

‘Walenisi’ and ‘Mafuta’: Depiction of Class Segregation

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Abstract

Realism is a style that portrays issues as they are in the society and has been there for a long time. The objective of this paper was to seek to know the representation of reality within Utopianism in *Walenisi* and *Mafuta* more so the meaning of the names ‘Walenisi’ and ‘Mafuta’. Post-modernism theory directed this research, especially the aspect that talks about Magical-realism, whereby fantasy and realism are put together so as to portray the way issues are in the society in the era of Post-modernism. Purposive sampling was used to select Mkangi’s novel which had Utopianism, fantasy put together with realism. This was qualitative library-based research. Several libraries were visited during the data collection of this study. The method of content analysis of data concerning realism especially the meaning of ‘Walenisi’ and ‘Mafuta’ in *Walenisi* and *Mafuta*, was used. Data analysis was done having in mind the themes, characters, various style and stylistics used and the setting of the novels. It was found that realism was used in *Walenisi* and *Mafuta*, to bring out the state of issues in the society. It was also evident that, there was the use of realism especially class segregations that resulted to the mistreatment of the lower classes. An aspect of class segregation seemed to be evidenced in the names ‘Walenisi’ and ‘Mafuta’ Moreover, there was the issue of Lucks and fate, mass actions and sensitizations and ultimately the overhaul of the systems of leadership and life.

Keywords: walenisi, mafuta, segregation, realism, class, depiction

Ikisiri

Uhalisia ni mbinu ambayo imekuwepo kwa muda mrefu, kwa sababu inasawiri mambo kama yalivyo katika jamii. Mbinu hii na hasa ile inayochukua mrengo wa kisiasa imetumika kuwadhihirishia wanajamii hali ilivyo na mambo yanayotumika kuwapumbaza, ili waendeleo kukubali hali yao huku wachache walio uongozini wakinufaika. Tatizo katika utafiti huu lilikuwa kwamba, mbinu ya udhahania imeshika kani sana katika enzi ya Usasaleo na mbinu hii imetumika katika *Walenisi* na *Mafuta*, jambo ambalo halikueleweka ni matumizi ya uhalisia na jinsi yalivyowakilishwa katika riwaya hizi za katama Mkangi. Kwa hivyo, lengo la karatasi hii lilikuwa. Kubainisha uwakilishi wa Uhalisia katika Udahania hasa katika riwaya za *Walenisi* na *Mafuta* za Mkangi hasa suala la utabaka na linavyodhihirishwa na majina ‘Walenisi’ na ‘Mafuta’. Nadharia ya Usasaleo ilielekeza utafiti huu, hasa kipengee kuhusu Uhalisia-mazingaombwe ambapo, masuala kuhusu fantasia na ya kihalisia huwekwa pamoja ili kujenga kazi za kisanaa na kudhihirisha hali ilivyo katika jamii ya enzi ya Usasaleo, ambayo mambo mengi yamechanganyika. Mbinu ya kimakusudi ilitumika kuchagua riwaya za Mkangi zilizokuwa na udhahania na uhalisia. Utafiti huu ulikuwa wa kimaiezo na wa Kimaktaba. Maktaba kadhaa zilitembelewa katika kukusanya data ya utafiti huu. Mbinu uchanganuzi wa yaliyomo ilitumika kuchanganua data iliyohusiana na uhalisia. Uchanganuzi wa data ulifanywa kwa kuangazia Maudhui, wahusika, mbinu za lugha na hata mandhari. Ilibainika kuwa *Walenisi* na *Mafuta* zinasawiri wanajamii kwa kutumia uhalisia. Kuna hali ya kudhulumiwa kwa watu kwenye jamii na jinsi zilivyowekewa misingi na kuendelezwa kupitia utabaka unaojitokeza kupitia majina ‘Walenisi’ na ‘Mafuta’. Aidha, kuna hali ya kubahatika, uhamasishaji na uzinduzi na mapinduzi.

