

A NEW HISTORICISM APPROACH TO PARADOX IN RELIGIOUS FAITH IN SELECTED KISWAHILI NOVELS

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Abstract

This paper aims at analyzing specific Kiswahili novels using a New Historicism Approach in the quest to show that witchcraft, adultery, lies, power struggle and other vices characterize the daily activities of worshippers in today's religious set up.

*In exploring and debating these issues this paper will focus on two novels: **Kisima cha Giningi** (Abdulla, 1968), **Paradiso**, (Habwe, 2005). It is significant that the former is a Muslim and the latter a Christian and that both explore the issue from the perspective of their respective religions.*

The paper shows that faith in religion is vital for the wellbeing of worshippers and the society in general. It is however, argued that the church and mosque are undergoing momentous changes, largely caused by human greed, socio-cultural differences and globalization. Faith in God is ordinarily seen as key to moral and spiritual well being of worshippers and the foundation on which a just and virtuous society rests. This is however contradicted by the events in the selected novels. Although our reference is fiction, the role of literature in depicting these social realities cannot be underestimated. It can be argued so because writers are themselves products of given societies that might be undergoing the turmoil in focus.

Key words: Faith, prose, new historicism, worshippers, society.

1.0 Introduction

Faith in the religion and believe in the existence of a super natural being visa vis tradition are important elements of worship and indeed influence the behavior of those practicing them a great deal. However in a particular way, religious faith, social-cultural issues and personality in Africa are opposed to each other and this causes conflicts of interest and practice. The use of creative works in this paper aims at showing the importance of faith in a religion and its impact

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in shaping of behavior of those that practice it and the resultant implication to the society . All the core values and virtues expected of human beings are elaborated in the Holy writings and this makes faith very important. Wellek and Warren (1949) notes that literature is an institution that uses language creatively to mirror the society and portrays how the society views its behavior and manners. Religious faith is not exempted since literary works delves on issues of faith and how they are manifested in fiction.

The themes explored by authors of **Kisima cha Giningi** and **Paradiso** brings to focus the fact that the faith that is preached is not the faith that is practiced by the worshippers .The characters in these two novels are portrayed as liars, adulterous and power hungry. Apparently they are still rooted to their socio- cultural old self. Indeed Wellek and Warren (1949:94-5) note that literary works might not reveal the entire societal truth but to a larger extent the content of the issue under focus would at least bring the picture out. Faith represents the worshippers and thus the character of a person. As indicated by new Historian theorists, one cannot interpret the work of literature independent of the context of the society in which it originates or is practiced. A quick survey in many other genres of literature indicate that that indeed there is need to re-examine faith in religion in the contemporary world urgently. Mbatia (2004) explores this issue in a short story entitled ‘‘Arusi’’(the marriage)). In his work characters in this story are steeped in religion but are still captive to superstitions.

Among key objectives of literature is to awaken the society to the realities that its very foundation is built on the beliefs in the existence of power far beyond it and the values and actions of the people are perceived in accordance to what they believe in. Faith in religion is not therefore an issue of literary works only but one of reality as well. Writers explore these social realities in an attempt to help readers understand the realities that surround them. This paper seeks to answer the following questions:

How is Christian and Islamic faiths interpreted in the Kiswahili novels? What is the societal interpretation of Christian and Islamic faiths in the selected novels? What is the interpretation of religious faith in the face of social evils as represented in the selected works.

The purpose of this study is to highlight the various interpretation of religious faiths in socio-cultural environment as evidenced in the selected Kiswahili novels. The paper seeks to show that as depicted in the selected works, all the social-political and religious conflicts have their basis in the faith that members of society have in religion. The challenges faced by members as depicted in the selected novels suggest that religious faith play a very important role in attempting to help them to create a just and virtuous society and how to deal with the challenges of such a lofty ideal. Literature does not portray the entire truth but the way a particular writer perceives the truth.

The issue of religious faith and socio—cultural conflicts in the Kiswahili novel has not been given much attention by critics thus some researchers are left to speculate on the issue. Some of the writers who have delved on this issue in the Kiswahili Scholarship are: Mbele (1985) , Waweru (2006), Momanyi (1998), Ndungo (1985) and Mulokozi (1999).

