

The Role of the Image of the Hero Character in the Development of Swahili Drama

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15175196>

Published Date: 08-April-2025

Abstract: The role of the image of the hero in the development of Swahili Drama and its theories. Primary data were collected by the method of reading selected drama of *Fumo Liongo* and *Sundiata* written by Emmanuel Mbogo. The review of documents used to verify the primary data was obtained through electronic and library methods. The descriptive method was used in the presentation of the data. The data discussion was guided by the theory of semiotics. This theory deals with signs and symbols in literary works. It was used to examine the audience in the selected books as they create various meanings through their creativity and interpretations of the symbols and signs they encounter in literary works. The results of this article show that one of the roles of the hero in the selected works is to show the spirit of patriotism and solidarity by avoiding betrayal, greed for wealth and power, hypocrisy and cruelty in order to build a society with strong prosperity in all areas of life. This article suggests that further research be conducted on literary works to examine how the ideologies, philosophies and traditional norms of society and nation are conveyed through the protagonist.

Keywords: Image, Hero Character, Drama and Semiotic Theory.

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of the image of the hero in the development of Swahili drama. Drama is one of the Swahili literary genres that deals with various issues concerning humans, the environment, ideologies, lifestyles and systems (Shule, 2010). Events are described in the style of acting out anything that could happen in society. This situation gives the genre a wide opportunity to deal with social issues seriously and on a wide scale. The author portrays the thoughts and conversations of the characters by creating conflicts and discussions between them. The characters are chosen to present the situations, behaviours feelings, thoughts and actions of the characters they are portraying. Drama is one of the largest and most important literary genres (Wafula, 1999). Wafula's perspective can demonstrate the great possibility of this genre interacting with others to complement and depend on each other.

Before the existence of the printing profession in African societies, the performing arts were viewed as a stable tool that was tied to lifestyles that reflected the essence of culture and viewed as a storehouse of African resources and practices (Daniel, 2012). The knowledge found in fiction is one of the unique degrees for members of society to be able to use in their efforts to manage their lives and their environment. The development of this genre has taken different paths depending on the history and culture of the society concerned. Since the 20th century, fiction has entered many experimental and rebellious streams (Ali, 2017). Sometimes, it is not easy to identify the differences between it and other genres due to the existence of significant structural overlap. What can distinguish these genres are the styles of presentation and their forms.

Drama is one of the literary genres that is studied as a tool that examines society as it is and how it can express itself. It is also used to develop and develop a broad understanding of many issues related to philosophy, the environment and the

reality that exists in the society concerned (Gichamba, 2005). It is also viewed as a thermometer of development and the reality that exists in society by analysing and examining all issues related to all human movements and fields such as knowledge, philosophy, politics, culture, economy, history, environment and its development. So, this article has addressed the role of the image of the hero character by referring to the *Fumo Liongo* and *Sundiata* books.

Regarding the hero character, Campbell (1968) explains that he is a person who liberates his community in things that others cannot do. The hero character must have magical powers, courage, care and unite with his people to fight for their liberation. The victory he will achieve is not his own but that of the entire community. The hero can leave and return later to bring and defend justice for his people. Mulokozi (2017) sees the main character as the hero in a literary work. Therefore, the hero of fiction is the one whose many actions concern his life and destiny. He also adds that, at a traditional level, the hero usually comes from an upper class, where he usually perishes due to some trick in his behaviour and decisions or is overwhelmed by circumstances beyond his control. This description provides us with a basis for examining the experiences that the hero character encounters in his world.

Raymond (1966), in describing the types of myths, then identifies the characteristics of the main character as a hero. He considers the hero to be an ideal person whose credibility comes from the freedom that humans have in following their advice and is found in the ruling class, which is usually the source of evil and various movements. This group focuses on the conscience, where the hero could be confused with his own conscience. The hero found in modern myths, which stems from the changes in people's thoughts on life in Europe in the 18th century during which capitalism was flourishing along with exploitation. The hero in this group was seen as someone from any level of society. During that period, the main emphasis was on encouraging people to use science in social issues to find the source of problems and control their consequences.

