganja in an environment with an assortment of rainbow colours (159). Later, when Tshepo is booked at the police station, he meets the members of this culture, and is “stuck by their rigid sense of duty and how easily they seem to see the truth from lies, evil from good. They speak with pragmatic wisdom, of ghetto experiences that have forced them to look inward too much” (186). Tshepo, however, does not approve of this subculture’s acceptance of “the jagged knife of repression”, and their stoic acceptance of suffering, appearing more as a “forgotten people... ancient remnants of old Africa” (186, 188, 189).

Tshepo, finding no solace in the “club culture” and in the Rastafarian culture, turns to the gay culture. His quest for a liberating subculture is envisaged in
his acceptance of homosexuality. This mirrors his search for cultural inclusiveness as promised in the Rainbow nation’s constitution. Munro (2007), in her reading of queer identities in the “New” South Africa, and especially in the inclusion of gay rights in its democratic constitutionalism, notes:

South Africa’s transition to democracy involved the attempt to create a “rainbow” nationalism, marked differently from most postcolonial nationalisms, which is not attached to one ethnic identity and explicitly includes gay people as citizens. (754)

Munro is referring to South Africa’s inevitable embrace of “non-racial” democracy, which recognised the various races of the country as equal. The embracing of gay rights was largely seen as expressing the quest for freedom, especially in a unique country, where the growth of the city, the movement of migrant labourers, and sexual restrictions among races produced what Munro terms “unruly sexual cultures” (2007: 753).

Munro notes that *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* is a “coming out novel”, and connects the novel’s overriding theme of homosexuality to the conception of the “New” nation, arguing that it attends to the:

- economies of sexuality into a more direct engagement with “rainbow” nationalism. This book is a late transition era meditation on the disorienting effects of becoming “gay” in the new South Africa, which also insists on the possibility of self-fashioning through queer sex. (756)

Notably Tshepo’s gay culture emanates from his experiences of the “club culture”. The clubs that he visits embrace the “New” nation’s gay freedom. There are many gay bars and cafés, mostly at Green Point, including the Detour, Angels and the Ganesh, where the gays and the lesbians frequent. There is also the “massage Parlour”, Steamy Windows. Duiker’s characters find the Ganesh, “an idiosyncratic cafe-cum-bar tucked away in the heart of Obs” (71), as a charming spot for youngsters to while away their time as they drink and enjoy themselves. It is a place that speaks of a relative sense of cohesion among the various subcultures residing in Cape Town. It is a place where the “sexually ambiguous”, the lesbians and the gay are to be found (182). The same gay-club atmosphere is to be found in Biloxi bar, “a decent disco pub in the heart of the gay district”, located in Green Point, Cape Town’s gay area (298).
Tshepo turns to homosexuality as a “last solution”, coming at a time when he desperately needed a job and was frustrated by his lack of chances to get employed (204). He walks the city without any success. So he books himself into Steamy Windows, a massage parlour and a business unit in the heart of Green Point. Here, he meets West, an educated Afrikaner young man who not only feels liberated through gay sex but has been made financially secure. Apart from visiting places, paying his university loans and making investments, West is a testimony of the financial security that this massage parlour promises (294-5). For Tshepo, the “massage parlour” is a “stop over” for other bigger things (277). He is excited at the prospect of making money. Furthermore, Tshepo manages to put behind himself his violent sodomy by Chris and his friends from Pollsmoor.

The youth’s embrace of expressive subcultures in the “New” South Africa is, however, not without fissures. In *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, the youths find their escapism to club, Rastafarian and gay culture ultimately unsatisfying. The novel embodies the contradictory nature of the post-apartheid nation. Despite striving for an “ideal of the Rainbow”, there are legacies of apartheid that have resisted erasure.

Tshepo’s acceptance of his gay sexuality is an attempt to communicate his private need for a world of acceptance and inclusiveness. As he informs his dead mother in his demented state, his leaning towards a “queer” life is a “survival mechanism” in an attempt to make sense of his psychosis (140). This is especially because, as he attests, he has had an “incomplete childhood”, having grown up as a fickle asthmatic child and having survived a terrible evil visitation at their home that drastically changed his outlook on life. Steamy Windows is symbolically tied to Tshepo’s quest to understand himself and his suffering. Initially, then, he creates a world of inclusiveness in his mind. He envisions the gay culture in the light of a new beginning, a new direction. Sebastian, his Steamy Windows colleague, also shares this dream:

*It’s as if life is engineering a group of people who’ve trumped over the worst, the ugliest prejudice, the worst bigotry, on every level of society. Perhaps it is preparing them for something else, bigger challenges. This is one of the prejudices that cuts across racial, social and cultural boundaries.* (253)

Steamy Windows gives a glimmer of hope for a better South Africa, but as Tshepo soon finds out, this dream of inclusiveness is utopian: the kind of racial, social and cultural inclusiveness so wished for by Sebastian is a facade.
When whites mistreat Tshepo and deny him change at New Yorkers, an all-white gay bar in Green Point’s gay district, he realises that the gay “brotherhood” that he had always thought of as “liberated” and untainted by racism did not in fact exist. He also realises that gay whites “are white people before they are gay” (343). Tshepo then wonders:

Cape Town never ceases to remind us who we are. When we leave the sanctuary of our Utopia at work we become pigments in a whirlpool of colour. In the centre it is lily white. On the edges of the whirlpool the other colours gather like froth and dregs. (343-344)

Tshepo comes to the realisation that “race is ... the modality in which class is ‘lived’, the medium through which class relations are experienced, the form in which it is appropriated and ‘fought through’” (Hall, 1980: 341). In spite of class differences, race dominates the country’s social and economic relations. Tshepo realises that the Rainbow is mottled and variegated. Cape Town is still an exclusive preserve for whites. It is “very white, the influence of European traditions like coffee shops and bistros is inescapable ... there are certain places where you know you’re not welcome and the patrons make you feel like you are an outcast” (420).

Tshepo painfully discovers that the gay world that he had so readily accepted as a “brotherhood” is racist. When Shaun, his white boss at Steamy Windows, mentions the taboo word among the blacks, “kaffir” – Tshepo is “shocked, offended. That word has always stung” (286). Tshepo is “shattered, having so readily embraced them as brothers” (286). In retrospect, he wonders why crimes committed are always primarily presupposed to have been committed by blacks, and the coloured (349). Tshepo reflects upon the fact that black clients do not come to him at Steamy Windows, preferring to go to the whites. Racial relations have tended to reflect the earlier ingrained and stereotyped attitudes and prejudices, with race getting privileged in economic terms. With this stagnation in racial relations, Tshepo decides to leave the massage parlour. He has learned that he had been living in “a different mask”, in a self-defeating racial utopia (320).

Tshepo does understand that race is still a relevant signifier in South Africa’s social relations, but he chooses to downplay its significance in favour of a class-based consciousness that recognises equality among cultures. He attests to this view at Steamy Windows on what he says about his culturally diverse friends: “I don’t think of them in terms of race groups, but that does not mean
I’m not aware of their race” (343). Yet, the alternative he identifies with is a privileged, materialistic attachment to the changing local and global consumer culture that he embraces through dress labels.

The youth have fallen victim to a capitalistic society that has put a price tag on their lifestyles. Tshepo chooses the “club culture” of Cape Town that identifies him with the kind of labels that they wear. At Steamy Windows, he has to discard his fascination with the “flea market” in favour of imported / expensive brands. It is the motivation that makes him, and other gays, go for designer “Soviet jeans”, “Gucci shirts” in a world where “Designer labels are the new Esperanto” (34). Irlam (2004: 710) argues that “the new South Africa is a space delivered over the commodification in which race is ... a question of market value”. This is the kind of materialism that is espoused in Cape Town’s “club culture”.

As already argued in this article, the South African youth exhibit anxiety and vulnerability played out through a dualistic behaviour that mirrors the country’s democratic constitutionalism. In Welcome to Our Hillbrow, The South African black youth show their avowed love for South Africa through sports. However, their celebrations are also eerily marked by violence and death. In the novel, youthful sports fanatics throw away bottles out of their high-rise apartments in Hillbrow without caring for the multitudes swarming the streets. Aside from reported deaths from such acts, a driver swerves in ecstasy, killing a child in the frenzy:

Most people, after the momentary stunned silence of witnessing the sour fruits of soccer victory, resumed their singing. Shosholoza ... sounded its melodies from Wolmarans Street, at the fringe of Johannesburg downtown, to the head of Clarendon Place, at the boundary of the serene Parktown suburb. Shosholoza ... drowned the choking sobs of the deceased child’s mother. (2)

By suggesting that the whole of Hillbrow is under violent sports frenzy, Mpe portrays a near occult scene. It is at the point of madness at such celebrations that the damning contradiction of the “Rainbow” nation is witnessed. A similar incident did in fact occur to Refentše when he and his friends got robbed in June of 1995, and a car they had borrowed “was successfully redistributed” by the black robbers (22). Paradoxically, then, the whole of Hillbrow was jubilantly singing because the Springboks, the South African rugby team, had won the Rugby World Cup. When the novel opens, the narrator addresses the
dead Refentše, and does not regret the 1998 Bafana Bafana’s loss to France, considering that a win would have been a disaster in Hillbrow (1).

In Mpe’s novel, the song “Shosholoza” is sung by sports fans to show their valiant support of their football and rugby teams. This song, as Jensen finds out, is a symbol of a compassionate “New” South Africa (2012: 92). However, the song is also sung during the burning of witches. Mpe mimics this dual response to democracy when he combines the killing of a young child by a spinning car with the singing of this song by an unfeeling crowd celebrating a sports win, drowning the cries of the deceased child’s mother (2). This song espouses the promise of togetherness in the “New” South Africa, but it also mimics the betrayal of democracy. Celebration and death are post-apartheid South Africa’s siamese twins, conjoined at the hip.

Duiker and Mpe use tropes of magic realism in their texts to emphasise a collapsing world where torture and confusion among cultures reign supreme. Slemon (1995: 411) argues that the use of magical realism is “metonymic of the postcolonial culture as a whole” which is, in Bhabha’s words, “disjunct and displaced”, sustained by what Slemon calls the “disjunctive language of narration” (Bhabha, 1994: 9). In the narrative strategy of these texts, there is a sustained use of metonyms and metaphors to narrate South Africa’s postcolonial condition. The tropes of madness and suicides, earthquakes and erupting volcanoes, violent and ghostly dreams and the utopia of Heaven, offer a template in which the “double vision” of the Rainbow nation can be read. The fantastic elements are infused into the thematic structure of these texts.

Welcome to Our Hillbrow opens with the narrator providing a surreal reference to Refentše, a character now dead (1). Mpe’s narrator speaks to and about many of the novel’s characters who are either dead or faced with the immanent possibility of dying. Death becomes a metaphor of South Africa’s colonial / apartheid condition which seamlessly finds expression in the post-apartheid/postcolonial era. During the apartheid era, many writers and lecturers, politicians and social workers were taken through “magical acts” by the apartheid regime. The heinous crimes of apartheid are remembered through the “grisly details, draped in tears, from the testimonies of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, of South African policemen enjoying their beer and braai while black dissenters roasted alongside their roasted meat in the heat of a summer day” (19). In a social formation where death has become a narrative of physical and mental dislocation, Mpe bares post-apartheid South Africa’s horrific deaths and killings to show that the
transition has remained largely as a narrative of disappointment in its echoing of the violent past. On what are clearly examples of racially motivated crimes and violence by the angry blacks in post-apartheid South Africa, Mpe narrates:

There were other chilling stories of what happened in the Kitchens. Of white madams raped and gagged by their South African garden boys... of white men found hanging like washing waiting to dry... of whites killed simply because they were wealthy... of whites hacked to death simply because they were white, an embodiment of racial segregation and black impoverishment, irrespective of their political allegiances and economic affiliations. (22-23)

In the novel, however, Mpe’s dead characters are given a new lease of life as the narrator is able to take us to Heaven, their abode after death. Heaven becomes a place of interrogation of individual earthly causes of death. It is also a place of retrospect. It provides a utopia of a different South Africa. Heaven enters into the narrative as a thematic template to highlight the salient themes of witchcraft, AIDS, and xenophobia.

Duiker also uses magical realism in his novel to suggest a world without hope. Tshepo dreams of beasts and destruction. He paints a picture of a soulless, serpent-infested, collapsing world. In the dreams, Tshepo is alone in a world of vampires, falcons, jackals and wolves, all in a horrific frenzy baying for human flesh and blood (140, 367, 379). These coalesce into dreams of the horror of poverty, want and confusion in squatter camps and townships. Sebastian, Tshepo’s colleague at Steamy Windows, also dreams of chaos, doom, confusion among cultures and AIDS.

*The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* embody the “New” South Africa as a neurotic space in which local South Africans muddle through the nation’s inconsistent transition to the Rainbow. Many of the nation’s attendant pathologies, such as suffering, death, suicide, indifference and seclusion present a confusing and hallucinatory environment for the characters. This is especially manifested in the characters’ points of view on the “New” nation’s sharp economic divides, between the minority whites and the majority blacks, between squatter camps / townships / rural areas on the one hand, and the inner cities and rich suburbs, on the other in the capitalist structure of South Africa’s social formation.
Mad Futures: Decoding the Madness of South African Capitalism

In *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, Duiker uses psychosis as a corollary to the inconsistencies in the transition from apartheid South Africa to the “New” South Africa. In this novel, mental delusion is revealed through the frenzied thoughts of the characters as they sift through the problems bedevilling the “New” South Africa.

Tshepo is booked at a mental asylum hospital immediately after his mother’s sexual violation and murder, as well as his sodomy, and again, later at Valkenberg Mental Hospital, where he is diagnosed with “cannabis induced psychosis” after his drug-addiction problem (9). In the hospital Tshepo is portrayed as a psychotic patient who leads a solitary life. He is a character who goes through pangs of depression and loneliness. He understands that his sickness is a result of “the lies and cover-ups, the injustice and humiliation of it all”, and blames the circumstances of his past life as having contributed to the incarceration (10).

Valkenberg Mental Hospital emerges as an image of “disciplinary power”, as a purgatory of evil. It is South Africa’s psychiatric asylum previously used by the apartheid system to house deranged inhabitants (Filippi, 2011: 627, 630). Instructively, this panopticon still towers in the “New” South Africa, an indication of the continued evil long after apartheid. It still provides asylum to many mentally dislocated individuals, most of whom are notable professionals who all live and walk in a delirium “anonymously”, and those already “certified”, which means, “they can’t drive, they can’t vote, they can’t open a bank account” (Duiker, 2001: 49, 135). A majority of these patients while away their time as they see their dreams go to waste.

In South Africa’s imagination, Valkenberg is, in Foucault’s words, “a space of exclusion” where “symbolic inhabitants”, namely “[the] madmen and the disorderly”, are confined in, away from the gaze of the “normal’ society” (1977: 199). Valkenberg does not offer any consolation. Those at Valkenberg are the forgotten, living at the fringes of the “New” South Africa. Zebron sarcastically captures this non-inclusiveness in the Rainbow when he laments that those at the asylum suffer away “so that people can sleep safe at night ... because the really sick people are locked away ...” (46).

As an image of corruption and decay, Valkenberg satirises the “New” nation as a country with no possibility of redemption and escape. The nurses understand very little of their patients, most of whom only “act along” to
reinforce their prescribed illnesses. The more problematic patients are taken to the “Kulukutz”, a place of seclusion and solitary confinement with dehumanising conditions that are only comparable to apartheid’s mistreatment (23, 26, 110). It is a place where patients contemplate violence and murder. Zebron deliberates murdering his nurses at the very hospital, which, ironically, was supposed to cure his murderous instincts. It parodies South Africa’s failure at social integration. Tshepo affirms that Valkenberg “has horrors and that it doesn’t work”. It is an institution that leaves “mental scars” behind, which include non-acceptance in jobs and within circles of friends (122). Because Tshepo is a former patient, he finds it hard to continue with his studies. Furthermore, he loses his temporary job at a café in Waterfront because the manager gets wind of his Valkenberg experience (198).

Tshepo repeatedly turns to his mother in his psychosis. He shares with her the terrible things going on in his country. He tells of a picture of a wounded people, of confusion among families and the loss of their children, of political corruption and class divisions, of difficult labour relations, of gangsterism and of the violence painting the urban streets of South Africa. He conjures up images of hardship, strife and oppression visited upon the poor and the downtrodden. Shortly before he is picked up for booking at Valkenberg from Wynberg where he lived with an immigrant family, Patrick, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, notes of him:

He is serious. Everything affects him: Whites, their whining about post-apartheid South Africa, the new government and its corruption, fat politicians, drug lords, the police and opportunistic heists, pollution, nuclear testing, the price of food, the cost of living, the poor, the rich, the disabled, the aged, the mountain, the stars and moon ...(139)

The problems of the “New” nation are ingrained in Tshepo’s consciousness. This overindulgence in the many of South Africa’s challenges lands him the second stint at Valkenberg mental hospital. In a scene akin to what happens in Hillbrow in Mpe’s novel, Tshepo throws away his stuff from his balcony in the belief that he is “ridding the world of evil” (99). Tshepo attributes his insanity to the cruelty existing in South Africa’s social relations. Tshepo’s depression and madness are a result of failed dreams. He reflectively complains: “I live with too many questions, crying dreams, I mourn too many missed opportunities and failed relationships” (59). When he finally joins Steamy Windows, the gay massage parlour in Green Point, he comes to realise the maddening and overbearing contradictions in the “New” South Africa. The
relationship between the rich and the poor is dialectically related to class and racial tensions. While being gay for money accords him a privileged economic position, he notices the entrapment of predominantly black areas in poverty and violence.

Tshepo’s Steamy Windows experience with a number of his upper class clients hints that class and race are intertwined. He travels with Alex to the affluent suburb of Hout Bay, one of South Africa’s expensive residential areas. Alex is a rich white architect and an executive. All the time, Alex humiliates him. He is contemptuous and condescending towards him because he is black and poor, his education notwithstanding. In a world where whites primarily believe that blacks are gay because of poverty, Tshepo goes through a similar experience with another rich young man, Oliver. After picking him up from Steamy Windows, Oliver drives his black Jaguar to Camps Bay, another expensive suburb at the Atlantic seaboard. Tshepo is taken to an expensive “chic nouvelle cuisine restaurant”, where they meet Oliver’s friends, who all appear “in their thirties, rich and spoilt, probably the children of the wealthy ... their arrogance and self-assuredness pervasive in their manner” (370). Afterwards, Oliver takes him to his mansion, a building of an “unusual European façade ... in Monaco’s neo belle époque style” at the residential suburb of Llandudno, where, together with his friends, they participate in sex orgies, “the decadence of the obscenely rich” (371).

In the story by Mmabatho about a class-conscious professional black woman spoken to condescendingly at a Pick ‘n Pay shopping mall at the V and A nogal at Waterfront by white women, Tshepo notes that the “colour thing” is there, but also, it isn’t there. It is a mutating virus coughed out through class. Where class meets race, race rears itself over it. In the “New” South Africa’s social formation, race manifests itself in social relations, with the whites believing that blacks are still the low-class citizens, despite some blacks being in the class of “nouveau riche ba bo darkie” (138). Tshepo’s initial hope of a liberated South Africa through a class-based consciousness is thwarted by the understanding that old habits have failed to die away. He believes that, “everyone has got their own agenda”, and reminds Mmabatho about the racial stagnation in the country:

[T]his is South Africa and don’t fool yourself thinking that Cape Town is liberal. Some of the worst bigots and hypocrites come from Cape Town. Old Money, Mmabatho, they don’t want us, they never have and they never will. Do you know how hard it was for them to watch apartheid and all their privileges go? ...Whenever you get lots of rich people, you can be
sure that they will be as conservative as hell ... my theory of Cape Town is that you get a lot of rich people, Germans, French, Jewish, Muslim, Italians and of course a few of the nouveau riche ba bo darkie. And then the majority of the people is working class ... there are all these obscenely rich people who don’t even know what to do with their money and then you have Gugulethu and the Cape Flats on the other side ... the rich own everything, the courts, the cops, the politicians, the works. (138)

At the economic level of post-apartheid South Africa’s social formation, there are marked contrasts in the distribution of wealth. Tshepo notes that in some parts of Cape Town, there are those who are “obscenely rich”, on the one hand, and those at the “Gugulethu and the Cape Flats” who reek of an “offensive scent of poverty and neglect” on the other (138, 207). Tshepo comes to the realisation that class may not be an explanation for the ongoing exploitation of the blacks in South Africa. He reasons that class is not a solution to racial problems:

Even when I have looked my best and spoken in my best private school accent, I have confronted the harshest, the crudest prejudice from whites. They probably felt it their duty to remind me that I’m nothing but a kaffir who talks like a larney. That is how it feels when people are rude to you for no reason other than your different complexion. We still have a long way to go. (419)

He continues:

South Africa does not give you a chance to feel good about yourself, if you’re not white, at least historically. Having gone to multiracial private schools made a difference, but my journey into myself and the true nature of people has been no different from that of township blacks, trying to find their place, their voice. (419)

Instructively, Tshepo sheds off his class-consciousness in favour of the more “open” global “culture” in his own terms:

I can’t follow the whites, they are heading for the abyss with stupid pride. The coloureds are waiting for their own coloured messiah. The Indians will only tolerate you if you eat their hot food and laugh at their jokes. And the new blacks are too angry and grab everything for themselves. I don’t think they see clearly. (438)

In this social formation, divisive social relations exist along class and racial lines. Blacks, whites and other cultures exist as separate social groups, and this
is often reflected on the economic level. This shows that class tensions in South Africa are still grounds of contest, expressed through a continued struggle within the capitalist relations. Cole, Tshepo’s colleague at Steamy Windows, reminds Tshepo that the rich control power. He comes to understand that the rich and the powerful meant the whites. When Cole elucidates to him that class is power, it is a foregone conclusion that the ruling class is still the white class. This is reflected in Hall’s argument that “at the economic level ... race [takes] its distinctive and ‘relatively autonomous’ effectivity”, that emerges as the major defining factor in class relations (1980: 339).

In South Africa, class operates on a racially structured social formation. Hall (1980: 340) opines that in order to analyse the confluence of race and class, it is important to understand that race becomes a mechanism in which class stratification is accomplished. South Africa’s classes were hierarchically ordered by apartheid, and sustained by enforced legislations, including the creation of borders between black townships and Cape Town’s northern suburbs whose blurred edges Tshepo takes note of.

Burawoy in his discussion of the confluence of class, race and colonialism, advances that the form of colonialism witnessed in South Africa exhibits a kind of “pluralism” in the way in which a “colonial superstructure” manifests itself by “differential incorporation into the central institutions and by a ruling ideology or dominant value system which justifies that differential incorporation” (1974: 528). Here, Burawoy looks at class as being determined by the economic base and ideology. Colonialism/apartheid structured South Africa’s classes in a differential sense, creating different and fractured cultural groups.

In the apartheid era, colonial expansion was undertaken in the context of maintaining the interests of the white ruling class so that the kind of political and economic structures set up in the decades-long apartheid were very strong. In the end, the whites were able to maintain a steady and growing capitalism, one that, in the post-apartheid era, has proved difficult to break. Tshepo understands that blacks have always been at the bottom of the class structure, set up historically, in fact, by the many landless African peasants who worked for the whites and in mines, and those who walked into the cities with a pass to do menial jobs.
Class structure in South Africa’s social formation is complex. As observed above, the issues surrounding the rich versus the poor invariably coincide with those concerning relations between whites and blacks respectively. But the distinction in post-apartheid South Africa is blurred. In post-apartheid South Africa, a number of blacks have taken advantage of the new leadership to get rich, and/or amass wealth. This shows that in post-apartheid South Africa, it is difficult to explain class stratifications based on race alone. Emerging groups such as the black middle class cannot fit into the earlier system of South Africa’s economic relations.

Burawoy (1974: 543) observes that “the logic of economic growth in South Africa lies in the creation and extension of the black middle classes”. Writing before the end of apartheid, Burawoy must have foreseen that a growing black middle class may be the way to even up with the white bourgeoisie in post-apartheid South Africa. Ironically, even with a substantially growing black middle class in South Africa, poverty and other social ills have continued to grow. The economic privileges so enjoyed by this black middle class have made them live alongside whites in expensive neighbourhoods, and shop in the expensive V and A nogal in Waterfront, as represented in Duiker’s novel (138). This has happened at the expense of the majority of the black population.

What, then, is the nature of this South African capitalism which Tshepo, a knowledgeable former Rhodes University student, blames for the economic problems of South Africa? As Duiker’s Tshepo finds out, the rich in South Africa are members of a capitalist economy who still live in exclusive preserves now not set by law but by economic advantage. Blacks may go to Clifton or other expensive suburbs but the prohibitive rates may put a hold to their ambitions of living there. Those in the townships lack the material base to reconstruct their lives and develop. Consequently, despondency and lack abound in townships and black squatter settlements. Mpe sets his novel in the (post-apartheid) poor rural economy of Tiragalong that is dependent on the city economy, particularly on those who have gone to the cities to look for education and employment. Hence, even though apartheid has ended, there principally remains an economic contradiction between the economies of the rich owners of production and the poor townships / rural areas.

Duiker’s Tshepo walks down the township in an attempt to find answers to the maddening confusion in his country. Tshepo, like Mpe’s Refentše, burdens himself and is overburdened by the problems and challenges facing his
country. While Refentše finds suicide as a “relief”, Tshepo chooses to suffer to the point of madness:

Everywhere I go I look. I feel like I’m decoding madness, wrapping my brain around it, facing it, making it easier to see, to understand, giving it a name. Maybe it is called capitalism, making money for the sake of making money, not building communities. With capitalism, it seems someone has to lose, someone has to be the underdog, someone has to play the poor bastard that holds up the structure, so that the rich can be rich. Maybe the problem isn’t capitalism, maybe it’s the elites who run the structure. Maybe it’s the stifling class system that keep us all rigid in our places, everyone behaving, everyone going as far as their lives allow them. (432)

Tshepo makes a powerful statement about the nature of the contradictions facing his country. His experiences at Steamy Windows with rich clients from Clifton, Hout Bay and Camps bay, contrast markedly with the kind of life that black South Africans live in the same city, in formerly segregated parts of Cape Town.

Walking in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* is a metonym for escape from the hopelessness and the vagaries of life. The world outside Valkenberg is equally cruel and unfeeling for those like Tshepo. Tshepo avers that their feet “are sore from having walked into all the wrong places and having spoken to all the wrong people” (54). In his psychotic state, Tshepo also walks the streets and is haunted by witches, wizards and strange apparitions (93). His walking enunciates the evil and the oppression in various parts of Cape Town.

Tshepo’s walk around the city decodes crime, violence, poverty, unemployment and a host of other challenges facing contemporary South Africa. As his feet graze the streets of Cape Town, Tshepo communicates to us the social and economic underpinnings of the various inhabitants of Cape Town. In Mpe’s novel, the ghastly and gory scenes and reports in Hillbrow point to the enduring violent aspects of this part of the city of Johannesburg. Car jackings, robberies, murders, rapes and deaths are prevalent in Hillbrow. Even formerly secure places such as the suburbs are no longer safe. There are criminals on the prowl in Sandton and other upper class residential areas. Refentše narrowly escapes getting knifed “at the Hyde Park, near Sandton”, in spite of Hyde Park’s “lily-white reputation for safety and serenity” (22).
The privileged whites and the black middle-class are also targets of South Africa’s crime waves. As seen in Mpe’s novel, the affluent can appropriate spaces for themselves by facilitating their movements to other areas of the cities. “Big, forward-looking companies” move away from the “monster”, referring to Hillbrow, to “northern suburbs such as Sandton” (2-3). This relative seclusion by the white and the black middle classes has created monstrous in-between places and spaces. Because the rich have the means of production, they can facilitate their spatial mobility to other places. They can also afford to gate themselves. This contrasts markedly with the shanties and shacks in Alexandra where Mpe’s Piet lived, and in Nyanga and Khayelitsha, where Duiker’s Chris was brought up.

In South Africa in the post-apartheid era, spatial appropriation reflects class and racial differences. In that regard, it can be argued that class has insulated the white and the black middle class. The townships and squatter camps remain as places of entrapment. Those in poverty-stricken areas turn to violent crime, accentuated by perceived feelings of disenfranchisement.

The proliferation of violent spaces in South African townships directly emanates from the economic problems that predominantly affect these poor areas. Despite the promises of the transition, for example, Cape Flats has remained as a dirty slum, “a complicated underground sewerage system”, where poverty and want breed violence, especially sexual violence, like what we see in Chris (155). Tshepo’s and Chris’s train journey to Khayelitsha township is also a symbolic journey to the putrefaction in the townships of South Africa. The sadness and unfriendliness from the residents there contrasts markedly with the carefree suburban life that Tshepo lived off while at Steamy Windows. As Tshepo walks into the bowels of the township, the maze and the confusion of slum life invites back his earlier mad thoughts (429). Despite his sore feet and blisters, he walks the whole length of the township, taking in the suffering of the millions of desperate and frustrated black South Africans.

Duiker’s Tshepo also enunciates the unemployment and hopelessness afflicting the youth in post-apartheid South Africa, especially in cities. In his joblessness, Tshepo walks aimlessly to the train station. He notes South Africa’s gaping problems of street children, the poverty and the frustration of having to walk down the city’s streets in search of a job:

> For two weeks I walk up and down Cape Town’s restaurants looking for a job as a waiter ... They tell me either that there are no posts or
that they are looking for a woman, or is that someone white? ... I even tell them that I will work in the kitchen or scrub floors. I swallow my pride and force myself to walk the merciless streets up and down Tamboerskloof, Clifton, Gardens, Obs, Green Point, Sea Point, Mowbray, Claremont and Rondesbosch. (203-204)

Tshepo walks down nearly the whole length of Cape Town; from the city centre to the suburbs and to the places along the Atlantic seaboard without any respite for a job — any job. Tshepo’s option is to take the “only possible thing left” — to work for a “massage parlour” at Green Point, which means being gay for money (204).

In this dystopia, Tshepo sees the nation as being in a convulsive moment. There is more evil: “The story is unfolding, that there is more to come. A monster is rising” (95). It is maddening to see that capitalism has produced desperate lots at Nyanga, Khayelitsha and other townships who “lived through ’76, Casspirs, detention, Botha, and now this, everyone grabbing as much as they can for themselves ... Too much money and a small ruling elite ...” (430). For those travelling from the townships to the city, the poor roads and the inefficient transport network may earn one with a reprimand “for what you people are like” and constant lateness may earn one a sack as the (white) bosses “only make money, they don’t build people” (432). Much the same way as they were in the 1960s during the apartheid era, Nyanga, Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Alexandra and the Cape Flats have remained black spaces of neglect and desolation.

As Duiker’s *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* shows, blacks and whites do not stand on the same economic ground in relation to capital. Duiker builds upon the complexities of the distribution of economic resources, showing how its skewed pattern has favoured new patterns of socio-spatial and demographic disagreements. In this novel, the danger of South Africa’s form of capitalism is brought to the fore.

**Disavowing the Rainbow: Dystopias of the “New” South Africa**

In the two novels, the protagonists, namely Refentše and Tshepo, speak for the “New” South Africa. They are imbued with nationalistic tendencies to brood over the direction that the nation is taking. In Mpe’s novel, the “New” South Africa’s problems neurotically impinge on the protagonist’s consciousness. Refentše’s drinking sessions in Hillbrow are punctuated by brooding as his mind sifts through his and nation’s problems. His suicide emanates from both
private and national pent-up emotions and betrayals. On an ideological level, Refentše dies for his country. Several “chilling haunting echoes” force him into suicide (27). Refentše dies a few years into democratisation. In very telling passages, Mpe deliberately avoids end-mark punctuations to suggest the nervous thoughts that catalyse Refentše’s depression and suicide:

And so when you come to this part of your journey to embracing the seduction of suicide the spinning of cars the prostitution drug use and misuse the grime and crime the numerous bottles diving from flat balconies giving off sparks of red and yellow from mid-air reflection of streets and flat neon lights only to crush on unfortunate souls’ skulls ... Bohlale and the Hillbrow child dying as they hit the concrete pavements of Johannesburg Refilwe rewriting the version of your living and Tiragalong condemning both you and the Bone of your heart the scarecrow woman of your fiction stifled by the repressive forces of the democratisation and Hillbrow and Tiragalong flowing into each other in your consciousness ... (61)

Refentše’s wheezing thoughts all point out the contradictions of “democratisation” that have produced his suicide. He finally succumbs to the lure of suicidal thoughts (79).

The slow pace of change in effecting the promises of the democracy is the subject of the two novels. Post-apartheid South Africa has frustratingly and maddeningly failed to bring justice and equality especially on the economic front. Instead of focusing on the “most pressing concerns” of the post-apartheid era that Cousin in Mpe’s novel intimates, South Africans, especially those at high echelons of power, have kept themselves hidden within “the conspiracy of satellites and clandestine societies ... stealing [our] dreams, preying on [our] hopes and doing terrible things in the name of God” (Duiker, 2001: 61).

The new democratic government has failed to make reparations for economic justice in the manner in which they promised when they fought against the apartheid regime. South Africa’s democratic transition has largely been discoloured by “politicians fattening up on the hopes of people” (94). Tshepo is bitterly sarcastic of the national leadership: “I see old men tired of protest leading us further into darkness laughing and joking the way they did in the sixties while the world was getting drunk on free love” (94). The corrupt ruling elite are “indifferent to the greed of banks and the humiliation of an empty stomach ... [and are] fraternising in parks in broad daylight with
gangsters and drug lords” (95). The nation’s vicious cycle of oppression and economic slavery continue to dog the predominantly black poor.

In the same vein Zebron and Chris reject the notion of a “New” South Africa and the democratic ideals espoused in the country’s constitution. Zebron believes that he is not part of the democratic rainbowism that his country espouses. He parodies Tutu’s idea of democratic inclusiveness when he claims: “We’re not all God’s children. In here God doesn’t exist...I am the forgotten who lies rotting in a barrel of fermenting apples” (23, 45). Chris, too, understands that he is not part of the Rainbow promise, considering in part that he is not educated and that he has spent nine years in Pollsmoor prison for murder (155).

Chris claims: “All that Mandela and all of them are talking about now is the new syllabus and new school-goers. No one is interested in where I’m going. I’m just Chris who got out of Pollsmoor. I’m just an outie” (156). The youth criticise the new black elite for their failure to alleviate suffering in the townships and in other neglected areas. This is essentially the blame that Tshepo covertly levels against the black leadership of South Africa:

There is nothing grand, poetic or tragic about our lives, our failure. The poets have lied to us. The historians soiled honour. We will meet our demise with the smallness of our lives. Our heroes have been clowns, charlatans, they have led us further into blindness. I don’t believe in anyone anymore. (437)

Looked at from this perspective, it is possible to understand why Zebron and Chris are dismissive of South Africa’s founding fathers such as Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu. For them, the future holds little promise because their leaders gave in “too soon” to the whites. They believe that the leaders should have righted the economic wrongs before accepting to take on the mantle of leadership. Chris is particularly incensed that Mandela and “his cronies” have “put down his people” (164).

In a witty and satiric tone, Mpe delves into the political and cultural legacies of apartheid that make the conception of a “New” South Africa premature. Mpe uses Refentše’s narrative to reveal that South Africa’s recent democracy is in fact encapsulated in new forms of segregation and divisiveness. In post-apartheid South Africa, the envisioned reconciliatory gesture of contritely asking for forgiveness is no longer emphasised in the Rainbow. Implied in Mpe’s novel is the failure of the aggressor to ask for forgiveness from the
victim, a failure captured by a refusal to accept to pay the price of committing an offence. Bohlale’s resolve to ask for forgiveness from Sammy, because of her own betrayal of him by having a clandestine relationship with Refentše, is cut short by her death. It is a death that cuts short her repentant remonstrance: “We must confess and apologise to Sammy about what we did! What kind of friends are we, Refentše, who could just lead themselves into temptations like that?”, a position that Refentše unashamedly rejects (52). For Refentše, it is “not that easy” to apologise. Instead, he entertains the thought of writing about the incident to “find relief” from his “guilt and grief”. When he does write, it turns out to be a story about HIV/AIDS, the stigma in the rural areas and xenophobia. Hence the narrative of confession and forgiveness in the nation-building project of the Rainbow is discarded in favour of the “more pressing concerns”, the emergent national problems of the post-apartheid South Africa. This shows the mutating “rhetoric of urgency” of the many overbearing and overpowering problems in South Africa today (Bethlehem, 2001: 365).

The nation’s avowed constitutional democracy and cultural equality is also put into question. Despite the fact that the constitution elevated all the local languages into official status, including Sepedi, cultural repression witnessed during the apartheid era continues. Mpe decries the failing post-apartheid dream of cultural freedom and inclusiveness. The unpublished Sepedi novel written by Refentše’s heroine in his (Refentše’s) novel is rejected by publishers because it is considered linguistically inappropriate. The narrator observes:

The woman of your fiction, Refentše, was writing in 1995, one year after the much acclaimed 1994 democratic elections; one year after the overthrow of the political and cultural censorship, and of the damaging and dishonest indoctrination ... where arid Bantustans ... became homelands, where any criticism of apartheid thinking became a threat to public morals; where love across racial boundaries became mental instability ... [...] in 1995, despite the so-called new dispensation, nothing had really changed. The legacy of apartheid censors still shackled those who dreamed of writing freely in an African language. (57)

Mpe unearths the fallacy of the “so-called new dispensation” that downplays and suppresses the dreams and aspirations of South Africans, especially the black ones. A story about HIV/AIDS, xenophobia and stigma would have been appropriately presented in a local language. This would have allowed for a wide readership by the local Sepedi people from Tiragalong and elsewhere suffering from the problems that the novel addressed. Not only would it have
contributed to the stock of Sepedi literature in the spirit of cultural recognition, but also to “important discussions of life in South Africa”, given that HIV/AIDS and xenophobia were topical in the nation (58). Mpe, in the novel, writes out the social and cultural effects of HIV/AIDS among the black South African population. In the novel, he is emphatic on the stigma associated with the disease.

In her personal interviews with Mpe, Yvonne Vera and other Southern African writers who were widely believed to have succumbed to HIV/AIDS, Attree (2010) attests to the widespread AIDS infection rate in Southern Africa that was claiming a huge chunk of the youth population. Matshikiza (2005), eulogising Mpe’s death, considers Welcome to Our Hillbrow as an “elegy for his [Mpe’s] own life”. The novel becomes a testimony of the power of narrative in releasing pent-up emotions for Mpe, as it also happens for his characters, Refentše and Refilwe. Attree also notes:

When the associated social and cultural implications of infection with HIV are considered, fictional representations contribute significantly to our understanding of the impact of HIV/AIDS on communities and individuals. (5)

Mpe’s Welcome to Our Hillbrow represents AIDS as the new mass killer of the South African youth involved in casual and unprotected sex, often in drunken stupor. Although Mpe’s characters abhor gay sex and would certainly frown at Duiker’s openly gay characters, the high incidences of HIV/AIDS in the novel point out that the disease is more widespread in heterosexual relationships. Mpe’s narrator opines that it is the moral depravity and decadence in Hillbrow that is responsible for the spread of the virus. This is conceivably suggested by the thoughtless and uncontrolled sexual liaisons in the novel. There are “semi-naked souls” everywhere in Hillbrow (11). Most of the social contacts appear to find completeness in physical and sexual acts. Therefore, it must be “the bizarre sexual behaviour of the Hillbrowans” and their carelessness that is to blame for the spread of AIDS (4). As Duiker’s The Quiet Violence of Dreams also reveal, AIDS infections are reportedly high in the townships and black squatter settlements and in predominantly black, poor areas (376, 430). In Steamy Windows, the “massage parlour”, AIDS also “lurks quietly” in the minds of the gay youth. Many of them, however, understand the real threat of AIDS and insist on using condoms as a means of protection (223, 407, 313).
Mpe portrays South Africans’ social entanglements and provincial misunderstanding of HIV/AIDS. Traditional healers sourced from as far as Blantyre, Malawi, crudely preside over treatment of “mysterious diseases” in rural South African villages as most of these rural South Africans do not seek hospital treatment (Attree, 2010: 9, 10). As it turns out, these “strange diseases” are often cases of HIV/AIDS which the villagers erroneously blame on witchcraft: “Mysterious diseases, in Tiragalong’s view, could only result from a mysterious cause: witchcraft” (45). Tshepo’s neighbour is suspected of having bewitched her husband and her illicit lover “both of whom had died some years previously of mysterious diseases” (45).

*Welcome to Our Hillbrow* unearthed traditional systems and beliefs that have countered the fight against HIV/ AIDS in South Africa. Rural South Africans are ignorant about the disease. In the novel, many villagers who are infected are ignorant of their HIV positive status:

> It was easy to be ignorant of this, because this disease lents itself to lies. Such people were thought to have died of flu, or of stomach-ache. Bone throwers sniffed out the witches responsible, and they were subsequently necklaced. (121)

South African rural blacks kill innocent people under the guise of eradicating witchcraft. Refentše’s mother, grieving the loss of her son, is necklaced by the villagers who blamed her for bewitching him. When Tshepo is struck by lightning soon after graduating from the university, a neighbour is suspected of sending lightning to strike him in her jealousy, and is subsequently killed. Piet, who “did not even know how to mix herbs for his ordinary cold”, is blamed for bewitching a relative, and is later knifed by hired killers and left on the pavement of Alexandra (78). *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* highlights South Africans’ beliefs in bone-throwers, and the ugly and violent consequences that go with that.

*The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* exemplify the powerlessness and vulnerability in the violent spaces of South Africa. In *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, local South Africans are prejudiced against those from Hillbrow or from the cities generally. The “New” South Africa is a space in which extreme otherising has marked its tumultuous history. South Africans, especially the local black South Africans, are united in their hatred of foreigners. The xenophobic treatment of foreigners by the local South Africans has cast grey shadows in the promised Rainbow dream of inclusiveness.
Xenophobia: A New “Apartheid”?  
Duiker and Mpe bear witness to xenophobia in South African cities showing how African immigrants now live on the margins of the Rainbow, the same way the black South Africans did during the repressive years of apartheid. In South Africa’s new social formation, pluralism has accentuated cultural divisiveness. The treatment of foreigners, especially those from specific African countries, has counteracted the avowed inclusiveness in the country’s professed democratic rainbowism. *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* both underscore the “New” nation’s divisive otherness and exclusion, a narrative that is evinced in a number of studies about xenophobia and xenophobic violence in South Africa.

Nkealah’s (2011) study about the commodification of the female body in the 2008 xenophobic violence in South Africa is useful in this analysis. Nkealah traces xenophobia to the township of Alexandra, and its spread to other parts of South Africa, such as Durban and Cape Town. This was a major wave of attested xenophobic violence directed at black Africans from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and other parts of Africa in South Africa’s major cities. Nkealah observes that this violence was economically motivated as it was fuelled by “the competition for scarce resources within a multiethnic community” (124). In *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, foreigners “from Mozambique Zaïre Nigeria Congo Ivory Coast Zimbabwe Angola Zambia from all over Africa...” are fleeing from their “war torn countries to seek sanctuary here in our country” (18, 19). The majority are exiles seeking refuge from the political circumstances of their countries in the same way native South Africans fled to their countries during the apartheid era. In Duiker’s *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, Akousia, from Nigeria, and Patrick, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, are representative of African immigrants fleeing from economic limitations and civil war, to South Africa in search for relative peace. They are examples of what local South Africans in the novels call “makwerekwere”, a word “derived from kwere/kwere, a sound that their unintelligible foreign languages were supposed to make, according to the locals” (Mpe, 2001: 20). It is indeed a vulgar and derogatory term that can be equated to the apartheid “Kaffir” reference to black people by the whites.

The “New” South Africa is no place for a reciprocal kind of love: the exiles from other African countries are now objects of hate in the period of democratic rainbowism. Duiker and Mpe contextualise this hatred directed at foreigners as being hinged on the failure of the post-apartheid government to fulfil the promises of the democratic transition to local black South Africans.
Through Tshepo and Mmabatho’s dialogues, it is revealed that the hatred directed at black foreigners is in fact deeply entrenched in the society. Mmabatho’s hatred for foreigners is constructed around the physical attributes of foreigners, most of whom are easily distinguishable based on their darker complexion as compared to local South Africans. In effect, local South Africans demonstrate their “racism” towards these “darker” foreigners.

