

## **Allegorical depiction of East Africa in Kenyan Swahili novel of the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Mikhail D. Gromov

*United States International University-Africa*  
Email:mgromov@usiu.ac.ke

Allegory as a literary device and an artistic form<sup>1</sup> has been widely used in modern Swahili literature since its earlier times – suffice it to recall Shaaban Robert’s “modern tales” *Kusadikika* and *Kufikirika*, written in the 1940s and 1950s. In Kenyan Swahili writing of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the most well-known allegorical texts are Katama Mkangi’s novellas *Mafuta* (Oil, 1984) and *Walenisi* (Them Are Us, 1995) (cf. Bertocini et al. 2009:52, 57, Wamitila 1998). In Kenyan Swahili literature of the current century allegory is extensively used in a host of literary genres and forms. This study analyses the use of allegory in several novels by the leading Kenyan authors of Swahili expression, published within the first decades of the current century. In these novels the writers, in order to perform their artistic tasks, present their allegorical visions of the past, present and even the future of the region.

Offering the readers their own interpretation of the region’s history (mostly recent, namely of the post-colonial period), the writers often look for the roots of today’s social problems. One of such interpretations is given in John Habwe’s novel *Cheche za moto* (Sparks of the flame, 2008). The story of the main character, dissident writer Mohamed Mule, starts against the background of the events of the early 1970s. Mule is a native of the country of Tambo (Tanzania), and was a lecturer at the University of Daro (Dar es Salaam), from where he was eventually expelled for criticizing the government - in particular, for the forced annexation of the islands of Zabar and Pombo (Zanzibar and Pemba), despite the fact that Tambo, the mainland, retained de facto hegemony. Tanzanian realities are only slightly “veiled” in the novel - during his trip around the country (which further strengthened Mule in his critical attitude towards the government’s course), he travels to the city of Rusha (Arusha) past Mount Kilimaro (Kilimanjaro), and with a delegation of foreign scientists visits the Lake Nyara (Manyara) reserve. The Tanzanian ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), is named in the novel TTM, and even its real name is given in one of the chapters, but with lowercase letters.

Equally recognizable in Habwe’s allegories are the realities of other East African countries. Expelled from Tambo-Tanzania, Mule moves to Uganda, presented in the book under the somewhat unexpected name of Osaka. Nevertheless, the events of Ugandan history of the 1970s are also depicted quite recognizably. Osaka’s president Osman Jumbe (a free paraphrase of the name Idi Amin: the name reflects his Muslim faith, the surname means “headman” in Swahili, an indirect reference to Amin’s nickname Dada - “sister”) forcibly expels citizens of Indian origin from the country, taking away their property, establishes a police regime in the country, and destroys the national economy. In the police state of Jumbe, Mule’s dissident views are not accepted; he and his family are repressed, and Mule is forced to seek refuge again in a neighboring country called Boma - presumably meaning Kenya. The name of the country, in Swahili meaning “fortress, fence”, appears to indicate Kenya as a zone of relative stability, free from wars and political upheavals. The characteristic features of Kenyan society are also faithfully reproduced by the author - in the capital of the country, the city of Fiji (an allusion to the word “jiji” - “big city, capital”, as Nairobi was often called throughout East Africa) the pace of life is industrial, and individualism flourishes, although a large part of the population has no money - independence, which turned into “wild” capitalism, also brought disappointment to the people of Boma. The

description of the country of Boma also contains more transparent allusions: for example, almost in the center of the city of Fiji there is a slum district called Kira - which is easily recognized as Kibra, a slum area of Nairobi, located half an hour's walk from the presidential palace. The city of Momba, located on the ocean coast, where Mule participates in the activities of the local political opposition, is, of course, the Kenyan port of Mombasa (the corresponding chapter of the novel provides a very detailed and recognizable outline of the history of the city). The country's ruling party is called BANU (in addition to the direct analogy with Kenya African National Union (KANU), the former ruling party of Kenya, the name also seems to contain an ironic allusion to the English word "ban"). In Boma, Mule's activities again displease the authorities, and he eventually disappears without a trace; Mule's work is continued by his comrade Fatuma, which forms the plot of the second part of the novel.