In terms of the socialist realism myth that emerged from communism to bring about a classless society in the world. The hero in this group is a character who is constructed in propaganda for the benefit of communist politics. The hero was supposed to have reached a high level of humanity, a spirit of bravery and patriotism, intelligence, respect for people and a single-minded stance on the principles of socialism and its development. The shortcoming of this approach is that it requires the character to be flawless. This is difficult due to the presence of factors influenced by his environment (Senkoro, 1987). By referring to the principles of the hero described in literary works, this article has examined the role of the hero's image as reflected in selected drama.

Mbogo is among the great Swahili fiction writers in East African societies. His works are built on historical, cultural, philosophical and developmental criteria based on the foundations of the context of his composition that demonstrates the specific connection that exists between time and his society. This situation makes many scholars (Fadhili, 2014; Clemence, 2015; Mningo, 2015 and Shemweta, 2015) approach his works with different perspectives and motivations. However, the aspect of the image of the hero in his works has not been given the weight it deserves in the analysis and criticism of academic literary works. This gap has stimulated the desire to investigate this aspect in order to determine the role of the image of the hero in his writings. In general, this article has examined the role of the image of the hero character as reflected in *Fumo Liongo* and *Sundiata* books.

2. RESEARCH THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

The article has examined the role of the image of the hero character as reflected in a selected books. Primary data were collected using the method of reading selected novels, *Fumo Liongo* and *Sundiata* by Emmanuel Mbogo. Secondary data were used to verify primary data. The descriptor was used in data presentation. Data analysis were guided by the theory of Semiotics founded by Ferdinand de Saussure (Eco, 1976). This theory deals with signs and denotations in literary works. Signs that appear in literature are created by the author considering the social context, and humans are the makers of signs used in their daily communication. This theory was used to examine the audience in selected books as they create various meanings through their creativity and interpretations of the signs and symbols they encounter in literary works. Therefore, this theory was used to examine the role of the image of the hero character as reflected in a selected books.

The Role of the Image of the Hero Character in the Down Works

Image is a collection of various images created by artists' descriptions in literary works (Wamitila, 2006). The good use of imagery depends on the author's skill in being able to draw on the things around him in his society. This article has examined the image of the hero character in the selected works as manifested in various ways as offered in the next section.

The Devil Image

The devil is an angel believed to have been cursed for refusing to follow the commands of Allah (TUKI, 2004). The image of the devil is viewed in many ways. Senkoro (2011) places this image in the group of images of incorporeal beings. The concept of the devil in the system of social norms is viewed as a hypothetical concept. This situation is due to the fact that people only think about his existence, but he has never been clearly seen by members of society (Wamitila, 2008). Although the devil has never manifested himself clearly, he is still viewed as an agent of evil that continues in society. In Sundiata's novel, the devil is constructed figuratively by showing the state and source of various evils in society. Devil is another name for a demon who is always neither good nor bad (Ferguson, 1990). In the work, the author portrays the devil through the evil deeds committed by Sumanguru. He explains:

No one can kill Sumanguru. This is not a man but a demon...fighting Sumanguru is like fighting Maimuna from Persia. No human can fight the devil (Mbogo, 2011: 66).

This quote shows the devilishness of Sumanguru resulting from his evil actions towards his citizens. It also depicts the lack of good cooperation between leaders and their citizens due to the cruelty towards the people they lead. Citizens fear leaders for their extreme injustice and acts of cruelty. Such threats bring silence to citizens about bad leadership, fearing for the safety of their lives. Massoud (2018) compares this situation to how colonialism was rampant in African countries with oppression, corruption, theft of public property and exploitation, that this is devilishness itself. Furthermore, Sumanguru demonstrated his devilishness when he responded to his minister regarding a message from Dankarani when he said:

Tell him: Sumanguru, the one who wears shoes of human skin, crushes his hands of peace. Sumanguru, the sorcerer of sorcerers, crushed them with his bronze foot; the whiskers of those dogs knelt down to kiss my feet in peace... Sumanguru, the king who tames owls, dragons and jinn, will split them and tear them to pieces with his axe... (Mbogo, 2011: 27).