2.0 Literature Review

Lorun (2005) asserts that religious faith affects the psychology of believers. This in turn affects their decisions and how they perceive various issues in their lives. An example is how they perceive relationships; for instance whether to give in to their bodily urges and engage in illicit sex and adultery or not withstanding the fact that religion opposes fornication and adultery, Salome, Musa and Nice (**Paradiso, (2005)**) freely engage in these vices as if it was part of sermons they learn in the church. On the other hand Joshua and his wife Lona are driven by greed for wealth and fame. They therefore engage politicians and drug dealers in their business of running the church. Apparently blatant lies persist in the religious sector as depicted by **Mwana wa Giningi** (Abdulla , 1968) and **Fumbwe** (Babu, 2007). These are cases of religious faith existing hand in hand with hypocrisy.

Indeed Stark and Funkel (2002), McCullaugh et-al (2002) and Dollahite (2004) argue that religion affect members of the society whether positively or negatively. It affects their perceptions of the world around them. Dollahite (2002) for instance asserts that religion affects one's perception towards marriage and the result could be negative and astounding. The example of Nice (**Paradiso** , 2005) is prove that indeed faith interpreted wrongly can lead to illicit behavior and ruin characters. Nice is a daughter of Bishop Joshua and first lady, Lona but cannot rid herself of fornication. Runkel (1998) argues that religion only makes the members guilty of their actions as evidenced by Salome, Musa and Lona (Paradiso , 2005) and Mwana wa Giningi, and Musa (Abdulla, 1968).

Chowdhry (2002) states that religion is a key to responsible faithful, respectful and trustful life yet what is depicted in the selected works indicate a different situation. Mbele (1988) states that religious faith cannot be viewed in exclusion of socio-cultural issues and in ignorance of societal changes as all these societal aspects affect each other creating a complex scenario. Indeed he further notes that religion is at conflict with cultural issues on matters of gender and family. Cultural matters are important and whether one subscribes to a religious faith , the values passed over from cultures are necessary and affects one's worldview as noted by Chiragdin, S (1973) and Mulokozi (1999).

3.0 Theoretical perspective

The paper uses New Historicism Theory from the American school of thought. The theory recognizes the context of society in the written works and asserts that literature and society are inseparable and therefore a focus of the interplay between both aspects is important in analyses of creative works. It also recognizes the importance of understanding the historical context in the analyses of creative works. It further recognizes the context of time during the reception of the literary works; that is the present and future audiences and also the objectives in the interpretation of the content. All these parameters are taken to be crucial during analyses. The theory also holds that the author's intentions have a direct effect on the interpretation of the historical background of the creative work under observation.

Wafula, (2004) asserts that one cannot adequately interpret a work of literature outside the paradigms of the society from which it originates. The understanding here is that the way one generation views and interprets matters is arguably different from the other generation thus time and space is key in the way literary work is analyzed.

Caution should be taken however because not every interpretation is positive and leads to successful analysis. However it is clear that an interpretation can be erroneous and therefore might lead to an inaccurate analysis or an implausible stance on an issue.

4.0 Discussion and results

Faith in religion is a delicate issue and any discussion on this topic requires a lot of caution. Matters of spirit are totally different from matters physical and so when the people fail to live to the expectations in their chosen faith, the result is the many social evils evidenced in society namely: adultery, drugs, power struggle prostitution amongst others.

4.0 Various areas of conflicts

By definition, a conflict is a state of disharmony or disagreement between persons or ideas.

There are various aspects of conflicts depending on the parameters used and depending on who is applying what interpretation of the act. The various interpretations are based on the texts under scrutiny. This paper will zero in on conflicts that arise in the society as a result of the institution of religion.

4.1 Religion and Witchcraft

New Historicism Theory asserts that every work of literature has some social context and the two are intertwined. As such, criticism of any literacy work that does not recognize the role of literature in the society falls short of expectations. The conflict that we see of religion and traditional practices such as witchcraft can only be explained in this context.