Mmabatho and Tshepo visit stalls in Cape Town where these foreigners, “a community of hawkers and informal stall owners”, sell their wares because Tshepo wants to buy a bag (260). Although there are locals selling their wares alongside these foreigners as Mpe’s novel also affirms, Mmabatho is visibly drawn to the foreigners, because they are “dark and tall and with features that don’t really blend with the general population” (260). The “strange” foreigners cannot easily “blend” into the Rainbow. Then, she warns him: “You must be careful of makwere-kwere” (260), a caution she repeats when she bids him goodbye on his way out to Johannesburg later in the novel: “Don’t go out in funny places. Hillbrow is full of Nigerians and Makwerekwere... and they sell drugs” (451). Mmabatho insists that black foreigners are dangerous and exploitative, warning him that the foreign hawkers simply “want [his] money so that they can sell [him] something cheap that will break as soon as [he] get[s] home” (260).

Mmabatho distances herself from these African foreigners, whom she clearly considers as the Other, the “them”. She observes:

We spend about fifteen minutes at the station. Tshepo keeps going to them. Them with their funny smells and accents. I don’t like them. A friend of mine who stays in a block of flats dominated by them tells me that they bring strange diseases into the country because they insist on performing their queer rituals even though this isn’t really Third World Africa ... always selling imitation goods [and] ... always together like a group of thugs hatching a conspiracy. (260-261)

When Tshepo meets one of these hawkers, Mmabatho aversively and racially profiles him. She estimates that the man’s “small dubious-looking pouch hanging round his neck” contains “muti” (witchcraft) that is used to “drug [them] to buy their wares” (261). Her assurance that she does not mind the man’s complexion is paradoxical, given her description of him as a “blue-black man” in her previously conceded hate (261). Tshepo finds the bag from this man, and Mmabatho evaluates it. She knows that the bag is “nice ... finely crafted and with no silly impostor names”, but she contradicts herself by
arguing that they are still “pathetic imitations of established, popular brands”!
(261) After Tshepo haggles over the price and pays up for it, Mmabatho
believes that he has been “ripped” off. The jaundiced view that she has of
black foreigners cannot be tempered by her realisation that the foreigner was
neither exploitative of Tshepo (he would have been “ripped” off if he had gone
to a “proper shop” belonging to a native South African) nor selling
“imitations”.

The misgivings that Mmabatho has in respect of the foreigners are all
motivated by the jealous belief that these blacks are making money at the
expense of the locals. Refentše’s unnamed cousin reinforces these arguments
in Welcome to Our Hillbrow. For Cousin, there are “more pressing concerns”
that “makwerekwere” are responsible for in Hillbrow, including “the crime
and grime ... for which he held such foreigners responsible; not just for the
physical decay of the place, but the moral decay...” [and] “like the AIDS that
they transport into the country” (17, 20). Cousin believes that the black
Africans should stay in their own countries and sort out their problems “rather
than fleeing them; South Africa has too many problems of its own” (20). The
local South Africans specifically blame black foreigners for the economic
problems in post-apartheid South Africa, especially as a reason for youth
unemployment. Absolving white foreigners from blame, Mmabatho observes:
“All I’m saying is that these guys [black foreigners] come into the country and
okay I’m not going to say the obvious thing that they are taking jobs away”
(263, my italics).

The treatment that black South Africans received during the apartheid era is
the same treatment that black foreigners from elsewhere in Africa receive in
the Rainbow. In Welcome to Our Hillbrow, Cousin is benefitting economically
from his ill-treatment of illegal foreigners who often had to bribe their way to
get “false identity document[s]”, or exchange sexual favours, in return for
freedom (21).

The treatment accorded to black foreigners point to the fissures in the Rainbow
dream. Irlam (2004: 699) argues that the unease witnessed in the “New” South
Africa is a product of failed nationalism. He argues:

One observes the rise of a certain cultural chauvinism and sometimes
even ethnic nationalism that was notably absent during the apartheid
era, but became highly volatile in the violent clashes during the
period of the transition between 1990 and 1994.
South African nationalism enshrined in an appeal for African unity and inclusiveness has instead led to a rise in extremism and disunity. Black South Africans have moved away from a belief in Rainbow multiculturalism into a narrower “South-Africa-for-native South-Africans-only” mentality. Native South Africans have conceptualised an ethnic form of nationalism that has blotched the democracy’s aspirations for a united nation with a shared destiny.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated how K. Sello Duiker’s *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and Phaswane Mpe’s *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* explore the metaphor of inclusiveness as suggested in the Rainbow, showing how they capture the slow and inconsistent pace of transition to a new South Africa. The article suggests that the texts disavow post-apartheid South Africa’s utopia of a united, non-racial democracy by use of gory and ghostly mental images and portray a dystopian South African society faced with imminent collapse. It has been argued that these texts explore narratives of rupture concomitant with youthful deaths and diseases, such as of HIV/AIDS. In this regard, the vulnerability of the South African youth has been demonstrated as they live in what Duiker’s Tshepo considers the “Train spotting odyssey of excess in a culture rapidly blurring the borders” between race and class, the townships and the suburbs, native and foreigner, and other socio-economic dichotomies (34).

The article has also shown how South African youth culture is a manifestation of a wider symbolic and aberrant post-apartheid society.

References


Moral Decadence and Moral Prescription for a Sick Society in Joseph Situma’s *The Mysterious Killer*

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**Abstract**

This paper argues that Joseph Situma’s novel *The Mysterious Killer* (2001) negotiates the dichotomous path of an ailing and a healing nation through a juxtaposition of amoral and moral characters. The paper interrogates the exemplary life of Rachel, a young woman who defies the wisdom of cultural dictates to speak about the mysterious killer disease that is bound to wipe out the entire community unless they embrace and internalize change. Her action heals the wounded society smarting from the pains of losing loved ones. This is contrasted with Yamo, a sleek criminal and a drug baron who profiteers from human trafficking of prostitutes in cohort with law enforcement authorities, and thereby perpetuating ailment in the society. The paper concludes that the novel emerges as a major critique of the decadent social institutions and retrogressive cultural practices and hence is an agent of healing in the wake of the social crisis precipitated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

**Introduction**

Arguably, the postcolonial nations, especially the African ones, have been ailing right from the period of gaining their official independence from the colonizers. What had been hoped to be emerging nations that would bestow on a people formerly dehumanized and sickened by colonial excesses and human dignity and a healthy milieu for the exploitation of their potential comes out as entities that do not fulfill the promise.

As the Cameroonian theorist Achille Mbembe has argued of the postcolony, that entity that “identifies specifically given historical trajectory – that of societies recently emerging from the experience of colonization and the violence which the colonial relationship, *par excellence*, involves” (1992: 3), it
manifests as a theater of the enaction of the banality of power. An enaction that collapses virtually every facet of the society and hence rendering its functioning itself be a farce, a sickness of morality and physicality.

It is in this sense of ailment then that the paper contextualizes and interrogates Joseph Situma’s novel, *The Mysterious Killer* (2001) to see how individuals endeavor to negotiate through by either seeking to heal or enhancing the national sickness.

*The Mysterious Killer* is a text that addresses sickness in the society. A people are afflicted by what they consider a strange, mysterious disease because of ignorance. In the same vein, because of the same non-knowledge they are not willing to collapse practices that enhance the infection and the spread of the disease (HIV/AIDS). This parallels what Kurtz (2005) in his analysis of Macgoye’s novel, has termed, chira itself has been applied to AIDS, any unidentified wasting disease” (191). In *The Mysterious Killer* there are characters wholly fixated to bodily pleasures that they will do everything to attain such satisfaction. Those who seek to challenge this state of affairs through revelation of the truth are met with contempt and violence. Again, as Mbembe reminds us in his reading of banality of power (state, cultural or other) in the postcolony, “[t]he signs, vocabulary and narratives that [the postcolony] produces are not meant merely to be symbols; they are officially invested with a surplus of meanings which are not negotiable and which one is officially forbidden to depart from or challenge” (ibid.: 4). Subsequently, in order “to ensure that no such challenge takes place, the champions of state [and cultural] power invent entire constellations of ideas [and] adopt a distinct set of cultural repertoires and powerfully evocative concepts … [and as well] have resort … to the systematic application of pain” (ibid.).

However, the societal threat does not dampen the spirit of a young university woman who having witnessed first-hand how her immediate family, through an aunt, is affected by the scourge dares the status quo and opens up healing discourses on the disease. These include knowledge on the disease, prevention and generally re-thinking societal cultural practices that are annihilative in design. The young woman, Rachel, envisions that her society can only heal through such empowering discourses. However, in this liberational endeavor, she is oppositionally confronted by the society, best represented by the elders and Yamo, himself the cenotaph of the ailment at the individual and national levels.
How then does the text mediate the personal/national ailment to bring about healing? This is what the following sections of the paper seek to show.

**The Trap of Ailment**

Rachel’s is a community that’s trapped in ailment because of it’s resistance of ignorance. The text commences by signalling the reader to the fact that the village chief, Busie, “has been ailing for a long time” (12). And, the chief himself “believes in the power of Mzee Simba, who has been curing himself of illness” (13). Hence, from the onset Situma sets the stage for interrogation of a community that is trapped in ailment but obviously resistant to meaningful healing, spiritual or scientific. The Chief, the symbol of authority in the community thinks that only Mzee Simba, the traditional medicine man can heal him. And so do the majority of the members of the community. Thus when the chief dies, it can only be understood in the community as bewitchment, because “[g]reat people have many enemies” (63). As Mutembei (2011: 417) asserts in another context, HIV AIDS sickness was conceived as an act of witchcraft done by people against their fellows.

The arrival from Busaki City by Aunt Cecilia then manifests the ailment more prominently. It as well complicates the narrative by linking the city and the village and in the process draw attention to cancerous nature of ailment in the nation. This time round, Cecilia’s arrival unlike other years was rather cold as she was not completely well (25). As the narrator tells us, there seems to be an air of despondency around her even in her voice. Cecilia’s ailment becomes more apparent when we are told that her “face was brown, with a few dark spots, and her cheek bones showed distinctly. Cecilia was not only low-spirited but also emaciated, what could have happened in the city?” (26).

The question is answered later in the novel when it is revealed that Cecilia was indeed engaged in prostitution in the City, frequenting Cloud Nine Hotel with Yamo, a sleek criminal and drug pusher as her man friend. Yamo had many sexually promiscuous women hanging around him such as Mama Baby. As we learn from the watchman, Lelei, later on in the text, they colonized a certain corner of the bar and all of them died one by one, claimed by the mysterious killer. The narrative underlines it:

Lelei shook his head. “People are dying,” he told her [Rachel] in a low but unwavering voice. “That corner,” he said, pointing. “Look how empty it is! That corner used to be graced by politicians, businessmen, lawyers, doctors, journalists, teachers, policemen,
soldiers and many others. They have all left the world. It’s as if something snatched them up overnight.” (172).

Earlier on in the text when the journey to seek “medication” from a traditional witch doctor for her aunt, Rachel had herself come face to face with the night life of Busaki City where Yamo is the master and kingpin of promiscuous nocturnal activities. Referring to Yamo the narrative runs:

With his box-cut and lush suit and a diamond earring and three rings on his left hand, he joined the men and women in the corner … The clean shaven woman smiled as she rocked in her chair. He puts his hand around her shoulders and looked into her eyes. (73)

This is a world of habitual drunkards and sexually promiscuous men and women. Yamo takes Mama Baby home at five o’clock to sleep with her, “to go to Eden” meaning being in flesh and blood and being naked to the core. Rachel is amazed by the extent of promiscuous activities evidenced by paired men and woman kissing, a slender girl wearing a knee high skirt and bosom revealing blouse, pursued by a drunken man.

The people here are driven by the love for pleasure, money, sex and drinks and it is this world which is a breeding ground for the mysterious killer. Yamo changes women like clothes and believes in conquering more and more (78). He cheats on each one of them by having affairs with their friends. It is no coincidence then when he encounters Rachel, he sees her as easy prey for his sexual escapades. She is lucky to escape an attempted rape by him. Yamo, thus is at once physically and morally ailing just as many of his colleagues at the Cloud Nine Hotel in the city.

Unfortunately, not even the spiritual healers are spared. The notion of spiritual collapse and decadence is portrayed in the text through Fr. Michael. Rachel perceives Fr. Michael as a paragon of godliness. The priest is described as humble, committed to service and merciful. But despite this goodness and dedication to his calling, the Father is tempted by the girl, Konse. This is the temptation that eventually leads him to commit suicide when Yamo sets him up with the girl whom Yamo himself had already infected with the HIV/AIDS. If one goes against what societies take to be their morals and values surrounding sex then stigma ensues (Mutembei, 2011: 429).

The padre’s transfer to another church at Gulabu does not help matters. Although a rural town, because of its proximity to a Game Park Gulabu has
attracted a heterogeneous population of Whites, Indians and people from
Busaki. Gulabu is thus, just like Busaki, a space of sin and ailment. The
Bishop’s remark that “[i]f we don’t convince the people of Gulabu that the
teachings of the church offer the best way of life – which alone is the
safeguard against the fatal virus – then most of them will perish” (101), is an
apt description of the deplorable situation.

Once in the rural village of Nkulu, the ailing Cecilia gets married to her former
admirer Nuomi, a polygamous villager who had always wanted to marry her.
The ailment is thus enhanced as the city encounters the village in another
union of death. However, to Hausa, Rachel’s father, his sister Cecilia is
bewitched. The narrative reads, “Hausa wished that he could find the man or
woman who had bewitched his sister. Cecilia had gone to all hospitals in
Busaki and found no cure for the coughing” (37); and “[t]he only cure was a
dark, bitter herbal mixture she had been given by a *mganga* [medicine man] at
Wauzi” (ibid).

Later on Rachel is sent to this *mganga* and she encounters lots of tribulations
as she is attacked by gangsters and she loses the concoction meant for Cecilia.
At the homestead of the witchdoctor, she encounters too many people seeking
for treatment for themselves and their relatives who suffer from AIDS. She
pays a whooping 8,000 shillings and the witchdoctor performs his rituals, an
act that disappoints and infuriates her. She feels cheated and foolish. To
exacerbate the situation, she and her companion on the journey were attacked
by gangsters on the way and she lost everything, her money plus the herbs she
had gone to sought. In a way, the textual message is that such a venture is
useless and come to nothing. It cannot bring the desired healing in the society.

This sojourn, however, makes her learn many things about the mysterious
killer disease, HIV/Aids, known locally as *Fojijo*, “a disease that kills by
wearing out the body of its victim” (97). This gives her the resolve to face the
ailment head-on, to endeavor to rescue her people and even the nation when
she launches serious Aids advocacy as student at the national university where
she is enrolled for a course in Architecture.

At the university, she soon realizes that the university itself is part of the
ailment. Rachel’s roommate is a Muslim girl Rehema who acts as a guardian
sister. But Rehema in spite of her strict religious upbringing indulges in sexual
affairs with a boyfriend, a practice which Rachel objects to for she believes
that it is wrong for her to be inviting and entertaining boys in their room.
Rachel later on as well reads into this university narrative when she is introduced to a male student, Edison. They subsequently fall in love but Rachel objects to his sexual advances, preferring to wait until they get married. Ironically, Edison is a client of Cloud Nine Hotel where sexual promiscuity is at its highest (173).

From the ailing experience of her aunt, Rachel is even more determined to learn more about her aunt’s lifestyle while she practiced prostitution in the city and the nature of the disease. She thus acquires the book *Aids: Facts and Figures*, and immerses herself into reading it. She refuses her boyfriend, Edison’s advances for sex with “too bad, we just can’t have what we desire” (128) words. She learns that part of the reason why AIDS spreads like bush fire is Randi’s cultural belief that the manhood of an individual is measured by how many females he impregnates (131-32). She sees people throwing caution to the winds “like the tsetse fly which seeks a bite in spite of the danger of death” (132). She sees Cloud Nine as a sure breeding ground for AIDS, a den of death (132).

Rachel’s thus becomes a meaningful sojourn to adequately understand what is ailing her society and from the vantage point of knowledge try to “un-trap” her people from the stranglehold of ailment, moral and physical.

**Collapsing Taboo in Order to Heal**

Rachel returns from the city armed with her book and street knowledge of the mysterious killer that is HIV/AIDS. She witnesses the death of Aunt Cecilia (146); and at the funeral comes to the open talk about the cause of Cecilia’s death. She collapses taboo in order to endeavor to heal.

At the funeral, Yamo is invited to speak on behalf of Cecilia’s former city friends. The narrative signals that he had already developed the tell-tale signs of HIV/AIDS. However, before he could say anything, Rachel, perhaps aware that he would falsify reality, intervenes with “I have something very important to say” (150). This is met with her father’s protest, but it does not deter her. She opines, “I know talking about sex matters is a taboo but this disease which killed my aunt is contracted through sexual intercourse (151). “There is a man here or out there, who infected my aunt with the disease. If such a man sleeps with girls in this village, they will all die. And there must be a woman who infected that man with the disease. If one of you men sleeps with that woman, you will die” (ibid.).
Rachel tells people to change their ways and desist from sleeping with strangers, a sentiment which her father condemns. He holds, “you have done something extremely bad” (153). In his view, “you have cast aspersions on the integrity of your dead aunt without any good reason and betrayed the honor of your family by speaking like a woman of unsound mind” (ibid.).

She is later on brought before the elders and she tells them about the mysterious disease and its mode of transmission. She observes, “[o]ur people through your wise counsel have to be guided away from conduct that is bound to lead them to infection. Teenagers must never engage in sex because most of them do not understand what they are getting into” (159). She advises them to desist from circumcision and the sharing of a knife that leads to transmission of Aids. Elders resist with “you are misleading us little girl” (ibid.), they insist, “What do we remain with if we accept all she tells us?” (ibid.).

The elders are more worried about the loss of sexual pleasure and the adherence to their traditional practice of circumcision rather than the loss of life to the mysterious killer disease. They reflect on her suggestions but they are half convinced. But as Waita (2009: 59) attests promiscuity, casual sex and careless behaviour are identified as core to possible infection.

In Gulabu town, a ravaged and poverty-stricken place with beggars on the streets, ignorance is still very high. The Padre, Fr. Michael is shocked by the lines of sick citizens waiting at the hospital. And when they lose one of their own to the killer disease, they whisper among themselves that the man had been bewitched. At the burial, however, Fr. Michael talks about the disease which afflicted those who failed to remain chaste and faithful to their spouses. He, as expected, meets opposition. The oppositionists are led by Yamo who warns him to stop talking about AIDS, causing despondency by spreading false alarm by a vicious campaign against an important source of people’s livelihood (169).

We see that the anti-AIDS campaigners are met with oppositional forces where traditional taboos, practices and economic livelihoods are threatened. Through Konse the brown girl, Yamo ensures that Fr. Michael is infected with AIDS and later in the novel viciously sends him a note to that effect. The good Father hangs himself rather than face the wrath of the sickness and the contempt of people.
At Busaki University, Rachel forms Busaki University Aids Awareness Society (BUAAS) guided by what she has read. She is convinced that “[u]nless proactive policies and measures are pursued immediately, the future plan is grim”. She thus organizes a special symposium on AIDS attended by thousands of students and university officials. She educates fellow students about the facts and figures about the AIDS virus. The basic science of theatre is to mobilize communities into HIV-AIDS congregation where they use the ludic power of theatricality to provoke people to speak and disclose their inner fears and produce solutions that are based on local knowledge and realities (Mwita, 2011: 436).

Rachel’s efforts seem to be bearing fruits when the elders decree that there is to be no sexual contact between men and women (186), and that the punishment for breaching this is death. As Oike (2008) avers, the story in times of HIV/AIDS does not provide a meaning for life, but through the abstinence encourages the readers to live on (81). However, the people who oppose this decree argue that elders have fallen under the spell of Hausa’s daughter (187). Thugs and hooligans distort her message of abstinence from sex and ridicule her (188). They ignorantly argue:

I am telling you … What will happen to your bodies if you stay for too long without engaging in sexual intercourse? Cases of frustration are likely to engulf our villages. Already there is a funny smell in the air. Do you smell something unusual, Mzee Mkose? Mzee Mkose nodded and held his nose. “It will get worse in the days and nights to come as these young men in the prime of their lives spend days and nights feeling unrequited sexual desire.” (188)

Rachel is thus ridiculed as young, naïve, ignorant and wisdom relating to sex is bandied around: “You think it was for no particular reason that Nasambu urged her daughters to copulate with men four times daily?” (188). Plans are subsequently hatched to punish her. A bhang smoking gang led by Yakobo beats up Rachel’s brother and abducts her with a sword at her throat. She is sexually assaulted by Yakobo. When she comes to her senses, she snatches the sword from him and kills him with it. This is a textual strategy, a signification of the demise of those who perpetrate ignorance and enhance ailment in the society.

Rachel’s attempt at suicide upon being “wrongly diagnosed” with HIV/AIDS may, on the surface, appear a defeatist action. But it becomes more of a sacrificial endeavor, a deliberate attempt to seek to collapse an age-old taboo
invested with the power of unalterable traditional law, when we realize that in her suicide note she lays the reason for her action on the culture of practicing *hutubuta*. She notes, “I am bitter that you elders continue to smile at a practice that has destroyed me and many women … With the AIDS virus, the practice of *hutubuta* spells doom for women” (245). She sees this practice as injustice against women; and asks her boyfriend to try and change the world.

Rachel emerges victorious as the text comes to close. In the narrative lines, “Rachel sighed and a broad smile creased her brilliant face. She lay back on her pillow and fell asleep” (261), is to be read as the victory and also the signal that a lot still remains ahead. The sleep can therefore only be temporary, a meditation on how to wake up to an even more vigorous engagement with ailment in the society. People like Rachel are displayed by the author as what elsewhere is deemed ‘role models giving hope to clients and caregivers since they have gained experience and confidence through training and practice (Kyakuwa, 2009: 152). The author’s message is stark and categorical: society has to be reordered. It has to put away the traditional encumberances to be able to cope with the contemporary realities presented by new challenges such as the mysterious killer disease threatening to wipe out an entire generation. This new phenomenon requires that people adjust their philosophy of life and learn to listen to young females like Rachel who is offering viable solutions to their predicament. By entangling the protagonist in the problem of HIV/AIDS and inviting the reader to tackle the knotty situation through putting himself in the shoes of the protagonist, literature can nurture warm understanding as well as a cool criticism in the mind of the reader (Oike, 2008: 77). At its best the novel is an attack on cultural institutions that encourage and facilitate the molestation of women. One such institution is the practice of *hutubuta* that condones the abduction and sexual molestation and rape of girls perceived to be haughty and challenging masculine power. Rachel becomes a victim of this barbaric practice because of her position in the novel where she challenges the status quo. By preaching abstinence and faithfulness in marriage she earned the wrath of male chauvenists who view this as an affront to their grip on the control of women’s sexuality. As Oike (2008: 82) asserts, the heroine does not sit down lamenting, she stands up against sexual humiliation.

**Conclusion**

*The Mysterious Killer* at once problematizes ailment in the society and critiques decadent social institutions and practices that structure it. As Homi Bhabha has argued, “[i]t must not be our aim to deny or disavow masculinity,
but to disturb its manifest destiny – to draw attention to it as a prosthetic reality – a ‘prefixing’ of the rules of gender and sexuality; an appendix or addition, that willy-nilly, supplements and suspends a ‘lack-in-being’” (2000: 102). *The Mysterious Killer* thus exposes and deconstructs “retrogressive” masculinities in order to mediate societal healing.

In the words of Elleke Boehmer, “[a] text, literary, filmic, or otherwise, can contribute fully, even centrally, to how a community defines itself and understands its future, especially after situations of trauma and war” (257-8). Joseph Situma’s is an interventionist postcolonial text necessary in understanding ailment and healing in the contemporary Kenyan society. He advocates for what Ahlberg et al (2009: 113) observed in the Kenyan context that young people are discouraged from having relationships which result in premarital sex as a way of inculcating societal morals.

**References**


Dhima ya Mwingiliano katika Embalu na Mwaka Kogwa

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Abstract

This study focuses on the role of multigenerism in African Oral Literature in performance. On this prism, the research used Bukusu’s embalu and Makunduchi’s mwaka kogwa rituals as platforms and springboards to unravel the importance of multigenerism nature of African Oral Literature in performance; a lacuna that has not been fully exploited. The study has underscored the fact that, African Oral Literature should not be analysed as independent units. The research findings show that, the two rituals are constructed and empowered to perform their functions through a continuous interplay of inseparable genres which constantly interrelate through processes like intertextuality, dialogism, genre eclipsing, generic chorusing and genre reconstruction, while in performance. These genre dynamics help these two rituals to perform their functions through several ways; which this paper discusses in detail. These findings confirm what Senkoro (2011a) alludes that genres in African Oral literature refuses to be itemised into independent units. The research makes a contribution towards improving the approaches used in analysing African Oral Literature with the multigeneric reality in mind; contrary to the usual approaches, (Bayo 2012), (Okporoboro 2006), (Ogumbiyi 1988) and (Kubik 1977). This research was conducted in Bungoma County and Zanzibar Island, where the researcher to collect songs, praise poetry, dirges and chants that were performed in the two rituals. A blend of Ethnopoetics and Emic Theory guided the collection and interpretation of data about the multigeneric nature of African Oral Literature. Ethnopoetics helped the researcher to collect data by mingling and interacting with the study community, while the Emic Theory guided the researcher into utilizing the insiders’ views on the nature of the study community’s oral literature. An Ethnomethodological approach which included participation,
observation and interviews was applied in the data collection. Data interpretation and analysis was done using the interpretivism approach to give a descriptive analysis guided by the research objectives and the tenets of the two theories.

Utangulizi

Utafiti uliofanywa kuhusu mwingilianotanzu katika mivigha ya embalunamwaka kogwa umedhihirisha kuwa, tanzu mbalimbali katika mivigha hii huchanganyikana wakati wa utendaji, na kwa hivyo, hazipaswi kuwekewa mipaka ya kudumu. Tanzu hizi ni pamoja na nyimbo, malumbano ya utani, majigambo, maghani, methali, misemo, tarihi, visasili, khurafa, mighani na misimu. Baada ya kubainisha uwepo wa mwangilianotanzu katika mivigha ya embalu na mwaka kogwa, makala hii inachunguza nafasi ya huu mwingiliano wa tanzu katika umamilishaji wa mivigha embalu na mwaka kogwa. Hii ina maana kwa hivyo, kuchanganyika wakati wa utendaji, na kwa hivyo, hazipaswi kuwekewa mipaka ya kudumu.

Kujenga Mivigha za Embalu na Mwaka Kogwa

Fanani katika mivigha ya embalunamwaka kogwa hutumia kongoo la fasihi simulizi ya jamii za Babukusu na Wamakunduchi kama marejeleo yake. Ndani ya kongoo hili, kuna tanzu zenye asili tofauti, zilizotungwa na watu tofauti, katika miktadha tofauti na kurejelea matukio tofauti huletea pamoja. Kwa mfano, fanani katika majigambo yanayotolewa katika hatua ya upakaji wa tope maalum (khulonga), ndani ya mivigha ya embalu anatumia tanzu kama vile methali ya Kitimule, kisasili cha Chetambe na milecha Mango ndani ya majigambo yenyewe. Hizi ni tanzu ambazo zina asili tofauti kwani moja aliwazungumiza kutokana na matukio tofauti, na inawezekana kabisa kuwa tanzu hizi zinaletwa pamoja ili kuunda namna ambavyo mwingilianotanzu huu ni nguzo muhimu katika kuiwezesha mivigha ya embalu na mwaka kogwa kutekeleza majukumu yake. Kwa hivyo basi, makala imebainisha kuwa, ambavyo mwingilianotanzu, (hali ambayo hujitokeza ama kwa fanani kujua au kutojua), huiwezesha embalu na mwaka kogwa kutekeleza kazi yake kupitia kwa namna mbalimbali:

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Ubunaji na ubunaji-upya wa vijenzi vya asantesem unakaidi mipaka dhahiri ya kifasili, kwani asantesem ni zao la mahojiano na mazungumzo ya ndani kwa ndani kati ya vijenzi vyake, yanayoifanya iwe nyumbufu, changamano na yenye mianya. Hili huifanya ikaidi uwezekano wa kuichambua kipwekepweke, (msisitizo ni wangu).

Hii ina maana kwamba, embalu na mwaka kogwa kama mfumo timilifu ulio na miuundo dhahiri ni zao la uumbaji wa Babukusu na Wamakunduchi, unaojengwa kwa tanzu mbalimbali zinazoingiliana katika viwango (vivigha) tofautitofauti. Kuhusu hili, McCaskie (1989) anashikilia kuwa, uainishaji na uchanganuzi (msisitizo ni wangu) wa asantesem ni wa kimuktadha na wa kiutendaji. Hii ni kwa sababu, maudhui yenyewe yanategemea nyongeza na punguzo linalotokana na utendaji. Kwa kuunganisha yaliyokuwa yametenganishwa; na kwa kusema kitu kilekile kwa njia tofautitofauti, mivigha ya embalu na mwaka kogwa huibuka na muktadha changamano unoweza maana mpya kuibuliwa huku ya jadi ikipanuliwa na kupewa sura mpya katika ulimwengu wa sasa. Barber (1991: 20) anaunga hili mkono anaaposema:

Kongoo la oriki linalolengwa mada fulani maalum, huundwa kwa fito zinazotokana na tanzu tofautitofauti. Kwa hivyo, tanzu hazina uhusiano wowote tofauti na uhusiano unaopatikana kutokana utendaji husika. Mwingilianotanzu huu unaweza kufasiliwa kwa msemu: enyi tanzu nendeni pamoja, kwa njia moja au nyinge, kata kama hamkutungwa pamoja na wala kwa lengo moja.

Maumbo ya embalunamwaka kogwa inatokana na mifanyiko ya kingazi ya kitanzu. Utafiti huu umebainisha kuwa, mifanyiko hii ya kitanzu huanza na tanzu ndogongogo kubebwa na tanzu kubwa kiasi. Hizi tanzu ndogo ni pamoja na methali, misemo, misimu na ngano ambazo huungana ili hujenga tanzu kubwa kiasi. Tanzu zinazobeba hizi tanzu ndogondogo ni pamoja na nyimbo, maghani, malumbano ya utani, ngonjera na majigambo. Hatimaye, hizi tanzu kubwa kiasi huingiliana na kushirikiana kupitia mifanyiko mbalimbali ya kitanzu katika kujenga tanzu kuu ambazo ni embalu na mwaka kogwa. Kwa

**Mbinu ya Kuhalalisha Maoni ya Fanani**

Katika jamii nyongeza za Kiafrika, wazee hushikilia na afasi maalum ya kuielekeza jamii kupitia kwa maneno yao yenye busara na kuwa wakati wa umri pamoja na tarijiba yao pevu inayotokana na wao kuishi na kuona mengi. Maneno haya ya wahenga hubeba sauti na mamlaka ya jamii nzima. Kwa hivyo, mtu yeyote katika jamii akitata asikilizwe kwa makini, anaweza akatumia baadhi ya maneno ya wazee hawa, ambayo huu hifadhiwa ndani ya tanzu mbalimbali za fasihi simulizi. Tanzu hizi ni kama vile, methali, misemo

Kwa mfano majigambo yaliyotolewa katika jukwaa la *khulonga* (*shughuli ya kumpaka mtahiriwa tope maalum*) katika kuzingatia kwa embaluje, yameundwa kutokana na tanzu ndogondogo kama vile misemo: *lirango lie ‘njofu* (*paja la tembo*), *chinyuni chafwa* (*nyuni wakafu wote*), *omwana bulilo* (*mtoto ni mali*), *bang’ang’ula mafunga* (*ngariba watajika*), na *engobo ya Mango* (*nguo ya mwazilishi wa tohara kwa jina Mango*); methali: *rebanga Kitimule wanyoa Ebuyumbu* (*uliza Kitimule aliyetangulia kuifika nasaba ya Bayumbu*), *eng’ana ye emboko yambukhila nie mawe yambukhila* (*mtoto wa nyoka ni nyoka* na *wesalila akhila webale* (*aliyezaa ni bora kuliko tasa*); na kisasi cha *Chetambe*.

Katika kuzingatia kwa *mwaka kogwa*, kuna malumbano ya utani yanayotolewa wakati wa uchomaji wa kibanda ambapo, waimbaji wanatumia methali mbili: *mkosa mila ni mtumwa na baniani mbaya kiatu chake dawa*, ambazo ndizo kitovu cha malumbano yao. Methali hizi zinatumiwa katika malumbano haya ya utani ili kurithisha historia na utamaduni wa Wamakunduchi. Kwa mfano, methali *mkosa mila ni mtumwa*, inatumiwa kwanza kusimulia kuhusu ujio wa biashara ya watumwa pamoja na kutetaji wa mila na desturi za Wamakunduchi, ikiwemo usherekeaji wa mwaka kogwa wa *embalu* kwa *mwaka kogwa*.
na ngano. Hii ndio maana, fanani hutumia tanzu ndogondogo katika tanzu kubwa kiasi kwa lengo la kutafuta sauti yenye mamlaka na ya kijamii ili wazo au maoni yake yaweze kukubalika kwa urahisi na jamii. Kwa hivyo, matumizi ya methali, misemo na ngano katika nyimbo, majigambo na maghani ni uingizaji wa sauti ya wahenga wanaowakilisha jamii nzima.


Kuonyesha Umahiri wa Fanani
Mwingilianotanzu unaweze kutumiwa kama mizani ya kupima ubingwa wa fanani husika. Hii ni kwa sababu, uhamaaji kutoka utanzu mmoja hadi mwingine bila shida yoyote unathibitisha ubingwa wa fanani katika kumaizi fasihi simulizi ya Basotho pamoja na uwezo wake mkubwa wa kukumbuka, Tsui (2008). Utanzu ndani ya utanzu mwingine au unaotolewa sambamba na utanzu husika, unaweza kubainika tu utanzu nani au maudhui yake. Hii ni kwa sababu, maneno au mishororo inayochukuliwa au kunukuniwa kutoka tanzu hizi zinazobebwa na tanzu zingine huwa siyo kamilifu. Fanani, hususan wale magwiji huyunjavunja tanzu hizi kwa chuchukuliwa au kunukuniwa kutoka tanzu zingine katika ustadi wa hali ya juu. Wanaweza kumaliza na kuweze kwa kutokana na kuheshi, ili waweze kumaaniza ili waweze kumaaniza kwa kuzungu wa fanani husika aliwasiliana na umahiri wa fanani wa tsamii. Flue, Tsui (2008: 234), anasema:

Uhamaji wa fanani kutoka thoko (majigambo) hadi sefela (mghani ya wachimba migodi); sefela (mghani ya wachimba migodi) hadi thoko (majigambo) na hatimaye kutoka thoko (majigambo) hadi
Dhima ya Mwingiliano Tanzu

sefala (maghani ya wachimba migodi) unafanywa kwa ustadi mkubwa hivi kwamba ni vigumu kubainisha mipaka kati ya tanzu hizi. Mipaka inabainika tu kupitia ubainishaji wa maudhui ya kila utanzu katika fasihili simulizi ya Basotho.

Hiyo basi, fanani ambaye ana uwezo wa kutumia tanzu nyingi ndani ya utanzu mmoja huchukuliwa kama mulumbu hodari. Kwa hivyo, mwingiliano tanzu hutumiwa kudhihirisha kuwa fanani husika anaielewa na utamaduni wake barabara. Hali hii huifanya imetukia kwa imani.

Maitaria (2010: 15) anaunga hili mkono kwa kusema:

Matumizi ya methali zaidi ya moja katika uwasilishaji wa ushairi huweza kutumia kama mizani ya kubainisha umahiri na uhodari wa fanani; ni mbinu ya kuhakiki viwango vya umbuji au ubunifu wa fanani; ni mbinu ya kuhakiki viwango vya umbuji au ubunifu wa fanani.

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Hali hii inadhiririka katika tanzu tulizochambua katika mivigha ya embalamnamwaka kogwa. Kwa mfano, katika wimbo wachebutang’i, fanani anatumiza methali omwana wesecha sikolonjo silinda ekunda, kwa maana ya, mtoto wa kiume ndiye mkinikiwa na maadhihi ya kwenye kufanyia kwa kuhakikisha umahiri wa fanani.

Hali hii inadhiririka katika tanzu tulizochambua katika mivigha ya embalamnamwaka kogwa.

Mbinu za Kifani

Kwa mfano katika wimbo wa ‘Shamba’ tunatambua kuwa, kuna matumizi ya semi nyingi ambazo zimefuatana. Kwa mfano, kuna methali kama vile mpunga bila kuutwanga hauperti mchele wake; mtoto akililia wembe mpe; na kila mgombea fupa mwisho humng'oa meno. Methali ya kwanza ina maana kuwa, ukitaka kupata kitu kizuri lazima ukihangaikie. Kitu hicho kizuri kinamithilishwa na mchele ambao haapatikani hivi hivi tu bila kufanya kazi ya kuukoboa mpunga, shughuli ambayo huchosha. Methali ya pili inalenga kuwaasa wanajami kuwa, wanapokumbana na watoto waisiozingitia maelekezo ya wazazi wao, wanapaswa kuwaacha maana hatimaye watapata shida. Aidha, methali ya tatu inabeba ujumbe kama ule wa methali ya pili.


Ingawa kila utanzu una sifa zake, na mahali pamoja na muda wa kutolewa, tanzu hizi ndio una uwezo mkubwa wa kutolewa wa kubeba utanzu zingine katika utendaji. Utanzu wa hadithi huingiliana. Utanzu wa hadithi ndio una uwezo mkubwa wa kubeba tanzu zingine katika utendaji. Tanzu zinazobebwa na hadithi huiongezea ufasihi wake pamoja na kuisaidia iweze kutekeleza wajibu wake vizuri zaidi.

Kusisitiza na Kupanua Wigo wa Maudhui

Kwa mfano, katikamajigambo ya khulonga (yanayotolewa wakati wa kupaka mtahiriwa tope maalum) yanabeba tanzu kama vile misemo: lirango lie ‘njofu (paja la tembo), chinyuni chafwa (nyuni wakafa wote), omwana bulilo (mtoto ni mali), bang’ang’ula mafunga (ngariba watajika) na engubo ya Mango (nguo ya mwazilishi wa tohara kwa jina Mango); methali: rebanga Kitimule wanyoa Ebuyumbu (uliza Kitimule aliyetangulia kaifika nasaba ya bayumbu), eng’ana ye emboko yambukhila nie mawe yambukhila (mtoto wa nyoka ni
nyoka) na wesalila akhila webale (aliyezaa ni bora kuliko tasa); na kisasili cha Chetambe (jina la sehemu ambapo Babukusu waliuwawa sana wakati wa vita vyo kupigania uhuru). Methali ya rebanga Kitimule wanyo Ebuyumbu hutumiwa kwa lenge la kuwaasa walengwa watafute ushauri wa waliowatangulia katika jambo husika kabla ya kulifanya naye eng’ana ye emboko yambukhila nie mawe yambukhila, ikiwaasa watafariwa waawezuka nyayo za wazazi wao kwa wakati wa vita vyo kupigania uhuru.) Methali ya rebanga Kitimule wanyo Ebuyumbu hutumiwa kwa lenge la kuwaasa walengwa watafute ushauri wa waliowatangulia katika jambo husika kabla ya kulifanya naye eng’ana ye emboko yambukhila nie mawe yambukhila, ikiwaasa watafariwa waawezuka nyayo za wazazi wao kwa wakati wa vita vyo kupigania uhuru)

Matumuzi ya semi hizi nne yanalenga mambo manne tofauti: ujitofuatishaji na ujitambuaji wa Babukusu; umuhimu wa ujasiri; umuhimu wa watoto katika ndoa; ubingwa wa nasaba ya Bayemba katika kazi ya unjani na umuhimu wa jagina wa kima Mwili katika maisha ya ukubwani miongoni mwa Babukusu. Kuhusu hili, Kalogirou na Vasso (2012) wanasema kwamba, wingi wa matini ndani ya matini moja huzalisha maana tofauti tofauti zinazohusiana.

Hatimaye kisasili cha Chetambe kinatolewa kupitia kutajwa tu kwa jina la sehemu amba kula ambapo Bayemba katika kazi ya unjani na umuhimu wa watoto katika ndoa; ubingwa wa nasaba ya Bayemba katika kazi ya unjani na umuhimu wa jagina wa kima Mwili katika maisha ya ukubwani miongoni mwa Babukusu. Kuhusu hili, Kalogirou na Vasso (2012) wanasema kwamba, wingi wa matini ndani ya matini moja huzalisha maana tofauti tofauti zinazohusiana.
Katika ubunifu wa masimulizi, suala la mwingilianomatini *badala ya mwingilianotanzu*, humfanya msikilizaji aweze kuwa na uwezo wa kupokea mambo mengi kwa wakati mmoja, (msisitizo ni wangu).

Kuhusu hili, Namulandah (2011: 36) anashadidia hali hii ya mwingilianotanzu kwa kusema:

Nyimbo ni sehemu muhimu sana ya ngano. Hutumiwa kuboresha usimulizia; kama kuingo cha matukio katika msuko husika; hutambulisha au kuzua taharuki na kuondoa uchovu wa masimulizi. Wakati mwingine, nyimbo ndio maudhui wakati masimulizi hubebe maudhui yenye.

**Kutoa Muhtasari na Majumuisho**

Tanzu ndogondogo hutumika kama majumuisho ya maudhui ndani ya tanzu kubwa kiasi na tanzu kuu. Hali hii hudhihirika kutoa maelezo marefu au kutoa muhtasari wa maelezo marefu. Ndiyo (2011) anashadidia hali hii kwa kudai kuwa, wimbo hutumiwa ndani ili kuleta msisitizo wa jambo fualani ambapo msani ya kutoa muhtasari wa maelezo wa mafunzo wa majumuisho na majaribio ya kwenye utanzu husika…pia unaweza kutumia utanzu kwa ambapo mlango ya mwanasa wako.

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Tanzu ndogondogo hutumika kama majumuisho ya maudhui ndani ya tanzu kubwa kiasi na tanzu kuu. Hali hii hudhihirika kutoa maelezo marefu au kutoa muhtasari wa maelezo marefu. Ndiyo (2011) anashadidia hali hii kwa kudai kuwa, wimbo hutumiwa ndani ili kuleta msisitizo wa jambo fualani ambapo msani ya kutoa muhtasari wa maelezo wa mafunzo wa majumuisho na majaribio ya kwenye utanzu husika…pia unaweza kutumia utanzu kwa ambapo mlango ya mwanasa wako.

Kufikirisha Jamii
Fanani mtajika hutumia tanzu mbalimbali ili kuzua taharuki miongoni mwa hadhira yake. Hapa, fanani anaweza kuanza kuimba wimbo halafu ghafla, anaacha na kuanza kutongoa hadithi, labda, kisasili na kabla ya kukamalishina utongoaji, akataja methali na kuhitimishana na majigambo. Kila utanzu unazua hamu ya kutaka kujiandaa zaaidi, kwa kukoleza maudhui inayotolewa ili iweze kujumuika katika utendaji. Kwa ujumla, misitizo huu wa yaliyomo katika tanzu mbalimbali unasirizwa pia majukumu ya mivigha ya embalu na mwaka kogwa, hivyo kuisaidia kutekeleza wajibu wake vizuri zaidi.

Matumizi ya tanzu ndogondogo ndani ya utanzu mkubwa, huwa na lengo la kuhitiza hadhira. Kwa hivyo, utanzu unatuwezi katika utanzu mwingine huwa kama kituo cha mapumziko kwa hadhira. Hadhira hupewa fursa ya kutafakari kuhusu yaliyosemwa na fanani na kujiandaa zaaidi. Kuhusu hili, Maitaria (2010: 114) anasema:

Methali ya katikati huifanya hadhira kuwa na kipindi cha kupumzisha kwa utanzu. Kwa hivyo, utanzu unatuwezi katika utanzu mwingine huwa kama kituo cha mapumziko kwa hadhira. Hadhira hupewa fursa ya kutafakari kuhusu yaliyosemwa na fanani na kujiandaa zaaidi. Kuhusu hili, Maitaria (2010: 114) anasema:

Methali ya katikati huifanya hadhira kuwa na kipindi cha kupumzisha kwa utanzu. Kwa hivyo, utanzu unatuwezi katika utanzu mwingine huwa kama kituo cha mapumziko kwa hadhira. Hadhira hupewa fursa ya kutafakari kuhusu yaliyosemwa na fanani na kujiandaa zaaidi. Kuhusu hili, Maitaria (2010: 114) anasema:

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walimuuma mwenyewe ghala; Olinda embalu Oli olinde ‘ngwe yenyen maana ya ikabilu embalu kana kwamba unaikabila chui; na Onyindalila oli okhama linani kwa maana ya vumilia kama mtu anayekana zimwi. Halikadhalika, katika malumbano ya utani katika mwaka kogwa, waimbaji wanatumia methali mbili: mkosa mila ni mtumwa na baniani mbaya kiatu chake dawa.