Sumanguru is seen as a witch doctor who lacks humanity due to his cruelty towards his subjects. Wafula (1999) views the image of the devil by attributing it to the beliefs of many tribal communities that see the devil as a terrifying being who cannot be controlled by humans. This image indicates fear that affects performance due to the prevalence of silence for fear of getting into trouble when someone speaks. Leaders must avoid styles of leading their communities with cruelty that cause fear among the citizens. This situation causes the community to lose confidence in themselves and in the implementation of their daily responsibilities.

The image of the devil has been used to indicate acts of sexual exploitation. The author uses Sumanguru as a leader who is extreme in acts of exploitation towards women. When Sumanguru sends his soldiers to war, he continues the evil of having sex with the wives of the soldiers who are at war. King Sumanguru oppressed women by having forced sex with them without their consent. In addition, he had sex with the wife of his nephew, who sent him to war to confront his enemies. Keleye's complaints build the image of Sumanguru's devilry and how he is compared to the greed and lust of a hyena. The author shows greed and desire to desire everything that is in front of him, as he even managed to harvest crops in a field that is not his. The image of an animal has been used to demonstrate the cruel behaviour that comes from doing things outside the understanding of reason and human life. Citizens lose faith in the leaders of the country. Leaders must do good according to the principles of justice and democracy (Dukore, 1974). The most important thing for a leader is to follow the principles of ethics, dignity, justice and democracy.

In *Fumo Liongo's* novel, the image of the devil is portrayed through King Mringwari, especially when he is criticised for his bad leadership. Mringwari was known to give life to anyone who dared to criticise him by telling him the truth. When King Mringwari was criticised, he felt that he was being despised, so he sentenced Mshaki to be killed by being stabbed in the head with a mtalimbo. Leaders who lack self-confidence and do not follow the rules of democratic leadership misuse their power by losing the lives of people they criticise and imprisoning others as a peaceful solution in their leadership positions (Mhando, 1981). Usually, orders that accompany the evil actions of leaders towards their citizens hinder and eliminate efforts to manage justice and social development.

The Pate Curtain Image

A curtain is a piece of cloth of a certain size that is hung on a window, door or stage to make the inside invisible (BAKITA, 2017). In *Fumo Liongo's* book, Fumo Liongo is seen as a shadow of Pate due to the power he had in his community. The image of Pate's shadow shows the presence of a sense of patriotism and courage of Liongo in fighting the enemies of his community. Liongo's death caused fear among the Pate community, as they felt abandoned in the realm of Mringwari, which was shrouded in the darkness of all injustice. The author, expressing these fears, says:

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences

Vol. 12, Issue 2, pp: (1-7), Month: March - April 2025, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

But in the past, our father Liongo has abandoned us. We have remained orphans. The wisdom that united us with him has faded. The Bajuni are now struggling in darkness. We are facing the mouth of the crocodile of the State House (Mbogo, 2009: 49).

Fear has spread among the citizens, fearing a return to the suffering of King Mringwari, who is compared to facing the mouth of a crocodile, that is, destruction due to his cruelty. This situation is seen as returning the citizens to a state of colonial oppression, especially neo-colonialism. Also, the fall of the Pate veil is compared to the deaths of famous leaders, including the founders of African nations who fought for independence from the hands of the oppressive colonial rule (Beja, 1988). The author, showing the collapse of the support of the Pate community, says:

This knot, now these oppressors have cut it. Oh! Look at the Bajuni. The veil of the Pate nation has now fallen to the ground, and Pate has remained empty. (Mbogo, 2009: 45).

The hopes expected by the citizens in the struggle against the oppressive leadership were suddenly extinguished like a candle being extinguished by pouring water on a jar full of water. The situation of the fall of the curtain has caused the society to feel as if it was left defenceless. This situation is compared to the announcement of the death of the former president of Zimbabwe made by President Mnangagwa that Robert Mugabe will be remembered and viewed as the Father of the nation and the light of the revolution, a son of the African community who devoted his entire life to fighting and liberating Zimbabwe to bring development, stability and prosperity to its citizens (Mgogo, 2012). Mugabe's death was seen as the fall of the curtain of Zimbabwe because he was a pillar in fighting and protecting Zimbabwe. His death left a huge gap, as his patriotism, bravery and experience were relied upon in providing guidelines on how to lead and manage the country to bring development and prosperity on the basis of justice and true democracy.