1. Introduction

As a way of introduction, the research found that there are various aspects of representation of realism which included: class segregations that resulted to the mistreatment of the lower classes and insinuated by the names of the books: *Walenisi* and *Mafuta*. Moreover, there was the issue of Lucks and fate, mass actions and sensitizations and ultimately the overhaul of the systems of leadership and life. All these was evidence of class segregation and the counteraction of it so as to form a socialist system.

2. Mistreatment among the people

Something that came out vividly in this paper, is the mistreatment of the lower class people. This result from segregation of the society into classes, the high class wanting to maintain their status, use all various philosophies, including the physical force to subdue the lower class in the society. The mistreatment is evidenced in both *Walenisi* and *Mafuta*. The segregation of the society of the two novels into classes is the major cause of inhumanity, as the high class people want to maintain their status through all means possible.

2.1 Class Segregation

This paper at this point is going to examine the classes in *Walenisi* and *Mafuta* and the results of such

segregation. The classes are insinuated in the names of the books 'Walenisi' na 'Mafuta'. The segregation of people in classes that was evidenced in this research is the same as those found by Mohamed (1981), Kamunde (1983), Mazrui (1984) and Gwachi (1991), who did research and concluded that the society in which the studied various novels is segregated into classes and the lower class is mistreated as a result.

Looking into the issue of mistreatment in *Walenisi*, class is the major factor that causes people within high class, to subdue other people to maintain their status throughout this novel, this is evidenced from the instance Dzombo is in the rocket, Sayari, and he flashes back on how he was mistreated by his boss for allegedly trying to mislead fellow workers, especially his brother about their state of poverty. He is told that he is sensitizing very loyal workers against the employer; he is fired so as to safeguard the company. He is not allowed within the vicinity the company. This shows the highest level of mistreatment by the bosses to their employees, who are not allowed to say or even air their views.

Furthermore, the issue of class is portrayed as Dzombo and Maskini Jeuri walk to Dzombo's house. The appearance of his house definitely shows a picture of a person of the lowest class in the society, one house with one room is used for all the activities: cooking, sitting, sleeping, storage and so on. There were spaces on the grass thatched roof and holes on a mud wall. There are torn clothes and very old unused things. This is the greatest level of poverty, which is a portrayal of a great rift of Dzombo class and the boss' class. The way out of such poverty, is the drinking of the alcohol for the likes of Dzombo and Maskini Jeuri. Mohamed (1981), as evidenced by this scenario in *Walenisi*, says that in his novels, his characters represent the lower class that is being mistreated.

The character Dzombo interacts with the family of Mzee- Mtu Mwenzio, he tells them about the situation in The World, where he comes from. He talks of money and riches, which is taken as god by many people. This becomes a big debate and Mzee- Mtu mwenzio, says richness is a relationship whereby a person compares himself to others, he puts it that, so as to say that someone is rich then there must be someone else, who is poor.

Moreover, the mother to the family, Mama-Mtu Maanani, continues the talk by saying that classes are formed by the class that controls country's politics and are amassing nation's wealth. This allows them to own the national wealth by fraudulent ways and means. The family's daughter Mtu-Bint Fikirini, contributes to the debate by saying that the people in the higher class conceal the reality about the classes, by using various ways including: Politics, culture, religion and different philosophies. These are used to subdue and even force some kind of thinking that makes the poor accept the state of the matter. Those who overcome this way of thinking and sensitize others so as to fight for their rights are silenced using force by police or the army. They are forced to follow the rules and regulations of the ruling elites, who are high in the class ladder. This is like what Mazrui (1984) concludes that *Dunia Mti Mkavu*, a Kiswahili novels he researches, deals with class differences and struggles that is between those who have and those who do not have.

2.2 Class and Struggles

Issues to do with class and its struggles, are dealt with in length in Dzombo's research in *Walenisi* as he explores the history of Walenisi, way back before it got its independence in that nation. He finds out that its foundation was laid using various issues including: falsehood, faith, distribution of wealth and force by police, when it was necessary.