Kueleza na Kurithisha Historia
Dhima ya Mwingiliano Tanzu


**Kuchangamsha Hadhira**

Fanani hutumia tanzu zaidi ya moja katika uwasilishaji wa utanzu mkuu ili kuondoa uchovu na kuteka hisia za wasikilizaji wake ili watamani kumsikiliza zaidi na zaidi. Maelezo ya Bukenya na Wenzake (1997:71) yanaunga mkono kwamba, maghani na semi zinatumwa kwa kusisimua hadhira ili iweze kushiriki katika utendaji wa ngano inayotongolewa.

**Hitimisho**

Makala hii inadhirishwa kuwa mwingilianotanzu uliobainishwa katika mivigha hii unaisaidia kuibuka na uwezo wa mwingiliano-majukumu unaoitekelezwa kupitia namna mbalimbali: kujenga mivigha ya *embalu* na *mwaka kogwa*; mbinu ya kuhalalisha maoni ya fanani; kuonyesha umahiri; kusisitiza na kupanua maudhui; kutoa muhtasari na majumuisho; kufikirisha jamii; kueleza na kurithisha historia; na kuchangamsha hadhira. Njia hizi anuai huiwezesha mivigha ya *embalunamwaka kogwa* kutekeleza majukumu yake mbalimbali kwa wakati mmoja.

**Marejeleo**


Abstract

Transformational visionary and inspirational leadership practices of departmental heads can determine levels of organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) of the academic faculty members in a public university setting. The organisation and management of public university activities depend on active involvement of academic faculty members because they play a vital role in the university’s survival. This implies that university management is incomplete without notable participation of the academic faculty members, whose foundation is laid at the departmental level and the results have implication for the overall governance success of the university. Consequently, certain leadership styles have distinct bearing on the levels of obedience, loyalty and participation of employees, which subsequently influence organisational effectiveness. Based on this premise, this paper presents results obtained from a qualitative case study conducted among academic faculty members of one faculty in one of the public universities in Kenya. The purpose of this study was to determine how heads of departments’ leadership styles influence the degree of academic faculty members’ OCB within their departments – and by extension – the effectiveness of the university. Data was obtained through in-depth interviews and focus group discussion with a purposive sample of heads of departments and academic faculty members. The results obtained add empirical support to the assertions that indicators of organisational effectiveness are associated with employees’ willingness to go above and beyond their job requirements as indicated by the levels of OCB largely influenced by the leadership styles. Can this apply in
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Introduction

Good organisational citizens usually work hard for their organisations, and thus achieve greater effectiveness in their jobs (Cameron, 2005). Organisational effectiveness is determined by a variety of factors. One important determinant is the organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) of the members of that organisation. There are many determinants of desirable levels of OCB of the members of the departments within which they work and the organisation at large. One of the factors is leadership styles.

Although the importance of leadership styles as predictors of OCB has been discussed comprehensively in Western settings (Bass, 1985; Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Lowe, Kroeck & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Geyer & Steyrer, 1998; Wang et al., 2005; Schlechter & Engelbrecht, 2006; Boerner et al., 2007), Farooqui (2012) and Iqbal, et al., (2012) observe that most of the existing literature supports the OCB’s significance in the service provision organisations with focus on active participation and effective delivery of services but has not been given great prominence in educational contexts, including universities.

This study is confined to the aspect of leadership styles that influence the attitude and behaviour of the members in an organisation within a university setting. This is important because university educational settings are presumed to facilitate quality of leadership in the society. However, as Farooqui (2012) notes, this is not always achieved and actual practices have led to discussion that higher education may no longer be viewed as the cradle of elite pride, as it was in past decades. Research on OCB is a recent topic in educational settings, so it is presumed that within university settings, increased OCB may increase the overall efficiency of the organisation and thus lead to greater staff and student satisfaction and/or performance. Efficiency in University management can lead to addressing some of the governance challenges that public universities face in Kenya today.

This study, is therefore intended to analyse the concept of OCB and its effect on faculty attitudes through an in-depth study of departmental leadership at ‘African University’ (pseudonymous to protect the identity of the participating
Mareri

university) in Kenya. African University is a public university where the academic division constitutes 10 faculties with about 480 academic faculty members (‘African University’, 2008; Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). In addition to the existence of varied cadres of staff who contribute in different ways to organisational effectiveness, public university academic faculty members play a key role in sustaining university operations. They are, however, not always allowed access to issues that contribute directly to the effectiveness of university management. Farooqui (2012) notes that academic faculty members are usually relegated to dealing with student classroom teaching and examination oriented issues, while their attitude and feelings about the non-academic issues that affect the administration of the university are not given prominence.

To gain a greater depth of understanding, this qualitative case study focuses on the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences with a sample purposively selected to reflect that faculty. It examines the direct influence of two aspects (visionary and inspirational) of transformational leadership style of the heads of four academic departments on faculty OCB within those departments. Since literature supports the role played by leadership styles in determining the levels of OCB, this qualitative case study identifies the need to establish the levels of OCB among the academic faculty members in a specific university context, determined by transformational visionary and inspirational leadership traits based on Farooqui’s (2012) indication that OCB research is a new trend in the education sector the world over. In fact, there are no known studies in Kenyan educational settings on how leadership can determine the citizenship behaviour of the academic faculty members, who play a pivotal role in any university workforce, hence contributing to its effectiveness. This is particularly important because in the Kenyan public university settings, there is a tendency to focus on top leadership that usually constitutes the Vice Chancellors, the deputy Vice Chancellors, Principals of Constituent Colleges and Directors of Institutes. Minimal attention is paid to the leadership qualities and styles of heads of academic departments, who interact directly with academic faculty members, often viewed as the face of the university to students (Laws of Kenya, 2012; ‘African University’, 2008).

This study utilizes the qualitative case study research technique in collecting and analyzing data. This is done by seeking evidence from one organisation and contextualizing the subject matter. Three sources of evidence are used; interviews, focused group discussion and a Likert-type scale questionnaire to
categorize the information obtained. The Likert-type scale is not used in the more traditional ordinal number scale and quantitative statistical analysis is not performed on the data, but it is used to segment responses into broad areas of agreement and disagreement with statements presented to the respondents. The data obtained by this mode is used to measure the leadership styles currently in use by the heads of departments from the leadership style scale consisting of the transformational leadership behavior inventory (TLI) developed by Podsakoff et al., (1990). It is used to measure dimensions of articulating a vision and inspiring and motivating. This is supported by empirical research findings, which have established that transformational leadership is related to organisational, and leadership effectiveness (Bryman, 1992; Lowe et al., 1996).

Besides measuring transformational leadership, OCB is measured by using standardized OCB questions developed by Smith, Organ and Near (1983). This scale measures the altruism and compliance of OCB. This qualitative case study rates these behaviour items ranging from Never (1), Once or twice (2), Once or Twice per month (3), Once or twice per week (4) to Every Day (5). The responses are considered as estimate indicators of behaviours and attitudes rather than numerical statistics. The choice to use Likert-type scale in this qualitative case study is to complement and validate responses and minimize the likely misinterpretation of the data obtained from interview and focus group interaction. Open ended questions in the interview questions are used to obtain qualitative information from the sample academic faculty members and heads of four academic departments (Economics; Languages & Linguistics; Philosophy & Religious Studies and Peace & Security Studies) at ‘African University’, which make up the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The responses obtained are analyzed thematically and interpreted by identifying the recurring subject matter as well as content that is noticeably different from the rest. This is achieved by looking for common attitudes and behaviours self reported from the academic faculty members that have indications of obedience, loyalty and participation and also common attitudes and behaviours self-reported by the heads of departments that have indications of transformational leadership traits and practices.

The study aimed at achieving four objectives: to identify visionary and inspirational traits of transformational leadership exhibited by heads of four academic departments in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of ‘African’ University; to determine how visionary and inspirational leadership traits
influence the levels of academic staff obedience, loyalty and participation in departmental and university activities; to analyze how actual or implied levels of obedience, loyalty and participation determine academic faculty’s OCB and to determine the degree to which academic faculty citizenship behaviour could affect ‘African University’s Organisational Effectiveness (OE).

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour
The term organisational citizenship behaviour was first coined by Organ (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith, Organ & Near, 1983). This was followed by a comprehensive definition by Organ (1988) as that individual behaviour that may not be recognized by the organisation’s formal reward systems but contributes to the degree of effective functioning of the organisation. Such behaviours are optional and are not part of individual job descriptions and hence their absence is not punishable. Later, Organ (1997) refined the OCB definition by conceptualizing organisational citizenship behavior as any form of performance that supports the social psychological environment in which the work tasks are embedded. This is intended to distinguish OCB from what constitutes the core tasks and explains why many organisations now strive to reward the behaviours inclined towards OCB (Nielsen et al., 2009). Based on this broad definition of OCB, Organ (1990), notes that there have emerged related concepts which however emphasize different features. They include: organisational citizenship performance; extra-role behaviour; organisational spontaneity; pro-social organisational behaviour and voice behaviour. Although these concepts are related, they usually emphasize different features (Organ, 1990).

One key benefit of organisation citizenship behaviour (OCB) is its positive contribution to overall effectiveness of an organisation because it is viewed as a pro-social organizational behaviour and extra role behaviour (Ashraf, & Kadir, 2012). This is why Organ (1990) says that OCBs have a variety of forms including altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, civic virtue and conscientiousness. Chompoukum and Derr (2004) observe that since organisation citizenship behaviours are less likely to be formally rewarded than are required job behaviours; they are presumably performed by intrinsic motivation mechanism. The intrinsic rewarding properties of OCB’s may be especially salient and important for teachers, who are acknowledged for having high stress jobs with low extrinsic rewards. Podsakoff et al., (2000) believe that OCBs are still primarily viewed as behaviours that are generally discretionary and less likely to be formally or explicitly rewarded in an
organisation. This is supported by Erturk’s (2007) argument that academics perform the task of teaching that is a complicated activity requiring professional reasoning. They are viewed as professionals since they have spent a considerable amount of time mastering the fundamentals of teaching and yet, as Macfarlane’s (2007) study established, most universities do not place academic staff citizenship behaviour as an important criterion for promotion. Macfarlane’s study highlighted a voiced concern that what really mattered in such promotion decisions were contributions to research through publications and to obtain grant funding. Macfarlane (2007) further observes that a minimal number of universities provide an explicit ‘weighting’ for service or non-academic citizenship contributions.

Within the context of the above description, OCB remains an elusive phenomenon particularly within the institutions of higher learning. The fact that academic faculty members are expected to routinely go to class at stipulated times, cover the set syllabus, prepare and administer examinations and keep all the deadlines for results submission, leaves gaps and questions that require to be addressed, such as the ones that this study articulates. There is a need to determine the degree to which the academic faculty members’ attitudes and feelings could enhance the effectiveness of their departments and the organisation (the university).

**Effective Leadership**

Leadership has been described as the relationship behaviour between leaders and followers in a particular situation with the common intention to accomplish the organisation’s results (Bass, 1985). Generally, most leadership researchers suggest that an effective leader should be able to articulate vision, instill belief, loyalty and lead employee’s talents directly towards achieving the organisation’s goals (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996; Strange & Mumford, 2002; Bennis, 2002; DePree, 2002). From this description, the communication that takes place between leaders and subordinates is expected to influence the behaviour of both parties. Consequently, leader behaviours are believed to play a key role in determining OCBs. Podsakoff *et al.*, (2000) established that leader behaviours show consistent relationships with employee behaviours. However, they noted that the mechanism through which these leader behaviours influence citizenship behaviours are not always clear. Some of these behaviours such as supportive leader behaviour may have their primary effect on OCBs through the norm of reciprocity. For example, employees who receive personal support from their leaders may wish to reciprocate by
inputting extra effort in the form of citizenship behaviours to help the leader. Other behaviours, like providing an appropriate role model, may influence OCBs directly through social learning processes, because the leader influences various types of citizenship behaviours among subordinates. Podsakoff et al. (2000) further observe that other leadership behaviours, such as contingent reward behaviour, may have a direct impact on citizenship behaviours. According to Lo, Ramayah and Kueh (2006), the relationship between leader and members of the organisation play a significant role in motivating employees to perform citizenship behaviour. Walumbwa, Wu and Orwa (2006) investigated the impact of contingent reward transaction leader (CRT), and defined leader behaviour as that which emphasizes clarifying role and task requirements and providing followers with material or psychological rewards. Their results further showed that when employees perceive their leader as being fair, demonstrated in terms of the reward behaviour, employees are more inclined to be satisfied with the supervisor and will remain committed to the organisation and display citizenship behaviour. This provides a good basis for assessing the degree to which leadership styles of heads of academic departments could influence the academic faculty members’ OCB and gauge how this might influence the overall organisational effectiveness. This is in reference to Deaconu & Rasca’s (2011) belief that organisational effectiveness and success rely on leadership style.

Furthermore, Arklan (2011) notes that leadership is important for all organisational structures that contain the human element; for the simple reason that leaders play dominant roles in the kind of directions organisational structures take up, how they will organize themselves, and the kind of goals they will adopt and who will perform what kind of tasks to attain those goals (Arklan, 2010). This influence of leaders holds true for intra-organisational communication as well as for other fields. As leaders are the ultimate decision-makers within the organisation, the type of leadership that they have adopted and their fundamental assumptions about internal communication of the organisation and approaches will manifest themselves in various different forms and permeate the internal communication system of that organisation in many ways. Iqbal et al. (2012) argue that any leader within an organisation has an undeniable influence on intra-organisational communication, whether positive or negative and that the influence of an autocratic leader on intra-organisational communication will be different from the influence of a leader who has democratic qualities. Likewise, Arklan (2011) explains that the influence of a leader who advocates traditionalism and customariness, and that
of a leader who is a forerunner of modernity and progressiveness will yield different results on the scale of organisational effectiveness. This view is in tandem with various assertions of leadership theories fronted by various scholars (Northhouse, 2001, 2007).

This in effect determines imminent results of transactional-transformational leadership style construct that is the focus of this research. Transformational leadership in particular has received a great deal of academic attention in the recent past. The effectiveness of transformational leadership style has empirically been proven to contribute greatly to organisational effectiveness in European and North American contexts (Lai, 2011). Little research has focused on African contexts and negligible research in Kenyan settings. This is the reason for utilizing this construct to assess the effectiveness of a university management system in Africa and Kenya in particular. Nevertheless, a model of transformational leadership concept created by Podsakoff, et al., (2000), that bears six dimensions that are u oriented, is used in this study because of its suitability to the phenomenon under study. This is because the academic faculty members feel and behave in a particular manner as determined by the behaviour of the leaders at the departmental level.

This, according to Lai (2011), is in pursuit of what researchers have sought to identify, which leadership style – or which elements of particular leadership styles – can be linked to positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, follower motivation, and organisational performance. Consequently, Lai (2011), reports that Judge and Piccolo (2004) performed a meta-analysis of 626 correlations from 87 sources to relate transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership characteristics to the aforementioned outcomes. Their findings support a link between effective leadership and all dimensions of transformational leadership (visionary, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration), as well as a single dimension of transactional leadership, contingent reward. Lai (2011) safely concludes that though transformational and transactional leadership are often presented as being at opposing ends of a spectrum, a combination of select elements from both leadership styles may yield the best results. This paper focuses on only two elements of transformational leadership of being visionary and inspirational.
Effective Leadership in Universities

Universities are organisational settings with different levels of leadership—institutional, faculty, departmental and section. Several studies have examined the requirements and characteristics of departmental leaders in United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia. These studies established departmental leadership traits that would be associated with effectiveness at those levels (Abu-Hamour, 2012). For example, Wolverton et al., (2005) investigated the requirements of the heads of departments (referred to as Chairs by their study) as they were perceived by the deans and the chairs themselves. It was established that the deans believed that the chairs needed to possess good people skills particularly in relation to communication and in dealing with conflict. These skills can be deemed important in setting direction, fostering collegiality, acting as role model and even advancing the department’s objectives. Furthermore the deans believed that the chairs need to have the ability to treat academic faculty fairly and with integrity. The study also noted that practically every chair who responded wished they had more knowledge about the complexity of the position and the sheer variety of roles they would need to balance. This in essence suggests that heads of departments need to have the ability to respond in complex ways to their role as leaders at the departmental levels. However, earlier studies (Scase & Goffee, 1989) had noted that many heads of department seem to be reluctant in the sense that they view themselves primarily as academics rather than as managers. For these academic faculty members, being a leader or having managerial responsibilities is not a priority and many did not think of themselves as prospective managers when they become academics. In essence, Sadeghi & Pihie’s (2012) argument that effectiveness of any leader is reflected in their leadership style is applicable within the academic setting. This is why Bryman’s (2007) summary of the key components of effective leadership at both departmental and institutional levels, are useful. These components include: being able to provide direction; creating a structure to support the direction; fostering a supportive and collaborative environment; establishing trustworthiness as a leader; having personal integrity; credibility to act as a role model; facilitating participation in decision-making; consultation; Providing communication about developments; representing the department/institution to advance its cause(s) and networking on its behalf; respecting existing culture while seeking to instill values through a vision for the department/institution and protecting staff autonomy (p. 2).

These are derived from various studies (Benoit & Graham, 2005; Bland, et al., 2005; Ambrose et al., 2005; Bareham, 2004) and are the components
Transformational Leadership in a University Setting

associated with transformational leadership which is usually desirable in organisational leadership because it yields good results. One of the studies (Benoit & Graham, 2005) involved interviewing 24 leadership researchers who were asked to comment on the forms of leader behaviours associated with effectiveness in higher education. The responses were so varied that only the above similar components were isolated thematically that indicate a general need for a leader to create an enabling environment for academics to fulfill their potential and even interest at work. This is what informed the current qualitative case study, which aimed at establishing departmental leader behaviour effects on their followers in a specific higher education context (‘African’ University).

Despite the outlined expectations of an effective leader at university departmental level, Kerr and Jermier (1978) had earlier claimed that there are features of organisations and the people who work in them that can neutralize the impact of leadership. Although old, this is a potentially significant concept within the higher education context today because of the suggestion that when ‘subordinates’ have a professional orientation and a need for independence – both of which are arguably characteristics of academic faculty – the impact of leader behaviour is often neutralized. Similarly, Pounder, (1999) suggests that ‘most professional workers require little direct supervision from managers’ (p. 143). Instead he suggests they require a covert form of leadership entailing ‘protection and support’, which involves leaders attending to links with important constituencies that help cultivate legitimacy and support for their department or organisation. It is on this premise that this study focuses on the ‘subordinates’ – the academic faculty members’ – attitude and behaviour determined by the leaders’ demeanor that in turn influences the degree of organisational citizenship behaviour. The aim is to assess the degree to which the departmental leaders influence the academic faculty members’ OCB, which is a healthy ingredient of an effective organisation.

As earlier indicated in this paper, transformational leadership is believed to be characterized by: being visionary, idealized influence where leaders share risks with followers and are consistent in their dealings with them; Inspirational motivation by which the leader provides meaning and challenge to followers; by being enthusiastic and arousing commitment to future states; Intellectual stimulation whereby the leader stimulates innovation and creativity by encouraging new ways of dealing with work and individualized consideration where the leader pays close attention to followers’ needs, encourages potential
and recognizes personal differences (Jansen et al., 2009; Rukhmani, et al., 2010; Lai, 2011; Bass et al., 2003).

Bryman (2007) highlights Ramsden’s (1998) Australian research, which found that transformational leadership on the part of heads of department and programme coordinators was associated with student focused approaches to teaching, which in turn was perspective of students. He argued that transformational leadership is particularly conducive to departments in which dialogue about teaching is encouraged. Ramsden’s (1998) however examined leadership in relation to student rather than staff outcomes. The present study examines leadership in relation to staff outcome that are not directly related to the mandatory teaching duties. It isolates the transformational leadership traits based on the heads of departments and the academic faculty members’ perceptions, and relates the degree of academic faculty members’ citizenship behaviour to these leadership practices. The leadership practices are identified by both the heads of departments and their ‘subordinates’- the academic faculty members. Hence, this paper discusses two traits of transformational leadership; visionary and inspirational/ motivation and assesses the influence they have on two OCB aspects of altruism and conscientiousness of academic faculty members.

**Methodology**

Data was obtained from 8 academic faculty members and 4 heads of academic departments in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of ‘African University’. The sampling was purposively obtained by selecting one highest rank/designation and one lowest rank/designation from each department. There were four departments, therefore implying two members from each department, making a total of 8 to represent the academic staff members. The study demographic is summarized in Table 1 below.
Table 1: Academic Faculty Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>CODs</th>
<th>Highest Rank</th>
<th>Lowest Rank</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>COD1</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer (AF1)</td>
<td>Assistant Lecturer (AF5)</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L,L&amp;L</td>
<td>COD2</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer (AF2)</td>
<td>Assistant Lecturer (AF6)</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHRS</td>
<td>COD3</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer (AF3)</td>
<td>Lecturer (AF7)</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSSS</td>
<td>COD4</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer (AF4)</td>
<td>Lecturer (AF8)</td>
<td>03</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>04</strong></td>
<td><strong>04</strong></td>
<td><strong>04</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For purposes of this study the data was collected based on the participants’ expressed experiences, observations, attitudes and how such determine their motivation and commitment towards their work and the organisation (‘African University’). Each respondent’s observations and experiences were unique, though a number of common themes have been identified. Data was obtained by sub-focusing on two OCB aspects of altruism and conscientiousness, which are part of the five identified by Organ (1990). Two transformational leadership inventory items of inspiring vision and objectives and inspiration and motivation were used as the scale for identifying the desired transformational leadership traits. These themes were derived from the responses articulated by participants/respondents in the interviews and the TLI and OCB checklists. The results are presented in two parts: the interview responses from the academic faculty and OCB standardized checklist and the interview responses from the heads of departments and the standardized TLI checklist. This approach was guided by the model for transformational leadership that is built around selected behavioural components by various scholars (Bass, 1985; Bryman, 2007; Burns, 2010; Lai, 2011), which are summarized as revolving around four concepts that include: visionary traits; charismatic or idealized influence; inspiration; intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, these concepts provided direction to kinds of themes to look for in this study and in turn guided the kind of data to be collected.

This study therefore sought to identify only two traits – visionary and inspiration - by interviewing the academic faculty participants, the heads of departments and analyzing the scores obtained from the standardized checklist.
completed by the heads of department. These traits provide the basis for themes and subthemes based on the responses obtained from the academic faculty and the heads of department participants obtained from interviews and the OCB and TLI self assessment scores checklist. This is supported by the observation that academic departments play an important role in the success of institutions of higher education and the success of departments directly depends on effectiveness of their head (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012).

**Results and Discussion**

The results presented in this paper reflect the responses obtained from the participants in this study on how two leadership traits of being visionary and inspirational influence the levels members OCB in academic setting.

(a) **Visionary Leader Traits**

A visionary leader is one who often sets a realistic and concise vision, mission and values that can easily fit in the organisation’s culture. They have the ability to effectively communicate the vision to those that they lead and convince everyone to accept and work towards achieving that collectively (Loughead, 2009). The vision they provide does not only present a good future but also shows how individuals can work towards it in their present jobs and positions. In so doing, the followers/subordinates are encouraged to think independently and creatively to come up with solutions to old problems. Furthermore, such leaders recognize their followers as complete human beings and act as their mentors (Lai, 2011; Burns, 2010; Bryman, 2007; Bass 1985).

In this study, the academic faculty members and the heads of departments responded variably on the questions that required them to indicate what they thought about the levels of leader visionary traits.

(i) **Academic Faculty Responses**

The academic faculty participants in this study had varied responses to the question that sought to establish the level of visionary leadership that the heads of academic departments exhibited in relation to what is articulated by the proponents of transformational leadership styles. A number of important themes emerged during discussion with the respondents that relate to visionary leadership. Some of the respondents had no idea of the existence or need for a departmental vision and goals. Respondents who commented in this manner made statements such as the following:
I don’t even know what the vision of the department is. When I am sometimes ambushed by threats of disciplinary action or something like that, I go to the secretary to give me the objectives. She is better placed. I have no access to the secrets of the department.

What do you mean by departmental vision? I don’t even know what that means anyway.

I do not know if there is any vision but I just follow my instincts to do the right thing for the benefit of the students. They set the pace for me.

Some of the respondents however indicated that they had an idea that the department had some goals, although they implied that they were not availed to them. These respondents made such comments as:

No! These objectives have never been discussed in any forum. They are just pinned on the notice board.

A second theme that emerged was that the respondents were more aware of the university’s vision statement and therefore assumed that their department would follow something similar. Respondents who commented in this manner made statements such as:

I only know that the university has a vision, something like world a class university...

The COD has a clear vision of the mandate and responsibility in the department because he implements the university’s objectives

Yes the departmental objectives are clear as they are derived from the university’s strategic objectives.

To some extent there is a vision because the COD’s duties are well stipulated in the university’s procedures

These responses indicate that the respondents were faintly aware of the existence of a vision within their specific departments, although most of them commented on the university’s vision and had little or no information about a departmental one. This is an apparent indication of ignorance brought about by
lack of information. Such information needs to be spearheaded by the head of department who serves as their leader.

(ii) **Heads of Departments Responses**
The participating four (4) heads of four academic departments were interviewed to determine how they would self-report their leadership style. They were also asked to summarize their views by scoring their behaviours on a written Likert-type questionnaire.

Three main observations emerged from the responses from the participating heads of departments in response to a question that asked them to comment on the aspects of a vision for their individual departments.

First, some of the heads of the departments directly stated that their departments did not need a vision but just objectives to support the university’s vision. They implied that having a departmental vision would be duplication of university operational requirements. Those who were of this view made such comments like:

*We actually do not have a vision and as such, I believe the department aims at fulfilling the University vision through the departmental objectives.*

*What is the real use of departmental vision, won’t it look like duplicating some of these things?*

*We aim at fulfilling the university’s vision. The departmental one is just implied because success depends on the situation in the university.*

These responses are an indication of the heads’ lack of vision for their individual departments.

On the contrary, some respondents indicated that they had a vision for their department but such was not clearly articulated, but just implied. Those who had these views made such comments as:

*To have a vision I believe means that I should have clear structures put in place to enable the efficiency of departmental operations and develop world class competencies among the academic staff in the department.*
Our vision is to have an efficient department with all academic staff having attained PhD for better provision of services. Based on this dream, I strive to lead the academic staff by example.

These responses indicate that the departmental heads that had an idea about the vision did not have an actual vision to which they could make specific reference. The responses imply a confusion of concepts – vision vs. objectives and aims. A vision should be a statement that can easily be memorized, remembered and used as a point of departure for all activities.

Lastly, it emerged that some heads of departments did not have an idea about the need for a departmental vision. These respondents made such comments as:

I do all within my ability to remain scholarly relevant, I come to work on time, clear my in tray within hours, act on staff needs timely, so I expect that the staff also follows my example of such commitment to delivery of services.

I lead by example, in fact I take part in all the activities where possible, and I meet my deadlines for activities and assignments, so I expect cooperation from the members of the academic staff.

Such responses indicate that the affected heads of department do not have a good idea of what an organisational vision means and its uses. The responses above are simply a reflection of the respondents’ commitment to their duties as leaders within the departments.

(b) Motivation/ Inspiration

Based on the foundation of promoting consistent vision, mission, and a set of values to the members, the transformational leaders guide followers by providing them with a sense of meaning and challenge. They work enthusiastically and optimistically to foster the spirit of teamwork and commitment (Rashid & Waheed, 2012). Motivation and inspiration is a theme that manifests itself when a leader shows professional interest in the formulation of functional groups for the good of the department or section. Inspirational motivation further describes the degree to which the leader states a vision that is attractive and encouraging to followers to work towards achieving that goal collectively (Lo et al., 2010; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).
In organisational settings, inspirational motivation describes managers who motivate colleagues or subordinates so as they commit to the vision of the organisation. Managers with inspirational motivation encourage team spirit that facilitates the achievement of the organisational goals, increased revenue and market growth for the organisation. Inspiration and encouragement may involve inspiring and motivating employees to see what they gain when the organisation attains its set goals (Sookaneknun & Ussahawanitchakit, 2012; Podsakoff et al., 1990). Furthermore, it describes the degree to which the leader states a vision that is attractive and motivates followers by providing meaningful and challenging work environments (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

(i) Academic Faculty Responses

The participating faculty members in this study had varied perceptions about their heads of departments’ motivational inspiration within the work place. Two themes related to leader motivational and inspirational traits emerged from the responses obtained. Many respondents indicated that the head of department did not show notable genuine interest in individual or group tasks and therefore did not inspire them to work better. The specific comments made included:

The COD only shows interest when faced with his own deadlines from above and often harasses us to complete certain tasks at very short notice. I do not feel inspired. Instead I feel so harassed and demoralized because the COD thinks I do not require planning my own work but work at short notice. I often feel stressed and end up feeling desperate.

Not enough interest is shown by the COD. I remember we had once made a schedule for a research group presentation and it was cancelled the last minute without explanation, this is sending wrong message. I was mad! I needed to be told what went wrong, but nothing was said.

We do not have clearly designed group tasks except when working on ad hoc curriculum review assignments. So in fact I take responsibility for my own work and goals. The department hardly has group tasks. All members perform all tasks on equal basis, groups and teams are just like individual working on assigned duties, because we are few and rely heavily on part time staff members who are rarely available for group tasks and meetings.
The four narrations cited above indicate that the respondents felt minimal motivation from their heads of departments because they did not show individualized interest in their schedules and needs and lack of clearly set schedules for their tasks.

A second observation made in relation to the theme of inspiration and motivation is the presence of motivation and direction from the heads of departments regarding group and team tasks and goals reflecting Rashid & Waheed’s (2012) observation that transformational leaders work enthusiastically and with optimism to foster the spirit of teamwork and commitment. Those who made such observations made comments as:

*The COD shows quite a lot of interest in my work by providing an enabling environment and the required resources for functioning. I believe the COD has some interest in my personal work although in relation to her own duties and goals. I mean the interest is not clearly articulated to me as an individual but the concern for individual development is occasionally mentioned generally during meetings. Actually, during staff meetings some reference is often made to individuals and not so overtly directed to me except for my primary teaching duties.*

The two responses above imply that the respondents viewed the kind of interest shown by the heads of departments as general and having no specific benefit to individual motivation and inspiration. This indicates low rating of the leader’s inspirational qualities by the faculty respondents.

**(ii) Heads of Departments’ Responses**

The responses from the participating heads of departments elicited three themes. First, a majority indicated that they inspired and motivated their academic faculty members in various ways. They indicated that they appraised their performance and recommended them, included them in departmental decision making and implemented suggestions that they make. Those who indicated thus made comments like the following:

*I make sure that the academic staff members are aptly appraised in accordance with their performance contracts which they prepare individually and commit to adhere to them.*
But the appraisals have assisted me a lot, I rate them accordingly, give Caesar what belongs to Caesar, but I do my best to encourage them to feel part of the department and the university.

You see, I want them to feel useful in the department, this department does not belong to me alone but all of us. I surely try to include all those who are willing to move the department forward, I even take and implement their suggestions, you may not believe, because of the circumstances under which we work here.

Based on these responses, the interpretation of inspiration and motivation of followers is largely ill directed. These responses indicate that the heads of departments are not enthusiastic about going out of their normal obligations to inspire and motivate their academic faculty members on individualized basis.

Secondly, some heads of departments out rightly indicated that they did not actually engage in inspiring and motivating behaviour for the benefit of the academic faculty members in their departments. The specific comments made by such heads include:

I have one or two academic staff members who are very reliable. They finish their work on schedule even if they are under pressure and they actually sacrifice to finish team assignments without complaining and timely. Unfortunately all I can do is to thank them and give them more work because they keep deadlines, they are just smart.

The good ones…I just commend them and encourage them to keep up the spirit. Sometimes I recommend them to university management for recognition but again that depends on what they have done.

The two responses border on exploitation of the hard working members instead of motivating them. The implication here is that the heads of departments cannot distinguish between inspiring and ‘misusing’.

The third theme that emerged was apathy in dealing with academic faculty members. The element of constituting and relying on team work for accomplishing departmental objectives was not a common practice among the participating heads of department. Some of the respondents commented as follows:
But those who do not avail themselves, I do not bother because I don’t want to be struck by ulcers unnecessarily. I leave it to the administration to deal with those I cannot handle anyway.

The low performers make technical appearances and vanish. They hardly participate in any other departmental business.

I have a system of auditing all the activities in the department to establish poor and good performers. I reach out to the poor performers to find out what the problem could be but I do not actually go in depth lest they think that I am witch-hunting them.

Actually, it is not my business to police the teaching staff. I suppose that everyone knows why they got employed by the university and there is no reason for me to remind anyone. I strive to accomplish my duties and each individual should follow suit.

I will grow grey hair trying to guide adults as though they were children, you know what I mean. Let each one feel free to serve in the best way possible. I do not personally supervise team work because we rarely have such.

Apathy can be described as absence of interest in or enthusiasm for things generally considered interesting or moving, some kind of passive position. Based on the above responses, the heads of departments seem to have little or no interest in what individual academic faculty members do and the general feeling among them is that of performing duties as stipulated by the university requirements. That is an indication of minimal inspirational qualities among the heads of departments.

(c) Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)
In addition to the assessment of the levels of visionary and inspirational qualities by both the heads of department and academic staff members, this study also obtained information to enable determine the Organisational Citizenship Behaviour.

Academic Faculty Self-Assessment of Altruism and Conscientiousness
Based on two of the dimensions of OCB outlined by Organ (1990), the responses obtained are presented under the themes of Altruism and
Conscientiousness. In order to obtain standardized and measurable responses, data was collected on a scale that ranged from little evidence of a particular behaviour to frequent evidence of such behavior. Behaviours reported are accepted in the literature as reflective of OCB. This based on Redman and Snape’s (2005) argument that altruism and conscientiousness and often measured in compassion.

(i) **Altruism**
This is understood to be a social behaviour that aims to help workmates to solve their problems within difficult situations faced in terms of both job responsibility cases and individual personal cases (Organ *et al.*, 2006; Batson, Ahmad & Stocks, 2011; Vedantam, 2007). This dimension refers to a kind of helping behaviour that exceeds the normal work responsibilities. An individual ranked high in altruism is always helping their workmates who have overwhelming workloads and maintains a proactive approach that supports the leader to complete job targets (Batson, 2011).

Figure 1 (below) summarizes the self-assessment scores by the participants’ behaviours that reflect elements of altruism. The overall score from the sample indicated mid-level to low levels of altruism. Almost half of the respondents have exhibited altruistic behaviour just once or twice during their work life at ‘African’ University. The smallest grouping (just 2.08%) evidence this behaviour on a daily basis.
(ii) **Conscientiousness**

This dimension is described by organisational and behavioural psychologists as the kind of behaviour that exceeds an individual’s main job description as outlined at the time of employment (Organ *et al.*, 2006; Roberts *et al.*, 2009). This involves work based on the job description even without supervision by the leader. The individual also works effectively and efficiently (Organ *et al.*, 2006; Roberts, et al., 2009). Figure 2 (below) summarizes the self-assessment scores by the participants about behaviors that reflect conscientiousness. The data showed that 33.33% of the respondents evidenced Conscientious behaviour (exceeding expectations) at least once per week and an additional 27.08% demonstrated such behavior at least monthly. Weekly conscientious behaviour was evidenced more often by employees holding the senior lecturer job title (12.5% of the total participants), while those holding the lecturer and assistant lecturer job titles lagged behind. These results are a positive reflection of Tonkin’s, (2013) observation that leadership style has substantial effect on the followers’ behaviour within the organisation.
(iii) **Synthesis of Altruism and Conscientiousness Levels with Perceived Visionary and Inspirational Leader traits**

The transformational leadership behaviours have been described as contributing notably to innovation and creativity of the subordinates (Jansen *et al.*, 2009; Boerner *et al.*, 2007). This is the reason for inclining this study towards transformational leadership characteristics because of the nature of the participants’ occupation. Based on this premise, the data obtained is synthesized to reflect two of the five characteristics of transformational leaders which form the themes under which the data is presented.

Similarly, organisational citizenship behaviour has been described as constituting five aspects of Altruism, Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, Courtesy and Civic Virtue (Organ, 1988). The data obtained from the academic faculty participants is synthesized to reflect two of these aspects. Similarly, the behaviours identified by the participants on the standardized OCB Likert-type scale, which reflect their own actions, are summed up guided by the reviewed literature, which indicated that OCB is the individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organisation, because it is viewed as a pro-social organizational behaviour and extra role behaviour (Organ, 1988). The data is therefore deductively analysed.
by searching for relevant subject matter based on the preset themes, which form the foundation for discussion.

Connections between various aspects of the data were made in order to arrive at sensible explanation of the responses obtained. For instance, the connection between the knowledge of an existing vision or objectives in the department points to the visionary characteristic of transformational leaders. If such information is lacking among the academic faculty members, then this leader does not share a vision with the subordinates. Such a scenario determines the degree of obedience and loyalty to the head of department and participation in the departmental matters.

The levels of comfort and willingness to carry out various departmental and university duties voluntarily without grumbling or expecting payment is a reflection of satisfaction with the leadership. The connection made between the participants’ levels of comfort and willingness facilitates analysis of the influence that leadership has on the OCB of the academic faculty members. This in line with Bryman’s (2007) summary of key components of effective leadership at both departmental and institutional levels as: providing direction, creating a structure to support the direction, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment, establishing trustworthiness as a leader, having personal integrity, having credibility to act as a role model, facilitating participation in decision-making, consultation by providing communication about developments and respecting existing culture while seeking to instill values through a vision for the department/institution.

An individual with altruistic traits ranks high for always helping their workmates who may have overwhelming workloads and maintains a proactive approach that supports the leader to complete job targets (Batson et al., 2011). The results of this qualitative case study indicate that majority of the participating academic faculty respondents exhibited little altruism. These aspects are demonstrated in the behaviour of the academic faculty members, obtained from the respondents’ self ratings and comments during the interviews discussions. This affirms the conviction that OCB remains an elusive phenomenon within the institution of higher learning included in this study.

Conscientiousness is a pointer to organisational citizenship behaviour of individuals within their work environment. It is believed to involve work
based on the job description even without supervision by the leader. The individual also works effectively and efficiently (Organ et al., 2006; Roberts, et al., 2009; Lok, & Crawford, 2003). From the results presented, 33.33% of the respondents evidenced conscientious behaviour (exceeding expectations) at least once per week and an additional 27.08% demonstrated such behaviour at least monthly. Weekly conscientious behaviour was evidenced more often by academic faculty members holding the senior lecturer job title (12.5% of the total participants), while those holding the lecturer and assistant lecturer job titles lagged behind. This is an indication of a situation existing among the academic faculty members showing a lack of conscientiousness among a majority of the members of the academic faculty. The questions that the participants responded to were basic and touched their day to day operations. For example, the questions used to determine conscientiousness behaviour of the academic faculty members in their work environment included establishing if the members offered suggestions to improve how work is done within the department and volunteered for extra work assignments and special committee duties. These aspects were rated very low by many of the respondents and scored 68.74% representing the low rating of the behaviour (1-3). This is an indicator of the absence of OCB traits among the faculty of arts and social sciences academic faculty members.

The minimal OCB implied by the academic faculty members could be attributed to many issues. Transformational leaders often inspire and motivate their followers in order to encourage them to see what they gain when the organisation attains its set goals (Hoffman et al., 2011; Sookaneknun & Ussahawanitchakit, 2012; Podsakoff et al., 1990). Furthermore, they should state clear attractive visions that provide meaningful and challenging work environments (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). In this study, some of the participating heads of departments indicated that they motivate and inspire and in this regard they made the following comments: ‘I surely try to include all those who are willing to move the department forward’. This statement sounds despondent; this respondent does not seem to know what is required of the head of department regarding motivation and inspiration. Another respondent said that: ‘I make sure that the academic staff members are aptly appraised in accordance with their performance contracts’. Although there is the mention of appraisal, the respondents did not say how the appraisals are utilized as motivators. All the participating heads of departments remained silent on this aspect. This implies that such appraisals are routine activities that do not make productive use of the results obtained from the exercise. That is why some of
them vaguely commented that: ‘...but I do my best to encourage them to feel part of the department and the university’ and ‘You see, I want them to feel useful in the department’. It is not clear how such wishes are realized practically.

Some of the heads of departments even indicated that it is not their duty to motivate or inspire the academic faculty members within their departments. One disclaimer to such responsibility was made in the comment that: ...it is not my business to police the teaching staff. I suppose that everyone knows why they got employed by the university and there is no reason for me to remind anyone. This is a clear anomaly on the part of the leader of the stature of head of department, and an indication that the heads of departments do not understand their leadership roles. And this is reflected in earlier studies (Scase & Goffee, 1989), which had noted that many heads of department seemed to be reluctant in the sense that they saw themselves primarily as academics rather than as managers.

**Conclusion**

The results presented indicate that there is minimal organisational citizenship behaviour among academic faculty members in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Many report to work, perform their teaching duties and leave for lack of incentives, recognition, creative and innovative opportunities. The academic faculty members are not readily available to perform duties on a voluntary basis because they do not believe that the departmental heads and the university would appreciate their efforts.

The results also indicate that many of the academic faculty members do not view their heads of departments as visionary and inspiring. This, in essence implies that many participants in this study do not look up upon their heads of departments to influence how they feel, behave and act within their work environment. Consequently, the OCB phenomenon remains elusive in academic settings if the heads of departments do not demonstrate effective visionary and inspirational transformational leadership skills (Bryman, 2007). Since organisational effectiveness heavily relies on how much influence a leader might have on the followers, it is safe to conclude here that the minimal visionary and inspirational attributes identified from the responses may deter organisational effectiveness because all members exist as individuals without a common dream and goal to achieve.
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Authorship and Audience: The Shaping of Kenyatta's Identities in Suffering without Bitterness

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Abstract

The audience that Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's first President, targets in his collection of speeches, Suffering without Bitterness (1968), requires a close examination insofar as this audience shapes the identities the author constructs and projects in the documents. Kenyatta typically addresses the Kenya opposition and the former colonisers, whom he perceives as threats to his image as their intention in his view was to nullify his credentials as the father of the nation who had the mandate to lead Kenya into modernity. Kenyatta, in his speeches, works to render these damaging representations of him baseless. In this text, Kenyatta tries to construct the identity of a nationalist leader who is worthy of trust and who is involved in (re)constructing a post-independent state that is devoid of divisive politics and that creates an environment suitable for economic growth. The audience influences the content of a speech and almost every idea and experience that a speech writer uses has been forced by his/her intended audience. This influence is not limited to literary concerns; it determines how utterances are located within and what attitudes are taken towards a social context constituted by the audience. This paper argues that the presumed audience of the Kenya opposition and former colonisers plays a significant role in the content of Kenyatta's speeches, and in the construction of his identities in the text.
**Introduction**

This paper is concerned with one major way in which Jomo Kenyatta, the author of *Suffering without Bitterness* (1968, herein after *Suffering*) constructs his identities as nationalist leaders, i.e. by considering the wide spectrum of his audiences. Although Kenyatta’s main, acknowledged and direct audiences were the people as a whole, this paper observes that he was keenly aware of the presence of particular listeners/ readers who stood out from the general mass of people on account of their sceptical or critical attitude to his rule. He thus perceived the views of these segments of his audiences as potentially destructive to the projection of his (Kenyatta’s) desired identities. Because of this, the process of identity construction incorporates an undercurrent of work which consists in implicitly – and sometimes explicitly – responding to reserved or critical views of him by subtle placation, reassurance or outright dismissal or counter-accusation.

Essentially, every word or phrase nationalist leaders use is influenced by what they want their intended listeners/ readers to make of them. Allen (2000) argues that authorship is a mental process that involves active planning, progressing through iterative stages, in order to respond effectively to a particular audience. For Kenyatta, it is essential to consider whom he was directing his authorial statements to and what it is he wanted his speeches to accomplish in terms of projecting certain identities of himself. This is because, as Zamel (1987: 42) and Flower (1979: 123) have shown, the process of writing a speech or an autobiography is a dialogue between authors and specific (present or absent) audiences.

*Suffering: Kenyatta’s Rhetorical Engagement with the Kenya Opposition*

On the eve of independence, Kenyans had high expectations regarding the benefits they would reap from their new state of freedom and newly available opportunities. Kenyatta, as President, was seen as the one who would make the realisation of these opportunities possible. Indeed he made promises to that effect. But no quick reversal of fortunes was forthcoming, and Kenyans started expressing disillusionment and dissatisfaction with his government. The opposition that emerged regarded him as a veritable heir to the colonisers. It was felt that the only difference between him and the former colonial masters was the colour of his skin (Muigai, 2004: 189).
The most ferocious among Kenyatta’s critics and the leader of the opposition in the early post-independence years was Oginga Odinga, who wrote a book, *Not Yet Uhuru*, whose title implied that there was no freedom yet under Kenyatta. In his speeches in *Suffering*, Kenyatta is compelled to discard these accusations by constructing the identity of a father of the nation, an identity which, in its very essence, makes any negative view of him as President illogical, unthinkable and absurd. Kenyatta’s aim is to ensure Kenyans’ early adoration of him remained alive, and to undo the damage that criticisms of his leadership were doing to his image.