The Dream Image

A dream is a sequence of images, thoughts, and feelings that occur involuntarily in a person's mind during sleep. Dreams are one of the methods of solving problems because through them a person can be suggested something related to the issue he is having and can provide him with methods to get out of that problem (Barrett, 2007). A person can be given a vision of how he will handle a certain matter. In the Holy Bible, Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, which concerned a famine that would occur in Egypt for seven years. Joseph advised Pharaoh on the importance of storing food to face the disaster. Pharaoh obeyed and stored enough food. Dreams are a stylistic technique that is used to take a person out of the familiar real world and take him into a dream world between the construction of a new society and its obstacles (Massoud, 2018). The author shows the sequence of Liongo's dreams, telling Zahidi:

Last night was not a good night for me. I was troubled by a dream that recurred frequently every time I woke up and went back to sleep. In the dream, a shadow appeared in the shape of half man, half beast, and blew up my weapons, and I had no power to stop it or chase it away. However, when I woke up in a panic, I found my weapons safe (Mbogo, 2009: 42).

This dream indicates that Liongo was being robbed of his life and magical powers. The deprivation of his weapons indicated the deprivation of his authority and his opportunity to fight for the rights of the Wapate. The full meaning is revealed when Liongo is killed by a needle in his navel by his son who visited him in the forest. Zahidi ambushed his father while he was sleeping and stabbed him with a needle in his navel and fled. The author emphasises the importance of interpreting dreams to avoid unavoidable challenges. If Liongongo could have interpreted his dream correctly, he would have taken precautions and avoided his death. It is also stated that Pharaoh's dream came to him twice because God has confirmed that word and will fulfil it shortly (Genesis 41:32). Yutu (2016) explains that dreams have meaning for humans. Therefore, they should not be ignored.

The Knife and Needle Image

The image of the copper needle in the *Fumo Liongo* story was used to symbolise the protection of Fumo Liongo's magical powers in all his struggles against his enemies. Mbijima (2011) emphasises that a warrior must have protection that protects him from enemies. This protection is accompanied by magical powers that have the ability to turn enemy spears, bows and arrows into bullets to avoid harm directed at him. Liongo could not be caught in any kind of trap by his enemies due to the magical powers he was imbued with. A leader from the palace confirms:

This man is not a man; if you catch him with glue, he will only break free with a stick. If you bite him with your teeth, he will only break free with words.... How many times have we ordered our state agencies to go and set traps for him? But Liongoo has always set traps. We must discover the secret that protects the stars of his life (Mbogo, 2009: 4).

Liongo, as a hero in this drama, proves to his son Zahidi that he cannot be killed easily, as the ministers are looking for him. Liongo told him that he was as the lion of Pate. No one else knows the secret of my death except me and my Creator. A spear does not kill me, an axe does not kill me, an arrow does not kill me and a knife does not kill me. Nothing kills me. But if you want to kill me, work hard and find a copper needle (Mbogo, 2009). Normally, a hero must have enemies who are not happy with his hero's movements. The image of a copper needle has been used as a weapon to destroy Liongo, who was being sought for a long time without success. After Liongo revealed the secret of his bravery, he was killed by his son Zahidi by stabbing him with a needle in the umbilical cord and running away. This is the result of the selfishness of the leaders who have misused their power and authority by thinking that they are better than the people.

In *Sundiata's* book, the knife had been used as a weapon of destruction at that time, compared to the gun, which is a modern weapon, especially in this 21st-century period of scientific and technological development. The knife sent to King Tunkara as a payment for land has depicted the destruction that Sundiata will do to Tunkara in order to take revenge. The knife has been used to reinforce the selfish nature of the desire for power. The author shows Sassuma sacrificing himself to make preparations to get a knife to kill Sundiata to ensure that his son Dankarani sits on the throne. The author explains:

I need a knife. A short, strong, sharp knife... for my son Dankarani, ...what he is wearing is unrecognisable. He approaches Sundiata; Sassuma crowns him with his left hand and stabs him three times with his right hand... (he stabs his daughter), and you, illegitimate seed, die; follow him lame to hell. Nana falls and dies, and Sundiata staggers in pain and dies (Sundiata, 2011: 74).