It is evidenced in the research done by Dzombo, that the characters Moto, Mchawi and Mbavu used all sorts of falsehoods and funny ways to amass wealth and make themselves rich. The rift between them and those they alleged to be serving got bigger and bigger, as they got richer and their subjects poorer and poorer. Mbavu used force and coerced his subjects to great humility, thus would take whatever he required from them. They were reduced to submission whenever he said anything. The rich and the high class in the society were so much respected, that without them it was believed that nothing could take place. The society within the context of the research by Dzombo, is portrayed to have two tribes: the rich and the poor. The rich use all means possible to entrench segregation as they mistreat the lower class and the poor, who do all the production and the work that enable the rich brag and be in the higher class. Despite this, the rich are proud saying they do all the production, using their great mind given to them by God. They therefore, enjoyed the good life especially in towns, while leaving the rural and the tedious work to the lower class and the poor in the society. Kamunde (1983), deals with mistreatment that results from class differences between those who are rich and poor, Just as it is evidenced in *Walenisi*, Kamunde says the characters in the novels: *Asali Chungu*, *Dunia Mti Mkavu* na *Utengano* are used to show how the lower class is mistreated by the higher capitalist class who do all within their ability to maintain the class difference because it benefits them.

The whole matter of classes is brought to climax within Dzombo's research in quest to understand the people called Wachuna, who were ruling Walenisi before they were overthrown. There is a story told about two twin daughters, during their reign. One was married to a poor man while the other one was married to a rich man, within the Wachuna's class. It is said that every pregnant woman in the Wachuna's class had a personal doctor

that attended her from conception to delivery. On the other hand, the women in the poor class went through a lot of problems during pregnancy and more so during delivery. To get space to deliver in the hospital was difficult and when they got they were mistreated so much, and thus there were those who did not survive the delivery. This is the evidence of great mistreatment that arises from class differences, as the higher in class use all ways possible to maintain the smaller number of those within the higher class. They treated the lower class so harshly and ruthlessly.

Walenisi uses realism to portray capitalism and its effects and thus criticizes it as it proposes socialism, that is ultimate and climax of the novel. It is in this proposal of socialism that the name 'Walenisi' is used as a philosophy to show that there is no difference between 'We' and 'Them', in fact 'Walenisi' Within the context of *Walenisi* novel means 'those are we and we are them', this philosophy is used by the book to try and sensitize people that there is no reason of segregating along class lines. Thus this name 'Walenisi' is an evidence of class segregation in the novel of *Walenisi* and the need to counter it by introducing a philosophy that would bring people together so as to live together under the new system of socialism that is proposed in the novel. Gwachi (1991) researches on Zanzibar Swahili novel writers and he find out that, they deal with evils within this society and overthrow of government, after which this writers propose a society that has no capitalism but the one with equality and that which is lacking selfishness of money. This research found out that *Walenisi* and *Mafuta* proposes a society with equality and without any selfishness. This brings out utopianism that go hand in hand with socialism that is being proposed by this novel. This research found the same results are those of Njogu (1987), who researches on themes about overthrowing of Government in Zanzibar, these were different from the writers that preceded the writers he studied, who he says dealt with fantasy.

2.3 Class Segregation and Wateule

Mafuta on the other hand, portrays realism, the class segregation, especially through a group called Wateule that means the privileged ones who are capitalist. They use all means possible to maintain their status as they mistreat the lower class and make them believe that, that is how the society should be. For the Wateule, the society should have classes; there should be segregation of people within the society. The main reason for this is because they benefit so much from the system of capitalism that encourages this segregation. To become Mteule (singular of wateule), you have to struggle to an extent that you get Mafuta (oil), that now gave you the privilege to enter this class of the capitalist in the society of the novel *Mafuta*. Mafuta thus is a symbol of class segregation, everybody in the society of Mafuta is struggling to get this 'The Mafuta' and anything that intercepts the efforts of a person and 'The Mafuta' is criticized in the strongest terms and is regretted by the concerned person. Water was such interceptor, it was avoided so much by anyone who wanted to be 'Mteule'. Thus the name Mafuta is used as a symbol that shows the class segregation.