In **Paradiso** we see Lona (the wife of a bishop) and her friend Adema deciding to seek the help of a local witchdoctor in order to make her bishop husband obedient and loyal to her alone. This is uncharacteristic of believers and it only stresses the fact that indeed there is no connection in what people believe in and their practical existence in life. Thus Lona and Adema converse:

“Ameseamje tangu juzi” Adema aliuliza.

“ Nani?” Lona aliuliza,”

“ Bila Shaka mume wako,”

“ Oh ! Huyu bado amenuna. Anafuata shughuli zake za kanisa,”

Lona alisema.

(Habwe 107-109)

“Has he said anything since the other day?”

Adema asked. “Who?” Lona asked

“Of course your husband,”

“Oh! He is still indignant. Busy with his church matters,”
Lorna said.

Adema had taken Lona to a witch doctor in Kawangware in order to get Lona’s husband put under a spell so as to control him. The friend was confirming that the charms were effective. The extract confirms the existence of belief in witchcraft in the church contrary to what the church teaches. Indeed it points to the fact that church weddings do not necessarily lead to a strong manage. Faithfuls believe in spells rather than religious faith. Lona notes thus:

*“Nikirudi nyumbani yuko hukoo. Jikoni anaosha vyombo hadi
nimweleze aache. Akiniona nikiingia ni baridi, anasema tu,
“Mummy! Mummy!” ... Leo yuko chini ya nyanyo zangu,”*
(Habwe :107)

“Whenever I reach home he is always there. Right in the kitchen cleaning utensils till I tell him to stop. He is scared of me that he keeps yelling “Mummy! Mummy!”..He is completely under my control,”

Lona is delighted that the spell works and her husband is now behaving like a zombie . Lona is happy that finally her husband is doing what the witchdoctor predicted and he is foolishly overworking himself. This is contrary to religious faith as expounded by the bible or Quran. The church is used as a cover up by people who excuse their worldly evil unnoticed.

This behavior is replicated elsewhere in **Kisima cha Giningi** where Mwana wa Giningi claims:

*“ ... Bwana askari, mume wangi kanawahi kuviwekea uramali
ndani ya chungu kipya...Fundi Mangungu kanambii...”
“ Mumeo kanokuja kwangu pano; kachukua uramali kwangu
kukuletea; kanataka ufe akurithi ,” (Abdulla:29)*

“... Officer, my husband tried to bewitch me by putting concoctions in a new pot.... Fundi Mangungu (a witch doctor) told me he went to pick the spell from him in order to kill me so that he inherits my property,”

According to Mwana wa Giningi, Vuai wants to use witchcraft to disinherit her. It confirms that even in situations where Islam or Christianity exists, others forces too exist and look even much stronger. The presence of Shee Haji, head of, and symbol of Islam does not stop the people believing in witchcraft as shown in the words of this character. Indeed the text suggest that even the religious leaders themselves are victims of the same.

Thus the man who comes to report about the mysterious disappearance of his Kanzu, at the police station thus notes:

“Fundi Mangungu kanasema nisiivae tena mimi, hela nimpelekee yeye, na yeye katajua vya kufanya...Leo takwenda kwa shee Haji aisome Badiriya, nishtakie Mungo.”

(Abdulla:13-14)

“Fundi Mangungu said I shouldn’t put it on anymore, I should take it to him and he will know what to do with it... I leave it to God, today I will go to see shee Haji for *Badiriya*.

We see a perfect example of religion and faith at conflict. This man though purports to be a Muslim, he still wants to see Shee Haji to pray a pagans’ prayer. He wants revenge instead of forgiveness and mercy as taught by both the Bible and the Quran. What he is saying is that he has seen both the witch doctor and a religious leader and the two have similar conclusion; the *kanzu* was bewitched and only them can cleanse it. *Badiriya* and witchcraft both have the same consequences and almost work in the same manner. The two incidences confirms the existence of witchcraft in the same environment where religious faith exists.

4.2 Religion and Adultery

The fact that adultery exist in the religious sector is illustrated well in **Paradiso** when Musa and Salome engage in extra- marital affair for two years. The two are prominent personalities in the church; Musa is a pastor and Salome is head of the church choir and both are married.