But Odinga was only one of a larger Kenyan audience, constituting members of the opposition, scholars and other Kenyatta government critics, who saw Kenyatta as entrenching ethnicity in Kenya given that he favoured his tribesmen, especially on the issue of land issuance (Muigai, 2004: 190; Ogot, 1996: 56). Kikuyu cronies and Kenyatta’s followers from other tribes, whom he held a grip on, dominated the only ruling party KANU. It was during the time of Kenyatta that tribal fawning started in Kenya and evolved into ethnisation of the politics of the country. But it is that very trend that Kenyatta wants to camouflage in his speeches, posing as the champion of unification.

In other words, as he constructs his identity as the father of the Kenyan nation, one who wants to see his family/ nation united, Kenyatta is driven not only by an abstract ideal of a nationalist leader, whose embodiment he wants to be seen to be, but also by his awareness that part of his audience – whether physically present during the deliverance of his speeches or not – is accusing him of dividing the nation on ethnic basis.

In the speech “Constitutional Conference, 1963”, which he delivered as a prime minister, Kenyatta pleads with communities to unite:

> At the same time, the government understands the fears and anxieties of some communities, and hopes that – by its example during these few months in office – such fears will be seen to be unfounded. The KANU government is concerned with the welfare of all the people, regardless of their race or tribe, and will be the policy of the government in the future. (219)

In this quotation, Kenyatta demonstrates that he can talk boldly about a sensitive issue – the tribal division in the country. By his very choice of topic, by the very fact that he addresses deep-rooted fears on the part of the people,
he dissociates himself from tribal inclinations. Thus, by speaking about unity of the nation, he both absolves himself from any blame with respect to tribalism – of which his critics accuse him, and responds to the people’s fears as well as aspirations.

In the same speech, Kenyatta warns the citizens that “there is no room for autonomy or secession” (211). He urges them to embrace nationalism. Although nationalism is a lofty ideal and a worthy cause for a nationalist leader to espouse, it can be argued that Kenyatta’s call for it is opportunistic. He knows that nationalism was successfully used in the past (in Kenya) to advance the goals of leadership, when these goals were sincere and coincided with the people’s aspirations for independence. Nationalism could thus take the form of allegiance to the leader, above religion, class or tribe, to the extent that some people could be prepared to sacrifice their lives in defence of it. Kenyatta sees how he can now revive the nationalist sentiments of the people, but this time to serve his new agenda – to entrench Kikuyu ethno-nationalist ideology in the country.

Similarly, in the Foreword to *Suffering*, Kenyatta foregrounds certain values as his highest principles. He writes: “I would say that I have always stood for the purposes of human dignity in freedom and for the values of tolerance and peace” (5). This assertion is again not an attempt to formulate some moral and political axioms, but is directed to the opposition’s accusations of him for violating these very values. Although Kenyatta’s government continued to talk of Kenya as one nation, and to extol fairness in its policies on land, in service delivery and jobs allocation, the high-minded rhetoric concealed a less palatable truth. As Muigai (2004: 192), Osolo (1968) and Ogot (1996: 96) observe, Kenyatta’s government spearheaded the entrenchment of Kikuyu power via a web of both formal and informal networks. As was the case with respect to the security forces, the senior civil service was increasingly Kikuyu-dominated. The crucial posts of provincial commissioners, for example, were held by a small group of conservative insiders, more than half of whom were Kikuyu (Muigai, 2004: 192).

To counter these criticisms and to make people blind, as it were, to reality itself, Kenyatta urges the Kenyan citizens to embrace nationalism, insisting that he believes in nationalism “rooted in loyalty to Kenya” as a unified state instead of a fragmented one. In his elevated rhetoric, “defending Kenya from both aggression and subversion” (9) had to be the credo of every citizen regardless of their tribe of origin. What Kenyatta means by aggression and
subversion is the existing opposition. In other words, his gospel of protecting his citizens is to be understood as protecting them from the opposition. He presents himself as a leader endeavouring to safeguard the rights of Kenyan citizens precisely because he possesses the power to detect and counter adversarial policies being championed by the opposition. His narrative of suffering for the sake of all Kenyans is meant to be seen as both his crowning glory as a nationalist and as the indisputable refutation of all criticisms against him.

Kenyatta’s critics were unsparing. Among these were Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Oginga Odinga who argued that Kenyatta had gone through a political metamorphosis (Ngigi, 1986: 4; Ogot, 1996: 95). Kenyatta the nationalist had become Kenyatta the dictator and a neo-colonial comprador (Wright, 1978). To them, he was not the man who had inspired people to stand against colonialism. His post-independence dictatorial tendencies were discerned in his amendment of the constitution to fit his presidential desires and in his banning of Odinga’s KPU and detaining his critics in 1969.

Another way in which Kenyatta builds up his identity as a father of the nation, against the background of severe criticism against him, is by turning the tables on the opposition and portraying them as betrayers of uhuru. For example, in the speech “Kenyatta Day, 1967”, he literary insults the opposition. He tells his audience that whenever they see “a KPU man … know that you have seen a snake hiding in the grass … What do you do when you see a snake? [We kill it]” (343). In addition, he cautions: “KPU should beware! The fighting for our Uhuru is on. Whoever has ears to hear, let him heed this. We say we are ready to fight for our Uhuru.” (344). By character-assassinating members of the opposition, by issuing threats against them, and by implication against those of his audience who were inclined to side with them, Kenyatta believes he is clearing the ground for constructing his identity as the ideal nationalist leader – the father of the nation.

**Suffering and the Former Colonisers**

Another segment of audience Kenyatta had in mind as he prepared his speeches consisted of the former colonisers. The reason for this is that he most likely felt he was not done with them. The economic realities of independent Kenya created the need for Kenyatta to jumpstart the country’s economy. According to him, this could only be solved through strengthening the ties between the local economy and that of the former colonisers. When Kenyatta
went to London in 1931 to present a written petition to the British parliament; he ended up enrolling in Woodbrooke Quaker College in Birmingham (Muiga, 2004: 190). Discouraged by the lack of official response to the land claims he was putting forward, he began an association with British communists, who published articles he wrote in their media outlets. After giving evidence before the Morris Carter Commission, he proceeded to Moscow to study Economics briefly at the Comintern School, KUTVU (University of the Toilers of the East) at the invitation of George Padmore, a radical West Indian. In 1934, Kenyatta enrolled at the University College London and from 1935 to 1938 studied social anthropology under Bronislaw Malinowski at the London School of Economics. But it is noteworthy that, although Kenyatta associated himself at some points with communists, his “heart” was with the capitalistic Western tradition. In fact Mutiga (2014: 17) unwittingly acknowledges this when he argues that of all the people whom Kenyatta interacted with during the fifteen years he was attending the schools mentioned above, only Malinowski (a Westerner) impressed him. Mutiga (2014) contends that Kenyatta always “worked hard to sit at the table with Britons as an equal” (17). This shows that Kenyatta’s disposition was always towards the West. His actions since independence were proof of this. So although Kenyatta wanted to be seen as deeply committed to his people, as their father, he could not extricate himself from his mental allegiance to Western capitalism, and particularly to the British.

In the “Independence Day, 1963” speech, this allegiance found an almost direct expression. Thus, he addressed the audience in English, a language belonging to the British, before he turned to Kiswahili. Osolo (1968), an eyewitness of this momentous occasion, notes that the Africans in these celebrations outnumbered both the Europeans and the Asians together by 100:1. Yet Kenyatta chose to open his remarks in a language foreign to his people. Besides giving preference to non-Africans, this act had the further implication that Kenyatta disparaged the local language and African culture. It is noteworthy that the disproportionate use of English, during and after colonialism, in Kenya is an indication of the feeling among the elite that there is prestige in using that language (Gatheru, 2005; Gal, 1989: 353; Anderson, 2006). The political elites favoured the development of English without due attention to Kenyan languages. English was perceived as an instrument of power. Fanon’s (1967) treatise on language and power relations points to the fact that the subdued person aspires to master the language and culture of the conqueror. To achieve this, the oppressed person denigrates his own culture.
and historical experience and adopts the oppressor’s perspective as his new point of reference (Fanon, 1967: 137). Within this convoluted logic, the oppressed person is contended when he “speaks like a white man”. This logic evokes a powerful psychological dilemma. The oppressed has internalised the image of the oppressor as his only reference. This means that once the oppressor exits, the oppressed person looks around for someone to oppress in turn. Kenyatta aspired to master English as a way of modelling himself within the frame of reference of the British colonialists. This kind of inferiority complex foisted on or subliminally assumed by him vis-à-vis the British found expression in the inordinate use of the English language on this historical occasion.

A further examination of the “Independence Day, 1963” speech shows another intriguing phenomenon, which reflects significantly on the allegations by Fanon (1967: 132-39), Mbato (1969: 12), and Turnbull (1962: 3) that Kenyatta was a neo-colonial comprador. For example, Kenyatta began his speech as follows: “Your Royal Highness, Your Excellency, distinguished guests and gentlemen…” (212-213). In the entire opening address, there is absolutely no indication that Kenyatta was concerned to elevate his sovereign people. Kenyatta was more bound by his desire to please his European audience than to reassure his own people about their future. The European audience would have wished Kenyatta to advance their capitalist interests in post-independent Kenya. They had in fact assisted and funded him to enable him to appeal to the Kenyan masses more strongly than KADU members. Kenyatta felt duty bound to advance their interests in return. It is this expectation on the part of the former colonisers, who constitute one of Kenyatta’s audiences, that motivates Kenyatta to speak in a manner that would not disappoint and alienate them. As far as the construction of his identity is concerned, this leaning towards the former colonisers is counterproductive because it contradicts the identity of a father of the nation. Kenyatta, however, cannot help it in this speech. But in other speeches he will work to “re-dedicate” himself to his people, re-ascertain his position – and his identity – as their father.

A further examination of the “Independence Day Speech, 1963” unearths additional interesting phenomena. Kenyatta’s speech focused primarily on the Queen’s husband as though the latter was the primary political figure at the occasion. Thus, he was convinced that the first dignitary to address was the same colonial master who had adorned him with the Fanonian “white mask.” The Kiswahili version of the speech began:
We are grateful for the greetings from Her Majesty the Queen which the Duke of Edinburg has read to us today. We ask him – when he returns to Britain – to convey our greetings to the Queen: tell her that, although we have become independent, we shall remain her friends. (214)

Of course, in Kenyatta’s view, it is African culture to be polite to a guest, both friend and enemy (Kenyatta, 1938). For Kenyatta, it was equally significant to show that, in spite of the hardships Kenya had been subjected to by the British colonialists, Kenya had no intention to seek revenge. Still, the fact that Kenyatta’s focal point in both the English and the Kiswahili versions of his “Independence Day, 1963” speech were the Queen and her husband was objectionable to his critics (Osolo, 1968; Mbato, 1969). It is clear that Kenyatta wanted to show the European audience that he was not “a leader unto darkness and death” but a leader who was ready to forget the past injustices and that he was not a communist as the British government feared. The issue of communism becomes problematic for him later as the Kenyan audience were in favour of socialist ideals, and not the capitalist ideals upon which colonialism was founded. If the purpose of the Kenyan independence celebration was to mark the restoration of African sovereignty and dignity, Kenyatta’s preference for the former oppressor over his own people was problematic. So, although Kenyatta’s deliberate intention in the speech is to construct his identity as a father of the nation, of his African people, there is hollowness to this identity which he cannot always guard against.

As a result of his approach to land division and wealth acquisition, Kenyatta has been classified as a capitalist who posed as a socialist (Ogot, 1996: 46). Socialism was a popular ideology in Africa because it emphasised the principle of members of the society contributing willingly and without stint to the development of the nation (Mboya, 1963: 3). It was appealing because it discouraged personal accumulation of property at the expense of other members of the society (Odinga, 1967; Ogot, 1996). African socialism, which Kenyatta had argued his government would embrace, proposed that the nation’s productive assets must be used in the interest of the society and its members. The sharp class divisions that once existed in Europe had no place in African socialism.

Since capitalism was an unpopular worldview in Africa, Kenyatta typically invoked the capitalist ideals with hatred, but his actions and overall rule was
largely capitalistic. Kenyatta seems to have revised his ideological orientation after ascending onto power and became a capitalist par excellence. It should be noted here that by late 1950s Britain had seemingly concluded that an independent Kenya better served its long-term defence interests than a colony wracked by open rebellion and inter-ethnic conflict (Branch, 2011). By supporting Kenyatta, the British Government would be assured of a moderate government (as opposed to what it considered to be a more radical and Soviet-friendly Odinga government) (Osolo, 1968), that would facilitate Western interests. It is in this context that Kenyatta delivered his “Independence Day Speech, 1963” at Uhuru Park in Nairobi, in which, even as he works to construct his identity of father of the nation, he cannot avoid contradicting this identity by reaching out to the British to convince them that he is ready to enter into a new pact with them. True to his word, Kenyatta became a capitalist whose leadership revolved around advancing British interests in East Africa (Osolo, 1968; Mbato, 1969; Ogot, 1996). The speech marked the end of colonial rule, but it did not mark the end of colonial influence. The speech declared independence, but it did not create a discursive space for the autonomy and self-determination of Kenya’s populace. It also revealed the holes Kenyatta himself was punching in his identity of father of the nation, in spite of himself.

Conclusion

In Suffering, the nationalist leader – Kenyatta – as he constructed his desired identities, take into consideration the entire spectrum of the audiences that he was addressing directly, or the ones that were likely to become recipients of his text. He frames his pronouncements in such a way as to respond to these audiences: either to re-affirm or revive the audiences’ positive view of them, or to undermine the views of those who have taken a critical stance with respect to them. Kenyatta’s speeches in Suffering portray him as the father of the Kenyan “family”/ nation by appealing to the nationalist aspirations of his people, dismissing, counter-accusing and character assassinating his opponents, and placating the former coloniser. As he tries to consolidate his identity as a father of the nation, he both rekindles the enthusiasm of the masses by demonstrating a re-dedication of his promises in their favour, and discards the views of his critics by portraying them as irrelevant. The “dialogue” with audience thus becomes crucial in the author’s construction of his identities.
References


Autobiography and the Deconstruction of Female Selfhood in Karen Blixen’s *Out of Africa* and Elspeth Huxley’s *The Flame Trees of Thika*

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**Abstract**

The present paper uses deconstruction theory to critique the notion of female ‘selfhood’ in two autobiographical novels written by two settlers in Kenya: Karen Blixen and Elspeth Huxley. Lejeune’s and Barthe’s deconstruction theory are applied in the analysis of White settler female writing. The European settler community in Kenya traversed linguistic, religious, cultural, economic and geographical boarders as they tried to construct and re-construct their identity in their new homes. The construction of the identity of female ‘selfhood’ by Karen Blixen and Elspeth Huxley in their autobiographical novels *Out of Africa* (1937) and *The Flame Trees of Thika* (1959) respectively blend fact and fiction, lending insight into particular migration histories within specific time periods that contributed to the formation of female ‘self’ identity. These novels address the ways in which individual identities are changed by their own journeys, their ancestors, and those of their community. The heroine in *Out of Africa*, who is actually Blixen, found herself caught between the ideal of European womanhood and that of the brave new world of white settlers in Kenya. The heroine in settler writing emerges with a strong, complex, dynamic, and meaningful female personality which is the product of various journeys across different boundaries.

**Introduction**

The paper analyses the construction of ‘self’ by White settler female autobiography writers. Two autobiographies selected are Karen Blixen’s *Out
of Africa and Elspeth Huxley’s The Flame Trees of Thika are analysed using Derrida’s grammatology deconstruction theory. These two texts are read in a manner that reveals the ambiguities and contradictions that have made them to be misread as describing ‘an autonomous unitary female protagonist.’ Karen Blixen, according to Marais (2015: 131-132), was born in Rungstedlund in Denmark, where she spent her early life before moving to East Africa marrying her Swedish half cousin, Baron Bror von Blixen-Fineke, in Mombasa in 1914. They separated after a seven year marriage and she continued to manage the coffee plantation and Karen Coffee Co. which they had earlier started. Blixen had an intimate relationship with Denys Finch-Hatton who later died in a crash in his private plane and she buried him on her land at the foot of the Ngong Hills. The effects of the great economic depression on her farm and the death of her lover drive her ‘out of Africa’ when she goes to Europe never to return.

The story of women’s involvement in the establishment of the colony had not been told prior to Out of Africa. Karen Blixen narrates her journey for self-discovery in this autobiographical novel. She explores her identity through relationships with the land. Karen Blixen’s fictional autobiography Out of Africa will demonstrate the interaction and mutual influence of events in her life shape her concept of ‘self’. Blixen aptly summarises her experience of living in Africa as follows, ‘Looking back on the sojourn in the African highlands, you are struck by your feeling of having lived for a time up in the air’ (Blixen 1937: 14). This, however, is to miss the point since Blixen uses the difference between the different racial and ethnic groups in Kenya to create a narrative which has universal wholeness and belonging.

Elspeth Huxley was born, at 22 Sussex Square on 23 July 1907. She was the only child of the Grants and this made the parents take very special care of her. In their maiden trip to British East Africa, as Kenya was then known, they left her behind in England under the care of Daisy Learmonth, one of Nellie’s friends. The issue of historical facts in autobiographical is tested in the opening scene of The Flame Trees of Thika where Elspeth Huxley gives the readers the impression that she was present when her parents first arrived in British East Africa. This has led Nicholls (2002:2) to contend that the book is actually a work of fiction that is laced with many historically real events. Elspeth asks ‘How much does one really imagine, how much does one observe?’ One can no more separate those functions than divide light from air.
or wetness from water. Nicholls (2002: 2) adds that it is her publishers who subtitled the work ‘Memories of an African Childhood’.


The paper is a comparative examination of the autobiographical writings of Karen Blixen’s *Out of Africa* and Elspeth Huxley’s *The Flame Trees of Thika* based on deconstruction and feminist theories. These are useful tools into the process of deconstructing the female selfhood. The writing of autobiographies had its origin in the importance of expressing one’s ‘self’, but the expression of one’s ‘self’ was a difficult and painful process. This process of writing symbolizes the search for identity of the ‘self’, self-knowledge and self-recognition by the writer. Identity construction in the settler colony in British East Africa in general and Kenya in particular was fraught with many ambiguities and contradictions. The main question that the paper grapples with is how to (re)-constitute the self, gender and social relations and culture without resorting to the linear, teleological, hierarchical, holistic or binary ways of thinking and being in female autobiographical writing. Deconstruction philosophers question the dominant beliefs.

The paper uses two autobiographical novels by European settler female writers’ to deconstruct the developmental stages of the female ‘selfhood’ and the psychosocial factors that shape it. The imperial narrative written by the men is a story of white masculinity which is characterized by masculine adventure, power and authority in vast territory. Huxley and Blixen give women a central place in their pioneer settler stories. The colonizing women share the attributes of British masculinity; their rugged individualism depends on a contrast with colonized masculinity. (Webster, 1999: 536).
Deconstruction of the ‘Self’ in Out of Africa and The Flame Trees of Thika

Two schools of thought within deconstruction are brought to bear in the analysis of the autobiographical texts under review. The first is the contract between the reader and writer as propounded by Lejeune (1989:25) contends that

The ultimate expression of truth (if we reason in terms of resemblance) can no longer be the being-for-itself of the past (if indeed such a thing exists), but being-for-itself, manifested in the present of the enunciation. It also implies that in his relationship to the story (remote or quasi-contemporary) of the protagonist, the narrator is mistaken, lies, forgets, or distorts – and error, lie, lapse of memory, or distortion will, if we distinguish them, take on the value of aspects, among others, of an enunciation, which, itself, remains authentic.

Lejeune (1975: 15) tends to dismiss the importance of a chronological order in favour of thematic patterns by which the autobiographer confers an (aesthetic) structure and a deeper meaning to his/her own life story.

The second is the construction of the self through narration as propounded by Roland Barthes. Kim Worthington (1996: 13) asserts that:

The construction of a subject's sense of selfhood should be understood as a creative narrative process achieved within a plurality of intersubjective communicative protocols. In the act of conceptualizing one's selfhood, one writes a narrative of personal continuity through time. That is, in thinking myself, I remember myself: I draw together my multiple members – past and other subject positions - into a coherent narrative of selfhood which is more or less readable by myself and others. Understanding personhood in this way [...] leaves open the possibility of revision of one's conception of self, and also acknowledges the potential for misreading and misinterpretation of the narratives of self and others

The construction of the ‘self’ in the autobiography cannot therefore be conceptualized as a closed process. It is an ongoing process that is continually evolving and deconstruction theory would, therefore, be the best placed to deal with the fluid nature of ‘self’ in autobiographical texts.
The contract between the writer and the reader form the basis of the reading of the autobiography. Lejeune (1991: 3) cites the ‘autobiographical pact’ which is predicated on the fact that the author, narrator and protagonist share the same name. The focus is not historical accuracy but rather a sincere effort to tell the truth. There is a shift away from the content of the text and a diminished significance is attached to questions regarding ‘sincerity’, ‘authenticity’ and 'resemblance' and a greater deconstructive emphasis is placed on the intention of the author. There is a deconstruction of the binary opposition between ‘reality’ and ‘fiction’ in the writing of the autobiography. The significant distinction between the autobiography and the novel is that whereas in autobiography there is an explicit declaration and expected correspondence between the author and the subject described in that author's writing: it is immaterial whether that subject is an ‘accurate’ representation of the author.

Elspeth Huxley arrived in British East Africa in 1913 with her parents as a young girl where she was to spend most of her childhood before returning to England for further studies according to her recollection in *The Flame Trees of Thika*. According to Nicholls (2002: 8) the ‘real’ account is that she joined her parents a year after their arrival. This brings to question the role of childhood memories in the writing of an autobiography one may ask themselves if autobiography is a mirror of the real life. Is auto biography a product of fictional imagination? The autobiographical memory is the ability to recall events from our past. Eakin (1985: 63) contends that in reading an autobiography one has to accept that memory and imagination conspire to allow the author portray the reality or illusions of the ‘self’ in a manner that may not be quite consistent to reality. There is an acceptance on the part of the readers to tolerate disparity between reality and fiction, truth and falsity and accuracy and distortion. The ‘self’ in the autobiography is conceptualised within the deconstructive paradigm as a fluid and fragmented entity that is more or less an illusion. Damisio (1999:16) identifies three levels of ‘self’ : prototypical self which we are not aware of, the core-self which is state of constant flax and the ‘autobiographical self’ that gives us a sense of identity and personhood. The ‘core-self’ and ‘autobiographical self’ are equated to the core consciousness and extended consciousness. In the core consciousness the organism has a sense of self in one time which is now and one place which is here. Damisio (1999: 16) adds that elaborate sense of self, as we are aware of our past, we anticipate our future and we have knowledge of the world around us. During childhood the biographer seems to be more focused on the elaborate self. This is illustrated in the two biographies under review. *The
*Flame Trees of Thika* opens symbolically at a place of transit: The Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi.

‘The oxen looked very thin and small for such a task but moved off with resignation, if not with speed, from the Norfolk hotel… We were going to Thika, a name on a map where two rivers joined. Thika in those days-the year was 1913- was a favourite camp for big game hunters and beyond it there was only bush and plain. If you went beyond on long enough you would come to the mountains and forests no one had mapped and tribes whose language no one could understand. (Huxley, 1959: 7).

The extract above describes the scene where Elspeth Huxley arrives in Kenya with her parents. Huxley deconstructs the male settler narrative by giving women a central place in this pioneering story, especially her mother right from the beginning. The earlier writings by men on the pioneer settler establishment in Kenya were dominated by males and the land was referred to as the ‘white man’s country’. This opening scene giving an opportunity to draw a dichotomy between Huxley the author and Huxley the narrator protagonist in *The Flame Trees of Thika* is complicated. She was not there when her parents first arrived in British East Africa as Kenya was then known. Huxley’s life reveals a neat unified ‘self’ taking into account her birth, marriage and career in Kenya; however, there are a number of fault lines and raptures in her life which the autobiography tries to cover.

Karen Blixen on the hand arrived in British East Africa as a newlywed bride at around the age of twenty nine years. She came to British East Africa as Kenya was then known with her husband with the idea of sharing a life of adventure in Africa. The first line of *Out of Africa* begins with the words ‘I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills … In the day-time you felt that you had got high up; near the sun, but the early morning and evenings were limpid and restful, and the nights were cold.’ Blixen (1937: 13). This opening shows that unlike Huxley who starts her writing with the core self which is the here and now Blixen starts with the elaborate ‘self’ due the age that she starts her writing. This opening chapter of the two autobiographies show that age is an important part in the construction of the ‘self’ in autobiographical writing.

Autobiographical memory refers to how experiences are encoded, organized, and recalled. Mace (2010: 4) notes that autobiographical memory of who we have been physically and psychologically and who we plan to be in the future
(Something missing). These records include three different levels: first, the abstract knowledge about ‘self’, second, the general form of personal knowledge and finally, memory of specific events. Children’s socialization environments reflect cultural background of the care giver which in turn shapes the child’s developmental pathways. The care givers in their language use specific means to construct and convey a certain self-concept of the child: In the following excerpts for example, Mrs. Nimmo who is Huxley’s temporary care taker, mirrors the behavior and attitude of a European woman’s expectation of a well-bred child to Elspeth. The following examples serve as illustrations. Here is an excerpt

‘You must eat up your milk pudding, it’s good for the complexion’: or ‘You must eat your porridge, it’s good for the brain.’

‘I thought that was fish,’ I protested.

‘Well, it’s fish too, dear; porridge is good for everything, it will make you grow into a big, fine girl.’ But I don’t want to be a big, fine girl.

I want to be a jockey.’ (Huxley, 1959: 83)

Elspeth, however, already has her own idea of how she wants to look and behave. She has set herself to be a jockey and if she were to be big as Mrs. Nimmo would like then her dreams would not be realised. This is because the character has decided to define her ‘self’ in contrast to how others define you in the process being defined by others in her life.

Elspeth had anything but a tranquil childhood, and was going through experiences that were forever remarkable. She was becoming absorbed by the African people, who had adopted themselves skilfully to adapt to the environment. Unlike many immigrant adults, she claims that she understood their thoughts. As to whether this is true or not is another question.

I began to perceive that third way lay inside and intermingled with the two worlds I already knew of, those of ourselves and of the Kikuyu: a world of snakes and rainbows, of ghosts and spirits, of monsters and charms, a world that had its own laws and for the most part led its own life, but now and again, like the rock jutting through the earth and vegetation protruded into ours, and was there all the time under the surface. It was a world in which I was a foreigner but the Kikuyu were at home.
**Female Autobiography and the Search for ‘Self’**

Having defined the ‘self’ the present section deconstructs the notion of ‘self’ and interrogates how female writers deal with the ambiguities that are embodied in this genre. Marrone (2000:1) asserts that “the ‘self’ is said to be elusive, ‘identity’ changeable, and ‘life’ incomprehensible.” Women’s lives have been traditionally and strongly embedded in patriarchy and social organizations dominated by men, not only families but also political institutions. Marrone (ibid) points out the essential fact that the self-discovery of female identity is based on the recognition of a significant “other”, with which the self is continuously connected. The recognition of the existence and relevance of a “significant other” is extremely important for the development of a female identity, because female self is particularly connected to other people’s lives. Writing is a strategy for self-definition: the writer can build her story and understand herself through the written words.

Markus & Kitayama (1992: 245) postulate that there are two models of ‘self’ construal: the model of a construal of the independent self-prevailing in Western cultural contexts, and a construal of the interdependent self-prevailing in East-Asian societies. The model of independence prioritizes the perception of the individual as bounded and self-contained, focuses on mental states and personal qualities in order to support self enhancement, self-expression and self-maximization. The model of interdependence prioritizes the perception of the fluidly defined individual as interrelated with others. The African sense of self is modelled along the East Asian sense of self where the self is interdependent on the others.

Markus and Kitayama (1992: 245-246) postulate that

The most significant difference between these two construal is in the role that is assigned to the other in self-definition. Others and the surrounding social context are important in both construal, but for the interdependent self, others are included within the boundaries of the self because relations with others in specific contexts are the defining features of the self. [...] The sense of individuality that accompanies an interdependent self includes an attentiveness and responsiveness to others that one either explicitly or implicitly assumes will be reciprocated by these others, as well as the willful management of one’s other-focused feelings and desires so as to maintain and further the reciprocal interpersonal relationship.
Male and female autobiographies differ in their consideration of the self in its connection with significant others. What differs in male and female autobiographies is the degree of involvement of the self with significant others, that is how the male and female selves shape their lives in consideration for other people, and how these aspects are reflected in the narration. The self-discovery of female identity seems to acknowledge the real presence and recognition of another consciousness, and the disclosure of female self is linked to the identification of some ‘other’. This recognition of another consciousness seems to enable women to write openly about themselves.

The two writers Huxley and Blixen are caught between two different cultures that have a totally different sense of self. The European concept of self is independent whereas they are living in a culture where the self is interdependent. In Africa the philosophy is Ubuntu which means “I am because we are and because we are I am”. In the construction of the image of the self, the conceptualization of the ‘other’ is very important and central. The writers’ conceptualized differences and exclusivity or difference and inclusivity is all a product of the culture in which they operate.

For the independent self, on the other hand, they state that

‘Others’ are less centrally implicated in one’s current self-definition or identity. Certainly, others are important for social comparison, for reflected appraisal, and in their role as the targets of one’s actions, yet at any given moment, the self is assumed to be a complete, whole, autonomous entity, without the others. (Markus and Kitayama, 1992: 247)

Webster (1999: 540) argues that theories of women’s autobiography have sometimes focused on the differences between women’s and men’s writing, arguing that women’s sense of ‘self’ is less ego-focused and individuated, bound up in relationship to others rather than differentiation from them. The difference between the prototypical male autobiographies and those written by women, asserting that in contrast to the self-revelatory approach of Augustine or Rousseau, “the self-discovery of female identity seems to acknowledge the real presence and recognition of another consciousness, and the disclosure of female ‘self’ is linked to the identification of some ‘other.’Estelle Jelinek (1986:7) argues that male “autobiographers consciously shape the events of their life into a coherent whole,” constructing “a chronological, linear
narrative... by concentrating on one period of their life, one theme, or one characteristic of their personality.” By contrast she sees women’s autobiographies as characterized by “irregularity rather than orderliness, not chronological and progressive but disconnected, fragmentary, or organized into self-sustained units rather than connecting chapters.” The fragmentation of the autobiography is, therefore, an opportunity for the readers to bridge the gaps and reread the texts along lines that they reconstruct. *Out of Africa* and *The Flame Trees of Thika* have not been written in a linear chronological sequence but are rather fragmentary recollection whose sense of coherence emerges from the quest for self-discovery.

*Out of Africa* and *The Flame Trees of Thika* both have the search for ‘self’ as the predominant theme. There is no idealising or sentimentalising of the female in their novels. Given the patriarchal British colonial social structure, the woman is accorded a secondary status. She is the ‘other’ that confirms the subjectivity of the male but is excluded from the subject position, the importance of these women writers lies initially in delving within their self, to formulate the ‘female self’ as a subject in its own right. It examines how the novelists tap their autobiographical ‘self’ through their protagonists and fictionalise the process of the emerging empowerment within women, through their ability for reviewing self."

The experience of travelling simultaneously constructs and destabilizes the female protagonists’ sense of “self” and personal identity. Soon after Karen Blixen relocates to British East Africa, she finds herself alone in a distant land with the huge task of trying to manage a thriving coffee plantation. In order to realize this, she must get to know the land and the East Africans who work for and with her. In the process, she learns more about herself. Unlike Elspeth, Blixen does not tell in great detail her arrival in Africa. The fact that she arrived in Africa as a young adult could account for her lack of a detailed recollection of her arrival. On arrival both Blixen and Huxley are quite alienated and at a loss about how to get used to the new environment.

Elspeth Huxley arrives with her parents only to find a wilderness which is quite different from the environment which she was used to in Europe. The next several years that she spends in Kenya transform her into a more mature and rounded personality. The newly established colonies give the women a break from the constraints and dictates of the society back In Britain and the women in the colony are now able to do things that they would not do back
home. Elspeth Huxley (1959) “while Juma took care of the domestic chores, she was abroad in the sunshine laying out the garden, supervising the planting of coffee seedling, marking out a citrus plantation ...paying labour in a corner store that..” Back in Europe Elspeth Huxley would be taking care of the domestic chores. The female protagonists in these two novels embody the authors desire to portray women’s accomplishment and difficulty realistically. The dialectical making and unmaking of the self is mirrored in the accounts of the protagonists revealed at moments when conventional plots and perceptions give way to narrative rupture, at moments when narrative voices multiply or collapse. The development or division of the self is a crucial element of the settler colonialists travel narrative as a genre, just as it is in autobiographical genres at large. This ravelling and unravelling of the self is particularly fascinating in those texts that undertake most strenuously to represent the “outward” self as unified, stable, and organic whole. The efforts these writers make to collapse the distance between the self and the speaking author are frequently occasions for innovative experiments in that impossible straining for autobiographical realism.

Travel writing embodies the richness of physical adventure and personal self-discovery while celebrating the familiarity of the beaten path and, throughout the modern era, the pleasures of acquiring cultural capital. Sometimes the acquisition of that cultural capital has served purposes of which it is important to be critical - purposes of colonialism, conquest, and domination of different sorts.

Webster (1999: 531) argues that there is also an undercurrent in Huxley’s work which claims female superiority in this masculine arena, where women outdo men in qualities of adventurousness, resilience and persistence. The contrast is especially between colonizing women and metropolitan men, the latter, like the colonized, occupying a feminine position in relation to the exemplary masculine qualities displayed by settler women. This is deconstructive reading where the female subverts the dominant male role that is assigned to male in most narratives.

Women in *The Flame Trees of Thika* are represented as practical and level-headed, capable of mocking and deflating narratives of masculine adventure. Lettice, Tilly’s friend, elicits a story from her lover, Hereward, of the black buck he shot in Kashmir and its 28 inches from one end of its horns to the other, and comments: ‘How proud it must have been of its masculine glory,
like a man with a magnificent moustache’ (Huxley, 1959: 58-59). Tilly’s distaste for those who are ‘gushing’, ‘emotional’, ‘sentimental’, or ‘effusive’ is about other colonizing women. (Huxley, 1959: 261). She is also represented as robustly practical in opposition to her husband Robin’s unworkable schemes, his ‘passion for inventing things that never quite worked’, and his habit of covering ‘scraps of paper with detailed, complicated calculations which invariably proved, beyond all question, the brilliant success of whatever plan he was hatching’ (Huxley, 1959: 121).

It is particularly the quality of persistence that characterizes Tilly, who does not dwell for long on difficulties and is never deterred by setbacks. When, on the first safari to Thika, Robin muses on the difficulties of the journey – there are no bridges – Tilly replies briskly, ‘then we must get some built’ (Huxley 1959: 20). Tilly is marked out by her racial superiority, once more against a backdrop of colonised people, and especially of colonised men who occupy a feminine position in relation to her strength, and perform domestic duties as her ‘houseboys’ and as her porters when she goes on safari. But there are also suggestions of her superiority to white men, both as colonial settlers, and in the metropolis. This female ‘self’.

**Gendered Construction of Colonialism**

The narratives have been written as stories of white masculinity where male adventure, power and authority are exercised over a vast territory. The shifting positions, conditions and politics of women from various national, ethnic, and racial collectivities have been neglected. Settler state represent ‘home’ to a dominant group, the intransigence of settlers regarding both indigenous resistance and the metropolis or other external pressures for change complicates the transformation of the state. ‘Elspeth writes the East African colonial history from a female perspective as she deconstructs the model of female identity the male writers have presented as the normative in British East Africa’s settler colony literature’ (Daiva and Yuval-Davis, 1995:1).

There are occasional references in Huxley’s autobiographical writing to colonialism as a civilising mission. As Tilly reflects on Africans: ‘We may have a sticky passage ourselves, but when we’ve knocked a bit of civilisation into them, all this dirt and disease and superstition will go and they’ll live like decent people for the first time in their history’ (Huxley, 1959: 121). Imperial expansion is the main emphasis in adventure and Kenya as ‘this land of splendour and promise that offered sunshine, sport and adventure, with the
prospect of independence and the rebuilding of lost fortunes’ (Huxley, 1959: 22). Free settlers were an influential and hardworking part of colonial Kenya. Women shaped and created rural towns just as much as men did. Working alongside men they also managed homes, raising children and educating families. Colonial life meant upper class women had to perform physical labour and hard work for which they were hardly prepared. Women of social standing found themselves in harsh and brutal surroundings where they had to struggle to build a life for themselves and their families. The privileges of English upper life were over.

In the construction of the ‘self’ both female and male white settlers share and the most common adventure known as the safari is one in which women participate and which serves as a symbol of their mobility and freedom. When Tilly goes on safari and shoots a lion, Robin stays behind to manage the farm. Grant’s own first big game hunt is represented as a rite of passage which culminates in the pleasure of stalking and shooting buffalo (Huxley, 1959: 246).

Prior to her pursuit of farming in Africa, Karen Blixen was a game hunter. She recalls that:

Before I took over the management of the farm, I had been keen on shooting and had been out on many safaris. But when I became a farmer I put away my rifles. The Maasai, the nomadic, cattle owning nation, were neighbours of the farm and lived on the other side of the river; from time to time some would come to my house to complain about a lion that was taking their cows, and to ask me to go out and shoot it for them, and I did so if I could. (Blixen, 1959: 22).

Blixen had perfected her skills in hunting to such an extent that few men could rival her. She describes her hunting skills as follows:

Out in the wild I had learnt to be aware of abrupt movements. The creatures with which you are dealing there are shy and watchful, they have a talent for evading you when you least expect it. No domestic animal can be as still as a wild animal. The civilized people have lost the aptitude of stillness, and must take lessons in silence from the wild before they are accepted by it. The art of moving gently, without suddenness, is first to be studied by the hunter, and more so by the hunter with the camera. (Blixen, 1959: 24)
It has been claimed that women writers subvert the autobiographical pact that they have with the readers. In contrast to this, white masculinity from home is represented as distinctly unheroic and unadventurous in the figure of Hilary, Tilly’s cousin, who comes to stay on a visit from England. Hilary keeps indoors as much as possible, fussing about domestic detail, and repeatedly warning Tilly about the dangers of insects, unboiled or unfiltered water and the sun. When he ventures out, even onto the veranda, he is swathed in many layers of insect-repelling fluids and protective clothing – sunshade, goggles, spine-pad, scarves, and an enormous toupee. As a representative of ‘cultured’ and ‘civilised’ masculinity he is portrayed mainly as a comic figure. Home as ‘civilised’ may be the yardstick which makes Europeans what they are. Kenya, as Hilary warns Tilly, may represent the danger of becoming ‘rough colonials’ – a phrase which Tilly herself uses to characterise her domestic life (Huxley, 1959: 246). But home is also the domesticated place which marks them off as pioneers, away from home. In the episode with Hilary, oppositions between home and colony and the association of women with the former are reversed, in the contrast between Hilary’s fussing and Tilly’s much more robust approach. White (home) men are less adventurous than white (colonial) women. The contrast extends to Huxley herself, who is introduced to Hilary as a child who ‘spends most of her time on ponies or missing pigeons with a 22’ rifle (Huxley, 1959: 105). Not all European women are portrayed as undomesticated adventurers in Kenya.

**Narrative Strategy and the Construction of Female Selfhood**

Narrative strategy is firmly linked to the notion of the individual, evolved to some extent by propelling the moment of self-recognition towards the narrative present: only at the end of one’s story can it be unfurled from the beginning as a singular life course, staging the auto-biographer as subject. *Out of Africa* is structured as a fragmented recollection of stories, character sketches, description of the Kenyan white highland and the Great Rift Valley among others and the people with whom Karen Blixen interacted during her life in Kenya. The unifying theme among all these apparently disjointed incidences is her search for self-identity. At the beginning of the story, Karen arrives at Ngong as a rather timid and unsure farmer out to try her hand in coffee farming. She meets Kamante, a young son to one of her squatters, who is very sick and secluded. Prior to Kamante’s move to live with Karen Blixen in her home, she also lived a rather secluded life and did not understand her native workers. Blixen begins her narration by highlighting ‘the self’ of the white settlers and the otherness of the Africans, Arabs, Indians and the Somali.
This otherness is based solely on racial identity. ‘The Somali were cattle-dealers and traders all over the country.’ ‘The Indians of Nairobi dominated the big native business quarters of the Bazaar.’ (Blixen, 1959: 21; 22) This helps her to situate the different characters who tell their own stories in their unique ways. Later in the autobiography *Out of Africa* ending they emerge together to form a big collective whole that they all share. Blixen’s ‘self’ has also matured from the alienated ‘self’ which she had during her arrival to a more transcendental one.

Huxley’s *Flame Trees of Thika*, on the other hand, is narrated in a chronological order. The novel starts with the Grants at The Norfolk where they board an ox-drawn cart to Thika. She describes the people and the new landscape that she has come to in very vivid details. “The dust and sweat combined to make us look like red Indians, with strange white rings around our nose and eyes” (Huxley, 1959:10). Huxley then proceeds to describe the smell of Africa: “one cannot describe the smell because there are no words in English to describe, apart from those that place it in a very general category, like sweet or pungent” (ibid.).

The other aspect of narrative strategy is the point of view; the placement and the relationship between the narrator and the events in the autobiography. Huxley seems to employ the first person from Elspeth’s point of view in narrating the events in the autobiography. This is in contrast to Blixen who uses multiple perspectives and anecdotes in narrating her story. The resulting text in *The Flame Trees of Thika* has a constricted and tunnel perspective that doesn’t evolve. Any details not seen from Elspeth’s perspective are presented by Elspeth, relating them to the reader as Elspeth learns about them. The limitation makes Elspeth’s character something of a mystery. Though she explains her feelings about particular events and her thoughts on some points, she tends to present more of her observations of others. This gives the reader a very limited view of Elspeth’s character.

The aspect of voice as a narrative strategy is used by Elspeth Huxley as she writes *The Flame Trees of Thika* effectively. She writes in the first person singular voice. It is clear to the readers that she (Huxley) in the main character once the novel begins just in the same manner that Blixen is the main character in *Out of Africa*. The feelings and thoughts of the auto biographer are clearly expressed in the story. Elspeth Huxley gives detailed background information that allows the readers to comprehend the story. The context is woven into the
story so clearly that it gives it depth. The reader can visualise the scene that she is depicting vividly such as in chapter two where she is describing the Tana River plains and the numerous streams. “These rivers, no larger than streams had dug down through soil as red as a fox and rich as chocolate to from steep valleys whose sides were now green with millet and maize” (1959:13). The narrative technique adopted by Huxley allows the readers to get a clear mental picture of some of the locations and places where the actions that she is describing are taking place.

The use of relationships as an aspect of narrative technique is quite significant. The reader gets a clear relationship between the characters when Elspeth Huxley narrates how she gets to know her new neighbours who are also coming to start new lives as settler farmers. The main characters are Lettice and Hereward Palmer who arrive with two Pekinese dogs and the story of having left their young son behind in Europe. Hereward is a former military man and Lettice later says she was not cut out for life in Africa. Elspeth likes Lettice who gives her a pony as a gift. Lettice says that a friend, Ian Crawford, selected the pony and it is soon evident that Ian and Lettice are involved in a budding romance. When war breaks out, Lettice tells Tilly that she cannot go through with leaving Hereward in favour of Ian because she fears that Hereward might sacrifice himself on the battlefield and that his skeleton would always stand between her and Ian. As it turns out, she does not have to make that decision because Ian is killed in battle. Another of the neighbours is Mr. and Mrs. Nimmo. Mr. Nimmo spends all his time hunting, leaving Mrs. Nimmo to fill her time as best she can and to manage the farm as best she can. There seems to be an emerging relationship between Mrs. Nimmo and another of the neighbours, Alec Wilson, who believes that the best way to make his farm succeed is to read everything he can find on the subject. The sexual encounter between Mrs. Nimmo and Alec is described by Elspeth although she does it so that there is no sense of obscenity in the mind of the readers.