A character called Matope in the novel *Mafuta* portrays a clear picture of a person in lowest class. He has no hope and thus he lives in the mud and even sleeps there. To get food, he was forced to go to a rich man's house, pass through a fence and search within the rubbish bin for the leftovers that had been thrown away. This is a great contrast between class difference, that there are those who lack what to eat to an extent of going to search for leftovers, while there are those who eat to their satisfaction and throw away without caring that there are those who stay hungry. In fact, there is a day that the rich family poisons the leftovers after knowing that there is a poor man who normally comes to eat in their rubbish bin. *Mafuta* is criticizing this state of affairs by contrasting these two opposite and very different ways of life of the high and the low class. This the evidence of class difference whose basis is getting or lacking 'The Mafuta'. A person who gets it enters the higher class while the one who lacks it will remain in the same lower class.

Moreover, the scenario of class difference and what accompanies it, is emphasized during the story telling among the lower class as they interacted with Ti, who had changed her mind and moved out of the privileged group of people and joint the communal lower class. A character called Mbeyu tells a story of a rich family who got their wealth by mistreating other people. The father to the rich family treated the prisoners so unfairly and cruelly, so as to get his daily needs and money. On the other hand, the mother engaged in abortion services and got so much money, that she did not care about the lives she was destroying. This shows the extent that the capitalist class will go, to ensure that they become rich and maintain their status. As a result of this, the family was very well and their living standards were good and that encouraged them to go on being so cruel and inhumane. Kamunde (1983), deals with mistreatment that results from class differences between those who are rich and poor as it is the case in *Walenisi* and *Mafuta*.

The privileged class within Mafuta was used to portray class difference within the society of this novel. Even when Ti changes her mind to leave this class and join the lower class, the lower class people take a lot caution and makes her go through so much tests to ensure that she was really changed. They doubt her so much, but latter they incorporate her and she became integral part of them. This is great evidence of class struggle and mistrust between them.

3. Luck and fate

The ideology that life depends on luck and fate, is used so much by the capitalist class, within *Walenisi* and *Mafuta*, this further propagates classes and more so realism. In *Walenisi*, Dzombo is very grateful to his luck especially in his journey to test his humanity. His colleagues together with him undergo various difficulties and whenever he gets a way out or a solution; he is so happy and thanks his luck. During the reign of the Wachuna, the ideology of life depending on luck and fate was so much rampant. This ideology is used to mistreat the poor and make them believe that their state is a fate and there was nothing to be done to change the situation. They were being told that to be rich is destined; the same way applies to being poor. By so doing the poor are tamed because they believed that their status is a fate willed from powers beyond humanity and nothing could change state of affairs. Unlike this research Mohamed (1981), says that in his novels, and a proposal he is making to other writers, is that they should have ideology of protecting the lower class against exploitation.

In *Walenisi* the lower class is being exploited by using different ideologies before later the novel embarks on the fight against injustice done to the lower class. To be rich and poor were destined long time ago and during the current time, it is about people living according to the state they find themselves. This is due to the fact that, nothing could be done to change the situation. The poor and the unprivileged were being told to live today and now, tomorrow and the future all depends on luck and chance. If your luck is bright, all will be well but if it is destined otherwise then nothing could done to change it. With this in mind, the poor lived miserably knowing nothing could be done to better their lives.

