

Inter-textual Relation between the Epic of Fumo Liyongo, Kifo Kisimani and Mstahiki Meya

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Abstract: *This paper intended to illustrate pastiche, parody and allusion in the selected texts as well as exposing new information which can only be understood when these texts are interpreted according to the selected theory. The paper focuses on interrelationship of texts in Kiswahili literature in East Africa which touches on allusion, pastiche and parody in interpretation of Kiswahili literature in East Africa. The selected texts that informed this paper included Fumo Liyongo (1950), Kifo Kisimani (2001) and Mstahiki Meya (2009). The epic of Fumo Liyongo is compiled by Mulokozi (1999) in his collection of three epics in the history of the Swahili community. In this paper, the researcher has been able to analyze inter-textual relation at the level of characterization. The paper successfully illustrates how allusion in the selected texts is portrayed and how pastiche and parody is illustrated at the level of characterization of the selected texts. The paper provides a basis on the use of the selected theory to guide interpretation and creation of Kiswahili literature works. The selected theory has guided the study to achieve the set objectives.*

Keywords: *Fumo Liyongo Epic, Kifo Kisimani Epic, Mstahiki Meya Epic, interrelationship of texts, Inter-textual Relation*

1.0 Introduction

There has been a case as to whether the writer of the play of *Kifo Kisimani* has his work copied from the Epic of *Fumo Liyongo*. This motivated the review to find out whether there could be any link between these two texts. Thereafter, the author of *Mstahiki Meya* also replicates some issues which have been addressed by *Kifo Kisimani*. As a result, this attracted the interest of the

review to establish the kind of inter-textual relation between these texts. As argued by Porter (1986), there is no work in literature which is dependent on its own. It is usually related from the former texts. Wamitila (2006) explains that, a play can borrow from other texts and still retain its originality. This forms the basis for examining inter-textual relation between the epic of *Fumo Liyongo*, *Kifo Kisimani* and *Mstahiki Meya*.

2.0 Methodology

The review is based on a qualitative research approach that was able to acquire the required information through content analysis of the selected texts. This was achieved through reading carefully these selected texts. Thereafter, the review was guided by the specific tenets of inter-textuality theory which are, parody, pastiche and allusion. There was clear illustration of how these texts are not different in terms of their content as described in the results. The three texts were chosen on the basis of their content.

3.0 Character Inter-textual Relation between the Epic of Fumo Liyongo, Kifo Kisimani and Mstahiki Meya

The text of *Fumo Liyongo* is an epic dated back to the 18th century. However, it seems to have emerged thereafter through the text of *Kifo Kisimani* (2001) by Kithaka wa Mberia. Thereafter, it re-emerges again through the text of *Mstahiki Meya* (2009) by T. Arege. The inter-textual relation between these texts emerges at the level of characterization, thematic structure and the plot of these texts. This review is guided by the three tenets of intertextuality which are pastiche, allusion and parody as discussed by Habel (1989). This paper therefore intends to illustrate the inter-textual relations at the level of characterization of the three epics, namely Fumo Liyongo, Kifo Kisimani and Mstahiki Meya.

3.1 Inter-textual Character Relation Between the Epic of Fumo Liyongo and Kifo Kisimani

Fumo Liyongo ---> Mwelusi

(*Fumo Liyongo*) (Kifo Kisimani)

Mwelusi is a main character in *Kifo Kisimani* and he is a replica of Fumo Liyongo in the Epic of Fumo Liyongo. He becomes a replica in terms of character traits and the role in which he plays in the text. Mwelusi has become a great hero among the people of Butangi. He is highly celebrated by the people of Butangi because of his great desire to see a better Butangi. This is what is portrayed in the Epic of Fumo Liyongo who is a great pillar of the Swahili community. Similarly, Fumo is a great hero who has been seen in different occasions being celebrated for his strength and contribution in the Swahili Community.

Similarly, these two characters have had a great influence without necessarily holding any political office. Fumo is just a brother to the king of the Swahili community then. The king was

known as David Mringwari. David Mringwari was envious of his brother due to the influence he had in the community. The same case is reinforced in *Kifo Kisimani* when Mwelusi faces similar threats from his brother Gege due to the influence he had in Butangi.