Blixen’s perception and images of the colonial world at a time when women travelled little does a great deal to paint the effect of travel on the female self. Mobility was clearly a gendered phenomenon and women travelled accompanying their husbands or fathers but none set out on their own as Karen Blixen did to establish and manage their own farms. Pratt (1992: 160) notes that ultimately writing is a process of construction or invention of the self, which occurs dynamically in an experience that by definition destabilizes the identity by having the subject wrenched from her habitually defined space, the
home. The identity of the writer is transformed by this travel-writing process. In this sense, travel writing is a dialogue — between the self and the other, between the here and there — relations which during the traveling process may become reversed and will be constantly questioned and (re)negotiated. Coming into contact with many cultures is a constant challenge to the process of identity-construction. There is marked difference in the narratives of the ‘self’ as presented in the two autobiographies under review given that Blixen wrote as an adult while Huxley wrote from childhood recollection. Blixen notes ‘They (Kikuyu) were making spells to prevent the Maasai from having any success in love with the kikuyu girls’ (Blixen, 1959: 151).

Travelling put women concretely in another place which has different gendered roles. For the Blixen and Huxley this implies a series of elements that put into question their status in the social and cultural milieu. They are constantly in contact and comparison with the other’s cultures and peoples. Blixen narrates how the Somali women were keen on learning more about the European women who they thought were a different breed of people from them.

The young (Somali) women were very inquisitive as to European customs, and listened attentively to descriptions of the manners, education, and clothes of white ladies as if out to complete their strategic education with the knowledge of how males of an alien race were conquered and subdued. (Blixen, 1959:159)

Blixen confesses that there are certain things that she had tried to learn but was not able to such as maidenly prudery which she could only learn from the Somali. This creates a bond of universal sister hood which transcends the borders of race and brings women together as they try to relate better with the men in their life.

Their travels have always constituted a metaphor for the inner road of existential development. Just as earlier male discoverers had experienced, in travel to new places there are also questions of interior and exterior exploration of the female space. Temporal and spatial distance from the home, spiritual and cultural distance from the places visited provokes a state of existential insecurity, nostalgia, loneliness, and comparisons which constitute differences to be overcome.
Visiting a new place is “reading” it, interpreting its signs according to a code that was set for another place. In this process of their biography writing, women generally try to collect and possess themselves. Karen Blixen notes that her relations with the natives on her farm helped her to grow and enlarge her vision of the world.

As for me, from my first weeks in Africa, I had felt a great affection for the Natives. It was a strong feeling that embraced all ages and both sexes. The discovery of the dark races was for me a magnificent enlargement of my entire world. (Blixen, 1959: 25)

Blixen had many roles which she played to the squatters on her farm. For example:

I was a doctor to the people on the farm most mornings from nine to ten, and like all great quacks I had a large circle of patients, and generally between two and a dozen sick up by my house. (Blixen, 1959: 29)

Blixen’s philosophical horizon was broadening through her interaction with the natives. She notes that the differences in worldview between the natives and whites accounts for part of their differences in behaviour.

The Kikuyu are adjusted for the unforeseen and accustomed to the unexpected. Here they differ from the white man, of whom the majority strive to insure themselves against the unknown and the assaults of fate. The Negro is on friendly terms with destiny, having been in her hands all his time; she is to him, in a way, his home, the familiar darkness of the hut, deep mould for his root. (Blixen, 1959: 30)

During the planting season Blixen was meteorologist and the natives relied on her for an accurate prediction of the rains.

The farmer slowly turns his eyes all-round the horizon. First to the east, for from the east comes the rain, and there stands clear in the virgin. Then south, to greet the southern cross, the door keeper of the great world, faithful to travellers and beloved by them, and higher up, under the luminous streak of the milky way, alpha and beta in the Centaur. (Blixen, 1959: 82)

Blixen’s vast knowledge of astronomy makes her acquire a name amongst the Natives on her farm.
Now looking back on my life in Africa, I feel that it might altogether be described as the existence of a person who had altogether come from a rushed and noisy world, into a still country. (Blixen, 1959: 92)

Blixen also acted as a judge whenever there were disputes on her farm. This experience was rather challenging to her since European ideas of justice and African’s conceptualization of justice were at variance in her opinion. She observes that

The ideas of justice of European and Africa are not the same and those of one world are unbearable to another. To the African there is but one way of counterbalancing catastrophes of existence (Blixen, 1959: 93).

As a young European woman Blixen had to sit in councils where men were to judge and arbitrate cases. This would not have been the case if she was in Europe since she is not a trained lawyer.

With all the diversities of views, my position as a judge to the Kikuyu held a profusion of potentialities, and was dear to me. I was young then, and had meditated upon the ideas of justice and injustice, but mostly from the angle of person who was being judged; in a judge’s seat I had not been. I took great trouble to judge rightly, and for peace on the farm. (Blixen, 1959: 96-97)

The Kyama is a council of old men whose only female member is Blixen. Sitting in this council she represents not only her interest as a white farmer but also the interest of the youth and women. She remarks: “at times I grew tired of my Ancients of the Kyama and told them what I thought of them: ‘You old men,’ I said ‘are fining the young men’” (Blixen, 1959: 96).

Blixen was also a teacher to her squatters. She tried to make them better people by exposing them to western values which would later on prove to be very useful. ‘I had an evening school for the people of the farm, with a Native schoolmaster to teach them’ (Blixen, 1959: 37).

Blixen had got fully absorbed into the life of the squatters that she was an integral part and parcel of their daily life. She empathized with them and was no longer removed from their life as she was at the beginning of her stay on
the farm. She notes that ‘the kikuyu made me a chief mourner, or woman of sorrows, when a great distress befell us on the farm’ (Blixen, 1959: 99).

**Embracing African Custom and the Female self**

The female ‘self’ is constructed in separateness and boundaries between the ‘self’ and the ‘other.’ The main female protagonists in the autobiographies *Out of Africa* and *The Flame Trees of Thika* go through a journey of self-discovery in which they dialogue first with themselves as they try to identify and construct their sense of selfhood. That explains why in the earlier parts of both novels the protagonists are constantly constructing the native as the other and trying to find out how different they are from the Europeans.

When both arrived in Nairobi they are keen to note and emphasize the distinctions between races in the town. Huxley starts:

> The quarters of the native and of the coloured immigrants were very extensive compared to the European town. The Swaheli town on the road to Muthaiga Club, had not a good name in any way, but was a lively, dirty and gaudy place…. The Somali town was further way from Nairobi on account, I think, of Somali’s system of seclusion of their women. (Blixen, 1959: 20)

She tries to segment the society in order to highlight the ‘other-ness’ of the different groups to the white Europeans. She even distinguishes between the immigrants as white and coloured. The various ethnic and racial groups are made to tell their own stories in their own situations. Later on as the narrative develops she then merges the groups into a whole that transcends the confine of race or ethnic division.

Huxley also notes that ‘while everyone else strode about Nairobi’s dusty cart – tracks in bush shirts and khaki short or riding breeches Roger Stilbeck was always neatly dressed in light worsted suit of perfect cut, and wore gold cuff-links and dark brogue shoes (Huxley 1987: 7). In her mind at this early stage she does not include the native in her description of Nairobi just like Blixen this exclusion of the ‘other’ becomes very critical as she is forming her concept of selfhood and finally matures to have a transcendental concept of self.

Blixen notes that she was at home in Africa and had embraced the attitudes and culture of the Africans.
I was much at home in the Somali Village through my Somali servant Farah Aden, who was with me all the time that I was in Africa, and I went to many of their feasts. A big Somali wedding is a magnificent, traditional festivity. As a guest of honour I was taken into the bridal chambers, where the walls of and the bridal bed were hung with old, gently glowing weavings and embroideries, and the dark-eyed young bride herself was stiff like a marshal’s baton, with heavy silks, gold and amber. (Blixen, 1959: 21)

**Conclusion**

The present paper has traced the development of the ‘self’ in white settler writing using the comparative deconstructive analysis of the works of Elspeth Huxley and Karen Blixen. Lejueune’s and Barthe’s deconstruction has been used to show how the two writers flout the writer’s pact in *The Flame trees of Thika* and *Out of Africa* respectively. Deconstructive reading of the two novels reveals that both writers have a sense of ‘self’ which is varied from those ladies who stayed back in Europe as well the African women. The men in the writers are also portrayed as more feminine which is a deconstructive reading. This can be attributed to the fact that women are more likely to conceive of their role as subordinate or interdependent, less driven by individual ego. The female ‘self’ in very fluid and dynamic and grows in response to number of socio factors some of which have been highlighted in this paper.

**References**


Challenges of Religious Moral Development of Young Adults in Kenya: A Case Study of Selected Students of the University of Nairobi

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Abstract
The article focuses on religious moral development of young adults, some of whom upon joining universities due to peer pressure, new found freedom, lack of adequate supervision, urban life and secularization lapse in their moral behavior. The article argues that unlike in the traditional African society where moral empowerment was continued into adulthood, the newly introduced religions in Kenya have not developed appropriate programmes for moral development of young adults. The structures for moral development in universities are voluntary, formal and not as thorough as those in family and lower levels of education hence many young adults do not benefit from them. The article is based on research conducted at the University of Nairobi where one hundred, first, second, third and fourth year students were interviewed. The study recommends that structures in universities mandated with moral development should be strengthened to become pro-active to deal with moral challenges young adults undergo. Religious denominations should also combine efforts and come up with ecumenical moral programmes geared towards empowering young adults morally.

Introduction
For the last one hundred years Kenya, just like other African countries, has gone through drastic changes which have impacted on all aspects of life. Writing on what Africa has gone through Macharia (2007: 223) says: “The technological innovations of 19th, 20th and 21st centuries have changed human life in ways that are not easy to understand”. The African traditional institutions which were mandated with moulding individuals to become
respons...ims of the society have been weakened or destroyed. Reflecting on such institutions Kinoti (2003: 8) observes, “Education in the traditional African society aimed at producing persons who upheld the values that helped society to remain integrated”. For instance, initiation rites which were pivotal have been done away with in many societies. In instances where some communities continue them they are only symbolic of a past relic. They lack the elaborate educational value they had in the traditional African society. Apart from the physical cuttings on the initiates’ productive organs, the other significant aspects are not accomplished.

Religious moral development in the African society was simple and effective. Writing on the benefits an individual derived from initiation rites Wandira (1971: 234) comments as follows: “The function of education lay in producing fully grown and balanced persons who would fit well in the society which they became a living part of”. Apart from family, society and religion there were no other competition institutions hence whatever religious moral development that was impacted was not challenged by external factors. In most cases African societies operated in a fixed arena. It was also easy to manage and monitor the process of moral development. Deviation from moral obligations was easy to correct and punish. Each Kenyan society had its own elaborate methodology of ensuring that proper moral attitudes and practices were impacted on the youth. Hence this guaranteed that the majority of the members of societies were well behaved.

Since the arrival of new religions and other modern institutions in Kenya, the process of religious moral development has become complex. The arena of moral development has also shifted. Children are born in families but from tender ages are taken to boarding primary schools. After completing primary education they move to other areas to acquire secondary education and post-secondary education. In these new areas they interact with a variety of institutions. For example, they are removed from their families, religious denominations and communities and exposed to unfamiliar institutions. Their parents and religions are not able to monitor the new horizons of religious morals development.

The mass media has emerged as the single most significant challenge to religious moral development (Gakahu, 2005: 82). It is competing with the family, schools, religions and cultures in moral development of the youth in Kenya. Social media has emerged as a significant forum for moral and social
influence. The development of information technology in Kenya has expanded the horizon of social interaction to levels one would not have imagined in the last few years. Kenyan youth just like other youths in the globalized world are interacting with others in real time from all over the world.

This is generating a lot of challenges in the area of moral development. Depending on the stand view of individuals moral attitudes and practices are changing very rapidly. Commenting on media, Gakahu (2005: 80) observes the following: “The media is a major source of behaviour modeling which has become an extreme pervasive and omnipresent institutions in the world”.

Together with the mass media are other factors such as urbanization, modernization, science and secularization which are presenting real challenges to the youth. In 2010 Kenya promulgated a new constitution which has given individuals a lot of freedom. For example, forms of punishment which were intended to bring in line those who veered away from expected moral standards have been outlawed. Children in schools have a lot of freedom and teachers cannot cane them as was the case a few years ago. In 2014 in Nairobi some male youths tried to force ladies to dress in less provocative ways. To enforce their endeavor they started undressing allegedly indecently dressed women. This generated a hot debate in the social medial culminating into the slogan “my dress my choice” several male youths were arrested for attempting to undress women and taken to court. In March 2016 a group of young adults organized a party dubbed “Project X”. Posters appeared inviting young adults to a party somewhere in the so called green and leafy suburb of Nairobi (Daily Nation, 26 March, 2016). The announcement caused hysteria on social media in Nairobi. The government reacted by banning the proposed party. These events posed serious questions on the status of moral development among young adults.

In recent times in Kenya there has been an upsurge in cases of immorality such as rape and defilement of women, killing of children and spouses, drugs and alcohol abuse, pornography, sexual promiscuity among others. The question is why are immoral cases on the rise despite the elaborate religious moral development society and religions are providing? Why is it that young adults are engaging in wrong moral attitudes and practices? Religions and society have been equipping children and youth with moral education, a look at any religion one would notice the elaborate religious education programmes on offer for children and youth. Why is it that the investment put in moral
development seems not to be achieving intended objectives of bring up morally upright people? Why is it that some young adults though having been morally educated, the moments they gain their freedom get involved in immoral activities? Why is it that some children who are raised and taught to be God fearing and people of integrity are in mid-way running away from the values and practices taught to them?

This article analyses the challenges young adults go through that make some of them take a new direction in their moral perspective. It intended to bring out the various influences and challenges which make young adults get involved in religiously immoral activities. The article is a product of a field survey that involved selected students of the University of Nairobi. It mainly targeted students born and raised in conservative rural settings and aimed at finding out how moral attitudes changed the moment they joined the University of Nairobi.

**Methodology**

The study utilized the questionnaire and open ended questions method. The respondents were required to answer 14 questions with agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree and no comment responses. They also gave responses to questions touching on their personal lifestyles where they responded with yes, no or no comment. They also gave comments on six questions where they gave reasons and explanations.

100 questionnaires were distributed to 50 young men and 50 young women. 97 questionnaires were returned, 50 women and 47 men. Since Kenya is religiously pluralistic, 87 Christians and 8 non-Christians filled the questionnaires hence the majority were Christians. The respondents’ ages ranged from 18-32 years of age. The majority were between the ages of 18-24 years.

The University of Nairobi was chosen because the study targeted young people brought up in rural areas and currently residing in urban centres. The University of Nairobi situated in the centre of Nairobi city was expected to have the greatest influence on young people owing to its multitudes of social attractions. Out of 97 students, 77 were raised in rural areas while 20 were raised in Nairobi. Stay in Nairobi ranged from less than one year to 24 years.
Thirty-two students were first and second years while 75 were 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} year students. Filling and returning the questionnaires took one month.

Results

Decline in Moral Standards in Kenya
From the respondents it is evident that that there is decline in moral standards in Kenya. 91 respondents representing 94\% strongly agreed that moral standards are rapidly declining in Kenya. Six respondents representing 6\% strongly disagreed.

Effectiveness of Nuclear Families in Moral Development
Questioned on the effectiveness of the family as a primary source of moral development, 51 strongly agreed representing 53\% while 44 strongly disagreed representing 45\%, 2 representing 2\% had no comment. This means that the nuclear family is not overwhelmingly effective in moral development.

Extended Families Involvement in Moral Development
Forty-one respondents representing 42\% strongly agreed while 56 representing 58\% strongly disagreed. This shows that extended families are not as strong in moral development as they were in the traditional African society.

Role of Religious Denominations in Impacting Positive Moral Influence
Seventy-nine respondents representing 81\% strongly agreed while 16 strongly disagreed representing 16\% and 2 had no comment representing 2\%.

Mass Media as the Most Influential Social Institution
Ninety-one representing 94\% strongly agreed while 5 representing 5\% strongly disagreed, 1 representing 1\% had no comment.

Mass Media as a Point of Reference for young Adults
Eighty-seven representing 90\% strongly agreed while 6 representing 6\% strongly disagreed, 4 representing 4\% had no comment.

Contribution of Religious Organizations such as Christian Union, Christian Youth Society, Muslim Students Organization and Christian and Islamic Chaplaincies in Positively Influencing Young Adults
Seventy representing 72\% strongly agreed while 25 representing 26 strongly disagreed, 2 representing 2\% had no comment.
New Constitution and New Laws in Kenya Granting Young Adults unprecedented Freedom
Sixty-two representing 64% strongly agreed while 16 representing 16% strongly disagreed, 19 representing 20% had no comment.

Influence of Urbanization, Modernization and Secularization in Moral Deterioration in Kenya
Eighty-eight representing 91% strongly agreed while 7 representing 7% strongly disagreed- 2 representing 2% had no comment.

Redundance of Religious Denominations in Moral Development in Universities and Colleges
Sixty-nine representing 71% strongly agreed while 22 representing 23% strongly disagreed- 6 representing 6% had no comment.

Ownership of Sections of Mass Media by Religious Organizations and Its Influence in Neutralizing Negative Secular Media
Fifty representing 52% strongly agreed while 37 representing 38 strongly disagreed- 10 representing 10% had no comment.

Parents Too Busy to Give Quality Time to Young Adults
Ninety representing 92% strongly agreed while 6 representing 6% strongly disagreed – 1 representing 1% had no comment.

Frequency in Attendance of Religious Functions
Twenty-seven representing 28% rarely attended, 59 representing 61% frequently attended, 7 representing 7% did not attend at all and 4 representing 4% had no comment.

Frequency of Accessing Aspects of the Mass Media
Twenty-five representing 26%, accessed once a day, 63 representing 65% accessed several times in a day, 7 representing 7% accessed once a week, 2 representing 2% did not access at all.

Frequency of Reading Religious Scriptures
Forty representing, 41% read scriptures daily, 35 representing 36% read scriptures during days of worship, 20 representing 21% rarely read the scripture, 2 representing 2% did not read the scripture at all.
The Most Popular Media
Four representing 4% preferred FM radio stations, 1 representing 1% chose newspapers, 85 representing 88% choose social media, 7 representing 7% chose T.V. channels- none chose books.

Contribution of Religions in assisting in Making Moral Decisions
Seventy representing 72% were assisted by religion in making moral decisions, 26 representing 27% were not assisted at all 1 representing 1% had no comment.

Sufficiency of religious content in religious media in influencing young adults morally
Thirty-eight representing 39% said it is adequate, 50 representing 52% said it is inadequate 9 representing 9% had no comment.

Religious Media’s Capacity to March Innovations and Creativity of Secular Media
Twenty-five representing 26% said the capacity is adequate, 53 representing 54% said the capacity is inadequate. 19 representing 20% had no comment.

Frequency of Parents Giving Religious Moral Guidance After Students Joined Universities
Sixty-one representing 63 said parents rarely gave moral guidance, 29 representing 30% said parents frequently gave moral guidance 7 representing 7% said parents did no at all give any moral guidance.

Discussion
The Dictionary of Psychology defines moral development as the process whereby individuals … come to adopt and internalize the standards of right and wrong of their society (Reber & Reber, 2001: 444). Mugambi (2003:15) defines morality as the sum total of the principles that influence or should influence the behavior of an individual. Over the years and in various societies moral decisions are based on; religious ethics, ethics of respect, ethics of rights and virtue ethics.

In this article emphasis is placed on religious morals and ethics. Religion in Kenya just like in other African countries still remains very strong. Writing on continued influence of religion in Africa, Sarpong (1975:28) says: “Africa
remains so religious that in many cases not even the introduction of science and technology has been able to make in-roads into her religious fabric”.

From the results from the University of Nairobi (3:13) 61% of the students interviewed still attend religious functions frequently. In this article young adults are understood to mean young people in the early years of 20 years to early thirties. While defining young adults Moloney (2013:9) writes: “There is still a sizeable group in education up to mid and even late twenties”. Kenya has embraced many religions of the world although Christianity and Islam have the largest following. In the results 94% (3.1) of the respondents are in agreement that Kenya though still being a very religious country moral standards are declining rapidly. Mwikamba (2003: 86) attributed the decline to among other factors the fact that African traditional morals have been replaced or displaced by other moral systems. When the missionaries arrived in Kenya they assumed that the culture and ethics of the missionary is “Christian” and “good” where as that of the prospective converts is “non-Christian” and “evil” (Mugambi, 2003:14). In the development of Christian morality in Kenya as in other parts of Africa, African values and morals were discarded while western Christian values were given the priority. In the teaching of morals, the various denominations operating in Kenya emphasized their interpretation of morality. On the conflict in moral and ethical teachings, Mugambi (2003: 15-16) writes: “The lack of moral consensus among Christians has produced a crisis in Christian moral education …. joint Catholic/ Protestant secondary education panel endeavored to formulate a syllabus for ethics at A level. The task proved very difficult owing to lack of consensus. In the end plurality, was acknowledged”.

Although African religion is very rich in morals and values upon conversion many African Christians do not adapt their cultural values and morals in the Christian ethics that emerge. In the traditional society moral development was a continuous process. For example among the Akamba of Eastern Kenya, there was a special initiation ritual that was intended to empower young adults. (Nzaiko Nene) (Mbiti, 1969: 123). In contemporary Kenyan society after students finish form four and join colleges and universities parents and religious denominations cease or drastically reduce their provision of moral guidance. Public universities in Kenya admit some of most well behaved students but upon admission some of the students’ morals take turn for the worse. In a study carried out in Moi University among first year students Sorre (2005: 86) found out that peer influence and newly acquired freedom are the
main causes of behavior change. He found out that emancipation from parental authority and emotional dependence upon parents also causes behavior change in an individual. Sorre (2005: 89) observes that most of these changes have negative implications on the students’ social and academic life.

When the selected students of the University of Nairobi were asked why some of them were involved in immoral activities, they gave the following reasons: peer pressure, extreme poverty levels, curiosity, poor parenting, ignorance, too much freedom, experimenting in new experiences, lack of supervision, aping others, influence from social media, idleness, to earn a living, rebellion and disobedience, living beyond means, affluence, financial constraints, erosion of moral values, easy access to drugs and alcohol among others.

Students who join university before they are admitted come from situations where they are effectively supervised. All of sudden they find themselves in universities where there are no rules, no prefects or monitors. Immediately driven by the above reasons they begin engaging in immoral practices. On young adults, Sorre (2005:89) writes: “New experiences and cognitive abilities that emerge during their interaction, with other students prompt them to redefine their behavior in a way that changes their world view and hence change in behavior element”.

Maloney (2013:19) writing on the challenges young adults in contemporary Kenyan society face says: “Differences related to decision making and inadequate support … often major life decisions about career, going to college and whom to marry are made during early adulthood”.

Among many African societies there were support systems at every developmental stage. For example, among the Maasai and kikuyu there were age-groups. These assisted when one was in doubt. Moloney (2013:19) says in contemporary Kenyan society it is commonly assumed that a young adult is neither a child nor adolescent so he has no need of help. When young adults find themselves in this kind of situation depending on their level of maturity and responsibility some surrender and move to extremes. The students of the University of Nairobi said although in the university there are structures such as Christian union, young Christian society and others they tend to be evangelistic than giving advice or counseling. The chaplaincy in the university is not pro-active. It only intervenes when things have gone bad. Most of these organizations are too formal- hence most of students interviewed said they
simply ignored them. Writing on the dilemma students find themselves Moloney (2013:20) observes: “After secondary school in college and university support structures either do not exist or they tend to be in personal and mainly geared towards academic performance”. The implication of this is that young adults often lack the necessary information and advice which may be the key in enabling them to make informed decisions. Some of the expectations students content with include pressure of unrealistic and unachievable expectations from parents, peers and society, difficulties in establishing and sustaining health relationships and challenges related to the pursuit of a career (Maloney, 2013: 20).

When parents and other institutions involved in moral development slow down, the vacuum they create is filled by mass media and bad company. Young adulthood is a time of many positive and negative experiences. During this time they enjoy, complete independence from parents and teachers. As they interact with their peers, mass media and personal experiences they encounter in the cities, young adults are slowly drawn away from the deeply religious environment they were used to. On why young adults change quickly, O-Donovan (2000: 207) writes: “Youth are always looking for new ideas and excitement. They are easily influenced to change in ways that adults would never consider”.

On the challenge society faces in moulding young adults, Mwiti (2005:1) writes: “We face a twofold challenge: how to enable young people to enjoy a satisfying morally health life and at the same time help them to grow into truly mature and responsible men and women. This is necessary for the good of individuals, families and nation”.

On the same subject O-Donovan (2000:2015) argues as follows: “The majority of Africa is becoming younger every year. Youth represent one of the greatest unmet of needs in the Church today. Churches need to drastically change their programmes in order to address the needs of the youth”.

**Mass Media and Young Adults**

Although most of the mass media such as radio, television, newspapers and films are either partially owned by Kenyan investors or wholly owned by foreigners the content in the mass media is mostly dominated by western cultures. Gakahu (2000: 80) observes the following: “In Kenya, most of the
content in electronic media is geared towards sexual graphics, sexual language and sexual relations”.

When Kenya launched digital broadcasting, various television channels, fm radio stations started broadcasting in English, Kiswahili and vernacular languages hence increasing mass media options. Many of these target mainly the youth and young adults and are dominated by issues of sexuality and relationships. On the capacity of the youth and young adults to critically accommodate the content of the mass media, Gakahu (2005: 80) says: “By the fact that youths are quite malleable the scenes of sexual material in our electronic media may have adverse effects on their behaviours”.

As shown in the results (3.6) the mass media has become a point of reference, most youth use it as the yard stick on which to base their dressing, mannerism, behavior among other aspects. Young adults are attracted to social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram and many others. Kenya as a country has not formulated adequate policies that guard against destructive content in electronic media. Gakahu (2005:8) observes that: “The exposure to media message of all kinds andthe influence of those messages have increased over the years”.

Due to the reduced involvement of parents and religions in giving alternative views the mass media is literally dominating young adults to the extent that most of them spent a lot of time checking what is in the media. In the study conducted at the University of Nairobi showed that 63% of parents rarely give their children moral guidance after they join Universities. Many young adults consult the mass media more than they consult religious scriptures and even books. In particular parents have been slow in providing sex education and female and male relationships. In recent years there have been reports in the media of young adults assaulting or even killing their boy or girl friends in the universities. On the failure of parents to provide education on sex and relationships, Gakahu (2005: 80) writes: “In Kenya the youth tend to turn to sources outside the family because a culture of silence surrounding most productive health issues. Many adults in the country including parents and school setting are uncomfortable and reluctant talking about sexuality with their youth, prompting them to turn to the media”.

When asked about some of the immoral activities young adults are involved, the students of the University of Nairobi listed the following: sexual
immorality, prostitution, homosexuality and lesbianism, fornication and adultery, sexual promiscuity, abortion, going to strip clubs, group sex, watching pornographic materials, drug and alcohol abuse, drug trafficking, robbery and theft, use of vulgar language, terror attacks, sexual harassment, money laundering, killing of girl and boy friends, pick pocketing, indecent dressing among many others. Although the majority of the students who were involved in the survey may not have participated in the above activities they had come into contact with several students in the halls of residence who were involved. To the students who were involved they saw these activities as normal. Actually apart from a few criminal activities, the majority of the others are only considered as immoral by religions.

In some instances religious denominations differ on what is to be called immoral. Mugambi (2003: 3) argues that different denominations emphasize morality as understood by their mother churches in Europe or America. For example, when it comes to drinking alcohol and smoking, the Roman Catholic Church allows their members to smoke or drink while the Protestants are totally prohibited from smoking or drinking. Mugambi (2003:3) writes: “This lack of consensus among Christian denominations in their approaches to ethics has led to a crisis in moral education in contemporary Africa”. Emphazing the same point, Macharia (2007: 226) says: “As a result, some are socialized negatively because of copying foreign values that are incompatible with their own cultures, religion and society in terms of morality”. Some young adults think that by abusing drugs and engaging in promiscuous behaviour they are proving to be powerful just like the powerful characters they watch on T.V.

**Religious Activities and Programmes mounted by Religions for Young Adults**

When the student surveyed in the study were asked about the programmes their religious denominations provide for them, they gave the following: Sunday schools, sports and games, seminars and workshops, bible study, retreats, missions and fellowships, Friday night activities, inspirational and motivational talks, keshas, campaign against drug and sexual immorality (CADAS), Daawah community preaching service (for Muslims), Quran recitation, annual church meetings, among others.

From the list of the activities provided by religious denominations it is obvious that the majority are designed for children and the youth of up to 18 years of age. There are very few programmes in the university or denominations
strictly designed for young adults. Some of the students cited Mavuno Church as an example of a denomination which has relevant programmes for young adults such as Mizizi, simama, ombi, hatua, adoption of new leisure activities, leadership development opportunities and frontline initiatives which help young adults to positively change their lives (Njoroge, 2012: 72). Commenting on the scarcity of religious programmes specifically designed for young adults, O-Donovan (2000: 207) says “If the church does not change its emphasis to include a serious ministry directed towards young people, it will lose the present generation of youth. If it loses the present generation of youth, it will lose Africa”.

The challenges most young adults find themselves in is that of moving to other denominations which have relevant programmes for them. The mainline denominations in which young adults have been socialized in have little to offer them. Those who have courage move to new denominations while others simply abandon church attendance. On such movements O-Donovan (2000: 209) writes: “In the area of religion it is young people who will most quickly follow new unusual religious movements, cults and self-proclaimed prophets”.

As shown in the results (3.10) some religious denominations have become redundant hence their followers look for alternatives either in new religions or they immerse themselves in immorality.

**Impact of Modernity, Urbanization and Secularization on Moral Development of Young Adults**

Proponents of the modernization theory argue that the contemporary world is strongly characterized by twin aspects of modernity and modernization that are expressed in technology, differential patterns of economic development and social institutions, political ideologies and modes of protest and participation (Eisenstadt, 1987: 2). Modern change was introduced in Africa by the missionaries and colonialists. The former influenced by social Darwinism and idea of 3cs (civilization, Christianity and commerce) advocated for by Dr. David Livingstone, came to African with the intention of introducing western culture. They were heavily prejudiced against African culture which they considered inferior and satanic. They believed that they had a responsibility to westernize and transform a backward African society. Kenyan converts to Christianity were encouraged to abandon their culture and embrace western culture.
Mwiti (2005: iv) writing on missionary activities in Kenya says: “With the coming of education and Christianity, the old was done away with but it was never adequately replaced. Schools taught Maths, English, Geography but not values and living”. Mwiti (2005: v) goes further and writes: “The church preached the gospel but discipleship, -the art of drilling expectations, educating and preparing for life, passing on values and impressing them chastising, reprimanding correcting and reproof were left out”.

The approach used by the missionaries ended up creating a society with a values vacuum. Mugambi (2003: 3) argues that the missionaries completely ignored African traditional morality which they viewed as satanic and evil. Hence the missionaries ended up promoting western values some of which were not in tandem with African value system. This has been the causes of some of the moral challenges in Kenya.

With Christianity and modernization came the development of urban centres. Urbanization in Kenya was facilitated by the construction the Kenya Uganda railway line. Several towns developed along the railway stations. Urbanization is a progress of population concentration. Kenyans left their rural homes to the emerging urban centres. Urbanization created a discontinuity for individuals and communities. In the towns communal ties which ensured upholding of community values were worsened. Kenyans in urban centres live a carefree life. There is no big brother watching over. On urbanization in Kenya Shorter (2004: 255) says:

The migrants to towns and cities found that they were no longer members of a coherent community, in which church going was an accepted practice” Christianity also came in Africa with secularization. Secularization is the process in which a culture turns more and more towards scientific and rational pursuits. There is a corresponding turn away from religious values.

Shorter (2004: 253) defines secularization as the situation in which religion loses its hold both at the level of social institutions and at the level of human consciousness.

Anyanga (2012: 346) argues that the missionary enterprise introduced into Africa notions and processes which removed the African from traditional understanding of community as well as the total separation of religion and state. Young adults find themselves in situations of modernization,
urbanization and secularization. These features alienate them from their traditional values. O-Donovan (2000-201) writes: “It is the youth who are most affected by the influences of modernity. It is the youth who are most permanently changed by western world view, Western music, western education and western technology”.

Christianity has contributed a lot to social transformation in Africa but is has not helped Africans to resolve moral contradictions arising from that impact. In fact some secular approaches have been proposed in Africa (Mugambi, 2003: 4). Since each denomination in Kenya emphasize its interpretations of morality, it has been difficult to come up with suitable role models. Kenyan society can be seen as contradiction of morality.

In the contemporary Kenyan society, a lot of social evils such as corruption, nepotism, divorce, spouse bartering, robbery with violence, abortion, kidnapping, among others are reported in media all the time. Most of these are perpetuated by adults. Actually the adults are equally involved in immoral activities just like young adults. The question is how do the old adults have moral authority to lecture on young adults on morality? Writing on moral modelling Macharia says: “It is a well-known fact that children learn by modeling what they see from adults in society. When society models wrong values, these are copied and demonstrated by children and youth in their behavior especially in matters of authority, social norms and religion”.

**Conclusion**

From the above discussion it is evident that young adults are not adequately facilitated by their parents, religions and institutions of higher learning in their religious moral development. As indicated by the respondents most parents are too busy and majority cease giving moral instructions and guidance to the young adults the moment they joint universities and colleges. In the universities the programmes that are intended to provide moral development are voluntary, formal and not as thorough in giving moral guidance as those in lower levels of education hence young adults ignore them. The result has been some young adults engaging in immortal practices which have negatively affected their social lives and academic performance.

Young adults have also to contend with modernization, urbanization, mass media and secularization which have created a liberal society where upholding
religious moral values is a big challenge. Denominational religions in Kenya emphasize their individual interpretation of morality hence they have created moral contradictions. Christianity has tended to view traditional moral values negatively. During the missionary period, Christianity condemned Africa traditional morality as evil and satanic. There has not been an effort to harmonize the two moral systems. This has resulted in a situation where moral standards have gone down. The mass media has reported several incidents of moral vices such corruption, nepotism, tribalism, theft of public resources, domestic violence, and political violence, among others. The Kenyan society has not provided adequate role models on moral integrity. Most of those involved in these vices claim to be religious. This leaves young adults in a dilemma. The society has become materialistic emphasizing individual success while religions are still teaching ideals of moral integrity. There is a big gap between the moral ideals and the reality on ground.

The article recommends that religions in Kenya should unite and come up with ecumenical religious programmes to be provided to young adults in universities. The universities should also strengthen their programmes involved in moral empowerment so that their content is appropriate for young adults and proactive so that they may deal with moral challenges facing young adults.

**References**


‘Men Are Not Taken as Lightly as That’: Power and Male Sexual Promiscuity in David G. Maillu’s *Unfit for Human Consumption*

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**Abstract**

Guided by the hypothesis that there is an association between the concepts of power and sex in the minds of sexually aggressive men, this reading of *Unfit for Human Consumption* (1973), the first of the ‘mini novels’ that launched David G. Maillu’s career on the path to the notoriety that it enjoyed in East Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, argues that the text shows that the sexual promiscuity of the male mwananchi (plural: wananchi) – that member of ‘the masses of the people’ – of the first decade of Kenya’s Uhuru, political independence, is a doomed and wrong-headed attempt to assert a sense of the significance of the self, to be ‘man,’ in an environment in which the gender regime in place defines him as a ‘no man.’ The reading thus locates itself among a rich body of recent work that urges the serious examination of Kenyan popular literature.

**Introduction**

“I would like you to sleep and reconsider your decision. Men are not taken as lightly as that” (1973: 34), Jonathan Kinama, the main character in David Maillu’s *Unfit for Human Consumption* (1973), tells his roommate Maruka. Kinama’s demand to Maruka to be cognizant of the fact that he is a man comes after Maruka asks Kinama to move out of the room they share. Maruka, who is the legal tenant in the room, spells out what is in effect an eviction notice upon finding out that Kinama has slept with his girlfriend. Kinama refuses to move out. He feels mistreated at being evicted at such short notice that does not give him sensible room to find alternative accommodation. This is not the only instance in the ‘mini novel’ (this cataloguing of the work is provided in the para-text of the work) when Kinama and other characters in

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*Unfit for Human Consumption* bring up the notion of being ‘man.’ In the opening scene of the mini novel, which is set in a banking hall, immediately after Kinama has withdrawn his salary the narrating voice reports: “Kinama counted the notes with trembling hands. It was correct. He pushed it in his tweed coat pocket. He sighed as he walked out thinking of the girl [he had been ogling a few moments ago]. He coughed and thought, ‘Now I’ve become a man again, where’s she?’” (1973: 8). Much later in the mini novel, when Kinama’s village-based and much neglected wife turns up at his work place, which is in the city, and causes a scene, a colleague’s voice asks him to control the situation: “‘Kinama, please, be a man – this is shocking, settle this please!’” (1973: 66).

From these three instances it is readily apparent that ‘man’ is for Jonathan Kinama and other characters in *Unfit for Human Consumption* a matrix of ideas. Beyond unpacking these ideas this article relates the notion of ‘man’ that is held by Jonathan Kinama and other characters in *Unfit for Human Consumption* to a second prominent feature of the mini novel, which is sexual promiscuity. Right from the opening passage of the mini novel Jonathan Kinama is presented as a character who consistently perceives the women he interacts with, including those that he merely sees in public spaces, as either “fit for human consumption” (1973: 7) or not – that is, as sexually desirable or not – and whose ambition, which he achieves to an impressive degree, is to have as many sexual encounters as he can. The narrating voice also indicates that most of the other characters in the mini novel are sexually promiscuous, regardless of their gender.

The argument developed in the article is that in *Unfit for Human Consumption* David Maillu shows that Jonathan Kinama’s sexual promiscuity, which is inextricably linked to his obsession with the notion of ‘man,’ is a doomed and wrong-headed attempt by the Kenyan male *mwananchi* – (Kiswahili: literal, ‘child of the country’, plural: *wananchi*), that is, a member of ‘the masses of the people’ – of the first decade of the country’s political independence, *Uhuru*, to assert a sense of the significance of the self, to be ‘man,’ in an environment in which the gender regime in place defines him as a ‘no man.’ It is shown that the mini novel proposes that political action holds the sensible answer to the devaluation of the *mwananchi*’s worth.
Power and Sex in the Minds of Sexually Aggressive Men

The theoretical frame for the argument is provided by the hypothesis that there is an association between the concepts of power and sex in the minds of sexually aggressive men. ‘Sexual aggression’ is here extended to include philandering. In this article, that which is perhaps the simplest formulation of the hypothesis that there is an association between the concepts of power and sex in the minds of sexually aggressive men is used as the base of the theoretical frame. This is the formulation that was put forward by some feminists who held that patriarchal “culture teaches men that sexual aggression is acceptable to demonstrate power, anger, and male ‘supremacy.’ They learn that they are ‘entitled to goods and services, including sex, from women as a class’ (Bart & O’Brien, 1985: 103) and that women enjoy sexual aggression” (Burt, 1980 in Parrot and Bechhofer, 1991: 232).

Other ideas are built onto this base. Following Kamphuis and colleagues it is inferred that the socialization of men in a patriarchy that is referred to in the feminists’ formulation then leads to an automaticity of an association between the concepts of power and sex in the minds of sexually aggressive men. Having internalized the ideas that they are superior and they can use sex as an instrument to underscore that status, the men engage in sexual aggression without having to think about it. This is a point that Kamphuis et al. capture in the following words: “Much mental life (including motivation) occurs without intention, effort, or conscious awareness – is automatic, or under automatic processes” (2005: 1352). The man in a patriarchy who engages in an act of sexual aggression does not have to be conscious that he is using sex to convey both to himself and to his victim the message that he is ‘man’ and therefore powerful.

The second idea that is loaded onto the feminists’ formulation of the hypothesis that there is an association between the concepts of power and sex in the minds of sexually aggressive men is the idea that men are particularly motivated to demonstrate their power in situations where that power is either challenged or not recognized. The postcolonial Kenyan male mwananchi of the first decade of the country’s political independence, Uhuru, was an economically and politically powerless individual. As such he would be motivated to display power. The point is given added significance by the consideration that in the postcolony the power-infused, hierarchical gender regime that was either established or reified by colonialism (Lugones, 2008; 2010) continues to hold sway. In this regime ‘man’ is a privileged category.
There is the real man, who is the white man. The man who is part of the African ruling class “who took over from, or Africanised, the colonial state hierarchy” (Freund, 1984: 241) follows closely. The male *mwananchi* becomes a ‘no man’ of sorts. For this reason he is referred to as ‘boy,’ no matter his age. In his iconic roles he is the houseboy (never a manservant), *shamba* boy (never a grounds man), mine boy (never a miner), etc. Living in a society that privileges the notion of ‘man’ and yet denies him the recognition that he is one in spite of his biological sex and age, the male *mwananchi* is tempted to achieve the definition by other means – by violence and sexual aggression.

I ease into the reading of *Unfit for Human Consumption* by summarizing the mini novel and bringing to view the three broad groups of responses that it has elicited from readers.

**Unfit for Human Consumption and its Readers**

The story (the fable, not the plot) in *Unfit for Human Consumption* runs as follows. Jonathan Kinama, a Nairobi-based, sex-and-alcohol obsessed junior civil servant, sleeps with Anita, who is his roommate Maruka’s girlfriend. Maruka, who is the legal tenant of the room, finds out and gives Kinama an eviction notice that Kinama regards as disrespectful because it is too short. An altercation arises between the two. The ensuing fight results in Kinama being hospitalized for close to two months. In hospital Kinama resolves to change his riotous lifestyle. When he is released from hospital, his “lifist” (1973: 44, italicized in the original) – that is, hedonistic – drinking buddy Tito Kimenye takes him in, to share a room, in the understanding that as soon as he gets paid his back salary (he has not been paid all the time he has been in hospital) Kinama will pay up his debts to Tito and do everything that is expected of a man who is back on his feet. Kinama’s resolve to change weakens in Tito’s room, in the face of Tito’s womanizing ways. When he finally gets paid, Kinama puts off meeting his obligations and instead goes out to drink. He ends up in a cheap lodging house with a sex worker who robs him of all his money. The next morning he goes to work, drunk, and tells his boss a tall story about his child having died while trying to borrow some money off him, only for his long-suffering and much neglected wife to show up from the village, their twin children in hand. That causes a scene, and the miserable family finally leaves for Kinama’s room. When he goes back to work the next day Kinama learns of his punishment by suspension. His life falling apart, Kinama commits suicide.
Out of this fable, Maillu constructs a fairly tight plot – the ‘present’ being comprised of the eventful last three days of Jonathan Kinama’s life, with all other events that are in the story but do not happen within the three days being brought in via flashback and memory – that structurally divides the ‘mini novel’ into two parts. The novel starts with Jonathan Kinama in a crowded banking hall waiting to get paid. With only a few (sex-filled) flashbacks and fantasies the narrative moves briskly, in four chapters, to the night Kinama spends with the sex worker, Lily. That night brings the first part to an end. The second part starts the morning after the night with Lily, when Kinama discovers that she has robbed him of all his money, and moves inexorably, in five chapters, towards his suicide – and the ferrying of his body to his village for burial.

A limited omniscient point of view is deployed in the telling of this story. The reader therefore perceives almost all that happens through the eyes of Jonathan Kinama. The notable exception is the last chapter of the mini novel when Kinama’s body is being ferried to his village for burial. In this case the event is seen through the eyes of Kinama’s wife.

Unfit for Human Consumption was the first of the self-published mini novels that launched David G. Maillu’s career on the path to the notoriety that it enjoyed in East Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. (For reports on Maillu’s notoriety at the time, see Wanjala, 1980: 204-250; Lindfors, 1982; Kurtz and Kurtz, 2002: 124). What was most striking about these novelettes is that coitus is frankly described in them. For this reason, most of (especially the early) responses to the novels do not get over the sexual content. The novels strike one group of readers as being wholly about sex. And that impression, apparently, gave the novels their popular appeal in the 1970s – as Siganga Makwato recalls:

And soon after, some of his [Maillu’s] other books made their way into the pockets of many Kenyans who thought Dr Maillu’s writing bordered on pornography and believed that he was mainly riding on the sex-sells wave at a time when anything that threatened to reveal the slightest bit of flesh, in pictures or words, would be assured of an audience. (2013: 23)

Not all readers share the excitement. Many readings agree with Kalu Ogbaa that Maillu’s “works, for what they are worth, cannot be appreciated more than those of a writer pandering to popular taste by portraying Nairobi as a city of
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self-destructive sex” (1981: 66). This was an important reason behind the disparaging of Maillu’s novels – and others of their kind – as ‘pulp literature’ (1980) by Chris Lukorito Wanjala, who was the foremost Kenyan literary critic of the 1970s and 1980s. Understanding the mini novels in the same lines, the Tanzanian government banned the books in 1976 (Lindfors, 1982: 130).