This ideology is used in *Mafuta*, to entrench the class difference. The privileged class told the poor that, it was destined that they go on being poor and the high class goes on rising within their class. Those that should enjoy life and riches were those who had luck, the others whose luck was not good were destined to live miserably and nothing was going to change that. As the poor communist class have story telling session, in *Mafuta*, a girl called Mbeyu narrates about a family that became rich by treating others inhumanely. She says that the rich family praised the various uncouth ways they used to get their wealth and they added that it was their luck that was bright and it was willed by God. So they enjoyed every bit of oppression to unprivileged, in the name of destiny, fate and luck. It was luck and fate that made one acquire 'The Mafuta' so as to get into a different class, this made the society to have the class differences. This research is different from that done by Kamunde (1983) in the Kiswahili novels: *Asali Chungu*, *Dunia Mti Mkavu* and *Utengano*, where he finds out that these novels depicts philosophy of lower class being empowered so as to fight for their rights. Kamunde's findings strongly depict the fight against injustices of class unlike in *Mafuta* where the ideology of luck and fate until later when the fight against it takes off.

4. Protests and Mass actions

It was evidenced that, realism was represented through protests and mass action. The lower class in the two books was sensitized by a few of them so as to know the reality about the state of affairs and have protests as they try to demanding what is rightfully theirs but is taken away unfairly by the capitalist class. This is a stage of preparation to overhaul the system of leadership and life and pave way for a new way of life that entailed socialist system that is being proposed by both *Walenisi* and *Mafuta*. In *Walenisi* the protest and sensitizations reach climax during the reign of Wachuna. The Wachuna were the ruling capitalist class and were the enemy of the people, they used all inhumane ways to subdue the poor and the lower class. This results to a lot meetings by the lower class, as they came together to sensitize one another and protest against the system and pave way to a new system where people were united and treated equal and in the same class. They sensitized one another using songs that unite them and not only enable them to work but also protest against their enemy, the capitalist class. The songs included the philosophy of unity which was conveyed through the word 'Walenisi'. This is evidence of class difference that is being countered by using such philosophy. The capitalist class treated the people inhumanely, subdued them and continued the existing system. This is like what Mazrui (1984) concludes that *Dunia Mti Mkavu*, a Kiswahili novels he researches, deals with class differences and struggles that is between those who have and those who do not have. It is fight between the high and lower class that is on the way to get back the rights they have been denied.

During the reign of Wachuna, the story of the twins as portrayed in *Walenisi*, marks the climax of sensitizations that led to overhaul of capitalism. This was an awakening period for the subdued lower class. The biggest threat to the Wachuna was anybody who sensitized the innocent lower class, they detested this so much. The lower class were awaken in hundreds, thousands, millions and ultimately the whole society was alert and ready to do what it took to claim back their denied rights. The new light of understanding made the lower class able to see the cruelty and inhumanity that had been going on for long. They put in place systems to enable them overhaul and overthrow the way of leadership and life propagated by the Wachuna.

In *Mafuta*, sensitization and mobilization is spearheaded by Ti and Matope. Mtue as well as the communal lower class especially those that meet in Jasho's hotel and those that were listening to the story telling, played a pivotal role in provision of information that alerts the masses towards their denied right as well as the

preparation for the coming overhaul of the capitalism system of life. Matope takes courage when he enters the court as Mama Fofi's case is on and tells the truth about the reality of inverted information about 'The Mafuta' (oil) and the water. He is opposing the ideology that 'The Mafuta' (oil) brings good fortune while water brings bad luck by washing away the oil and taking the fortune away. He says water is life and precious and no amount of distortion of that fact will stand. He adds that they will recover the real nature of water which had been distorted by the privileged class. Furthermore, the whole process of storytelling is meant to sensitize and mobilize the lower class and prepare them from the struggle of fighting capitalism and its proponents. Msati as well as Gweni are sensitized and they say that, for people to get the truth, they have to go on struggling and fighting for it. Gweni is so fascinated by a story told by Jasho about a mad man, who had narrated a very good story to Jasho. Gweni says that such mad men should increase so as to sensitize and mobilize them. The climax of the story telling marks the beginning of the struggle to end the reign of the privileged capitalist class in *Mafuta*. The communal low class come together and continues the fight that Matope and Mtue had started. Their objective was to recover their identity which depended on the true nature of water against that which the privileged class had given to it. Just like Mazrui (1984), *Mafuta*, depicts class struggles of high and low in the society.