On the third text; *Mstahiki Meya* the same case appears through the character of Doctor Siki who does not support the bad leadership of his cousin. Doctor Siki faces intimidation from his cousin the Mayor Sosi for condemning his bad leadership. Similarly, he faces threats because his cousin is afraid of his heinous leadership tactics. These texts portray a series of replica of the same mode of characterization.

Enmity between relatives is also portrayed in numerous instances in the above characters. Fumo Liyongo was betrayed by his own brother and son. Fumo Liyongo was betrayed by his brother David Mringwari who was the King of the Swahili Community then. David Mringwari was afraid that his brother would overthrow him and so he planned on how he could eliminate him. He had a number of attempts to eliminate him. At first, he planned to have him shot by arrows by people who were sent to ask him to get for them fruit from up the tree. What Fumo Liyongo did, left them shocked about the entire issue. Their intention was that when he gets on top of the tree then he would be shot by arrows. However, they were shocked by the wisdom of this man because he only used his spear to get the fruits down from the tree. In this case, they never succeeded to kill him.

The other attempt was having the king lure Fumo Liyongo's son to betray his father. In this case he succeeded because he was promised to marry the king's daughter. He was also promised wealth. To succeed in this, he beseeched his father to tell him what could be done to have him dead. This is because they had tried a number of times without succeeding. Ignorantly, the Fumo agreed to tell his son the secret of his strength. He told him that he could be killed by having someone prick him on his belly. The son waited for his father to sleep and pricked his father on his belly using a silver needle. By the time he was realizing what his son did, he ran away towards the well where he lost his life holding the spear in his right hand while kneeling down.

A similar case of characterization takes place in the text of *Kifo Kisimani*. In this case, the character Mwelusi is seen becoming a victim of similar circumstances. Mwelusi is facing accusation from the leader by the name Bokono. Bokono sees Mwelusi as a threat to his leadership by having him enlighten the people of Butangi on bad leadership from the current leader. Mwelusi is not a leader but he is being seen as a threat to the leadership because of exposing bad leadership from his leader Bokono.

In the same way that Fumo was dealt with, *Kifo Kisimani* takes a similar angle when Bokono sends for his younger brother Gege to the palace. Gege's character resembles Fumo's son. On the other hand, the leader Bokono also replicates the leader David Mringwari in his traits. This can only be seen when these texts are analyzed on the theory of inter-textuality.

In this case, Gege is promised to marry the king's daughter by the name Alida. He was also promised to be given a lot of wealth. Being a young man, he gives in to the new requirements by the king. The king desires to have Mwelusi killed. This has become possible through having Gege befriend his brother Mwelusi so that he can know about the whereabouts of his brother. At first, Mwelusi was jailed for being accused of conspiring to lure the people of Butangi from being loyal to the king. However, he managed to escape from the cells by having his mother prepare a piece of sour bread on which he had put chisel in between.

The reason he prepares the sour bread is because he foresaw that this kind of bread will finally reach his son which is the same way the mother to Fumo Liyongo did. The duo mentioned uses the chisel to cut the bars of iron guarding the cell so as to secure their freedom.

After Mwelusi secured his freedom, his brother Gege finds out his whereabouts from his mother who then directs him to where Mwelusi was. Mwelusi had gone to the well accompanied by his sister Andua to get water from the public well which had been grabbed by the leader Bokono. On arriving there, he calls Mwelusi to a separate talk so that he can have a talk with him. While on the separate place, Gege stabs Mwelusi on his belly causing him to scream loudly before he dies. Just like Fumo, Mwelusi dies in a similar circumstance and in a similar locality.

These texts are different in appearance but the content seems to be interrelated as portrayed by these two characters. Mwelusi is a reflection of Fumo Liyongo in the epic of Fumo Liyongo. When examined on the tenets of the theory of intertextuality, it comes out clearly that Mberia who is the author of *Kifo Kisimani* has his work drawn from the epic.