Their behavior goes contrary to the position of Bahr and Chadwick (1995) and also Cornwall (1990) when they assert that religious bonds make relations like marriage for example stronger. In **Paradiso** the author details the adulterous conduct of the aforementioned characters. He explains

*“Alifungua mlango ambao haukuwa umefungwa.
Aliusukuma na kuwakisha taa. Macho yake yaliingia giza
la sekunde moja. Aliona watu wawili. Ni kama hakuona.
Salome, Mkewe alikuwa na mwanaume
mle ndani,”*

(Habwe, 51)

He opened the door that had not been closed from inside side. He pushed it open and put on the lights. In a moment he could not see well. He saw two people. He was surprised. Salome, his wife was with a man in the bedroom.

Pastor Musa and Salome are not only adulterous, but have lost all morals by carrying their illicit act in Kyalo’s matrimonial bed. From the religious point of view his is hypocritical and total failure of the marriage institution for these couples. Indeed Kouneski and Ericksons (1998) allege that the relationship between the society and religion is confusing. And Chowdhry (2000)

is right when she asserts that the success in marriage is about the responsible behavior of the couples and not faith in religion. Though all religions have teachings on morality, members do not follow those teachings.

In **Kisima cha Giningi** we see Mwana wa Giningi remembering her past. She notes her father's last words thus:

“Mwana wa Giningi , wewe sasa si mtoto tena. Labda mimi sitopona ugonjwa huu, lakini nitakuambia. Wewe ni mwanangu; umezaliwa Saadani, na mama yako mzazi yuko uko uko. Haidhuru mimi sikumwoa mama yako hata tukakupata wewe. Yasikushughulishe hayo wewe maadamu mimi mwenyewe nimekukiri.”

(Abdulla :21)

Lady of Giningi, you are no longer a child. I might not survive this sickness but let me disclose to you. You are my daughter; you were born at Saadani, and that is also where your mother lives. Unfortunately I was never married to her before you were born. But don't worry, I have accepted you as my biological child.

Mwana wa Giningi was born out of wedlock and what Makame wa Makame is doing is to confirm that indeed adultery and fornication are entrenched in society and religion is unable to stop it. The presence of religion as represented by Shee Haji can not stop illicit behavior among the members of the society. The irony plays well in Salome and Musa's case, Salome was looking for a chance to get pregnant while in Makame's case, the child is born before the parents are united in marriage.

Indeed Mulokozi (1999) cautions that not all who believe in religion find all the teachings relevant at all. In **Paradiso** we read:

*“Ilikuwa ni siku ya Jumapili. Njia za kwenda Kibera zilifurika vururu kwa watu. Kunao waliokwenda kwa miguu.
...Siku hizi zilionekana kama za mwisho kweli maana maradhi, ufukara, mizozo na ukosefu wa kanisa ni baadhi ya visababu vilivyosukuma watu kanisani.”*

(Habwe :52)

It was on Sunday. All roads that led to Kibera were awash with people. Some boarded vehicles as others travelled in their personal cars Others went on foot... it looked like these were the last days, because

sickness, poverty, conflicts and these other vices gave people an impetus to go to church .

Indeed people go to church to find solutions to different personal problems and seek refuge in the hope of making things tolerable but not that they believe in the faith of a Supernatural Being. So, while people might be flooding places of worship, the reasons for their attendance are as varied as their numbers. And so when pastor, Michael arises to give his sermon he confirms the worst fears. Thus he says:

“ Kwa nini mnaona ajabu ? leo mtu kulala na binti yake si jambo kubwa! Au mtu kulala na mama yake si Ibura. Sote tumekuwa vizuka... Lakini aibu yetu ni kudai yote tunayatenda kwa jina la Bwana. ”
(Habwe :56)

Why are you surprised? It is no longer surprising to see a father have sex with his daughter nor a man sleeping with his mother. We have all turned into Zombies... but to our shame we do this in the name of the Lord.