The condemnation of Maillu’s mini novels as immoral is best articulated by Kalu Ogbaa whose comprehensive judgment takes in the work’s artistic merits, or lack thereof:

Maillu’s works could be easily dismissed as being too pornographic and formless. The author may not be given any credit for the few creative devices that sympathetic critics glean out of these works because such devices are purely accidental and the currency and importance of the themes in contemporary society are vitiated by low artistic taste. That Maillu’s writing is amateurish is a truism[.]

(Ogbaa, 1981: 57)

There are a number of readings of the mini novels that answer back the readings that condemn the books as immoral. These readings more or less agree with David Maillu’s summary of what he understands – and wishes his readers to understand – his mini novels to be about. In a 2013 interview Maillu stated: ‘Unfit for Human Consumption … was about a family man who fell from his moral high horse to a rather immoral existence, at least by his previous standards’ (Makwato 2013: 24). Tom Odhiambo has picked out this moral angle of the mini novel, commenting on the title: ‘In an ironic twist, the novella’s title “unfit for human consumption” makes a resounding warning about the dangers of excesses in the city’ (Odhiambo, 2007: 658). In the same vein, Lindfors summarizes Unfit for Human Consumption and Maillu’s other mini novels in these words:

It was this kind of story – the opera of civil servant self-destruction – that Maillu made his own in his first mini novels and long poems. Sometimes he would focus on men, sometimes on women (usually working women – secretaries, schoolgirls, prostitutes and the like), but his stories seldom ended happily. The protagonist would have to suffer for having over-indulged in the fleeting pleasures of the bed and the bottle, pleasures which Maillu paused to describe in elaborate and zeisty detail. (1982: 133)

As was obvious in Ogbaa’s criticism of Maillu’s work there are readings that take issue with Maillu’s work on artistic grounds. Arlene A. Elder’s reading,
which finds a mismatch between the formal characteristics of the mini novels (“sensational style and subject matter” – in Owomoyela, 1993: 59) and their thematic import (“moralistic intent” – in Owomoyela, 1993: 59) is an instance of these. In her conclusion Elder writes:

[A] more valid criticism [of Maillu’s mini novels] might be that his books do not hold together as either popular entertainment or cautionary tales, precisely because Maillu lacks the skill to bring together seamlessly two such divergent impulses. (Owomoyela, 1993: 59).

Whereas it generally aligns itself with the readings that answer back the readings that condemn Maillu’s mini novels as immoral, and mostly point out the author’s moral project, the present reading differs from them with its argument that in *Unfit for Human Consumption* the root cause of the male character’s indulgence “in the fleeting pleasures of the bed and the bottle” (Lindfors, 1982: 133) is his relationship with power. In other words, in this article *Unfit for Human Consumption* is read as showing that the male mwananchi engages in excess, self-destructs, falls off his high moral horse, etc. in – as has been stated above – a wrong-headed, misguided and doomed attempt to assert a sense of the significance of the self, to be ‘man,’ in an environment that renders him a ‘no man.’

‘Man’ and Male Sexual Promiscuity in *Unfit for Human Consumption*

The starting point in the process of unpacking the meaning of the notion of ‘man’ that is held by Jonathan Kinama and other characters in *Unfit for Human Consumption* is a consideration of the three instances cited at the beginning of the article. From these instances it is obvious that ‘man’ is not a biological category. And that is despite the point that both Kinama and Maruka also define the notion of ‘man’ through its contrast with the notion of ‘woman’ (1973: 34) and difference from the notion of ‘boy’ (1973: 36). There are instances in the mini novel when physiological characteristics are brought up to reference the notion of ‘man’ but even in such instances it remains clear that the notion is not to be equated to the biological phenomenon that is the adult male human being. In this vein, ‘man’ in Kinama’s view must have “a penis that functioned properly” (1973: 17) – and must definitely not be a eunuch (1973: 49). Sexual potency therefore becomes part of the definition of ‘man.’ Although, as shall be shown below, the attribute that is being emphasized here is power in its more generalized form rather than in a
meaning that is restricted to the ability to mate and procreate. For Kinama, yet again, ‘man’ is the one with the testicles (1973: 36, 73). But here Kinama is obviously using the organs metaphorically, referencing attributes that are other than biological – like nerve, courage and authority.

From the three instances, also, it is possible to short hand the notion and state that it is a cluster of the ideas that define the proper human being. Thus, to run through the instances one after the other: ‘man’ is he who must be treated justly, and with respect; ‘man’ is he who has money, and therefore has the agency that having money means socially and culturally in this context; and ‘man’ is he who is in charge, who has control both over himself and over those that are under his authority. An extension of this last sense of ‘man’ is the one that Kinama has in mind in his response to Anita’s question on whether he, Kinama, thinks that Maruka will still make it home to their shared room:

She asked him, “Do you think that he is still coming?”
“Can’t tell.”
“What’s the latest time he comes home in the night?”
As a man, he could come back at any time, but I do not remember one time when he came home after one or two o’clock. I hope you do not underestimate the dangers of this estate in the night.” (1973: 18)

In paraphrase: being ‘man’ Maruka makes decisions for which he is responsible, and which nobody has the right to question. There are, then, in the notion of ‘man’ ideas of individual autonomy, sovereignty and agency, and of the proper responses they should elicit in other individuals.

I now bring up sexual promiscuity in Unfit for Human Consumption. Even though there are only two instances when the reader is invited to peep at Kinama engaged in the sex act in Unfit for Human Consumption – when he has sex with Anita for the first time, which is described to some detail, and when he has sex with Lily, which scene is cut out at the point of the insertion of the penis – the mini novel makes it abundantly clear that the character is sexually promiscuous. In the very first paragraph of the mini novel the narrating voice informs the reader that Kinama is an “expert” who “had great experience in women” (1973: 5). There are numerous references to Kinama’s women, which taken together with his sexualized perception of the woman and his constant fantasies can only mean that the women are his sexual partners.
Other details that get their value from their use as popular literary conventions reinforce the point. For example, the women that Kinama has sex with are either directly (Lily and the many unnamed others) or indirectly (Anita) engaged in sex work. The use of the figure of the man who has sex with sex workers to convey sexual promiscuity is a popular literary convention. As is the figure of the married man who has extra-marital sexual adventures, as Kinama does. Sexual promiscuity is also suggested through the point that Kinama perceives sexual desirability and even the sexual act in images that are related to food and its consumption. The perception in its turn constructs the image of a character who is permanently on the prowl in search of sexual prey and indicates that Kinama not only considers sex a necessity but also that a variety of sexual partners is required. Kinama “calculat[es] the amount of sweetness” (1973: 10, 31) in women’s genitalia more than once in the mini novel; he recalls that he had “tasted” (1973: 13) Anita. And, as has been mentioned, already, Kinama consistently perceives the women he interacts with, including those that he merely sees in public spaces, as either “fit for human consumption” (1973: 7) or not – that is, as sexually desirable or not – and his motivation is to have as many sexual encounters as he can.

The narrating voice indicates in various ways that most of the other characters in the mini novel are sexually promiscuous, regardless of their gender. Tito is a womanizing “lifist” (1973: 44); Kinama’s immediate boss Ochwada is keeping their colleague Susy as a “secret girl” (1973: 44); Susy herself has a boyfriend, the university student Wellington Macanyengo Ogutu – who in turn has a “Luhya girlfriend”; Anita is Maruka’s girlfriend but also sleeps with Kinama; many female characters are sex workers; and so on.

A question that arises in the wake of the establishing of Jonathan Kinama’s obsession with the notion of ‘man’ and his sexual promiscuity is: Is there a connection between these two fixations of the main character in Unfit for Human Consumption? The focusing on Jonathan Kinama is determined by an appreciation of the point that the use of the limited omniscient point of view in Unfit for Human Consumption also encourages the reading of the character as the quintessential mwananchi. In the village he is a peasant. In Nairobi he is a junior civil servant.

My answer to the question of whether there is a connection between the two fixations of the main character in Unfit for Human Consumption starts with the noting of the point that Kinama’s obsession with the notion of ‘man’ and his
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sexual promiscuity are features of his life in Nairobi, and are absent in his life in the village in Ukambani, Mbiuni Location, where he lives before he moves to the city. This much is clear from the cameo images of Kinama’s life in Mbiuni that are placed in counterpoint to the narrative of his life in Nairobi. Whereas in Nairobi Kinama is a self-disrespecting, sexually promiscuous, alcohol-loving, thieving and financially wasteful man who totally neglects his immediate family, in Mbiuni he “was the model of a good Christian” (1973: 41-42) who was in control of his finances: “He had been earning less money [than he later did in Nairobi], but he had always had some saving” (1973: 41-42). Kinama also provided for himself and for his own: “There were a few fruit trees in the garden and many bananas which Kinama had planted” (1973: 16-17).

The contrasting of Kinama’s life in the two settings suggests that whatever caused his obsession with the notion of ‘man’ and his sexual promiscuity either happened in Nairobi or on the way to the city. Since there is no transitional space ‘on the way to Nairobi’ in Unfit for Human Consumption, it must be taken that the change happened in the city.

Character developments like Jonathan Kinama’s – his becoming sexually promiscuous in the city – lead to conclusions such as this one by Chris Wanjala: “An urban proletariat has since developed in East African cultural life. It is not accountable to the customary law of the rural chiefs and African systems of values” (1980: 205). It is important, when considering deductions like Wanjala’s, to pick out the detail that in Unfit for Human Consumption the values of the rural countryside are Christian, and not traditional Kamba. (The mini novel frequently identifies characters by their ethnicity, and Jonathan Kinama is ethnically Kamba, as are the people in Mbiuni). The point rebuffs the straight-forward ‘modern corruption’ versus ‘traditional morality’ argument implied in Wanjala’s statement. By so doing, it also suggests to the reader that the cause(s) of Kinama’s sexual promiscuity lie(s) elsewhere.

The moment(s) when Kinama starts obsessing with the notion of ‘man’ and becomes sexually promiscuous is (are) not identified in Unfit for Human Consumption. Neither does the mini novel overtly give the reason(s) why the changes happen. The omissions direct the reader to look closely at the Nairobi environment as (re)presented in the mini novel to find whatever is responsible for both Kinama’s obsession with the notion of ‘man’ and his sexual promiscuity. Logically, whatever is responsible for both Kinama’s obsession
with the notion of ‘man’ and his sexual promiscuity will be present in Nairobi, and will be absent in Mbiuni.

The narrating voice in the mini novel does not dwell on descriptions of place. Place and street names are simply mentioned. Indeed, the reader gets the impression that the narrating voice assumes that s/he knows the places the characters traverse. This is markedly different from the amount of space that the narrating voice gives to, say, the description of the women characters as perceived by Kinama or of “the fleeting pleasures of the bed and the bottle, pleasures which Maillu pause[s] to describe in elaborate and zeisty detail” (Lindfors, 1982: 133). The effect of the narrating voice’s refraining from giving detailed descriptions of place is the suggestion that it is not the space that motivates the aspects of character thought and action that is being traced here.

The most pronounced of the aspects differentiating city from village in the mini novel is the social universe. In Nairobi individuals of different racial, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds jostle with one another in the streets, hotels and offices. In the short walk back to the office from the bank, for example, Kinama “collide[s]” with an “expensive and sophisticated man in a grey suit” (1973: 9), is almost run over by an Alfa Romeo and has his face banged by a toilet door that is opened by a white man. In the office his colleagues are Kenyans of different ethnicities (one of them is white). This is quite unlike the situation in Mbiuni where, as it has been noted above, everyone is Kamba, and everyone is a peasant – even if that peasantry is internally differentiated in terms of who has more food.

The significance of this point is that in Nairobi the power-infused, hierarchical gender regime that was either established or reified by colonialism (Lugones, 2008; 2010) is readily evident. In this city Kinama operates in the same environment with the ‘real man’ in the postcolony, that is, the white man, and with the ‘second class man’ – that member of the African ruling class “who took over from, or Africanised, the colonial state hierarchy” (Freund, 1984: 241). Interactions with characters who belong to the higher classes – and even with those who have real prospects of joining these classes – constantly remind Kinama that he is a ‘no man.’ Kinama reads disdain for himself in their faces, words and actions: the “expensive and sophisticated man in a grey suit eye[s] … [him] with angry eyes which seem … to put a dog’s value to Kinama” (1973: 9); “‘Bugger!’ the driver [of the Alfa Romeo] barks[s] at him”
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(1973: 9); and his colleague Susy has been so influenced by her university student boyfriend that she has “adopted his phrase for low class people [like Kinama, who she] now called … ‘ Certain type of natives’” (1973: 32).

Even though he resents their disdain for his person, Kinama at the same time looks at these figures as his betters. This is clear from his telling response to the ‘real man’ in the following instance. Kinama is in the toilets at the Hilton Hotel where he has just had a pee:

He headed to the door and from outside loud laughter reached his ears. He hadn’t touched the door when it jerked open and hit him hard on the face. A stupid looking European met his face. “I’m terribly sorry,” an American voice came out of the thickly set and tall man carrying a bull’s neck. “I’m very sorry, guy,” the man added.

“Never mind,” Kinama replied imitating the accent and went out. “Fuck you!” he whispered as he left the door. He massaged his face and then put his hand in the pocket to feel the money. [He has just withdrawn his backdated two months’ salary from the bank.] The touch of so much money took away the pain in his face and he began thinking about the valuable things he could buy with that money. (1973: 11-12)

Several interesting things happen in this brief encounter. This is the only instance in Unfit for Human Consumption when Kinama takes in the physical stature of a man. Significantly, what strikes him most about the man is his strength. One needs to keep in mind that Kinama is a brawl happy character to appreciate that his getting intimidated, as he obviously is here, is so rare it should be put down to something other than a reaction to the physique of the white man in front of him. I am suggesting that it has something to do with race (in the power-infused, hierarchical gender regime that was either established or reified by colonialism race is yoked to socio-economic class) and with the place where the encounter happens – the Hilton Hotel. The narrating voice has informed us just before this incident that Jonathan Kinama is aware that his back-dated two months’ pay of two thousand and forty shillings, a sum that he had never handled before (1973: 12), can only cater for a night’s stay at the expensive Hotel (1973: 10).

To return to the encounter. The intimidated Kinama thereafter imitates the American’s accent. He does not do so sarcastically. He
thereby psychologically subjects himself to the American, who he desires to be like. The ambivalence continues when to the American’s face Kinama minimizes his hurt, only for him to curse the American when the American is out of ear shot. The curse is both at the author of his injury and an expression of Kinama’s unhappiness that he has had to bow to the American who he looks up to – literally and psychologically.

The last detail in the encounter is the effect that the feel of money has on Kinama. It is a balm to Kinama’s hurt. That is because in Kinama’s mind money is not simply a medium of exchange; it also symbolizes power. *Unfit for Human Consumption* underscores this significance of money to Kinama in the scene in the banking hall scene that the mini novel opens with. As he is getting sexually aroused by his fantasies about the girl he is ogling, Kinama thinks he hears a teller call out his name. And the narrating voice says: ‘His erection died of the excitement because he thought that the cashier had called out his name’ (1973: 7). The thought that he is about to handle money countermands Kinama’s sexual excitement. Having money helps turn an adult male into a ‘man.’ But one of the characteristics that define the mwananchi is his poverty, which often presents as a lack of money.

A second feature of the social universe in Nairobi contributes to the provoking and sustaining of Kinama’s masculine anxieties: the presence of the modern African woman. This is the figure that arrests Kinama’s attention in the opening scene of *Unfit for Human Consumption*. It is not the mere fact that she is liberal – a point that she emphasizes with her dress style – that challenges Kinama’s sense of masculinity. This character has agency. She controls her body. The modern African woman in *Unfit for Human Consumption* is single. She chooses to make capital out of her body (as a sex worker) or merely to experience in it pleasure (as Anita does when she seduces Kinama). This “good time girl” (Ligaga, 2014) is quite unlike the peasant woman of the village, who is best defined by roles that yoke her, in a subservient position, to man: as wife and mother. The structure of this relationship between man and woman defines the gender categories in patriarchal cultures.

Kinama is unable to control the modern African woman. His desire to impose such control explains his otherwise inexplicable proposal to the sex worker Lily that she become his girlfriend. The same desire to possess the woman accounts for Kinama’s longing for Anita. The interaction with the independent
and therefore uncontrollable modern African woman consolidates Kinama’s hurtful definition as a ‘no man.’

The social universe in Nairobi, then, supports a notion of ‘man’ that stresses to Kinama that he is a ‘no man.’ In the gender regime that upholds and is affirmed by the social universe in Nairobi to be ‘no man’ is not only to be powerless; it is also to lack a significant self, to be nothing. In this manner the social universe in Nairobi births and/or fuels Kinama’s obsession with the notion of ‘man.’ It also motivates Kinama’s sexual promiscuity. In reaction to his being defined as a ‘no man,’ Jonathan Kinama automatically activates behaviour that he – like other men in patriarchal culture (Malamuth and Dean in Parrot and Bechhofer, 1989: 232) – has been socialized into understanding demonstrate ‘man-ness.’ He engages in sexual aggression and violence. It matters little whether he does so to stake a claim to the status of ‘man’ or to express anger.

There is, thus, a connection between Jonathan Kinama’s obsession with the notion of ‘man’ and his sexual promiscuity. They share a ground and are sustained by the same source. Jonathan Kinama’s obsession with the notion of ‘man’ and his sexual promiscuity are fruits of his powerlessness. The sexual promiscuity is also, simultaneously, an attempt by Kinama to (re)claim power, to demonstrate that he, too, is ‘man.’

The pity is that the more Kinama tries to prove that he is ‘man’ using sex the further he moves away from the notion. To sponsor his sexual promiscuity Kinama must raise money, as his junior civil servant’s salary cannot underwrite it. In an attempt to raise money he pilfers things at the workplace and turns a blind eye to what should be his obligatory expenditure. He neglects his family. And he loses self-control. The lifestyle that has sexual promiscuity at its centre creates its own momentum, and starts reproducing itself. Kinama becomes painfully conscious of the fact that he has lost control of self when he is in hospital after his fight with Maruka. (This is brought to the reader as a flashback.) He reflects:

While at the hospital, he had felt so awful about his fallen life. It was so surprising how someone could change from grace to disgrace. He realized that just as man was capable of growing physically and spiritually strong, he was capable of growing weak. His spirit had suffered much distortion. He felt deformed, crippled. He was no longer the Jonathan Kinama he used to know and have control over.
A new Jonathan Kinama had been born at the death of the old one.
(1973: 42, my emphasis)

Control is, as has been noted above, one of the ideas that constitute the notion of ‘man.’ Instructively, it is only when Kinama is hospitalized, when he is isolated from the social environment of Nairobi that he resolves to change his riotous lifestyle. It does not surprise that the resolve weakens once Kinama is released from hospital. In my reading of the weakening of Kinama’s resolve, the “lifist” (1973: 44) Tito Kimenye’s womanizing ways trigger the collapse of Kinama’s resolve, but they are not the root cause. The root cause is the social environment in Nairobi, of which Tito’s womanizing ways are – like Kinama’s own sexual promiscuity – consequences and also part.

Unfit for Human Consumption shows that since it is inefficacious in as far as correcting Kinama’s problem, which is his being defined as a ‘no man,’ sexual promiscuity is wrong-headed. Being based on some precepts of patriarchal culture, it is misguided. And, ultimately, it is doomed. The total failure of sexual promiscuity as a solution to Kinama’s problem is shown in the character’s death by suicide and the events that precipitate it. Kinama loses his money in the course of yet another attempt to demonstrate that he is ‘man’ via the means of sexual ‘conquest.’ Lily, the sex worker he engages, robs him after a session of drunken sex. The morning after, still reeling from the loss of the money, Kinama is confronted with evidence of his irresponsibility when the wife and children he neglects as he attempts to be ‘man’ come looking for him at his workplace. The next morning when Kinama reports to work he discovers that his seniors have taken the ugly scene that arose when his family went to look for him in the office as sufficient to warrant his suspension. Unable to handle the situation, Kinama commits suicide.

So, rather than strengthening him sexual promiscuity makes Kinama vulnerable. It also takes away the only thing that works as a balm for his many hurts in this social environment – money. The reason why the night Kinama spends with the sex worker Lily is placed at the centre of the mini novel becomes clear. This is the climactic point when the problem that sets in motion the narrative trajectory is definitively dealt with.

In Kinama’s death I read a compound judgment that also is a protest. Even though Unfit for Human Consumption indicts the social environment of Nairobi and shows that Kinama is a victim, the mini novel also judges the
character. The insistence seems to be that regardless of the circumstances Kinama is a human being and is as such responsible for his choices. The mini novel emphasizes the point of Kinama’s human status in the last chapter which is set in the bus ferrying his body to Mbiuni for burial. The chapter is structurally odd. The plot proper comes to an end with Kinama’s death in the penultimate chapter of *Unfit for Human Consumption*. But in this ‘superfluous’ last chapter Kinama is mourned not as a ‘no man’ but as a human being and, most importantly, a husband. Which point both interrogates the rightness of the gender regime that upholds and is affirmed by the social universe in Nairobi and takes issue with Kinama’s manner of confronting his powerlessness. By confronting his powerlessness in the manner he does Kinama ‘takes himself lightly.’ He disrespects all, himself included.

This is not a simple ‘Thou shalt not fornicate’ or ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery’ moralizing. Given the imbrication of power in Kinama’s sad story, it is difficult not to read politics in the mini novel’s message. And, indeed, the mini novel directs attention to its political message.

**The Political Message in *Unfit for Human Consumption*\(^1\)**

There are only two scenes in *Unfit for Human Consumption* in which politics is directly referred to. The first is after Kinama has withdrawn his backdated two months’ salary and is absent-mindedly walking in the streets of Nairobi undecided on whether he should go back to the office. A car almost knocks him down:

> The car had really terrified him, but it was a busy day for his mind and he could not hold on to such things. A European girl about three-quarters naked was heading to him. She wore a micro-mini with the back removed and her breasts partly on display … She was without argument a beauty. “Angel in the daylight,” Kinama thought, “walking beauty. But by the way, how do they look like naked in bed?” She was drawing close and he had the courage to smile at her. “If only I had a car, Jesus!” She caught his smile. She screwed her face, turned her nose and snorted. But he didn’t get the message because he was calculating the sweetness lying between her legs. He stood to let her pass and he followed her buttocks with his eyes twisting behind her with what he would describe as “Pride of ownership.” He thought, “What devil on earth has denied me a car? How can I lay a bird like that one?” As she disappeared turning the corner, he began feeling his goatee beard which he had trimmed
nicely into a symbol of political leaning and awareness. Especially with his two thousand and forty shillings in his pocket, now he was very much conscious of himself. (1973: 9-10)

The second scene in which politics is directly referred to in *Unfit for Human Consumption* is a bar:

By eight o’clock that night, Kinama had knocked off a number of bottles. But now he was only starting to be in the mood and friends were pouring into the bar. He sat among his beer mates telling stories and talking politics. “Who could be the next president?” That was the big question and they went through a few names of some prominent politicians. “I don’t care who is the next president,” Kinama said, “because I shall always be ruled whether I like it or not.” (1973: 47-48)

*Unfit for Human Consumption* makes fun of Kinama’s attitude to politics. In the first instance Kinama is shown to have reduced politics to fashion. The statement that the money in his pocket made Kinama self-conscious in a sense that is also political, however, suggests that power lies in money. In the second instance Kinama voices his fatalistic acceptance of his powerlessness in a context where he is busy proving that he is ‘man.’ Kinama is a victim of his political ignorance. Even though the fact that virtually all male *wananchi* in *Unfit for Human Consumption* are leading the same hedonistic lifestyle, Kinama does not come to understand what he is up against – a hostile socio-economic and therefore political environment. By extension, Kinama does not come to understand what needs to be done to correct the situation. Kinama therefore keeps up his sexual promiscuity and fights with other male *wananchi* who he perceives in terms of their ethnicity. In this vein, it is lost on Kinama that, in his sexualized logic, by sleeping with Maruka’s girlfriend he has “taken Maruka lightly,” not treated him as a man. But maybe Kinama is subconsciously also saying that by sleeping with Maruka’s girlfriend he has ‘de-manned’ Maruka, and Maruka should recognize the fact and act accordingly – deferentially, if not submissively. Kinama dies still mistakenly thinking that his problem is only moral – and that he has a weak will.

*Unfit for Human Consumption* shows that this political ignorance is a pitfall in the way of the male *mwananchi*’s felt desire to reclaim a sense of the significance of the self, to be a human being in his eyes and in the eyes of others. On the flip side of this demonstration is the articulation of the call to
the *mwananchi* to correctly recognize the source of his devaluation, and to do something about it.

**Conclusion**

The argument in this article is that in *Unfit for Human Consumption* the root cause of the male character’s obsession with the notion of ‘man’ and his indulgence “in the fleeting pleasures of the bed and the bottle” (Lindfors, 1982: 133) is his relationship with power. The obsession of Jonathan Kinama – a representative Kenyan male *mwananchi* of the first decade of the country’s political independence – with the notion of ‘man’ and his sexual promiscuity are fruits of a powerlessness that devalues his life. *Unfit for Human Consumption* has been read as showing that the main character lives the hedonistic lifestyle in a wrong-headed, misguided and doomed attempt to assert a sense of the significance of the self, to (re)claim a sense of his worth, in a social and political environment that defines him as a ‘no man.’ The novel’s indictment of the social environment that devalues the male *mwananchi* and its judgment of the same *mwananchi* for responding to the social environment in the way he does are read to constitute a call to the *mwananchi* to correctly recognize that the solution to his problem lies in political action. The reading of this elaborate project of political conscientisation in a work of Kenyan, and therefore African, popular fiction is a call to look again, this time more carefully, at the “non–elite, unofficial and urban” (Newell, 2002: 4) locally published African fiction targeting non–elite African readers for, as Isabel Hofmeyr reminds us, “popular cultural production … [is] a privileged site for making visible demotic imaginaries and understandings” (2004: 128).

**References**


Selected Factors Influencing Social and Academic Adjustment of Undergraduate Students in Egerton University, Njoro Campus, Kenya

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Abstract

The provision of education and training to all Kenyans is fundamental to the success of Government’s overall development strategy. A successful adjustment of students to university environment enables them to complete their studies on time. However, there are indications that students’ failure to adjust to the university environment is still a persistent problem facing education in Kenya manifested in form of an alarming rate of student drop-outs, course deferment, delay in graduation, drug and substance abuse among the students at Egerton University. The study was designed to investigate the influence of interpersonal relationship skills and attitude on students’ social and academic adjustment in Egerton University, Njoro Campus. The study employed ex post facto’s Causal-comparative research design. A random sample size of 357 students and purposive sample of 40 Student peer counsellors, 2 Student counsellors and the Dean of Students was selected. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedule. Piloting of the instrument was done to ascertain validity. The reliability of the instrument was established by using Cronbach’s coefficient alpha method and a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were utilized to analyze data using SPSS. The findings of the study indicated that inter-personal relationships and the attitude of students towards university environment and academics were critical factors influencing social and academic adjustment of undergraduate students at the university. It was recommended that there is need for the university to
Students face many challenges while adjusting to university life. They must learn to operate in new environments, to live on their own, to work with new and unfamiliar people and to handle new stresses and new challenges. The factors influencing social and academic adjustment among university students have been a topic of interest for many years. The American College Testing programme revealed that out of 2.8 million students who enter higher level of education in the USA, over 1.6 million leave the institution prior to graduation. In a study done in USA, it was found that without a successful adjustment and transition to college, students may drop out. Moreover, statistics show that nearly 30-40% of college and/or university students in the USA drop out from university without obtaining degrees and they never complete their courses (Consolvo, 2002). Boulter (2002), reports that 75% of students in the UK who drop out of the university do so within the first two years of study. It is therefore important to understand the factors that influence social and academic adjustment of students from the time of entry to university to when they complete their programmes. Paton (2008), reports that, 14.1% of undergraduate students in the UK who enrolled for their degree programmes in 2005/2006 failed to complete courses due to drop-out. Paton further revealed that, the latest figure of students in the UK who drop out from the university equates to 47,788.

Education and training in Kenya is governed by Education Acts of (1968), TSC, KNEC Adult Education University Acts and Charters for Universities. Since independence, the Government has addressed the challenges facing the education sector through Commissions, Committees and Taskforces (Ominde, 1964). The Koech Report (2000) recommends ways which enable the education system adapt in response to changing circumstances. Moriasi et al., (2006) observed that, among the grievances leading to students’ unrest and riots in Egerton University, 43.2% is purely academics. Students’ failure to
adjust to university environment, may lead to students drop-out, course deferment, pregnancies and delayed graduation as shown in records in the Students’ Affairs Department in Egerton University.

Social adjustment is fundamental for everyone, but particularly important for undergraduate students engaged in the process of individualization from their home. Students’ social adjustment to college and/or university has been linked to students’ overall adjustment (Moore, et. al., 1998). One way of assisting students in establishing connections is to help them become involved in social activities at the university. Social adjustment can be examined in terms of how well students function in their immediate environment, participation in social activities and their satisfaction with various social aspects of the university experience (Campas, et al, 1986).

Social adjustment may be just as important as academic adjustment. Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994) observed that, personal adjustment and integration into social fabric of university environment play a role and is as important as academic factors throughout the students’ life. Most academic activities take place in social situations and so the students’ adjustment to university is an important factor in the learning process. Tao et al., (2000) revealed that academic demands increase and new social relations are established when students join higher level of institution. Students are often uncertain of their abilities to meet these demands. They need to be assisted to develop coping skills, that will enable them overcome the challenges they encounter at the university (Egerton University Student Handbook, 2006 / 2007).

Academic adjustment (how well students deal with educational demands) includes; students motivation to complete academic work, success in meeting academic requirements, academic effort and satisfaction with academic environment (Baker & Siryk, 1989). The pursuit of academic goals is the primary purpose of being admitted to the university (Egerton University Student Handbook, 2008). Russell and Petrie (1992) in their study on academic adjustment of colleges and/or university student concluded that many students who succeed academically in high school do not show similar patterns of success in the university.

The structure and meaning of interpersonal behaviour has been an important component in a social set up. Interpersonal relationship forms the core of human daily activity. Holmbeck and Leake (1999) assert that, individuals who
are able to succeed handling their independence and newfound freedoms are able to make new relationship while maintaining old relationships. Studies have shown that living arrangement have impacted the social adjustment of colleges and / or university students. Adams et al., (2000) remarked that, the environment in which students live has had a direct impact on the student's overall adjustment.

Students who lived in environment that are conducive to learning and provided ample study space and opportunities for growth and interaction tend to have an easier time adjusting than students who live in other environment (Dinger, 1999). Residence hall climates have been associated with families in terms of rules boundaries and atmosphere of care and concern for other members. Students are expected to develop care and concern to other in the residential halls.

The social climate has also been deemed important is assisting students to adjustment at the university. The university students belong to the category between late adolescence and early adulthood. This stage of life is characterized by periods of instability considerable conflicts, anxiety and tension (Hall, 1904). Socially, adolescence is period of building a stable identity, many young people experience role confusion and blurred self-image. Student may need to be assisted to develop skills of solving these difficulties and uncertainties. One way of assisting students to develop the interactive skills may be through timely and adequate orientation. Moser (1963) posits that new students should be assisted to adjust to the new environment. He asserts that orientation of new students should be done is conjunction with continuing students. Interpersonal relationship has an effect on students self-esteem which indeed affects the students overall adjustment at the university.

Human beings throughout their lifespan are exposed to a number of experiences as they interact with other people and the environment in which they live. As a result they may develop attitude about others or the environment. Bogardus (1931) defines attitude as a tendency to act towards or against something in the environment which becomes thereby a positive or negative value. However, the attitude that people form through their own direct experiences are stronger than those they acquire vicariously and are more resistant to change. Once formed, attitudes tend to strengthen when we associate with others who share those (Samuel, Ellen & Denise, 2008).
Attitude greatly influence how one behaves, therefore are among the issues that may be responsible for people's action in different situations. Attitudes are important aspects of social function since they summarize past experiences and predict or direct future actions. Ratcliff (1991) posits that, students attitudes about entry to university, values sense of purpose and sense of independence have a direct influence on academic achievement.

The students’ perception of university environment has a great influence on social and academic adjustment at the university. Hogg and Vaughan (1995) purport that, the learning of attitudes is an integral part of the socialization process, which may occur through direct experiences and/or interaction with others or as a product of the cognitive process. Thus attitudes formed by students eventually influence both their social and academic adjustment at the university.

**Research Methodology**

The study utilized the *ex post facto’s* causal-comparative research design. According to Kerlinger (2000), this research design is a systematic empirical inquiry in which a researcher has no ability to control the independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred and therefore cannot be manipulated by the research. It is primarily concerned with investigating the possibility of causal relationship between variables which in this study constituted the selected factors as the independent variables and the students’ social and academic adjustment as the dependent variables (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). This design was considered appropriate because it is suitable in social, educational and psychological contexts where independent variables lie outside the researchers’ control. The study was conducted at Egerton University, Njoro Campus, in Nakuru County. The County is located in Rift Valley region of Kenya. The study sample was selected using the stratified random sampling to obtain the required sample of the students in each year of study. The study sample was purposively selected to include students’ peer counsellors, university student counsellors and the Dean of Student.

Data of the study was collected using the University Students’ Questionnaires (USQ) and conducted interviews. The development of research instruments was done by examining the research objectives and hypotheses, related literature consulting research experts and lecturers, for the purposes of framing items and critical examination of variables. The data was analyzed using both
Results and Discussion

Table 1: Levels of Interpersonal Relationships among University Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of interpersonal relationship</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 indicates that majority (98.6%) of the students had at least moderate interpersonal relationship in the university. Out of 98.6 percent, 34.6 percent of them had moderate interpersonal relationship while 64.0 percent had good interpersonal relationship in the university. This suggests that the students had good interpersonal relationship with their peers, lecturers and other significant persons in the university. This was likely to enable them to effectively adjust socially and academically in the university. This is supported by previous studies by Adams et al., (2000) who observed that, effective interpersonal relationships will create an enabling environment for the student to adapt to the university. Dinger (1999) add that students who lived in environment that are conducive to learning and provided ample study space and opportunities for growth and interaction tend to have an easier time adjusting than students who lived in environments.

To establish the influence of interpersonal relationship on social and academic adjustment, Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used. Correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and the direction of the relationship between the two variables (social and academic adjustment index scores and interpersonal relationships index score). In this case, social and academic adjustment index scores were treated as the independent variables while interpersonal relationships index score was the dependent variable. Table 2
shows a correlation coefficient matrix of social and academic adjustment and interpersonal relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interpersonal skills</th>
<th>Social adjustment</th>
<th>Academic adjustment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.429(**)</td>
<td>.554(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social adjustment</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.429(**)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic adjustment</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.554(**)</td>
<td>.418(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed (n=356)).

From Table 2, there was a moderate and positive significant correlation between the level of interpersonal relationship and social adjustment \((r = .429, p \{0.000\} < 0.01)\) and academic adjustment of students in the university \((r = .554, p \{0.000\} < 0.01)\). This suggests that there was a positive relationship between the level of interpersonal relationship and students’ social and academic adjustment in the university. Therefore, the more positive the interpersonal relationship of a student, the higher was the likelihood of more social and academic adjustment, and vice versa. This could be attributed to the fact that a better interpersonal relationship makes it easier for the student to adjust socially and academically in school by developing positive relationships with lecturers and other students. However, it should be noted that the impact of interpersonal relationship on social and academic adjustment will also depend on simultaneous interaction and influence of other factors.

These findings support previous studies which suggested that relationships and making meaningful connections are important for students to adjust to the college environment. Students who have been able to establish bonds in their new environment adjusted better than students who were isolated and not as successful in establishing new friendships and relationships. The theory of attachment has been used to explain the importance of emotional bonds and healthy adjustment. Healthy individuals tend to have secure attachments to parents, guardians, and significant others in their lives. Individuals with secure
Social and Academic Adjustments

Attachments tend to have an easier time transitioning to college than individuals who do not have secure attachments (Rice, FitzGerald, Whaley & Gibbs, 1995). Relationships with parents may change when students go to college, which can be a difficult transition for all involved, and cause additional stress and pressure on the students as they move through the developmental process and become adults (Mudore, 1999). The process of adjustment can be frustrating and overwhelming for many students, leading to emotional maladjustment and depression (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000), which may, in turn, negatively affect college performance.

Table 3: Assessment of the Aspects of University Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Response (%)</th>
<th>Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel lonely in this university</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my academic performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had the opportunity I would transfer to another university.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this university to others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with quality of teaching-learning in this campus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like this university’s’ students code of conduct.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The security in this campus is adequate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think academic facilities and learning resources are adequate in this university.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the accommodation facilities offered in this university.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the food / meals available in campus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel lonely in this university</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my academic performance.</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had the opportunity I would transfer to another university.</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this university to others.</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with quality of teaching-learning in this campus.</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like this university’s’ students code of conduct.</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The security in this campus is adequate.</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think academic facilities and learning resources are adequate in this university.</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the accommodation facilities offered in this university.</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the food / meals available in campus.</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 356

Table 3 indicates that the respondents generally disagreed with majority of the aspects of the university environment and academic programmes. This was demonstrated by them rating six out of ten statements below the average score (3.00). The students were less satisfied with quality of teaching-learning, students’ code of conduct, adequacy of security, adequacy of the academic facilities and learning resources, accommodation facilities, and the food /
meals available in the university. However, the students were at least satisfied with their company, academic performance, opportunity to transfer to another university, and would recommend others to the university. This suggests that the students considered their university environment and academic programme as not adequate.

The responses to each constituent aspect of the university environment and academic programme were scored on a scale of 1, indicating least level of attitude, to 5, indicating highest level of attitude towards the university environment and academic programme. The individual statement scores were summed up to form an attitude index score for each respondent. The index score varied between 10, indicating the least level of attitude, and 50, indicating the highest level of attitude towards the university environment and academic programme. The higher the score, the higher was the level of attitude towards the university environment and academic programme, and vice versa. The index score had a mean score of 27.44 (Std deviation = 5.255) and was later collapsed into three ordinal categories in order to differentiate between the levels of attitude among the sampled respondents. This included a score of 10-23 (negative attitude), a score of 24-36 (moderate attitude) and a score of 37-50 (positive attitude). Table 4 summarizes the levels of attitude towards the university environment and academic programmes.

Table 4: Attitude towards the University Environment and Academic Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of attitude</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 indicates that 67.7 percent of the respondents recorded a moderate attitude towards the university environment and academic programme. The remaining 28.9 percent and 3.4 percent recorded a negative and positive attitude towards the university environment and academic programme, respectively. This suggests that on the overall, majority of the students were not very satisfied with the university environment and academic programmes. The students reported that in comparison with the situation in other public universities, they considered their university environment and academic programme
programme as inadequate. This was attributed to their adequate exposure and awareness of the environment and academic programme of their university.

To establish the influence of students’ attitude towards university environment and academic programme on students’ social and academic adjustment, Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used. Correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and the direction of the relationship between the two variables, that is, social and academic adjustment index scores and attitude index score. In this case, social and academic adjustment index scores were treated as the independent variables while attitude index score was the dependent variable. Table 5 shows a correlation coefficient matrix of social and academic adjustment and attitude towards university environment and academic programmes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students’ attitude</th>
<th>Social adjustment</th>
<th>Academic adjustment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.373(**)</td>
<td>.332(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social adjustment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.373(**)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.418(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic adjustment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.332(**)</td>
<td>.418(**)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) (n=356).

From Table 5, there was a weak positive and significant correlation between the level of attitude of students towards university environment and academic programme and social adjustment \( (r = .373, p \{0.000\} < 0.01) \) and academic adjustment of students in the university \( (r = .332, p \{0.000\} < 0.01) \). This suggests that there was a direct relationship between the level of students’ attitude towards university environment and academic programme and their social and academic adjustment in the university. Therefore, the more positive the attitude of a student, the higher was the level of social and academic
adjustment, and vice versa. This could be attributed to the fact that a positive attitude assists a student to positively evaluate the social and academic aspects of the university. However, it should be noted that the impact of student attitude on social and academic adjustment also depend on simultaneous interaction and influence of other factors.

These findings support previous studies such as Ratcliff (1991) who observed that student’s attitudes about entry to university, values sense of purpose and sense of independence have a direct influence on social and academic adjustment at the university. Hogg and Vaughan (1995) add that learning of attitudes is an integral part of socialization process, which may occur through direct experiences and/or interaction with others or as a product of the cognitive process. Thus attitude formed by students eventually influence both their social and academic adjustment at the university. When students attitude towards university environment, they tend to adjust socially which is reflected in their academic performance.

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

It was concluded that Interpersonal relationships and attitude of students towards university environment were critical factors influencing social adjustment and academic adjustment of undergraduate students in the university. It was therefore recommended the university should encourage social activities that can facilitate effective interpersonal relationships among students and the positive attitude towards university environment.

**References**


Widow Inheritance among the Luo of Kenya: Virtue or Vice?

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Abstract

Culture which defines communities and gives them identity is a feature that is common to societies the world over. The Luo Community that inhabits the lake region of Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania and other parts of East and Central Africa have as one of their cultural pillars the practice of widow inheritance. This involves the union of a widow with a relative of the deceased husband preferably a cousin who becomes in almost all respects a new husband. This paper examines the foundations of this practice and tries to find its justification. In the process an analysis of its possible grounds, its current status and factors that have affected its continuation as a valued aspect of this society is undertaken. An application of various philosophical theories on this practice is attempted to assess the moral value of this phenomenon. Underlying this assessment is the theoretical assumption that there must have existed certain grounds for this practice that were based on the community's socio-economic and political underpinnings that made it a cherished tradition. At the end, an attempt is made to support the position that widow inheritance could have been a noble practice that has simply been challenged by the changing socio-economic and political milieu that the Luo society currently finds itself in. It is hoped that the paper, having shed some light on this practice, shall assist in its re-evaluation and possible refinement because some of its foundations seem to remain relevant even in the current civilisation.

Introduction

This paper intends to analyse the traditional practice of inheritance of widows amongst the Luo of Kenya. The Luo is a Nilotic community in the Western part of Kenya largely inhabiting the area around Lake Victoria. Amongst their
cultural practices is the inheritance of widows (ter or tero in Dholuo) upon the death of their husbands. This is a practice from antiquity in the community based on some philosophy that we wish to examine using contemporary philosophical ethical theories or approaches. In this society, due to reasons that shall be outlined below, upon the death of her husband, a widow was free and even obliged to enter a new union with another man. This union would culminate in the production of offspring where there were none or adoption of the existing ones. According to Luo tradition, children sired by an inheritor are considered those of the dead man and not the inheritor’s (Oluoch, 2013). This paper analyses the grounds for this practice and its current status while examining the factors affecting its perception and perpetration in the contemporary society. Finally, an attempt is made to propose new interpretations of these practices that seem to have had a noble basis which have since been corrupted.

Some ethical theories try to assess behaviour and states of affairs basing value judgement on their consequences. Secondly, the concept of duty, implied in motive theories, contend that actions or states of affairs derive their value from the principle under which they are carried out or from which they obtain. Finally, those who rely on circumstances argue that since our actions are affected or determined by the situations in which we find ourselves, moral goodness or badness should be judged on the basis of specific circumstances.

The first position, consequentialism, seems to support the philosophy that ends justify means; that whatever we do and however we do it, we stand to be praised or blamed depending on the outcome of that action. The consequentialists, notably John Stuart Mill, believe that any action or state of affairs is good, praiseworthy and can be rewarded if its consequences produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people concerned. Mill (1990) argued that although the progress of moral philosophy has been limited by its endless disputes over the reality and nature of the highest good, it is agreeable that the consequences of human actions contribute importantly to their moral value. In this context, whenever we contemplate action we must focus on its good or desirable consequence. The goodness of truth telling for example, derives from what it produces which can be summarised as happiness, development of trust, maintenance of order and so on. The Utilitarian philosophers argue that nature has put man under two forces; pain and pleasure. Consequently only those actions that produce pleasure or reduce pain can be classified as good.
The second position, duty or obligation, contends that one should do good simply because it is good and not from the point of view of consequences. This implies the application of the principle of Good Will. According to Kant (in Gregor, 1998) having a good will is compatible with having feelings and emotions of various kinds with an intention of cultivating some of them so as to counteract desires and inclinations that lead to immorality. The deontologists argument is supported by the observation that certain actions produce un-intended consequences which could be good or bad. Since we should only praise people or condemn them solely based upon the motives of their actions or the principles upon which they acted, a person who tries to save a drowning child and they both drown is not blamed but praised on account of his motive. In this case the consequence is clearly bad (two deaths instead of one) yet the action is not blamed.

The third position, situationism, contends that the moral worth of an action is to be determined by the circumstances in question. These circumstances could be social, economic or even political. Thus a widow who finds herself in a certain society is bound by the culture of that society whereas a widow who is economically challenged may opt for such an arrangement. Political structures that do not recognise single women in leadership roles would encourage the practice. According to Gunga (2009), widowhood is a process characterised by rituals, remarriages, harassment, rejection, loneliness, poverty, loss of status, fear of the future and depression. This calls for an analysis of the possible advantages of widow inheritance as perceived in the Luo tradition.