By so doing, it comes out clearly that the author is addressing historical injustices perpetrated by those in leadership. This historical injustice seems to have been there for a while. In other words, Mberia is addressing the kind of suffering that the people go through when they appear to challenge bad leadership. He expounds on the cost of democracy in African countries which has a historical perspective. Being noted that the first text dates back to the 18th century while the second emerges in the late 20th century reveals how leadership in Africa has continued to use archaic methods to eliminate those who challenge bad leadership.

This kind of interrelationship brings out the facts that the author is not only addressing issues of bad leadership and victimization of opposers of bad leadership but he uses the interrelationship through pastiche to bring the reader to the source of the vice. He uses pastiche to show the seriousness of the previous text that it is still relevant. He also aims at re-emphasizing on the same by bringing on board the same story but featuring the previous main character Fumo in form of Mwelusi hence making the story to be more captivating. He also brings our attention to the importance of previous texts which possibly can be written off by the society due to their past characterization. This information of the duo characters is coming out clearly in this manner when the two texts are examined on the theory of intertextuality.

Mwanawe Liyongo ---> Gege

(Fumo Liyongo) *(Kifo Kisimani)*

Mberia brings on board a character by the name Gege to replicate Fumo Liyongo's son. To perpetuate this continuation, Gege reactivates the reader on the traits of Fumo Liyongo's son of betrayal and selfishness.

David Mringwari who was Fumo Liyongo's brother as earlier mentioned is not comfortable with his brother due to his influence on the community and yet he was the king. To counter this, he schemes ways of eliminating his brother. To succeed in this, he uses Fumo Liyongo's son to achieve this. He calls Fumo Liyongo's son to the palace. When Fumo's son goes to the palace, he is promised to marry the king's daughter if he agrees to kill his father.

Due to the pressure of the desire to marry king's daughter, Fumo's son agrees to that effect and then he devises a way to achieve this. The young man asks his father to tell him what exactly can be done to him so that he can die. Without realizing his mission, Fumo reveals to his son the secret of what can make him die. He told him that, what can make him die is when a silver needle is used to prick him at the bosom.

Fumo's son then waits for his father to sleep and pricks his belly using a silver needle. On realizing what had happened, he was helpless and he ran towards the well. On arriving to the well, Fumo loses his life while kneeling down with his spear on his hand as if he was preparing to attack.

After achieving his mission, he ran to the palace demanding for the promised reward. To his surprise, the king dismisses such an agreement. When the society realized what had happened to their hero Fumo, they became furious with Gege who finally rejected him. These two incidents depressed the young man who finally opted to take away his life.

Mberia brings the same version of Fumo's son in form of a character by the name Gege. Gege is a brother to the hero of Butangi by the name Mwelusi. Mberia brings the readers to the attention of the same issues highlighted by the previous text through the character traits of Fumo's son. Gege is a replica of Fumo's son in the later text of Mberia.

Like the previous Fumo's son, Gege was invited to the palace by King Bokono's advisers. When he went to the palace, he was promised to marry the king's daughter and also promised to be given wealth by the king. Like Fumo's son, he accepts the offer in exchange for eliminating his brother. Having the zeal to marry the king's daughter, he went ahead and deceived his mother to reveal to him the whereabouts of his brother.

When he learnt about the whereabouts of his brother, he went ahead and proceeded to the well where his brother was. On arriving, he called his brother aside to share to him some information

which he claimed was sensitive. When they went aside, he stabbed his brother on the belly by using a knifed. This brings forth a replica of the previous incident done to Fumo by his son.

After achieving his mission, he went to the palace to demand his reward of marrying Alida, the king's daughter. In similarity to the previous text, the king refuses to honour his promise of having Gege marry the king's daughter. Eventually, Gege faces rejection from the community for the heinous activity he did. He also lacks to get his reward from the king and as a result he suffers a double tragedy just like the previous character.