Pastor Michael is confirming the fact that religion no longer serves the godly and that faith is conflicting with peoples' interests. They no longer believe in God nor do they have they faith. Other than adultery, the rest of the clergy are mainly interested in seeking prominence and all these is done in the name of God. This is what destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah in the Biblical episodes.

4.3 Religion and power struggle

In **Paradiso** , power struggle is evidenced by what happens between Michael and Joshua. The popularity of Michael in the New Jerusalem Church splits the right in the middle eventually causing a serious rift. Thus we read:

“Baadaye walifikia uamuzi wa kuvunja kanisa la New Jerusalem : Micahel alihuzunika . Aliona kanisa la Bwana likisambaratika kila siku,kila mwezi,kila mwaka. Waumini ambao walijiita dada na ndugu ndio waliogeuka na kulikorofisha kanisa,”
(Habwe : 77)

Later they agreed to split the new Jerusalem Church. Michael was saddened. He could not watch to see the church of the Lord split. Faithfuls who called each other

sisters and brothers were the ones putting the church at crossroads.

The agreement to split the church is due to intolerance and power game rather than faith .. The likes of Michael feel sad because they are faithful unlike those who are fighting for control. The power struggle is a result of Joshua who has lost popularity because he can no longer sustain his spiritual life and Michael whose dedication to the church is immeasurable. Thus Joshua wants to take over Michael's power and remain the only centre of power on which the church activities would take place.

In **Kisima cha Giningi** the struggle is between Makame wa Makame on one hand and Vuai and Mwana wa Giningi on the other. The misunderstanding is also motivated by the wealth that Mwana wa Giningi has inherited from her father who is now ailing. The struggle between Vuai and Mwana wa Giningi is stage managed by Ali Makame and the local witch doctor who is assisting him to create a rift between Vuai and his wife in order for him(Ali Makame) to execute his plan of disinherit his brother's daughter by all means. Thus Mwana wa Giningi remembers:

“Alikumbuka kusikia baba yake akimwita tena ,” “ Mwana wa Giningi, kile kisanduku nilichokupa miaka ile unacho? Kiweke, kitakufaa. Sikiliza wasia wangu. Baba yako mdogo,; Ali Makame, ni ndugu yangu kwa baba na mama, lakini tahadhari naye. Nakwambia umwogope mtu yule na umwambae kama unavyomwambaa jini au shetani; Yule ni sumu baridi...” (Abdulla:22)

She remembered hearing her father calling for her attention; Mwana wa Giningi, do you still have the little box I gave to you many years ago? Keep it because it will be of benefit to you. Listen to my advice. Your uncle, Ali Makame is my brother born of the same parents but keep away from him. Avoid him like you would do evil genre or the devil. He is very dangerous.

Makame wa Makame believes that his younger brother can go to any length to kill his daughter in order to grab her wealth. He equates him to Satan. Wealth and fame appear to be among the reasons why power struggle is eminent in the religious sector. This is contrary to the teachings of Islam and Christianity. The contemporary church has therefore lost direction. More often than not, it is wealth gotten in a wrong way that has split the faithful or led to the death of some leaders. For instance, Makame wa Makame got his wealth through fraud. Thus he says;

“Usione hivi tuna wasaa huu wa kutosha hatumhitaji mtu. Mimi babako, katika uhai wangu, sikuwa na kazi maalum, au nzuri, kazi zangu aghalabu zilikuwa za magendo na kazi kama hizo; yaani mali hii tuliyo nayo hayakuja kwa njia ya sheria au halali,” (Abdulla: 22)

Do not suppose we have a lot of time left between us. I was never employed nor did I have a specific job, all my jobs involved illegal activities and as such; the wealth I have is thus illegally gotten.

Makame actually is admitting to being fraudulent and corrupt and his wealth is illegal. Thus his apprehension of his daughters future is well founded. Hegedon (1983) points out that every human action is a responsibility. This applies to religion and the human actions in general. Confession by Makame wa Makame to his daughter confirms the fact that the majority of mankind lead a double lifestyle and not even faith in religion can change them unless they voluntarily opt to change their perception of life .