The knife is used as a weapon to fight for power for personal gain. The issue of fighting for power using weapons has been a chronic problem on the African continent. The response to the need to use modern weapons is as acute as the tension between the United States and North Korea, where there have been political and economic conflicts. The issue of the use of weapons has been causing serious human rights violations, including killings, destruction of public and civilian property, an increase in refugees, rape and sexual violence against civilians. The lust for power exercised by some leaders has contributed to the rise of rebel groups that disrupt peace in their countries.

The Crown Image

The crown in *Sundiata's* book has been used to symbolise power or authority that a person has. A crown is a garment worn on the head, usually by a victor, king or queen (BAKITA, 2017). The crown is often contested. The image of the crown in Sundiata's work has depicted the fierce struggle for power between Sundiata and Dankarani. Gichamba (2005) explains that although a hero comes from a noble lineage, he often does not obtain the title of king just like that. The hero must defend or fight for his title as much as he can by considering the procedures and principles of leadership, rights and duties in society. Also, the image of the struggle for the crown after the death of their father has shown many magical incidents and threats to kill each other in public. Sundiata was supposed to be the rightful heir to inherit the crown on cultural grounds. Seeing this, Dankarani joins forces with Sassuma's mother to seize power by force.

Based on the foundations of traditional governance, the struggle for power is tied to the extensive use of magical powers, witchcraft and occasional oppression. For example, several things were done by Sassuma to ensure that they possessed the throne. First, Dankarani joins with his mother Sassuma to use magic to make Sundiata weak since he was young so that he would not get the crown. Second, when Sundiata seems to have recovered, they performed a magic spell to set up a crossroads so that he would be killed as a sacrifice they made at the crossroads. Third, to kill Sundiata by stabbing him in the stomach. All these are concerns of fighting for the crown of the kingdom. Sassuma saw that no one could wear the crown of the kingdom except his son Dankarani. He decided to fight by offering bribes, witchcraft and killing so that his son Dankarani could inherit the throne. This situation raised conflicts that contributed to the backward development of society.

The Blood Image

In the book of *Fumo Liongo*, the image of blood is used to illustrate the issues of passing on the deeds of society to the next generation after Liongo's death. In religious beliefs, blood is described as having the ability to speak, and it is believed that there is blood that speaks good and evil. Habiri's blood was able to curse the murderer Cain (2 Samuel 11:1-17). Food is

also used as a reminder of an important matter, as Christians use the Holy Sacrament, believing that they are commemorating the good deeds of Jesus Christ and remembering his redemption for them by sacrificing himself to die for sinful mankind. The author has shown the importance of valuing Liongo's blood as a legacy of patriotism, wisdom and courage for the people and the generations to come. He explains:

Look, even now I still have the precious blood that was spilt in the cave when a copper needle was pierced in the navel. Take it and see it! Kiss it. Apply it to your body. Take it and make it into fertiliser in your fields and villages. Share it and preserve it so that future generations can come and witness and pay homage to the unique heroism of Fumo Liongo (Liongo, 2009: 46).

This information shows that the death of Liongo, who was full of patriotic and courageous acts that are emphasised and encouraged, is considered a good example to be emulated by the current and future generations in our society. Liongo's life must be inherited to create a sense of courage and patriotism in activities that will bring development and prosperity to the community and the nation by acting justly and opposing leadership that does not respect the law and justice. Society must build strong foundations to develop values and patriotism in order to strengthen a society with dignity, values, patriotism and courage. This article calls on society to have a heart of patriotism and solidarity by avoiding betrayal, greed for wealth and power, greed and cruelty in order to build a society that is prosperous in all walks of life.

3. CONCLUSION

This article has identified the presence of the image of the heroic character in the selected fiction. The events and heroic deeds of each hero are made clear through the images contained therein. The discussion of the data presented has shown the role of the image of the heroic character as manifested through their heroic deeds carried out in their administrative life and temporal movements. Their involvement is viewed as a specific library for the reference of social issues and a strong natural link that builds a system for educating, strengthening and keeping society together on the basis of culture and the entire philosophy of life from ancient times to the present. This article emphasises that the issue of patriotism should be given strength in order to build strong foundations in the movement of management and building a prosperous society in all its administrative, life and developmental fields.

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