Through this character, Mberia brings afresh the issue of selfishness being used to achieve our selfish goals at the expense of our innocent relatives. When examined on the theory of intertextuality, it comes out clearly that, there is historical background dating back to the 18th century which aims at eliminating our blood relatives to achieve our selfish goals. It also comes out clearly that, this vice has not yet been eliminated and that is why Mberia brings it to our attention through his work. There is need to enlighten the society on the repercussions of being led by greed to achieve our selfish goals. This information is coming out clearly when the texts are analyzed according to the theory of intertextuality. The duo faces the same results after betraying their own. The kings also react in a similar manner in a way to emphasize that politicians are using the same ways to deal with their opponents. It also comes out clearly that, politicians are not to be trusted to the extent of betraying our own blood relatives to fulfill their wishes.

3.2 Character Inter-Textual Relaton between the Epic of Fumo Liyongo, Kifo Kisimani and Mstahiki Meya

Mamake Liyongo ---> Tanya ---> Mamake Dadavuo Kaole

(Fumo Liyongo) *(Kifo Kisimani)* *(Mstahiki Meya)*

The three texts have three ladies who have played a similar role in a manner to reinforce the historical role of women in support for justice and in support for their families. In the first incident, the mother to Fumo Liyongo plays a great role in his release. While Fumo is in jail, he sends domestic help to inform his mother to prepare sour bread and then insert a chisel in between.

The mother did exactly that since he understood the role of the chisel. It was then that Fumo used the chisel to cut the iron bars and was able to escape from the jail.

A similar case took place when the mother of Mwelusi by the name Tanya did also the same. When Mwelusi was in jail, every kind of food that was being taken to him could not reach him since it was being consumed by the prison guards. In this case, he prepared a sour bread which seemed detestable and sent her daughter Andua to take her son in the jail. When the prison guards

saw the bread which was sour and detestable, they give it to Mwelusi. When Mwelusi got the bread, he exhumed the chisel which he used to cut the bars of the jail and so he escaped.

In the third text of *Mstahiki Meya*, the author uses a character by the name Mother Dadavuo Kaole to emphasize the role of women in safeguarding their families. Mama Dada Vuo Kaole works at the king's palace. It happens to be a season of famine, and so he takes food from the palace made for the dogs. When he gets home he gives the son who later develops stomach complications. The mother rushes the son to the hospital so as to secure his health. He risks being abused for not following the protocol.

Though in the third text the author develops a new dimension of the freedom, it seems to be cohesive in a manner that the ladies are putting their lives in line to safeguard their families. When these texts are analyzed according to the theory of intertextuality, it is clear that these texts are woven in a manner to reemphasize the previous role of women in the society which cannot be undermined. The latter two authors are enlightening the society on their historical role in guarding their families and also defending their families. There are passionate efforts being made by women in quest for freedom which cannot be dismissed when these texts are well examined on the tenets of the theory of intertextuality.

David Mringwari ---> **Bokono** ---> **Mayor Sosi**

(Epic of Fumo Liyongo) *(Kifo Kisimani)* *(Mstahiki Meya)*

The above stated characters are taking the role of leaders in their respective texts. Similarly, the three characters are taking similar character traits and roles. It is clear that, the authors are addressing a similar issue with African Leaders when these texts are analysed according to the theory of intertextuality.

The trio are working out on mechanisms on how to retain their positions in leadership. At first, David Mringwari is afraid of his own brother Fumo Liyongo. As discussed earlier, he kills his own brother through his nephew because he is afraid that he is becoming more popular and is likely going to dethrone him. He truly succeeds all in the name of retaining his position.

On the second text, Bokono is a replica of the previous character discussed. He is the leader of the Butangi Empire. His leadership skills are poor and for that reason he uses his position to eliminate whoever exposes his weaknesses. He faces challenge from Mwelusi who is not happy with his bad leadership skills. Just like Mringwari, he uses the brother to Mwelusi as earlier mentioned to eliminate his brother. He comfortably succeeds in this by having Mwelusi killed by his brother.

The previous two characters are liars. They had given false promises to those who would succeed in eliminating their opponents. After Fumo's son succeeds in eliminating him, he was denounced by the king and as result he never honored his promises. Similarly, the same case happened when

Gege in Kifo Kisimani succeeded in having his brother killed. He was not given the opportunity to marry the king's daughter.