In **Paradiso** thus we note:

“Umma wa Kibera ulishangaa na mzozo wa New Jerusalem . Haikuwa rahisi kueleza sababu ya watu kupigana. Haikuwa rahisi kueleza kama katika kupigana maundi yote mawili yalikuwa yanaunga Mungu mkono na kumshughulikia,”
(Habwe:77)

The people in Kibera were shocked following the conflict at the New Jerusalem Church. It was not easy to know the source of the conflict. It was not easy either to know if the two conflicting sides were fighting for God’s work.

It is paradoxical that this bad behavior among the church leaders even shock non believers. What this means is that nobody will believe in the church anymore if what they witness is wars and squabbles. The power struggle is multi-dimensional in the sense that it is not clear whether the fight is about God or about human desires. The truth is, religion has failed.

5.0 . Various interpretations of religions against the themes explained

In the texts under consideration religion has been interpreted in varying ways for examples as a tool of alienation, as a refuge for the poor and finally as a weapon to be unleashed against enemies

5.1 Religion as a tool of alienation.

Religion is seen as a tool of deculturising the Black People and alienating them from their own traditional religion and indigenous lifestyles. Thus **Paradiso** thus Mzee Okoth tells Mango :

*“Hayo yako ya Mungu utayasema ukirudi Mombasa .
Hapa Budalangi lakini utusikilize sisi.”*
(Habwe 92)

You can go to your God once back in Mombasa. This is Budalangi and you will have to listen to us.

What he is literary saying is that in the local communities things are done differently. Power is vested in the traditions and not in the borrowed faith. To the people of Budalangi , religious is like a fashion. Indeed the local chief tells Mango thus:

“Sisis ni Waumini. Kwa mfano mimi ni Mwisilamu. Lakini siwezi kusahau mila. Mswahili alisema msahau mila ni mtumwa,”
(Habwe, 92)

We are believers. For one I am a Muslim. But I cannot forget my culture. The Swahili have a saying, He who that abandons his culture is a slave.

The notion that religion is foreign is not only limited to Christians but to Muslims too. That is what the chief is stating. Culture is paramount. Thus faith in Islam and Christianity is not deep seated. In the **Kisima cha Giningi** the character Musa thus says to Speкта Seif:

“Hiyo elimu ya kizungu tuliyopata na ustaarabu wa kisasa umekuja kwa kwa juu tu, lakini chini , shinani kwetu, mzazi wetu, ipo fikra na hofu ya mashetani na hivyo hivyo uchawi....Hivi sasa , kina sisi tena hujigamba kuwa hatuamini uchawi, hatuamini mashetani, lakini wapi? Itikadi ya mambo hayo inatuenda ndani ya damu yetu, na kujidai kukataa mambo hayo, tunakataa juu juu tu.”
(Abdulla :56)

The Western education and civilization we received is not deep rooted in us. Deep inside we live in fear of witchcraft and the devil. We apparently pretend not to believe in Satan and witchcraft but it is so? Our traditions compel us from deep within our bloodstreams and our denial of the same is blatant lie.

Pretence is what we detect from the extract here. People use the acquired religion to suppress fear of unknown yet deep inside they are still rooted to their old self; where traditions are of

paramount importance. Uncertainty appears to be the main reason why people look for supernatural power and once they feel safe, they forget or ignore it all together.

5.2 Religion as a refugee for the poor and hopeless

Many people think religion is for the poor and hopeless. They are the ones that seek refuge in it in order to tolerate the harshness of life. Thus Amuko a character in **Paradiso** has these thoughts about pastor Michael:

“ Amuko alimwambia Michael akili yake ikimwambia labda alikosa uwezo ndio akaingia katika mambo haya ya dini.”

(Habwe :40)

Amuko looked at Michael and in his thoughts concluded that he(Michael) must have joined religion out of desperation.