What then would be the possible negative and positive consequences of widow inheritance? In the Luo community, positives include that tero ensures provision of material and moral support to the widow. In a way, the practice confirms a father figure in the homestead and guarantees provision of a sense of belonging to children. It also gives assurance of affection and satisfaction of sexual urge to the widow while discouraging sexual promiscuity on the widow’s part. It is also assumed that tero ensures respect for the family of the late husband and the widow and confirms the worldview that wives belong to the community.

Let us examine these positive attributes of widow inheritance in this society. In the traditional set-up material wellbeing or generally ownership of property which included tilling of land, grazing of animals, hunting and gathering and so on, were the prerogative of the husband. These and other roles therefore
demanded that a woman required a man in her life. This also goes with the question of father figure. It would appear that a home without such a figure was lacking in direction or leadership since no one would for example represent it at a council of elders.

In this society, children were brought up with the conception that there was always a father with whom to identify. In fact one was always expected to introduce himself or herself as the son or daughter of so and so. In the absence of this, there existed a sense of non-belonging which led to offspring being labelled bastards. It does not matter that the children in this arrangement maintained their deceased father’s identity but that there was his representative within the set up to accomplish certain obligations.

Some philosophers and psychologists have argued that sexual urges and their fulfilment or lack of, have effects on the mental and physical wellbeing of the individual. Russell (1977) argues that sex is a basic need just like food and drink. It must be fulfilled to avoid undesirable conduct like rape or incest. Oruka (1991) places sex as the third human basic need after food and shelter because of its primary function of procreation for the human race.

Sigmund Freud and Erich Fromm, both psychoanalysts, have analysed the question of sex and concluded that it has a vital role in human conduct and social organisation. Freud (1923) uses his Oedipus complex theory to explain human psychological development. Freud believed that children are born with a libido – a sexual (pleasure) urge. There are a number of stages of childhood, during which the child seeks pleasure from a different ‘object’. To be psychologically healthy, we must successfully complete each stage. Mental disorder can occur if a stage is not completed successfully and the person becomes ‘fixated’ in a particular stage. This theory shows how adult personality is determined by childhood experiences. This points to the centrality of sex in human relations and wellbeing as has been averred to by Oruka.

Sex is a very sensitive topic which is avoided in many social discussions yet when examined critically it plays an important role in social life. Freud, Oruka, Russell and others may be right in their analyses which underscore the importance of sex. However, the issue becomes complicated for the widow especially with the existence of children. How to go about its satisfaction without the underlying feeling of betrayal of their father that may arise in the
children is an issue. Lurking behind this is the question of sexual promiscuity especially if the widow decides not to identify with one particular man but rather satisfy that need only when the occasion arises.

Fromm (1950) argued that freedom from the traditional bonds of medieval society, on the one hand gave the individual a feeling of independence, which was new and empowering, but on the other hand, made him feel alone and isolated, filled him with doubt and anxiety, and thus drove him into new forms of submission and into compulsive and irrational behaviour. This alienation from place and community, and the insecurities and fears entailed, helps to explain how people seek the security and rewards of authoritarian social orders which may be found in customs and rites. With his theory of behaviourism, Fromm explains the role of sex in social organisation. It would seem therefore that widow inheritance, though not likely to have been conceptualised this way in the traditional set up, had a role in fulfilling these aspects of human nature.

In line with this, it was argued within this community that widow inheritance would in a way curtail sexual promiscuity since there would be one partner recognised by society as occupying the position of the deceased husband. This way, even the children would be saved the agony of having to witness different characters associating with their mother occasionally. In a way this would also promote respect for the widow and the family of the deceased.

The Luo society had the worldview that a wife was communal in the sense that she was literally owned by the society. This was based on the rites and practices surrounding the whole concept of marriage. For instance negotiations for marriage and payment of dowry were in many cases a joint effort of members of the bridegroom’s family. Hence in the event of the demise of the husband, a widow was seen as having lost a base and therefore members of the family had to come in to fill this vacuum. Death of a spouse did not dissolve marriage; therefore woman should not remarry but have an inheritor (Oluoch, 2013). However, this paper does not envision a difference between remarrying and having an inheritor apart from the fact that certain rites involved in marriage (for example dowry payment) are not performed in the case of inheritance. According to Oluoch (2013) the arrangement is the cohabitation of a widow with her brother-in-law in which the brother-in-law relates to the widow as a substitute of her deceased husband. ‘Brother’ in this context would be wider in meaning implying either brother of the deceased or a paternal first cousin or a clan cousin. To understand this practice there is need to appreciate
the Luo conception of marriage and death. In the Luo culture, marriage is intended to be an everlasting contract whose purpose and function extends beyond the physical death of a spouse. It was a contract between the spouses and their extended families. In the event of death, therefore, the family of the deceased had a responsibility to provide a replacement.

However, these seemingly noble concerns have been challenged by social, economic and political dynamics. It is no longer the case that women, and by extension widows require a man for their material support. Economic emancipation has seen women capable of having their own income and supporting themselves plus their children. In fact, widows who are better off financially also support other members of the deceased’s family. Therefore one of the central pillars of widow inheritance has been removed.

Christianity and its concept of salvation has handed a big blow to this practise in the Luo community. In this society there exists a wide range of Christian denominations that have embarked on a serious campaign against this practice. They argue that when one believes in Jesus, issues of the father figure, protection and so on are taken care of and to participate in inheritance is not the way of salvation. Ironically, widow inheritance was encouraged in early Christianity. The story in Genesis Chapter 38 paints the picture of widow inheritance as a duty of the deceased brother for which one could be blamed or even punished if neglected. The same is witnessed in Deutronomy Chapter 25 as a law that was given to the Israelites by Moses.

Russell (1975) argues that there are a great many ways in which the Church, by its insistence upon what it chooses to call morality, inflicts upon all sorts of people undeserved and unnecessary suffering. According to him, it is a major opponent of progress and of improvement in all the ways that diminish suffering in the world. This is because it has chosen to label as morality a certain narrow set of rules of conduct which have nothing to do with human happiness. Russell was alluding to certain aspects of Christianity like the Catholic opposition to divorce even when it appears the only way to happiness. Perhaps this may also be true concerning widow inheritance (or if we choose to call it re-marriage) if indeed it leads to happiness for those who accept it.

The contemporary society is characterised by intermarriages between different cultures which has brought to fore the problem of identity. Given that one can
marry from other ethnic communities other than the Luo, there arises an identity crisis for the woman and her children. A case in point is the S. M. Otieno – Wambui saga which exposed the complications of intermarriage. Wambui, a Kikuyu, having lost her husband, a Luo, was faced with the challenge of where to bury her husband. The duo had settled in Ngong, a part of Kenya, as their residence which the *Umira Kager* clan of Otieno did not recognise as a home befitting the burial of their son. According to Ojwang and Mugambi (1989) this was a test case and exemplar of the debate between indigenous, ethnic or traditional law against the written law that had been imposed in Africa during the colonial period and partially retained after independence. The Court of Appeal ruled that when there was conflict between common law and customary law, the later is given precedent. Even though the court ruled in favour of the clan, this particular case has been seen as an example of injustice to widows. This exposes the identity crisis that faces widows and their offspring. It is important to note that had the customary law been strictly applied, which would have included widow inheritance, this dispute could have been avoided.

The reality and adversity of HIV and AIDS in the Luo society has greatly undermined this tradition. Whereas it was initially ignored or denied as a non-issue, AIDS has greatly reduced the issue of inheritance especially the one that involves sexual contact. According to a recent study conducted by the Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDs Foundation (EGPAF), 19,000 children in the Homa Bay County in Kenya are infected with HIV, with only 8,000 having been identified and introduced to treatment. The county has been ranked as having the highest rate of HIV/AIDS in Kenya, with the prevalence rate of over 25%, that’s 1 in 4 children. HIV is a major problem in Ndhiwa, a constituency of Homa Bay, with adolescent girls often most at risk due to a lack of sexual health and hygiene education and widespread sexual abuse and exploitation of girls and women (Team Kenya, 2016). This reality has greatly reduced the cultural practice of widow inheritance.

The number of men who have died of HIV-related complications is relatively high as a result of their refusal to stop widow inheritance. As a result, they leave behind young widows a fact that perpetuates the practice and the spread of the disease. The widows were usually not in a position to negotiate whether or not to use protection. Besides, the rate of new of HIV/AIDS infections has remained stubbornly high, despite efforts by the government and private sector to curb the menace. These professional inheritors are actually abusing the
whole process of inheritance. In the traditional set-up, there existed regulation as to who would inherit who and how it was to be performed. These professional inheritors have hidden intentions especially the desire to benefit from the property of the deceased or a general apathy to work and prefer ready-made wealth. A 2009 study found that the sexual rituals surrounding death have also undergone changes to the point whereby most men are no longer interested in getting married to the spouses of their kin. These professionals are men seeking to exploit women whose spouses have died. They pretend to remarry the woman but their aim is to have access to the resources in the hands of the woman left by her husband, and at the same time have sex with her. The professional *jater*, is characterised by his lack of material support for the woman cohabit with, yet in the traditional practice of the Luo, *ter* was meant to ensure the woman got material support and her sexual needs were also met (Source Watch, 2012).

As a response to these and other challenges, organisations such as the National AIDS Control Council (NACC) have come in to intervene. Since its inception, the NACC has had some notable achievements which include the coordinating, development and implementation of the Kenya AIDS Strategic Framework (KASF) and National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plans (KNASP I, KNASP II, KNASP III), the development of policies in key areas including orphans and vulnerable children, mainstreaming gender into the Kenya AIDS Strategic Framework (KASF) and engaging with key sectorial ministries to mainstream HIV and AIDS in the context of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) budget process (NACC, 1999). These efforts have taken away some of the traditional responsibilities of the *jater* and made life a bit more tolerable for the widows and their children.

The traditional concept of communal ownership of a woman has also been eroded. In the current civilisation, marital arrangements have become private affairs of individuals. Other members of the families and the general society are only asked to witness the union in the form of weddings or the office of the registrar as the case maybe. In fact, many cases have been witnessed where the man and the woman jointly contribute to the cost of their wedding and if need be, the dowry itself. Therefore, it is no longer tenable to argue that the community ‘owns’ the woman and can therefore dictate her operations.
Conclusion

The issue of widow inheritance seems to have had reasonable grounds supporting it in the Luo tradition. Analysed using the theory of consequences, it seems to have satisfied the utilitarian principle of happiness for the people concerned. If we invoke the Kantian Imperative whereby the concept of duty or motive is concerned, we can conclude that the intent of widow inheritance was based on Good Will. Kant’s philosophy is based on the assumption that no action can be good in itself except that which is done out of good will. Hence, consequences of an action should be ignored and emphasis placed on its motive to assess its moral worth. The circumstances surrounding the widow may also determine the goodness or badness of inheritance even in the current civilisation. Not all widows have so far overcome the challenges that necessitated inheritance in the first place. Many are still illiterate, poor and tied to custom and tradition which undermines their ability to challenge inheritance. As a point to ponder, maybe the whole issue of widow inheritance needs to be re-addressed and its proper place found in society. Presently, there are many widows who somehow satisfy the various needs that have been mentioned in this paper. Another issue that has escaped focus is the number of widowers who remarry after the death of their partners. In fact in the Luo society, a sister or relative of the deceased woman was recommended to take her place in the belief that the children would be safer or well taken care of. Maybe the whole issue of widow inheritance should be re-focused and even renamed re-marriage to give it a more positive outlook.

References


Culture, Change and Continuity in Riddle and Riddle Performance among the Kipsigis, Kenya

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Abstract

This paper interrogates contemporary riddles and riddle performance in the Kipsigis community. It illustrates the ways in which post-colonial social changes have influenced Kipsigis riddles. Review of related literature reveals that the question of change and continuity in riddles and riddle performance has not received much attention in the corpus of the genre. The paper is based on the theoretical stipulation that privileges cultural circulation and appropriation of fragments from other cultures and genres in the process of cultural production as opposed to the assumption that culture is stable and its constituent elements functions to maintain its stability. Data was collected from the Kipsigis respondents aged eight years and above, sampled from Kapsorok, Chepyegon, Barn’goror and Kaplelartet locations in Soin Division of Kericho County, Kenya. These areas are appreciably rich in oral traditions because most oral genres are still being lively performed. Participant observation method was used to collect riddles, while interviews were used for data about the culture and historical background of the community against which the changes were assessed. We conclude that formation of riddles is dependent on the cultural context both in the past and at the present. Thus new figures of speech in contemporary Kipsigis riddles reflect change in Kipsigis perspective of life during and after the colonial era.

Introduction

This paper focuses on a critical interrogation of post-colonial social changes and the ways they have influenced Kipsigis riddles. The Kipsigis are one of the nine sub-ethnic groups that comprise the larger Nilotic Kalenjin
community. The Kalenjin groups share similar traditions, norms and values which are passed on from one generation to the other through cultural genres such as proverbs and riddles. The paper is specifically geared towards explaining the process of composition and modes of arriving at the meaning of contemporary Kipsigis riddles. The composition of these riddles makes use of the elements of the community’s past tradition as well as those of the present. In this particular context, the paper explores how modernity has impacted on the modes of production of riddles and riddle meaning. Relevant literature reviewed in this area reveals that most studies emphasized linguistic or religious education, what Finnegan (1992) has described as “fitting for children to know”. There was little attempt to relate the text to their social context, elucidate their literary significance or to describe the normal circumstances of their formation. Pepicello & Green (1984) have theorized how linguistic ambiguity is exploited in the riddle genre to produce wit. They assert that in the manipulation of linguistic and aesthetic codes, “we find an affirmation of the cultural convention, the message which is hidden in the riddle form” Pepicello & Green (1984; 5). Comparatively, other scholars (Nakene, 1943, Cole-Beuchat, 1957, Blackings, 1961, Ishengoma, 2005) have pointed to the way riddles and stories are told around the fire place in traditional African cultures and that they are rich sources of educational information. Bukenya (1984) and Chesaina (1997) generally suggest that riddles and riddling are age-bound, thus limiting genre and genre practice to time, space and age.

The paper is informed by Karin Barber’s (1989) ideas that what the texts say is inseparable from history in the sense of the past. In Babrber’s view, texts are transmitted through time, bringing with them elements of the past even as they themselves undergo a process of erasure and layering as they are refashioned in accordance with the changing spatial and temporal contexts. More importantly, the issue of erasure and layering (Barber, 1989; Hofmeyr, 1994) plays an important role in exploring the changes that the riddles have had to undergo in order to remain relevant in a postcolonial context. Some riddles have had to lose some content and had been replaced with new content in accordance with the current concerns.

Other riddles have retained their content but have acquired new meaning. For instance the Kipsigis riddle, *Bun yon abun yu ng’etitosi ko biriren eunek’-chobinik*, (“pass here, let me pass there when we meet our hands will be red”). The response to which was “red wild berries” in the past. However, the
response to this riddle has now changed to “money”. The metaphor of “red wild berries” is replaced by new metaphor “money” which was first introduced into the community by the Indian merchants before the arrival of the Europeans and has since been widely used as legal tender. When a challenger poses the riddle, any of these answers may be given by the respondent but the challenger is the sole arbiter of determining the acceptability of responses offered. Such options were not there in pre-colonial time as the notion of money was non-existent. The riddle underscores the changes in the economic and social activities of the Kipsigis after the introduction and usage of money. Kiptalam, one of the resource persons and a farmer, explained that the riddle above has taken a new meaning because nowadays the wild fruits which hunters and gatherers used to collect are rarely found as the forested areas initially endowed with wild fruits have been cleared for farming. The riddle reflects the past when the Kipsigis land, particularly the Soin area (Lowland parts of Kericho County) had abundant natural vegetation. A new metaphor in the riddle thus unveils the reality of the new life situation in the contemporary Kipsigis community. Whereas the riddle remains largely the same, the new situation brought about by the postcolonial experience guides the audience to another level of reference is in play. The dynamics of change in the contemporary Kipsigis community is evidenced by the changing metaphor of the riddle itself. The change in the response reflects the change in the community lifestyle. Continuity of riddles is also apparent as the riddle retains its ancient form despite the change in meaning which maintains the community’s cultural values. Consequently, as Hamnet (1976) suggests, new and alien ideas appear to be re-classified and inculcated into the old riddles through a process that brings it into a relationship with familiar experiences while at the same time retaining the traditional knowledge (Hamnett, 1976, 388).

The Kipsigis riddles have undergone mutations and replacement of metaphors. Additionally, new riddles have been created in the midst of the changing cultural milieu. The riddles were obtained from interviewees in their respective homes during a research fieldwork carried out in the year 2014. Other riddles were obtained from children aged between eight and fourteen years during riddle sessions carried out in the selected schools. The study of these riddles shows the interaction of the past and present ideas in the minds of the composers. Riddle formation and the implication of riddle meaning are influenced by socio-cultural and economic activities, historical background and beliefs of the society including norms and taboos. In addition, interaction
with other cultures, colonial influence which includes Christianity and modern education has contributed immensely to composition of new riddles. The pre-colonial context and post-colonial context are brought together through the process termed as “composition by fragments” (Barber 1989: 20). This is best illustrated in her analysis of the Oriki oral text of the Yoruba people of Nigeria. In that context, she asserts “an Oriki text is woven out of fragments from a diversity of times and voices, that are pieced together by a sort of hybridization process (Barber 1989: 96), “a device of bringing the past into the understanding of the present of the text” (Bakhtin 1981: 4). Similarly, by looking at the present composition of riddles and their interpretation in the Kipsigis community, the “hybridization” process is prevalent in most riddles as the elements of the past as well as those of the present are pieced together in the riddle content or implied in the riddle meaning. The riddle may contain ancient terms but its meaning may be current. The hybridization process has been used to bring the past into the understanding of the present of the riddle as the following riddle illustrates: Arereni Chelang’at en kapolis – benderet (Chelang’at is hysterically dancing in the police station – a flag).

The riddle has significant metaphorical implication of the main aspect of Kipsigis life right from birth to marriage. The name Chelang’at is given to a female child born in the evening between 5.00 p.m. and 11.00 p.m. Some names in the Kipsigis were used as nuances and were indicative of some aspect of the foreign culture which impacted either negatively or positively on the Kipsigis social order. Hence, the use of the name Chelang’at here implies the colonial administration which distracted the community’s social order and challenged the cultural life of the Kipsigis. The flag as used in this riddle represents the national flag which in this case has replaced the traditional flag worn by girls during their circumcision. The latter was an emblem of honour. During the pre-colonial time both girls and boys in the Kipsigis community underwent circumcision as a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. The night before the circumcision marked the climax of the ceremonial songs and dance for the initiates. They were dressed for the occasion and those who maintained their dignity were crowned with a flag decorated with beautiful feathers. The flag signified that the bearer was a virgin. Colonial and the subsequent Kenyan state authorities suppressed this social order. The people mocked the new system of governance hence the new riddle was composed to reflect this new governance system. The national flag which stood for the new regime was perceived as a symbol of colonialism that upset traditional social order for which the people coined the phrase “hysterically dancing”.

Though the practice of female circumcision has greatly diminished in this community, values that were instilled into initiates during the seclusion period are retained in riddles and traditional songs which appraise the cultural norms and mock the foreign culture which is deemed to have degraded the cherished values of the society. The riddle alludes to the clash between the two cultures and creates a vent through which the nostalgia of the “lost culture” is expressed.

Additionally, a police station was seen as a place of torture, as similarly expressed in the following riddle: *Katyechyu kabun yu karkang – asikarindet* (He stepped here, he passed here with a thud! – Policeman). This is a sound riddle reflective of the coercive rule introduced by the British in Kenya during colonialism. The police worked for the new administration and were brutal in their actions such that they were presumed to be an anathema to everyday social life. This perception is captured in these two riddles to imply some suspicion and open distaste for colonialism and its signifiers.

Another riddle which alludes to the colonial culture is: *Arwap ilat kerer ng’wony – mogombetab eik* (Son of lightning splits the ground – ox-plough). Ox-ploughing was a new way of land cultivation brought by the colonialists in the 19th Century. It was considered as a cruel activity thus the Kipsigis reacted negatively to its use when ploughing by oxen was first introduced by the British colonial masters. The Kipsigis people adored their cattle; they were held in high esteem – almost considered sacred – and for this reason it was felt that they should not be subjected to torture through yoking for reasons of ploughing (Hotchkiss, 1937: 121-122; Fish & Fish, 1995:148). The use of plough which involved the use of the oxen was viewed as a kind of mistreatment of the oxen. The practice could even lead to the death of these animals through exhaustion and fatigue or excessive beating. Thus the association of the ox-plough with lightning is indicative of how dangerous the use of the plough was. It was perceived to be an ill-fated phenomenon hence the practice took long time to be accepted by the Kipsigis.

In Kipsigis *Ilet* (lighting) is a natural phenomenon which might cause sudden death of individuals or animals. If a man or domestic stock is killed by lightning, a day is set apart on which no work may be done over a wide area of the neighbourhood. If it strikes a house or land, consultations from the diviners on the cause and implication of the catastrophe are sought and necessary precautions prescribed by the diviners. The use of the term in the riddle
denotes some distaste of the practice by the community. However, ploughing by oxen was progressively accepted and is still carried out even today hence the retention of the riddle. The contents of the riddle show the Kipsigis’ perception of life in the past whereas the response to the riddle points to the modern ways of farming. This reflects the continuity of some aspects of the community as well as the changes wrought by the European colonists.

The following riddles trace the Kipsigis migrational routes and the spread of the Kipsigis people into their present lands: *Kilul ketit en Terik koit simamik oli – oret* (A tree fell in Terik and its branches reached this side – road). *Kilul ketit en Bureti koit simamik koroni – oret ab lam* (A tree fell from Bureti and its branches reached this side – tarmac road). The two riddles allude to the migratory paths the Kipsigis followed to settle in their present location. At the same time it introduces the infrastructure – road, which has made it easier for the Kipsigis to move further from their settlement areas to newer places. The first riddle depicts the migration of the Kipsigis from their cradle land while the second one shows the relatively recent movement of the Kipsigis to newer places such as Bureti, Belgut and Soin areas.

“Terik people” seems to refer to those who were left behind by the Kalenjin people at the time of migration. Mwanzi (1977) has suggested that part of the Kipois clan of Nandi tribe came from Kipsigis country and settled on Terik Hill, overlooking Kisumu. These early settlers moved to occupy more land further north and east in the present Nandi County. The riddle alludes to the Kalenjin migration story as described by the scholars, Peristiany (1939) and Orchardson (1961) who studied the oral history of the Kalenjin. According to these scholars, Terik people seem to have been lost on the way and decided to live on their own. However the Kipsigis and other Kalenjin ethnic groups still remember them and keep reminding the new generations of their existence. The Kipsigis riddle therefore is a form of oral art that is capable of storing the whole or part of the history of a community. The use of Terik in the riddle justifies the migration narrative of the community whereas the meaning of the riddle denotes the present road infrastructure. The change in the riddle meaning reflects change in the perception of things and the events that impacted on the Kipsigis’ life in general.

In the second riddle, a different interpretation is realized through the use of the name of a place – Bureti as opposed to the sub-ethnic group name – Terik indicates that the meaning is slightly different. However, it still talks about
migration, but in this case the migration process is more recent. Bureti was formerly inhabited by the Gusii people. After a protracted battle between the two communities at Chemoiiben area, the Kipsigis conquered the Gusii people and occupied their lands. Jamji, Chemosit, Chemosot, Litein and Chemoiiben in Bureti area were annexed as new Kipsigis land (Toweett, 1978, 14-15). The Kipsigis spread to these areas all the way from Lumbwa (the present Kipkelion) where they first settled at a place called Tuluap Sigis, eight miles to the west of Lumbwa. They pushed south and west from the Tuluap Sigis into the bush and forest country near Belgut in Kericho and finally to Bureti ousting the Gusii (Kosobek). The origin and migration history of the Kipsigis are veiled in these riddles and they are passed on from generation to generation. Riddles then can be said to be powerful condensers of unarticulated societal history.

New riddles have also been created. Formation of these riddles and the response thereof illustrate the new items which have been adapted for use in the community. *Chematweek ako chang ng’alek – Kitabut* (Dumb but with many words – book). The riddle is newly invented as depicted by the alien metaphor – book. The referent – book in this riddle symbolizes formal education in general. The composition of this riddle rests in the assumption that texts cannot speak for themselves; they are “dumb” unless someone talks of them. The riddle signifies formal education which gradually affected informal learning that was part of the Kipsigis lifestyle. Learning in the past took place informally and in non-formal occasions such as the initiation period where the initiates were secluded for a period of six to twelve months and taught lessons on cultural lifestyle. The initiates learned many practical things which would help them in later life. They were also initiated into the secret rituals and customs of the society. The riddle thus emphasizes the fact that texts contain lots of information which can be retrieved through reading.

Further riddles are also formulated by borrowing some values from the past and inculcating them into the present as in the following riddle. *Chepkulung kituiyo met – chemakurer/muguryot* (A wristlet with its head closed – a string-like bangle tied round a baby’s wrist). This is one of the old riddles which have been refashioned to fit into the current society. The framing of the riddle and the answer thereof has not changed. But during performance several responses to the same riddle were given. These included *kiptimbo, tamokiet, olmera and oliondo* all of which are cultural bangles worn for decoration purposes but a *tamokiet* had an added significance: it was made from the hide
of an animal killed for a sacrifice or for some guests and the entrails had shown good omen thus wearing of it was a sign of honour. The latter two bracelets were metal ornaments made from metals obtained from the neighbouring Luo and Gusii communities respectively. Many participants contested that the initial answer to the riddle should not be neglected as it carried with it moral lessons to be passed on to the new generations.

The social background from which the riddle was formulated in the past seemed to have dominated the minds of the riddle users, especially the older members of the society. The riddle is symbolic and was cited as a typical Kipsigis riddle by almost every resource person during fieldwork. Two women respondents explained that muguryot was a traditional bangle tied to a child’s wrist to monitor his or her growth. As the child grew it was supposed to tighten to the extent that it was removed and another one put on. This showed that the mother took care of the child well. It also implied that she had not had any sexual affair with her husband or any other man; it was an offence to do so or even mingle with men before the baby attained six months as it was believed that the baby would be subjected to several ailments and would grow thin and weak. This was the main reason why the muguryot was tied to a baby’s wrist. The offence was punishable by culturally sanctioned beating of the wife by her husband.

The same riddle was explained by a respondent, Kiptalam, 53, who added that the meaning of the riddle has changed. The new answer of the same riddle is “handcuffs” with which a suspect is tied when arrested over an offence. The “bangle” (muguryot) is thus regarded as a reminder of deep and extensive social memories, which are retrieved and recounted through the riddle. The ancient term used in the riddle calls for the need to continue some aspects of social life remembered from the past. The new answer of the riddle depicts how societal laws have been supplanted by the national laws. However both versions of the response to the riddle have a common goal geared towards the maintenance of social order.

New riddles have also been created based on technology and new invention as depicted in the following riddles: Kutkutenin koris koitin chumbeek – ndegeit (Let the wind blow you to the Whiteman’s land – aero plane). This is a new riddle which describes how the aero plane flies. Air travel is a new and fast mode of transport. New innovations as perceived in this community brought a lot of risks to the people’s lives. They were therefore cautiously accepted.
Thus they were introduced to the riddle with some kind of horror words as in the expression *kutkutenin koris*. The phrase *kutkutenin koris* is a curse in itself which literally means, “may the wind blow you away”. Orchardson (1961) argues that it is the curse that is feared by the Kipsigis and not the spirits. The curse (*chupisiet*) comprises two different activities: the verbal cursing of a person or persons by individuals; and the curse which is brought upon the man when he breaks any law or custom. According to Orchardson (1961, 117), the natural curse plays a very important role in Kipsigis life, as it is the ultimate sanction behind the recognition and maintenance of tribal custom. The riddle implies that air travel, though fast may involve some unforeseen risks, like being blown away by the wind literally.

Similar riddles were formulated later as follows: *Kutkutenin akiw Impo – ndegeit* (Let it fly you to India – aeroplane) also implies the strong “wind” which might carry one overseas. Aeroplanes seem to have captivated the minds of the Kipsigis people such that they formulated more riddles about them and sometimes even associate other new items with them as in the following riddle: *Siling mi barak – Ndegeit* (a shilling in the air – aeroplane). The shilling as used in this riddle represents Kipsigis attempt to make sense of the currency introduced first by the Arabs, then Europeans in the early 19th Century. An aeroplane is also a new figure representing the new technology and innovation that changed our understanding of travel, distance and time, which has been appreciated by the Kipsigis people. The modern concept of currency thus radically changed people’s understanding of the world in relation to the pre-colonial mode of trade and exchange, which was mainly barter. Often, people had to travel long distances with the items for exchange using donkeys, or even their own backs. Animals like goats and sheep were also driven for long distances to be exchanged with foodstuff, particularly millet from the neighbouring Kisii people. This happened usually during prolonged drought. The challenge was valuing the goods. The advent of money therefore changed the way the existing relationship of exchange of goods was understood. The trading pattern shifted from the pre-colonial past to post-colonial present as people’s conception of trade and exchange also shifted. Thus, as the novel mode of transport, aeroplane so captivated the imagination of the Kipsigis people that for a long time it was the focus of everyday discourses. Children would run outside the houses at the detection of the slightest sound that was deemed similar to that of the aeroplane so as not to miss the opportunity to gaze at the aeroplane that might be overflying the village. Over time, children even formulated a song about aeroplanes which
they would sing as they gazed into the skies. The association of the two signifiers of modernity therefore invokes the creative mind to think of the appearance of these two objects in the riddle and establish a relation. For instance, through observation objects appear big when they are near while they appear small when they are far away. In this case an aeroplane appears too big on the ground but high up in the sky it is no bigger than a shilling. Thus the response to the riddle is arrived at through comparison of the size of the shilling to the apparent size of the distant plane in full flight. At another level, the shilling might represent the monetary value of the aeroplane; it is the most expensive innovation ever made by the white people.

Other new riddles carry the elements of the past though the response reflects the current innovation and information as in the following riddle: *Kiptiltilyet mi itit – simoit* (A woodpecker on the ear – mobile phone). This is a new riddle which compares two objects: a bird and a mobile phone. Apparently the old and the new metaphors have parallel implication. *Kiptiltilyet* was one of the birds connected with omen in the Kipsigis community. Omen is very important in the Kipsigis cultural life and controlled numerous activities (Rutto & Maritim, 2016). No omen was to be ignored. It was believed that *Asis* (God) and the ancestral spirits send messages to people through omen. A positive or good omen was a sign that a good decision had been made and that *Asis* agreed with what was being done or would be done (Fish & Fish, 1995: 221-223). Three birds especially were connected with omen. One was *Kiptiltilyet* (a kind of woodpecker); the direction from which it sang was indicative of good or bad. It was especially significant when cattle raiders were leaving home to engage in raids. When in conflict, this bird on the right meant victory, but on the left it meant defeat.

Another bird which was considered a bad omen was the *chepkokosyot*, the brown hawk with a white abdomen. However this bird sitting on a tree with its white abdomen facing towards a person was good omen (Fish & Fish, 1995: 221-223). The Kipsigis believed in the intervention of these birds thus the interpretation of the message deemed to be conveyed by these birds meant that the spirits of the dead or any other supernatural powers had something to complain about therefore these birds acted as agents (Toweett, 1978: 34-35).

The use of the bird in the riddle therefore denotes the unforeseen dangers of a mobile phone: though accepted for its usefulness, speculations of it as potential bearer of bad news are cautiously taken. The riddle is synonymous to
a Kipsigis saying, *Telelenin kiptiltilya ketab it si kokur Chemunai ne mi oik* (may a woodpecker stand on your wooden ear-ornament and call Chemunai who is in evil spirit world). The name *Chemunai* in Kipsigis represents something hidden deep inside whereas *oik* generally stands for unseen evil. The saying seems to have prophesized the invention of a mobile phone with its unpredictable dangers. Some negative attributes of mobile phones as affecting emotions, increased stress levels and mental health and negative effects on immune system and vision problems have been identified. The association of the phone with the bird connected with omen is a reason enough to draw some caution to the mobile phone users. The metaphor as Bwonya (2010) observes in another context help in highlighting the community’s attitude towards mobile phones.

More riddles were attributed to change in Kipsigis lifestyle generally as exemplified in the following riddle: *Bun yon abun yu ketuiyejin Nairobi – masibit* (Pass here I pass there we meet at Nairobi – a belt). The riddle is new and is metaphorically used to denote two things – travel and clothing. The two are signifiers of modernity. Nairobi has also been used by the challenger to symbolize modernity, being the first metropolitan centre; it becomes more convenient for use by the challenger. The riddle portrays how Kipsigis people have become exposed through travel across ethnic borders and also how they have changed their manner of dressing. A belt for instance has replaced the leather strap cut from hides and used to tie *kolikoik* (animal hides worn as clothes) together.

The emergence of modern clothes was seen as having some resemblance to their past clothes especially in matching of colour. Misik and Bunei (informants) explained that the Europeans emulated their dressing; they were made in such a way that it was easier for them to wear; a blouse, skirt and dress resembled in appearance with the Kipsigis attire – *koliket, chepkauit and menegubet* respectively. The colour combinations were the same as those used by the Kipsigis to decorate their hide clothes with beads. This cultural exchange apparently led to acceptance of the use of modern clothes. However, the Kipsigis’ hides are reserved for initiation purposes. The riddle unveils the hybridization process which took place during colonization. Some of the symbols of assimilation included modern clothes and interaction with other cultures which was made easier through improved infrastructure. Travel across the ethnic border, made easier by the new infrastructure has also contributed to change in Kipsigis mode of dress; many people have abandoned the old ways
and adapted the new mode of dressing. Resource person Obot Kiptalam, interviewed on the historical background of the Kipsigis, narrated how the culture has gradually changed and that only a few old people still preserve their traditional clothes for commemoration of their past. Riddles therefore have been used as texts to store some societal history and culture.

Some riddles reflect the conflicting ideology of the past and the present as in the following riddle: *Atinye karinyun ne malanye chii-chepkokochet* (I have a car which nobody boards – tortoise). A tortoise is an animal creature that is known today just as it was in the past. It is a small animal covered with a hard protective shell and is recognized by its slow pace whereas a car is a recent innovation popular for its speed. The contrast here is the speed with which each one travels. A four legged tortoise is compared to a vehicle which also has four wheels but a significant contrast in speed is also registered. The riddle borrows from the past ideology to talk of the present; a concept which Noss (2006: 36) also observed in his study of Gbaya riddles. According to him, the riddle itself may be old or modern yet the setting of the riddle is always direct and contemporary. This is also true of Kipsigis riddles. The use of a tortoise and a car in the riddle depicts a conflict oriented view of social and cultural life in the mind of the composer. This confirms the argument made by Claude Levi-Straus (1963) and also observed by Okpewho (1992: 178-179) that in the process of acquiring competence in any language the human mind organizes the various concepts of that language into a scheme of oppositions so as to grasp them better, in other words the human mind naturally operates in a binary fashion.

Apparently more new riddles are being created especially as new inventions are being appreciated in this community. The following riddle is an example of such riddles: *Keron amatweku – kamera* (It sees me but it cannot talk – camera). This is a new riddle which was created by a pupil on the spur of the moment during our fieldwork at Barng’oror Primary school. One of the tools used for data collection was a video camera, a challenger critically observed its working and formulated and posed the riddle to the audience. Several responses were given by the audience before one of them, after careful observation of the items in the classroom and its surrounding gave the correct answer – camera. The poser accepted the answer challenging others to be keener on the new items around. The continual creation of riddles can be observed through this riddle; as a phenomenon occurs, people think of ways of bringing them into daily experience therefore they express it in different ways.
Putting it in riddle form seems to be the easiest way as riddles allow for repetition and through this process the meaning is retained in the mind of the participant and can be passed on from one generation to the other. The following riddle also follows the same trend as is it formulated in the classroom situation: *Tindo Cherono kuinoik ang’wan – mapit*. (Cherono has four horns – map). Cherono is a name given to a girl born in the late afternoon, “when the goats are returning home” as the Kipsigis would say. It was perceived to be a good time and good expectations were anticipated at that time. As explained earlier, some names were used as nuances in the Kipsigis community. Thus, Cherono here is used to indicate the positive appreciation of the map. The “horns” as used in the riddle implies cattle herding which was the main economic activity of the Kipsigis community in the past. The riddle is a metaphor introducing the map, a recent innovation which shows position and direction of a place. Though initially the Kalenjin were aware of the four major directions – East, West, North and South – only two – the East and the West – seem to have been of major significance in their ceremonies and practices. The East plays an important part in all Kipsigis ceremonies associated with God (*Asis*) and the spirit world (Orchardson, 1961: 25). East was the direction of health, life and prosperity whereas west was the direction of darkness, death, decline and cursing of enemies (Fish & Fish, 1995: 177). The introduction of the map therefore was just but a continuation of what was there though it was not yet represented on paper. The four horns referring to four compass directions – North, East, South and West – serve to emphasize the cultural aspect of the Kipsigis as regard to map use. Initially, the answer to the riddle was rainbow which was usually observed in the evening after the rain. Change in the riddle answer denotes a shift in the idea. The formal learning which introduced the use of a map created this shift. The girl with the four horns represents the Kipsigisland which initially had four districts namely Belgut, Waldai, Bureti, and Sot. These districts have been classified under one county which is Kericho County.

Apart from the socio-cultural activities in this community, many people engage themselves in athletic competition in various capacities. Thus it is common to find riddles formulated in relation to this activity as in the following riddle: *Atinye rwoik che rwae sait age tugul – Mugungonikab karit* (I have athletes who run all the time – car tyres); *Atinye lagok ang’wan che onege ako manomege – Mugungonikab karit* (I have four children who chase each other but cannot catch each other – car tyres). These two riddles have the same meaning which introduces a new innovation. The metaphor of runners
(rwoik) is associated with car tyres in the first riddle. Running was and is still a hobby for many Kipsigis people and the Kalenjin as a whole. Fast runners served the community by carrying messages from one place to another during colonial and pre-colonial days. This was usually so when the recipient of the message lived far away from the village to which they are sent. Those messengers could run as far as Nandi from Kipsigis area, a distance of over fifty kilometers. They were not supposed to stop or greet anyone before delivering their message. Running was treated as a hobby but also served the community in delivering crucial messages. A vehicle with its tyres in motion is compared to the fast runners.

In the second riddle, the implication is that the past and the present means of communication are of a diverse nature as the latter have obtained faster means of communication than it has hitherto been realized. The riddle thus represent the “past in the present” to paraphrase the words of Karin Barber: “a past which they have brought with them and which can be re-opened and re-activated by their agency” (1989: 25). They also represent the “present in the past”, for through all the stages of their transmission they do not lose their relationship of contemporaneity to the events they refer to. They are not thought to be about the past; they are fragments of the past, living encapsulated in the present (Barber, 1989). Riddles then can open windows simultaneously onto the past and the present. The running activity as a way of relaying important information in the past is remembered through this riddle. Riddles can thus be regarded as the principal means by which a living relationship with the past is daily apprehended and reconstituted in the present. Consequently, contemporary riddle can be said to be a way of experiencing the past by bringing it back to the present.

**Conclusion**

Riddles in the contemporary Kipsigis community are composed through a careful consideration of all aspect of life in the past and that of the present. This phenomenon is reflective of the dynamic nature of culture which imbibes changes and also keeps the old features intact at the same time. Continuity of riddles is evident in the content in which the ancient terms are included for instance Muguryot (a string-like bangle) and Kiptiliti yet (a woodpecker) and traditional names such as Cherono and Chelang’at. New meaning is created by making use of all available contemporary resources. These include new innovations such as motor vehicles, aeroplanes, tarmac road, mobile phones,
camera and national flag among others. Consequently, more riddles are refashioned to fit into the modern context. Some riddles have undergone mutations with replacement of old metaphors with new metaphors. Contemporary riddles also reveal that modern education, Christianity and the media have greatly influenced the way riddles are formulated and disseminated to the audience. New riddles are formulated by school children in the classroom context. Formal education has inculcated in them ingenuity and creativity in addition to learning riddles through their peers and elderly people, in the traditional system. Evidently, children formulate their own riddles based on the cultural knowledge, the knowledge acquired in school, social interaction and the media. These locales are new sites for riddle performances that not only compliment the old sites but compete with it, reflecting change and continuity of cultural values among the Kipsigis.

References


Transformational Leadership: A Means to Women’s Political Agency in Kenya

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Abstract

Social action aimed at transformation is crucial for the sustainability of our communities. Since the World Commission on Environment and Development Report of 1987, Our Common Future, there has been an increased focus on transformative research for sustainable development particularly in the countries of the South. However, there is a notable lack of focus on the critical role language plays in the linkage between transformative research and sustainable development. This paper explores how language mediates women’s action with regard to leadership drawing from a research carried out on the discursive representation of women’s interests and needs in a rural area in Kenya (Makueni District at the time of the study) and now Makueni County. The study, based on a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theoretical framework, is a multidisciplinary one cutting across the areas of language, gender and politics. The data for the entire study consists of four political speeches, ten interviews with politicians and other community leaders and eleven focus group discussions with women’s groups. This paper however focuses only on focus group discussions. One of the objectives of the research was to determine which interests and needs are selected by women in women’s groups, politicians and other community leaders as well as how they construct them. The study also sought to investigate whether these three groups of people see themselves as able to take transformative social action in relation to women’s interests and needs. Leadership emerged as one of the key women’s interests and needs. One key finding of the research is that collective action is at the heart of women’s ability to sustain their existence and that of their communities. Women’s inaction on the other hand is located in a negative discourse on women. In this paper, I argue that if the women were to understand and recognize the power of the collective,
and that power is in the collective and not in an individual leader, they might choose to influence the political process in a different way. Such understanding provides different possibilities for women’s political agency particularly in the context of Kenya’s new political dispensation where women are expected to take on leadership roles in County governance.

Introduction

This paper explores leadership as part of women’s interests and needs and as a means to achieving sustainable development in Kenya. It begins by providing a background to the notion of agency as a key aspect of transformative research. Next, it locates women’s interests and needs in the wider global context by interrogating the nexus between transformative research and sustainable development. In the discussion of findings, specifically the focus is on leadership one of the key needs that women in women’s groups mentioned.

My research on women’s interests as represented by their needs draws from Gouws (2004) who argues that the Gender and Development (GAD) approach is incomplete without the transformation of development discourse to include addressing women’s needs and to develop women’s agency. The GAD approach focuses ‘not only on including women in development projects, but also on the relationships of power (which are also the relations that exist between elite and rural women), that generate women’s inequality’ (Gouws, 2004: 25). The dual approach (involving both political and discursive representation) adopted in the present research provides a wider framework for addressing women's interests and needs particularly given the divergent interests of rural and elite women. Analysis at the level of discourse shows language as one source of understanding the participation of women in economic development encompassing the political process and social action in Kenya. As Adhiambo-Oduol (1993) argues, an important question is how language can facilitate the mainstreaming of women in the democratization process. It is hoped that a study of the role language plays in understanding women’s needs might be one of the ways to transform development discourse in order to recognise and develop women’s agency. In discussing both the politics and power relations involved in the articulation of women’s diverse interests, this project recognises the fundamental shift regarding a move away from needs-based discourse to rights-based issues in the discussions of women’s movements (See Muthoka, 2010).
Sen’s fresh approach to development in *Development as Freedom* (1999) underscores the transformation that has accompanied women’s agency in social change with regard to the two-fold features used to increase women’s agency: those related to *well-being* (which have received significantly more attention) and those related to the *rights* that are aimed at the free agency of women. He foregrounds the idea that the changing focus of women’s movements is thus a critical addition to previous concerns. This research seeks to make a contribution to Sen’s view of development from a Kenyan perspective.

Agency is linked to the question of power which is realized in two spheres: in macro-level civic politics and everyday micro-level interaction through social practices. In Kenya, both of these are shaped by patriarchal discourses. The politics of gender intersect with civic politics such that representation in the political sense and representation in the semiotic sense intertwine. Representation in language and discourse is fundamental to the articulation of policies and actions for the public good. Gendered social relations contribute to the prevailing conditions for the production and reception of texts. My argument is that the possibilities that exist for women’s semiotic representation of themselves affect their political representation. I have looked at discursive production to see if it can account for women’s minimal participation in the political process. In the next section, I provide a background to the 2002 elections in Kenya as a way of understanding women’s political participation as well as their constructions of leadership.