5. Overhaul of the system and the new way of life

This is the climax of sensitization, mobilizations and mass actions as portrayed in *Walenisi* and *Mafuta*, to complete the various series of steps of representation of realism. The overhaul is done by the lower class masses in *Walenisi*. *Walenisi* puts it that the Wachuna went to sleep and on waking up they were no more, they were overthrown and now defeated. The intention of the masses was a fair life that all people were treated equally and humanely. This overhaul brought about a new socialist life system whose backbone was real love and unity that knows no boundary. The new system was reached through sensitizations that was dependent on the philosophy 'Walenisi' which was able to discourage any forms of class difference and brought people together. Gwachi (1991) researches on Zanzibar Swahili novel writers and he find out that, they deal with evils within this society and overthrow of government, as it is evidenced in the novel *Walenisi* where the system of life is overthrown and the alternative system is proposed and effected.

In *Mafuta*, the privileged capitalist class is overthrown together with their system of life. This makes Matope and Mtue so happy, because this had been their dream that made them undergo a lot of tribulations, they were even willing to sacrifice their lives to ensure they stood for the truth. This research found the same results are those of Njogu (1987), who researches on themes about overthrowing of Government in Zanzibar. The oil pots which carried 'The Mafuta' and the famous bed are destroyed, the false philosophies are brought to an end and the nature of water restored. The lower class starts the new socialist way of life, whereby they did things communally. The process is meant to criticize the system of life propagated by the capitalist class that segregated people along the class lines all because the lower class would not get 'The Mafuta' to enable them become Wateule (the privilege) or if they struggled to an extent of almost getting 'The Mafuta' water would be used to deny them the opportunity forever.

The class segregation was entrenched by the philosophy of 'The Mafuta' in the novel of *Mafuta* whereby a person has to get 'The Mafuta' so as to become 'Mteule' and be in this privileged class that was not supposed to interact or leak any secret to the lower class. Moreover, there was the issue of Lucks and fate, mobilizations and sensitizations and ultimately the overhaul of the systems of leaderships and life and start of new way of life. In the two novels: *Walenisi* and *Mafuta* it was seen that people segregated into classes that resulted to mistreatment of the lower class. Various kinds of philosophies were used including telling the lower class that they were destined to suffer and nothing would be done to change that reality using the inverted reality of making 'The Mafuta' more important than the water in *Mafuta*. This resulted to the lower class coming together and mobilizing and sensitizing themselves against the capitalist systems by using philosophies like *Walenisi* in *Walenisi*. Ultimately, the lower class gathers enough knowledge and unity to overhaul and overthrow the capitalist class. Kamunde (1983), Mazrui (1984), Njogu (1987) and Gwachi (1991), all find out that the lower class fight the capitalist high class and ultimately overhauls it in the hope of getting a better society that is built on equality. The difference between these researches and what was found out in this paper especially *Walenisi* is that the novels researched by the various scholars leave the reader in suspense of what happens after the overhaul while *Walenisi* creates a perfect socialist country that brings out issues that go beyond reality after the overthrowing of class differences.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, it was evident in this paper that realism was represented in various ways, including: class segregations that resulted to the mistreatment of the lower classes which was carried in the philosophy of 'Walenisi' in the novel *Walenisi* which was meant to counter it and bring people together in the aim of proposing the social system of life. The class segregation was entrenched by the philosophy of 'The Mafuta' in the novel of

Mafuta whereby a person has to get ‘The Mafuta’ that is the oil so as to become ‘Mteule’ and be in this privileged class that was not supposed to interact or leak any secret to the lower class. Moreover, there were the issues of Lucks and fate, mobilizations and sensitizations and ultimately the overhaul of the systems of leaderships and life and thus the start of new way of life.

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