In **Kisima cha Giningi** the main character Msa, though a Muslim, supports the notion of witchcraft. A character in this novel had his *kanzu* stolen from the line and in a strange turn of events it is returned on the clothes line with some pieces torn away. He concludes that someone is attempting to bewitch him a claim supported by Msa thus:

“... Unasemaje? Labda kwanza uzungu wako utakuzuia kutilia nguvu fikra zitakazokupitia wakati ule ,lakini rohoni mwako “unajua” kuwa yale ni malogo na hayana dhamiri nzuri kwako,”
(Abdulla :58)

... what do you say? May be your Western civilization will tell you not to believe at first but deep inside you know it is witchcraft and whoever is involved is up to no good and wants to harm you.

According to this character, Western civilization cannot eradicate completely of the believe and faith people have about nature and bizarre or extraordinary happenings in their societies. This is the reason why Mwana wa Giningi believes her husband Vuai is desperate to use witchcraft to disinherit her and free from himself from poverty.

5.3 Religion as a means of hitting back at your enemies

In **Kisima cha Giningi** we read:

“Na mimi hata simo katika huwo usheza wao. Sikubali kabisa.Leo takwenda kwa shee Haji aisome Badiriya, nimshitakie Mungo!”
(Abdulla : 14)

I am not interested in their confusion. I don't agree. I leave it to God, today I will see Shee Haji to pray Badiriya,!"

In other words, what the individual who had his kanzu torn wants whoever attempted to bewitch him by interfering with his kanzu to be punished by God on his behalf. That is the purpose of Badiriya. Badiriya is a prayer made purposefully for revenge. It is therefore un-godly. The case is the same in **Paradiso** when Pastor Musa is ambushed and beaten up by Salome's husband, Mr. Kyalo. The prayer the church is to engage in is to have Kyalo punished by God for daring to fight a 'man of God'. The pastor announced:

"Leo sina matangazo mengi. Ningependa, kwanza, kusema, kuwa tumesikitika na kuvamiwa na shetani aliyemshambulia Mchungaji Musa aliyekuwa amekwenda kwa huduma. Tunajua siku hizi shetani ameanza kutuvamia na tutazidi kupambana naye hadi wakati tutakapomshinda." (Habwe : 53)

Today I have few announcements to make. First of all I must admit It is a sad day for us, Satan has been attaching us and has attacked pastor Musa as he was carrying out his church services. We know Satan is against the church but we shall not rest until we subdue him!

The interpretation here is that religion gives people impunity to revenge over those perceived to be their enemies even when they themselves are the aggressors. Those outside the faith are perceived as agents of Satan. Instead of helping people to be, honest, virtuous and merciful, the church is hypocritically brewing liars, selfish souls, adulterous and immoral society.

6.0. CONCLUSION

Our observation of the selected Kiswahili works deduces that religion is paradoxical. Witchcraft, adultery, power struggle, cultural difference and revenge are indications of a failed state of religious faith. This is evident through Mwana wa Giningi (Abdulla, 1968) and Musa Saloma and Lona in Habwe (2005). It is contrary to what is observed through the Biblical and Quaran teachings. Wellek and Warren (1949) and Stark and Finkel (2002) and Chowdhry (2000) observed that religion affected perceptions of those people who believe in any particular faith and their environments positively. But this theses has shown otherwise.

Indeed Christianity and Islamic faith exist alongside witchcraft and other evils. Mwana wa Giningi and the owner of the *kanzu*, (Abdulla 1968) go to see Fundi Mangungu, a witchdoctor to sort out their misfortunes in a society where pastors and imams exist. In the case of *Kisima cha Giningi*, Haji is the symbol of Islam. In the case of **Paradiso**, Pastor Joshua, Musa and Michael are the epitomes of Christian faith. Yet all these evils take place in their presence. Characters take away other peoples wives, (Habwe, 2005) and their wealth and lives, (Abdulla, 1968). Examples of these vices in the selected texts are: Musa takes Kyalo's wife, Salome in the name of the church. Ali Makame on the other hand kills his brother's daughter having earlier on

instigated her divorce from her husband, Vuai.

Our observation is that there is a lot of hypocrisy in the society and religion cannot be trusted to restore sanity. A new crusade to bring the society back to moral sanity is therefore needed. This battle has to be fought on all fronts; that is from the religious angle and from the cultural front. Only then can we reduce these paradoxes and create a better world.

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