Elections in Kenya are conducted at three levels: the presidential, the parliamentary, and the civic. This research focuses on the civic level. Kenyan national political discourse has been concerned with the empowerment of women in parliamentary elections and not with as much vigour at the civic level. According to the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK, 2002), a total of 1,035 parliamentary aspirants contested 210 seats in the National Assembly, 44 of these were women, 9 (less than 5 per cent) were elected. Forty-one political parties fielded 7,009 candidates. Out of these, 381 women were nominated for the 2,128 electoral seats. This low number of women relative to men confirms the poor participation of women in party politics, which has been identified as one of the major constraints to women’s participation in politics (Nasong’o and Murunga, 2007; Adhiambo-Oduol 2002). Makueni District is one of the 12 districts that formed the Eastern Province at the time of the study. In terms of administrative units, the district covers 5
constituencies, 17 divisions, 65 locations and 190 sub-locations (ECK, 2002). The research is based in Mbitini Location, an administrative unit in Makueni District. It is important to make a distinction between Makueni District which is an administrative unit and Makueni Constituency which is a political unit. Makueni Constituency is the largest Constituency in the District. Only one female parliamentary aspirant in the entire Makueni District stood for election but she was not elected. An analysis of the ECK (2002) civic election results shows that 8 women contested for councillor positions; 4 of these were from Makueni Constituency; only 1 was elected. In descriptive terms, these figures depict the low representation of women in the political process. Though much work has been done on transformative leadership particularly with regard to leadership development in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (Fowler, Ng’ethe & Owiti, 2002), little focus is given to the discursive construction of leadership, yet this provides a critical way of understanding women’s needs and subsequently their political participation.

The 1997 elections are particularly relevant for the women’s movement in Kenya; this was the year that Charity Ngilu became the first Kenyan woman to contest the presidential election. Grignon (2001) identifies two key factors as responsible for Ngilu’s dismal performance nationally and the Kamba’s ethnic community failure to vote for her as a bloc in the 1997 elections. The first is that Ngilu was the least well off of the five presidential candidates and money is crucial to electioneering; this is echoed by Adhiambo-Oduol (2008). Secondly, ‘in a male-dominated country where close to 75 per cent of the population is still rural, the usual prejudice against women’s leadership may have greatly hampered her presidential bid’ (Grignon, 2001: 345). These two factors worked at breaking what Grignon (2001) calls the ‘Ngilu wave’, in that Charity Ngilu had a great challenge to face, the most important being the age-old attitude among the men who in Grignon’s words ‘could not imagine being led by a woman’ (2001: 116). He captures this challenge thus:

As in many Latin European or Latin American countries, a great majority of the electorate might enjoy the idea of a woman president, but when the time comes for casting the ballot, the weight of the individual’s political socialization which associates power with men’s attributes does not play in favour of women candidates. Kenya is not unique in this respect. (Grignon, 2001: 345)

Sen (1999) argues that women’s increased participation in the political process is important for a greater balance, wholesomeness and equity in socio-
economic development. He clearly articulates this with regard to the Kerala experience of India. Nasong’o and Ayot (2007) contend that women’s presence in key policy-making institutions in appreciable numbers enhances and strengthens the political agenda on social issues such as healthcare, education and environmental protection. Additionally, Kamau (2008) makes a link between a critical mass of women in political leadership particularly those who support the course of gender equality and justice, and higher achievement in terms of development that takes on board gender issues. Kamau further argues that due to the small representation of women in predominantly male organizations, they may undergo what she calls a process of ‘masculinisation’ where they learn to do things in the traditional, masculine and patriarchal ways. Women make up 52 per cent of the adult population and 60 per cent of the voting population in Kenya, making them the majority especially in rural areas (Khasiani, 2000).

The implication here as argued by Adhiambo-Oduol (2008) is that higher numbers of women in politics would translate to women finding their own way of engaging in politics. She proposes that the best way to ensure this engagement is to sensitize women to support other women. She highlights three key issues; one there is need for a paradigm shift from the ‘what’ side of female politics (listing obstacles to women’s participation in politics) to the ‘how’ of specific actions that women must take as candidates. First, organising party members and leaders; two, sustainability of the transformation achieved so far; and lastly, the integration of women’s traditional roles and new responsibilities. She further maintains that the approach adopted by key actors to date does not enhance women’s capacity to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength through a deliberate effort to harness and nurture their energy around a common political agenda. This in her view is the reason why women are still locked out of meaningful political participation. She foregrounds the importance of women’s collective in enhancing their participation thus:

Women need to strengthen networks with women’s organizations and other social networks to invest in and buy into their collective agenda. Vibrant, cohesive and successful women organising occurs when women come together, organise around clearly perceived areas of the collective oppression which then define their common goal and helps chart the path for their collective action’ (Adhiambo-Oduol, 2008: 50).
In this paper, I argue for a dual focus on representation in studying women’s interests and needs; that is, to take account of both the numerical characteristics and the discursive aspects of women’s participation in social action. The reason for this is that emphasis on the numerical aspects of women’s representation, though undoubtedly important in understanding the political representation of women in politics, does not seem to adequately address women’s low participation in politics.

The key concern of studies on human agency is to contribute to the transformation of people’s conditions of life. A study on the role language plays in the representation of women’s agency is useful because if we understand how women’s interests and needs are represented, we will be in a better position to understand their non-participation in the political process. The discursive representation of women’s interests and needs in the political process in Kenya has not received much attention. Studying the way women use language might provide a better understanding of this situation and might provide different possibilities for transformation of their conditions of life. Women are seen to be disadvantaged in the political process though no explanation has yet looked at language as a possible way of explaining the relation between the ‘text and talk’ of politicians and community leaders on the one hand, and the women’s construction of their interests and needs, their agency and their level of involvement in the political process, on the other hand. Moreover, there are development problems such as poverty, illiteracy and HIV that affect women differently from the way they affect men. Studying women’s interests from a macro-perspective, as has previously been the focus in the democratization process, ignores such differences. Besides, most studies on political discourse have used data and models from the Indo-European languages (Fairclough, 1992; van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999). Looking at data from Kenya may provide fresh insights into political discourse generally and the construction of women’s interests and needs in particular and how both of these relate to the need for transformative research for the sustainability of communities. The next section highlights the position of women with regard to transformative research for sustainable development.

Although women’s interests appear to be at the core of sustainable development discourse, there appears to be a gap in the way this discourse is investigated. The crucial role of language use (text and talk) by the women themselves as a possible means of understanding women’s needs is ignored, yet language is one of the most important ways through which people
construct reality. The research questions that underpin this paper seek to address this gap.

A discussion of women’s interests and needs would be incomplete without the notion of sustainability. Women’s integral role in sustainable development in Africa has been variously documented (Ng’ang’a, 2006; Wacker, 1997). The focus on women and sustainable development indicates the idea that women, particularly rural women in Sub-Saharan Africa are ‘among the most important and best experienced actors in bringing about sustainability’ (Dankelman and Davidson, 1988: xiii, cited in Wacker, 1997: 10). This is an instance of these women’s actions being valued and being seen positively in the literature. Sustainability means different things to different people in different contexts. In this study, the operational definition used is in relation to sustainable development as ‘a process that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (UN, 1987). In the UN report, also commonly referred to as the Brundtland Report, this is the most commonly used definition, and it is also appropriate to the concerns of this study in that it indicates a shift from the idea that sustainability is mainly ecological to a framework that emphasizes the economic and social context of development. There are two key concepts in this definition; the concept of needs, in particular, the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs (UN, 1987: 43).

There is however a theoretical problem underpinning this view of sustainability as it raises a fundamental philosophical question; can the present generation preserve resources for future generations? In a sense, this definition positions itself against future generations as the needs of today may not necessarily be the needs of future generations. The challenge for future generations is that they must make sure that there is a planet on which they can sustain themselves. The needs approach as conceptualized in the present study is context specific and prevents homogenization and generalization of women’s conditions. The basic ‘human needs strategy’ pushed by the World Bank and adopted by most international agencies has played a crucial role in this regard. This strategy has, however, been critiqued as lacking a significant link to people’s everyday experience. In other words ‘basic human needs’ discourse as previously conceptualised does not foster greater socio-political participation, a gap which a study on language hopes to fill. This paper
suggests that an integrated approach to practices of sustainability that are women’s needs-specific should be mirrored in the socio-political, economic and environmental agendas as these are closely interlinked to bring about sustainable development by using a multidisciplinary approach that cuts across the areas of language, gender studies and politics. For Molyneux (1998: 236), focus on how needs are discursively constructed gives more political meaning to them for ‘needs are usually deemed to exist while interests are willed’. She argues that some way for combining a discourse of needs with that of interests is essential in the planning field. The study provides a fresh approach to the study of women’s interests and needs by using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a means of uncovering the subtle ways in which the representation of these issues interfaces with questions of power.

Wacker (1997) observes that, as is common with other terms in development politics, the term ‘sustainable development’ has been defined controversially and its meaning has changed overtime. In her view: ‘As a normative concept, sustainable development requires a political system that gives communities an effective say over the resources on which they depend. It requires promoting citizens’ initiatives, empowering people’s organizations, and strengthening local democracy’ (9).

Wacker’s definition alludes to the shift that has occurred from the traditional view of politics as a mechanism for controlling government to participatory democracy where politics is seen as a system of popular control in everyday life. A case in point is the Green Belt Movement which in the late Wangari Maathai’s words ‘has over the past 30 years shown that sustainable development linked with democratic values promotes human rights, social justice and equity, including balance of power between women and men’ (Maathai, 2004: xvi). In her view, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize demonstrates that although the work of grassroots groups, especially women’s groups, does not always make headline news, it does make a difference. This claim can be supported by Kenya’s efforts to restore her water towers particularly the Mau forest as well as other forests in other parts of the country.

There is broad agreement that sustainability in Africa stands on the shoulders of its women. For Ng’ang’a (2006), in order to continue to stand tall and develop sustainably, these shoulders must be kept strong, a task for everyone, especially, the young female elites who mainly manage women’s agendas in Africa. In this research, I argue that the way women are constructed both by
others and more importantly by themselves might enable us to understand their sustainability and their agency with regard to their involvement in both the political process and social action. One way of doing this is by addressing the discourse of women in relation to their practices of sustainability in women’s groups (see Ndambuki, 2009). Given the broad agreement that sustainability depends on women, this research raises the question as to why then negative representations of women prevail? This study argues for a more respectful discourse in order to develop women’s agency: a discourse that constructs women’s actions as having value and integrity.

In view of women’s contribution to sustainable development (Ng’ang’a, 2006, Wacker, 1997), it is no wonder that Sen (1999: 202) notes that the changing agency of women is one of the major mediators of economic and social change, and its determination as well as consequences closely relates to many of the central features of the development process. He aptly captures the urgent need to address issues of social injustice in relation to women’s agency thus:

The extensive reach of women’s agency is one of the most neglected areas of development studies and most urgently in need of correction, nothing is as important today as an adequate recognition of political, economic and social participation and leadership of women, this is indeed a crucial aspect of “development as freedom”. (Sen, 1999: 203)

Research on leadership development for capacity building in Africa (Malunga, 2006) decries the absence of an African cultural perspective in discourses and initiatives. He argues that most of the models for leadership development are based on foreign models which are therefore bound to fail as they import a lot of ideas from the west. With regard to leadership development, he identifies five interrelated principles of ubuntu: sharing and collective ownership of opportunities, responsibilities, and challenges; the importance of people and relationship over things; participatory decision-making and leadership; patriotism as a common bond of security, and lastly, reconciliation as a goal of conflict management.

Malunga’s (2006) findings with regard to ubuntu are largely confirmed by Ndambuki (2010) who established that the ‘Merry-Go-Round’ (MGR) (often referred to as nzangule in Kikamba), is the basis of what defines a women’s group. Members of the group provide practical support and care for one
another to form an extended family where people pool resources in terms of labour, literacy support and emotional support. Each group becomes a collective in which members fend for one another. The MGR is at the heart of the collective. Within it, people generate income through the sale of their farm produce and the small-scale business enterprises that they run. The women’s group might also be said to be a kind of adaptation to a new economic order but it retains the collective notion, a kind of extended family based on ‘ubuntu’ which is fundamental to African philosophy.

Malunga (2006) identifies a number of challenges on leadership development; for instance, loyalty to kinship which may develop into tribalism. The other challenge is the belief in Chiefs and Kings ruling for life, a situation which has led to the contested notion of traditional leadership in the African context. The term ‘traditional leadership’ generally refers to chiefship (chiefs, traditional leaders and kings). According to Quinlan & Wallis (2003: 146) the debate surrounding this institution revolves around two points. On the one hand chiefs are regarded as outmoded forms of authority and therefore should have no role in government. An extension of this argument is that the institution of chieftainship is a hindrance to political democracy and it should not be recognized by the national government. On the other hand, chiefs are regarded as significant forms of authority particularly in rural areas and therefore they are seen as having a role to play in the government of a modern state. An extension of this argument is that the institution of chiefship stands alongside the bureaucracy of a modern state and therefore the institution needs to be transformed to the effect that chiefs become active participants within local government structures. This would be a key point for Kenya in the new constitutional dispensation where transformational leadership (defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems – https://www.mindtools.com) is seen as key to sustainable development. In fact, in all African countries, traditional leadership coexists with the authorities of sovereign states and their subdivisions as in the cases of South Africa and Namibia where establishment of advisory councils of ‘traditional leaders’ at the national government is a common practice. The central question in this whole debate as Thornton (2003) argues is therefore what role do the chiefs have and how is it to be understood? This is an important concern for women in women’s groups who interact on a day to day basis with chiefs as the local community leaders (Ndambuki, 2013a).
Kenya had 71 districts at the time of the study. The study was carried out in Kenya, specifically in Makueni District in the then Eastern Province. Makueni District had five constituencies: Makueni, Kilome, Mbooni, Kibwezi and Kaiti. The study focused on Mbitini Division, one out of a total of 5 Divisions in Makueni Constituency. Having grown up in the constituency, I have witnessed first-hand that women appear to be faced with unique problems. The case of one division is used to show the issues concerning women in this rural division. These issues are specific to this section of the population, but are certainly similar to issues facing rural women in the whole district and possibly other rural districts in Kenya.

The research uses a case study approach. It is appropriate for the current study that seeks to understand how women’s interests and needs are constructed by women, politicians and other community leaders. Following the principle of triangulation which involves approaching the same question from different data sources (Gillham, 2000: 13), the research employed methodological triangulation which involved combining various sources of evidence notably political speeches, interviews with politicians and other community leaders and focus groups with women. According to Lemke (1998), case studies are also well-suited for discourse analysis methods due to the fact that discourse analysis produces its greatest insights when rich contextual information can be factored into the analysis of each text or episode. Each kind of evidence has its own strengths and weaknesses as no one kind or source is likely to be sufficiently valid on its own. A variety of research methods also worked to produce a fuller understanding of the political issues as they relate to women.

The research relied mainly on qualitative approaches. To some degree, I also combined with the quantitative approach in the presentation of the data. Silverman (2005) argues that a combination of both approaches is useful as it presents a richer representation of reality. Qualitative research is concerned with how people understand themselves, or their setting — what lies behind the more objective evidence (Gillham, 2000: 7). Qualitative research in developing countries has been poorly understood but is slowly gaining acceptance among scholars in Africa (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). The case study researcher works inductively from what is there in the research setting to develop grounded theory (explanations). Following Gillham (2000: 12), the actual data that you find are specific to a particular context but your theory (rooted in what you find) may be useable by other people and help them to understand women’s political issues in similar contexts. Thus, ‘although case
studies provide little basis for scientific generalization, they are generalizable in terms of theoretical propositions and not in terms of populations or universes’ (Yin, 1994: 100). They involve building knowledge case by case. Concerns raised about the different experiences of women in the political process in this case may, therefore, be key to understanding what needs to be done to change things for rural women more generally.

After explaining the research to a meeting of each of the women’s groups they then agreed among themselves who would remain behind for the focus group discussion. The meetings were held at places that suited the different groups: I held the women’s project sites, at their home, at the market place. The Kikamba texts were first transcribed into English and after systematic thematic content analysis purposive selection was used.

The data for the entire research consists of 11 tape–recorded focus group discussions (qualitative group interviews) of between 40-60 minutes each, 10 interviews with politicians and other community leaders and four political speeches. This paper focuses on the focus group data. The focus group is a key means of voicing women’s concerns especially when organised on the basis of the women’s group (Ndambuki 2013b).

The data is analyzed within a Critical Discourse Analytic framework, an approach that advocates increased awareness in the use of language to promote the welfare of marginalized groups. Key scholars who have contributed immensely to debates in CDA include Fairclough (2006); Van Dijk (1997, 2001), Wodak (1997; 2001a; 2001b), Blommaert (2005) etc. In Fairclough’s approach to CDA, individuals are seen as agents capable of constructing their own agency in their daily interaction. The framework presents power as embedded in social relations. CDA is able to show that the semiotic representation of social actors and agency is based on linguistic choices. Fairclough’s model of CDA involves a description of both the social processes and structures that give rise to the production of a text. He conceptualizes these relations using a three-dimensional view of discourse that includes analysis of text (spoken or written), discourse practices (process of text production and interpretation) and an analysis of the socio-cultural conditions that affect the production and interpretation of texts.

In addition to Fairclough’s framework, we use the concept of habitus developed by Bourdieu (1990, 1991). One’s habitus is a set of predispositions
which incline agents to act and react in certain predisposed ways. These dispositions generate practices, perceptions, and attitudes which are regular and which help us to understand how and why the women in this study see themselves as capable of transformative social action or not.

Leadership emerges as a key theme whereby the leaders raise an important concern regarding women’s leadership in politics. As already pointed out, the silence on women’s interests and needs particularly in the political sphere is critical given that the women are the majority of the voters in Kenya.

The issue of leadership was mentioned by all the groups except one. In the Kamba language the term for leadership is ũtongoi. One of the key issues that the women consistently mentioned in relation to leadership is the need for a female leader who would understand their needs (in other words a transformational leader who seek to change existing thoughts, feelings and goals for better results and greater good (https://www.onlinestudy.edu)). In the respondents’ views, such a leader is a person who can ‘do things for us’, ‘show us direction’, ‘give us support’ (money) ‘show us the light’ to mention but some of the responses as seen in Text 1.

Text 1

Nitūthīnāa ovaa tūtena mūndū waūtwonia mbee.Na nengī andū makaleaa kwonua mbee komesa kumbūka? We suffer here with no one to show us ahead. And if people are not shown ahead, can they really emerge? (Group 3, p. 2, lines 20-22)

In Text 1, by using the plural object -infix -tū- (we), the women construct themselves as a ‘suffering community’ that needs a leader to show them the way. Despite a culture of collective endeavour and group decision making, in which women’s groups are deliberately formed to give members the support of the collective, women construct themselves in a discourse which focuses on the centrality of an individual leader. In other words, they do not see the power that exists when they work together collectively. The women do not understand that community action underpins their sustainability not individual power. Their agency is based on the mutual support that women give one another, not on the power of an individual leader. This text also highlights a key finding of the research: their location in a discourse of negative representation makes women believe they have a limited role to play in politics. This in turn makes them believe they need a leader to solve their
problem. This is an individualized discourse which diminishes their sense of themselves. In other words, women want to give agency to a leader and yet agency resides in the collective. Discourses are ways of being (Gee, 2006), women grow in these discourses. This appears to be the prevailing dominant discourse about women; a Kenya discourse and no wonder they inhabit and reproduce these discourses. This deficit discourse constructs the women as helpless, and suffering and this comes straight from their mouths that they look for a saviour, a leader, and a mentor. They seem unable to translate their micro conditions of possibility into macro conditions of possibility. This is informed by Althusser’s (1971) notion of interpellation.

The women appear to use both ‘we’ and ‘they’. They refer to themselves as ‘people’ and use the third person plural pronoun suffix -ma-‘they’ which gives women what Fairclough refers to as ‘generic reference’. This reference is often associated with the universal and hence by using the generic pronoun ‘they’, the women construct themselves in an impersonal way, which generalises the suffering of rural women. What is fore grounded is their suffering, not their actions. Let us look at more responses on leadership.

Text 2

*Yu kethĩa yu ūilye vu wĩ president, nũmanya thĩna sya iveti. Na takethata Kalũkĩ Ngilũ asyaïtwe yu vaa tondũ ūsayïtwe wthĩna twĩ sawa viũ…tũkita kũamũkaa kwakya, nĩngĩ nanowĩsĩ yaa kwakwa, ngakwoneleelia ūṁzeũvania.*
*Kowũtĩkũla maithũna. Kotwĩsĩ tũkaumia mũndũ múka va?*
If you are the president you would know women’s needs.
If Kaluki Ngilu were born here the way you are, we would be high up there, perfectly fine … we would be waking up … since you know my place if I show you a problem you will easily sort it out. She wouldn’t want to see people suffering. We do not know where we will get a woman leader from. (Group 3, p. 4, lines 14-16).

Text 3

*Ukethĩa twũnatongoi ma aka nũndũ atongoi ma aka wĩthĩa matũlewa nũmavata maka na kwosa mavata moo na moko eli.*
If we had women leaders, because it is women leaders who understand women’s needs and take them seriously ‘with both hands’. (Group 3, p. 11, lines 82-83)
In both Texts 2 and 3, the speakers advocate for female leadership. While Text 2 supports the idea of female leadership by citing Charity Ngilu the first woman presidential candidate, in Text 3, the speaker wishes that they had female leaders, a condition of possibility indicated by the marker of modality ‘ũkethia. The repetition of this marker indicates the seriousness of her wish. Her reason for wanting women in leadership is ‘because it is women leaders who understand women’s needs and take them seriously ‘with both hands’. The use of ‘with both hands’ is Kamba metaphor that indicates taking something very seriously. This might be interpreted to mean that women in women’s groups meet the practical interests of women and that they recognize that there is a gap; that of women’s strategic gender interests that Molyneux (1985) identified. The use of the metaphor helps to emphasise that female leaders would address the strategic gender interests of rural women. Because I have argued that the rural women are not focused on strategic interests; this is the agenda of elites who are unlikely to translate individual power into power for rural women, this study hopes to provide a way of looking at how alliances between elite men and men politicians could contribute to transformation for both groups. Let us look at another text.

Text 4

Amwe ŋĩmaleeaa ũtwĩthukĩsya ta mũndũ ungũ watũie kana onawethĩa nũndũ asomete ata, niũneena ũkethĩa ona ũũ no mũndũ mũka.
Na mũndũ mũka tĩwakwĩthukũw’a.
Kwoou amwe nowũavunza lakiũi ũla wĩsĩ nokũvũthya.
Okila kũvũthya mũndũ mũka wavũthiwe kuma tene.
Mãũũkĩlaa maũtungoĩ maaka.
Some refuse to listen to us like another person (read man) told us they look at a woman no matter how learned she is, she will talk and you will just find she is just a woman; and a woman is not to be listened to.
So some loose respect but as for others, it is just lack of respect (for women).
Just that disrespect for women from time immemorial.
They do not accept women’s leadership. (Group 3, p. 12, lines 14-24)

Text 4 identifies masculinity as a challenge to female leadership, as seen in the speaker’s expression, ‘just that lack of respect from time immemorial’. This is particularly the case in the Kamba community that is highly patriarchal.
Patriarchy reinforces male power and might be said to be the underlying reason why the men ‘do not accept women’s leadership’. More detailed texts on women’s construction on leadership can be found in Texts 5-7 below.

Text 5

Naketha twona mündũ eítũsyäïsya aende akatũmanthĩa order na mĩtuuthenya muna Ĭw’o mũũkĩta kwĩtawa na kũetewe mbesa, kau to kānđũ?

Now if we had someone to get orders for us (to source orders for us) and on such and such a day you will be brought the money isn’t that something? (Group 3, p. 5, lines 28-31)

Text 6

Nándũ atongoi ala tũsakũaa meyendete mo ene. Na mbesa ii Ŭkwĩw’a syaetwe kũũ syĩitũmĩwa nai nandũ aa mevaa ũnenenĩ noyĩthĩa ndũkũlya.

Because the people we choose as leaders love themselves very much. And this money you hear about when it’s brought here it is misused by the people in leadership and you cannot ask about it. (Group 3, lines 14-15)

Text 7

Yu mũmbunge, ambunge ala manyuvawa kũũ kwitũ, yo wĩthĩaa matakwatũĩe maũndũ ala maĩle kwĩkwa nambunge. Yu kwangelekanio ta kuete maũtethyo, yu ta mbesa ii sya CDF, ũketĩia notasyũũenganwe kyendi, nĩwĩšĩ wĩă woo nũuseyũa malelu, ũtasyũutumĩka nesa kũvika vu. Kwanza tũkakwata atongoi aseo wĩthĩa twatetheka.

Now like the MPs who are elected in our area, they really are not concerned with the issues that should concern them as MPs. Now like for example to bring support, like there is this money for the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). You know the purpose of CDF is to make roads. It’s as if it as though there is favouritism. In fact, if we could get good leaders we would really be helped. (Group 3, p. 4, lines 7-12)

Text 5 identifies fear among leaders as particularly inhibiting their ability to deliver to the population like getting them markets for their produce. Text 6 identifies corruption among leaders with regard to the misuse of money for
community development projects. Finally, Text 7 is a microcosm of the nature of current leadership in Kenya where once a leader is elected; the electorate has expectations of support particularly in the form of money to the constituents. This shows a lack of understanding on the part of the women. The respondent cites the misconduct of elected MPs in relation to the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), a government intervention to help eliminate poverty in all the constituencies in Kenya. Instead of being concerned with supporting the local people to meet basic needs such as roads, the money for this fund is not being used properly according to the women. Text 7 wraps up the complexities associated with leadership as seen in the wishful note on the part of the women; ‘in fact, if we had good leaders we would really be helped’. The implication here is that with regard to leadership, transformation is indeed necessary to bring about the change desired by the community for their sustainability.

Conclusion

A Critical Discourse Analysis of the women’s ‘text and talk’ in focus groups reveals a mismatch between what the women say and what they do; a disjunction in the way the women produce a highly negative construction of themselves because they claim to be passive (unable to act, without a leader, without hand-outs from the government etc). They have internalized deficit discourses acquired through socialization. These discourses are, however, not internalized to the extent that they control their actions. They produce a sense of who they may be despite the fact that they are the ones who shoulder most of the family responsibilities. An analysis of the data shows that women characterize themselves in a discourse of suffering and as in need of a leader to alleviate their suffering. Despite a culture of community, in which women’s groups are deliberately constructed to give members the support of the collective, women construct themselves in a discourse which focuses on the centrality of an individual leader. In other words, they do not see the power that exists when they work together collectively. This implies that the women do not understand that community action underpins their sustainability, not individual power. Their agency is based on the mutual support that women give one another, not on the power of an individual leader. An analysis of the data however, shows the women as lacking in agency by their choice of words. They describe their needs in the ‘perhaps’ mode with no likelihood of transforming their conditions of possibility into reality. In other words, the
women presented their issues as if they were uncertain and not in control and yet in practice, they did a lot of things.

References


**Women’s Political Agency**


Style Sheet for *Egerton Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education*

*Egerton Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education* uses a style sheet that combines ideas drawn from available styles, i.e., the American Psychological Association (APA), the Modern Language Association (MLA), and other citation and documentation systems, to produce a unique and user-friendly format. What follows below is a summary of the basic information that potential contributors to the journal must be in possession of. These instructions will apply to all contributions of papers to the journal.

**General Organisation of Papers**

All contributions should be formatted to be compatible with Microsoft Word.

Note that only British English spelling is acceptable for consideration.

The font, pagination, and general appearance of the paper should be organised as follows:

**Typing**

The paper should be typed.

**Font**

The paper should be written in Times New Roman font size 12 point.

**Line Spacing**

The paper should be double-spaced.

**Pagination**

The page number should be set at the top right-hand corner of each page. The last name of the author should be set at the top left-hand corner of each page. This name should, however, not appear, in the two blind copies (copies that do not bear the author’s name).
The Title Page of the Paper

The title of the paper should be bold-faced and should be centred and placed at the top of the first page of the paper. It should not be capitalised in its entirety. The initials of the first and last words should be capitalised, as should all other words except conjunctions, articles, prepositions, and the word “to” in infinitives. After this, a line space should be skipped, followed by the author’s name, which should also be centred, bold-faced, and written in italics. Beneath the author’s name, also centred but without any space in between, should be placed some of the author’s particulars. In the case of academic institutions, the author’s department and university should be indicated. This information should be written in italics but should not be bold-faced.

Example:

Natural Resource Use Conflicts and Management among the Gabra of North Horr Division, Northern Kenya

Godfrey A. Olukoye
Department of Environmental Science, Kenyatta University

Abstract

Subsequent to the title of the paper, a space should be skipped, then the abstract should be presented. It should be written in italics beneath the sub-title “Abstract,” which should be bold-faced and set at the left-hand margin. The abstract should be separated from the sub-title and the subsequent body of the essay by single horizontal lines that should run from the left to the right margins.

Example:

Abstract

The conflict between missionary Christianity and indigenous African religious practices has been of major thematic concern for African
writers, particularly in the early stages of development of African literature. For quite some time, male approaches to the understanding of this collision prevailed, owing to the overwhelming presence of male African authors on the literary scene. This makes the emerging female points of view on the subject of special interest to researchers. One particularly noteworthy standpoint is that of Zimbabwean Tsitsi Dangarembga, as manifested in her novel Nervous Conditions. This paper, therefore, endeavours an analysis of Dangarembga’s portrayal of the missionary factor at work in Rhodesia during the 1960s and early 1970s. A significant outcome of this analysis is the assembly of the multifaceted textual evidence into what is obviously the author’s highly advanced perspective on a non-homogeneous missionary Christianity, and her recognition of its varied impact on the Shona people of Rhodesia.

The Body of the Paper

Introductory and Concluding Passages

The paper should include an introductory passage, under the sub-title “Introduction,” and a concluding passage, under the sub-title “Conclusion,” as well as appropriate sections.

Sub-Titles

The subtitles should be bold-faced and should be set at the left-hand margins of the pages.

Notes

If the paper contains notes, these should be listed towards the end of the paper, immediately after the body of the essay and before the bibliographical references. The notes should be listed under the subtitle “Notes,” which, like the other subtitles, should be bold-faced and set at the left-hand margin of the page. The notes should be separated from the preceding and subsequent sections (the concluding passage of the essay and the bibliographical references) by a line space. In addition, the notes should be justified at the left-hand margin.
The References

Subsequent to the notes (where applicable and separated by a line space), should be listed all the sources used in the essay. The sources should be listed under the sub-title “References,” which should be bold-faced (like the other subtitles) and set at the left-hand margin.

Appendices

If the paper has appendices, these should be attached to the paper at the end, after the list of references. They should be placed under the sub-title “Appendices,” which should be bold-faced and set at the left-hand margin.

Figures, Tables, and Graphs

Figures, tables, and graphs should not be included in the body of the text in the manuscript submitted to the journal. Instead, they should be included in the package on separate individual pages. This is important because it will help the editors of the journal scan them into the appropriate part of the paper without much difficulty.

To enable the editors to know exactly where to place the figures, tables, or graphs, appropriate direction should be included in the body of the text (to show where the figure, table, or graph should be situated) and on the page containing the figure, table, or graph (to indicate where the figure, table, or graph should be placed in the body of the text). These instructions should be placed inside square brackets, and both the instructions and the square brackets should be bold-faced and capitalised in their entirety.

Example (For Body of Text):

Other than streamlining the legal procedures, 30.5% of the respondents argued for the Government to provide them with credit facilities to empower them economically and improve their social status. Lack of this facility among women has been partly blamed on the existing framework of these institutions such as authorisation by the husband of a woman to acquire credit.

[PLACE TABLE 4 HERE]
On Government assistance (Table 4), 23 % of the women urged the Government to provide social amenities such as free education and medical care as they feel that the current cost sharing system is a burden to the poor single mothers hence the escalating poverty situation among them. About 20.9% of them felt that there was need for review of the current legal framework arguing that the poor single mothers were not adequately protected. Another view, expressed by 19.8% of the respondents, held that improvement of the social infrastructure is of paramount importance in poverty eradication.

Example (For Page Containing Figure, Table, or Graph):

[PLACE FIGURE IN SPACE INDICATED ON PAGE 15 OF PAPER]

Table 4: Government expected efforts

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<td>Legal improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own computation

In-Text Citations

_Egerton Journal_ uses the parenthetical method of citation to refer to sources in the body of the text. The following examples show the various approaches the journal follows in this connection.

Statements Introducing References in the Body of the Text

Where the Author is Not Mentioned in the Introductory Statement

In case the author is not mentioned in the introductory statement, a parenthetical citation should be placed at the end of the reference. If the author of the paper is referring to a specific passage in a text being referred to, the author’s last name should be placed in the parentheses, followed by a
comma, the year of publication, a colon, the page number in that order. The
period is placed after the parentheses.

**Example:**
Second, in this endeavour to problematise the imagery in which the
dominant ideologies portray them, minority writers are engaged in
reconstruction which involves recreation, revision and
reinterpretation of a new image and a new metaphor (Stratton, 1994: 47).

**In-Text References to Works Written (or Edited) by More Than Two
Authors**

If the text being referred to is written (or edited) by more than two authors,
only the last name of the first author is used in the parenthetical citation, with
the phrase “et al.” (in italics) used to stand in for the co-authors.

**Example:**
In 2001, the Environmental Protection Agency of the U.S.A. reported
that B.t. corn is harmless to monarch butterflies, lessening earlier
fears of wildlife risks (Losey *et al.*, 1999)

**In-Text Citations Where the Author of the Text Being Referred to is Named**

In case the author is mentioned in the introductory statement, the name should
be immediately followed by the parenthetical citation. This parenthetical
citation should include the year of publication followed by a colon and the
page number.

**Example:**
Hawton (1986: 129) distinguishes primary and secondary prevention
of suicide.

Alternatively, the author’s name can be followed by a parenthetical reference
to the year *alone* and the entire reference can be followed by a parenthetical
reference to the page number being referred to *alone*. 
Example:
As M. Shaw (1995) writes, “[t]hroughout history, and probably in pre-history too, the idea that there is a natural division of labour, dependent on the biological differences of the two sexes, has structured work patterns in the fields, in the workshops and the factories, and in the home” (p. viii).

If the citation includes more than one author and/or text, the individual authors and/or texts should be separated by a colon.

Example:
A number of studies have been done in the area of poverty (Mukuli, 1994; Ayeko et al., 1997; Gleer and Thorbecke, 1992).

If the citation concerns the entire text, rather than a particular passage in the text, the author’s name should be followed by a comma, which should in turn be followed by the year of publication.

Example:
Although very limited research has been undertaken on the subject of drug abuse in Kenyan schools, the problem is a reality (Mwenesis, 1995).

In-Text Citations of One of More than One Work by the Same Author Published in the Same Year and Included in the Bibliographical Reference

In the case where more than one work published by the same author in the same year are listed in the sources, the in-text parenthetical citations should be differentiated from one another using the letters of the alphabet (in the lower case) placed immediately after the parenthetical reference to the year.

Example
There is evidence that girls have done better in mathematics when questions referred to specific feminine activities (Kelly, 1981a).

Girls are expected to be passive, nurturing, subjective and more interested in people than ideas. Similar ideas were given by Kelly (1981b).
**Indented Quotations**

Indented quotations should be preceded by introductory statements that sum up the quotations’ essential points. The introductory statement should be a complete statement consisting of one or more independent clauses. If the introductory statement names the author of the reference, the name should be followed by a citation of the year and page number(s) (in parentheses and separated by a colon). The introductory statement should conclude with a colon to anticipate the quotation. The quotation should be indented (and a new margin established) ten spaces inwards from the left-hand margin. The quotation should not be separated from the preceding passage by a space, but it should be followed by a space.

**Example**

For a professional woman, conflict of roles emerges, as succinctly put by Elliot (1986: 89):

> It has been shown that the attempt to combine motherhood with part employment presents women with intense overload dilemmas and conflict of loyalty and commitment and may involve considerable mental and physical stress. When this happens, emotional control becomes a struggle.

**A Quotation Derived from a Work Written Not by the Speaker/Writer Himself but by Another Author/Writer**

Sometimes an author will quote or paraphrase a speaker or writer whose words are contained in a work written not by himself but by another author. In this case, the abbreviation “qtd. in” is included in the parenthetical reference to show that the words are contained in another person’s work.

**Example:**

The Victorian economist Marshall insists on this point: “We may define LABOUR as any exertion of mind or body undergone party or wholly with a view to some good other than the pleasure derived from the work” (qtd. in Thomas, 1999: 9).
References

References should be listed at the end of the body of the essay, under the title “References,” which should be bold-faced, set at the left-hand corner of the page, and separated from the preceding and subsequent information with single spaces. The list of sources should be arranged in alphabetical order according to the last names of the authors concerned or, where applicable, corporate authors or first names of titles (excluding articles and conjunctions). The first line of each listing should be set at the left-hand margin, but on each second line of a given listing a new margin should be established five spaces inwards. Each source should be listed in its own particular way depending on its form and, in the case of excerpts from other works, the type of publication in which it is contained. The following examples show how different works should be listed in the section.

A Book Written by a Single Author

The list should begin with the last name of the author, followed by a comma and the initials of the author’s first and other names (where applicable). Then should come the year of publication, which should be enclosed in parentheses. Next should be the title of the book, which should be written in italics to show that it is a complete work. The year of publication and the title of the work should not be separated by any punctuation. Next should come the place of publication, a colon, and the publisher, and, finally, a period.

Example:


A Book Written by Two Authors

The last name of the first author should be listed, followed by a comma and the initials of the author’s first and other names. This should be followed by the symbol “&” and the names of the second author, which should be written normally, beginning with the initials of his or her first and other names and followed by the last name. Then should come the date of publication, which should be enclosed in parentheses. After this should be typed the title of the
book (in italics), a period, the place of publication, a colon, the publisher, and a period, in that order.

Example:

A Book Written by More Than Two Authors

The last name of the first author should be listed, followed a comma, the initials of the author’s first and other names, and the word “et al.” (with a period) to stand in for the co-authors. Next should come the year of publication (in parentheses), the title of the book (in italics), a period, the place of publication, a colon, the publisher and, finally, a period.

Example:

A Book Edited by One Author

The last name of the editor should be listed, followed by a comma, the initials of his first and other names, the word “ed.” (with a period and in parentheses to indicate one editor), the year of publication (in parentheses), the place of publication, a colon, the publisher, and, finally, a period.

Example:

A Book Edited by Two Authors

The last name of the editor should be listed, followed by a comma and the initials of the author’s first and other names. This should be followed by the symbol “&,” the first and other initials of the second editor, his/her last name, and the word “eds” (in parentheses and without a period to indicate more than one editor). Then should come the year of publication (in parentheses), the title of the work being listed (in italics), a period, the place of publication, a colon, the publisher, and a period. Note that in the case of a place of publication that indicates both the city and the state in which the place of
publication is situated (as in the case of American cities) the state is abbreviated.

Example:


More Than One Book Published in Different Years and Written or Edited by One Author

In the first listing of the author’s works, the last name of the author should be listed, followed by a comma, the initials of the first and other names, and the year in parentheses. This should be followed by the title of the work, which should be arranged in a particular way depending on whether or not it is the title of a complete work or an extract from another work (see appropriate information elsewhere in this manual). The information regarding the place of publication and the publisher should then be included in the appropriate manner.

In all subsequent listings of the author’s works, a long dash should be used to stand in for the author’s name. To execute the dash, press the underscore key five times.

Note that the titles of the works being listed should be arranged in ascending chronological order in accordance with the years of publication.

Example:


More Than One Book Published in the Same Year and Written or Edited by One Author

In each case, the last name of the author should be listed, followed by a comma, the initials of the first and other names, and the year in parentheses. Because the books are published in the same year, a way must be found to distinguish them in the in-text citations. This should be done through the inclusion of the letters of the alphabet (written in the lower case) in the parenthetical reference to the year of publication. In the appropriate in-text citation in the body of the text the alphabetical reference should be included in the citation to distinguish the books. The reference to the year should be followed by the title of the work, which should be arranged in a particular way depending on whether or not it is the title of a complete work or an extract from another work (see appropriate information elsewhere in this manual). The information regarding the place of publication and the publisher should then be included in the appropriate manner.

Example:

A Work Contained in an Anthology and Written by a Single Author

The last name of the author should be listed followed by a comma and the author’s first and other initials and the year (in parentheses). This should be followed by the title of the work being referred to, which should be enclosed in quotation marks to show that it is an excerpt from another work, and a period. Next comes the word “In,” followed by a colon, the initials and last name of the author of the book containing the excerpt, a comma, the title of the book itself (in italics), a period, the place of publication, a colon, the publisher, a comma, the page numbers where the work appears in the book, and finally a period. If the authors of the book are editors, this should be indicated in the appropriate place with the word “eds” (in parenthesis and without a period). If the book is written or edited by more than one person, this should also be indicated in the appropriate place.
Example:

A Work Contained in a Journal That Organises Issues According to Volumes and Numbers

The first name of the author should be listed, followed by a comma and the initials of the author’s first and other names. This should be followed by the year (in parentheses) and the title of the excerpt from the journal (in quotation marks to show it is contained in another work). Next should come a dash, followed by the title of the journal (in italics to show it is a self-contained work), a comma, the volume number (preceded by the abbreviation “Vol., “ a comma, the publication number (preceded by the abbreviation “No.,” a comma, the page numbers where the excerpt appears in the journal, and finally a period.

Example:

A Dissertation

The last name of the author should be listed, followed by a comma, the initials of the author’s first and other names (where applicable), the year of publication (in parentheses), the title of the dissertation (quotation marks), a period, the phrase “Ph.D. Thesis,” a comma, and the university where the thesis was written.

Example:

An Unpublished Report Housed at a University

The last name of the author should be listed, followed by a comma, the initials of the author’s first and other names (where applicable), and the year of compilation of the report (in parentheses). The title of the work should then be
listed (in quotation marks), followed by a period, the phrase “Unpublished Report,” a period, and finally the university where the report is located, followed by a period.

**Example:**

If the report was written by a corporate author, this should be indicated in the place of the author.

**Example:**

**A Paper Presented at a Conference**

The last name of the author of the paper should be listed, followed by a comma and the initials of the author’s first and other initials. This should be followed by the year of the conference (in parentheses) and the title of the paper (in quotation marks). Finally, information regarding the conference, the location where it took place, and the subject matter discussed, should be indicated.

**Example:**

**An Article Published in a Newspaper**

The last name of the author of the article should be listed, followed by the first and other initials, then the year of publication (in parentheses). This should be followed by the title of the article (in quotation marks) and a period. Next should come a dash, followed by the title of the newspaper (in italics), followed by the date of publication, a comma, the page number where the article appears in the newspaper and, finally, a period.
**Example**

**Some Comments on Punctuation**

**Quotation Marks**

In general, double marks should be used to indicate direct quotations.

In the case where a quotation is placed inside another quotation, double marks should be used for the outside quotation and single marks for the inside quotation.

**Example:**
In postcolonial countries, however, work is not so easily disentangled from one’s daily life: “This concept of ‘work’ as an undifferentiated abstraction comprehending an almost infinite variety of different activities is a relatively modern one. It could not emerge in the less complex societies of the remote past the undeveloped world, where the whole of the population customarily engages in the business of procuring subsistence and where an individual’s tasks are preordained by his or her social position” (Thomas, 1999: xiv).

In general, the full stop (or period) should be placed before quotation marks where appropriate.

**Example:**
As Tablino (1999) writes, “they await from the heavens the rain; from the rain grows the grass; from the grass milk; from milk, health.”

Similarly, the comma should generally be placed before quotation marks.

**Example:**
“That pragmatic and uninspired approach to life was something I understood well,” she recalls.
When the Quotation Is Followed by the Page Reference

In the case where an in-text parenthetical reference appears at the end of the sentence, and where the reference consists of a direct quotation, the closing quotation mark should precede the parenthetical reference.

Example:
“They cook, bring water from the rivers, wash utensils and fetch firewood from the forests or bush. They also perform the task of carrying the loads on their backs. According to the tribal customs which govern the division of labour, no man would dare to indulge in any of these activities except in a case of emergency, otherwise he would scandalise the women and it would be difficult for such a man to get any girl to marry him” (pp. 32-33).

The Dash and the Hyphen

The hyphen should not be confused for the dash. The dash should be longer than the hyphen.

Example (For the Hyphen):
Self-help women’s groups are a prime example of harambees; most recently originating in Maendeleo ya Wanawake, or “Progress for Women” groups, women’s self-help groups proliferate; as of 1988 there were more than 23,000 groups with 1,400,000 members (Robinson, 1997: 248-249).

Example (For the dash):
Yet when Ogot represents sexual harassment – in her typical Gothic style – she is sympathetic.