On the latter case, Mayor Sosi is also having bad leadership traits. In this case, he is only concerned about his own well-being. Just like the other two kings earlier mentioned, he is also giving empty promises. There are no drugs in the dispensary and when he is asked he says that they have been ordered abroad which is not true. This trend of giving void promises is being woven in these three texts in an interesting manner.

3.3 Character Inter- Textual Relation Between Kifo Kisimani and Mstahiki Meya

Askari I, II and III ---> **Diwani I, II, and III**

(Kifo Kisimani)

(Mstahiki Meya)

There is a clear character development being brought about by these two texts through the above mentioned characters. The two authors have woven these characters to bring about a similar message but in a different manner. In the first text, Mberia has three soldiers who are working under the instruction of the king. These three soldiers are in charge of the cell where Mwelusi is locked.

However, what is interesting is that, the first soldier seems different from the others. He is working under king's administration as a soldier and on the other hand he is also working with the opposition. He is also exposing the bad plans of the king against those who are opposing the bad leadership of the king. It is clear that, he is not contented with the king's bad leadership. He is also differing with his colleagues on issues which seem to work against others. Finally, he joins the other members of the society to go and attack the king in his palace.

A similar situation is also being portrayed by the other trio in the second mentioned text above. There are three councilors in the administration of Mayor Sosi. They are all supporting the bad leadership of the Mayor except the first Councilor. The first councilor comes out clearly to oppose the bad deeds and plans being carried out by the Mayor. Unlike the other two, he speaks on behalf of the poor just like the First Soldier in the first text. This brought him on the longer ends with the Mayor.

These two authors are insisting on something important that, in every administration, there is always an individual who does not support the bad leadership. It is also an eye opener to the leaders to be careful on whom the trust with their information. This is because, as it is portrayed by the characters above, it is evident that it is not every subject that remains loyal. It is also clear that, in every bad leadership, there is always someone who is ready to stand for the rights of the poor. The two characters are different from the others in terms of their personality. They are giving hope to the reader that despite the oppression, there is always some good hope when someone seems to care for those who have their rights infringed.

Batu

--->

Bili*(Kifo Kisimani)**(Mstahiki Meya)*

Batu is the chief advisor of the king in Butangi in the text of *Kifo Kisimani*. He advises the king but in a wrong way. The main purpose of what he is doing is to be able to please the king and as a result benefit himself. At first he assures the king that he is the best king and that the people of Butangi are behind him. The king tends to believe in his lies even when there is no hope. Finally, the king is in a situation that he cannot even listen to his own wife Nyalwe who is telling the truth.

Later, the reality comes to pass when the people of Butangi plan to oust him out of power. He therefore realizes that he had been deceived by the sly advisors who are only after benefiting themselves.

The similar turn of events comes in the other text of *Mstahiki Meya*. The Mayor has an advisor by the name Bili. Bili misleads the Mayor by giving him the wrong advice. Bili like the previous character is after making sure that he reaps all manner of benefits by being close to the Mayor. He has been allocated land and given several treats in the account of the public money. Finally after the turn of events he then switches off his phone and is out of reach for a phone call. The Mayor regrets having trusted Bili so much.

In these two texts, the later author is emphasizing on the need for leaders to be wise in selecting their advisors. In the first case, there seems to be a similar trend of events even after the first work being released to the society. To insist on the previous information, then the later comes up with a more recent version on reemergence of the similar vice. This information is coming up clearly especially when these two texts are analyzed on the basis of the theory of intertextuality in line with the tenet of parody in this case.

4.0 Conclusion

From the above discussion and the results got, it clearly comes out that, though texts could appear different with different titles, some are just a replica of the other. It also comes out clearly that, authors can employ inter-textual relations which can bring out issues which demand to be insisted in the society. It also brings out the idea that, no work is new in literature but it is an image of the previous works done. This review confirms the idea that literature works interrelate with each other to bring out a different approach on the same issues.

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