The current situation in East Africa - both in the region as a whole and in its individual countries - is also allegorically reflected in the works of Kenyan Swahili-language authors. One of the most striking and unusual examples of such an allegorical reflection of the recent political situation in Kenya can be found in the novel *Mafamba* (Underhand doings, 2008) by Tom Olali, notable first of all for its unusual setting. The novel describes a kind of "mini-universe", consisting of several planets, inhabited by various humanoid creatures, and ruled by dictators fighting each other for supreme power. These dictators create constantly disintegrating alliances against each other, seek allies in other worlds - and in general, although the novel is set in the 25th century, the situation described in it is strikingly reminiscent of the events of Kenyan political history in the first decades of this century. In the three main characters of the novel, alien dictators named Maotad, Limioe and Amrao, vying for control of the planet Nuka, an informed reader can easily recognize the key figures of the recent inter-party struggles in Kenya.

The events described in the final part of the novel rather comprehensively reflect the political situation in Kenya on the eve of the infamous 2007 elections. Kenyan writer and literary critic Mwenda Mbatiah in one of his recent articles gave a "decipherment" of the allegorical names of the characters in Olali's novel:

*Mbinu mojawapo ambayo Olali ametumia kuwapa majina wahusika wake ni uhulutishaji. Mbinu hii inahusu matumizi ya vipashio vya maneno tofauti ili kuunda neno jipya, mathalani "msinakwa" kutokana na msimuliziwa nafasi ya kwanza. Yafuatayo ni majina ya wahusika muhimu ambayo yameundwa kwa njia hii: Amrao = Raila Amolo Odinga, Maotad = Daniel Arap Moi, Sinya = Simeon Nyachae, Kajo = Joseph Kamotho, Nikiabi = Kipyator Nicholas Biwott, Saigeo = George Saitoti, Kamu = Kalonzo Musyoka, Kanga = Katana Ngala na Rojoo = Robert John Ouko. Hawa wote walikuwa vigogo katika serikali za KANU chini ya Moi, na baada ya 2002, NARC (National Rainbow Coalition) chini ya Kibaki.*

*Njia ya pili ambayo imetumiwa kitabuni kuwapa wahusika majina ni ile ya kupindua herufi za jina mojawapo la anayehusika. Kwa mfano: Limioe -- kutokana na Emilio, ambalo ni jina lisilo rasmi la Kibaki. Njia ya tatu ni ya kutafsiri jina mojawapo la anayehusika kutoka Kiingereza hadi Kiswahili. Kwa mfano: Fadhila – tafsiri ya Charity, ambalo ni jina la kwanza la Charity Ngilu, aliyekuwa waziri katika serikali ya Kibaki. Bila kufahamu wote ambao majina yao yameundwa kwa kutumia njia zilizotajwa hapo juu, na ambao walikuwa na nyadhifa kubwa katika tawala zilizohusika, ni muhalu kuweza kuifasiri kazi inayohusika (Mbatiah 2019:101-2).*

**Translation:**

*One of the methods that Olali has used to give names to his characters is composing. It consists of using the components of different words to create a new word, for example*

*“msinakwa” (first person narrator) from “msimulizi wa nafasi ya kwanza”. This is how the following names of the important characters in his novel are composed: Amrao - Raila Amolo Odinga, Maotad - Daniel Arap Moi, Kajo - Joseph Kamotho, Sinya - Simeon Nyachae, Nikiabi - Kipyator Nicholas Biwott, Saigeo - George Saitoti, Kamu - Kalonzo Musyoka, Kanga - Katana Ngala, Rojoo - Robert John Ouko. All of them held important positions in the KANU government during Moi's reign, and, after it, in the NARC (National Rainbow Coalition) government headed by Kibaki.*

*The second way to create character names is to rearrange the letters in the name of a real person. For instance: Limioe is derived from Emilio, which is an unofficial name of Kibaki. The third way is to translate the English names of real politicians into Swahili. For example: Fadhila (one of the novel characters, a female – MG) is the translation of the name Charity, which is the first name of Charity Ngilu, who was a minister in Kibaki's government. Without knowing all those whose names were invented, using the above listed methods, and who held significant positions in these governments, it is not easy to decipher this text” (all the translations hereby are mine – MG).*

Mwenda Mbatiah himself, renowned not only as a critic, but also as one of the leading Kenyan writers of Swahili expression, profoundly uses allegory in his own literary works. Mbatiah's novel *Majabali yanapoyeyuka* (When the cliffs melt, 2021), like the above-discussed novel by Olali, also presents the author's allegorical reflections of the recent events in Kenyan history; moreover, devices used by the author are notably semblant to those used by Olali. In fact, the allegories used in this novel are more than transparent, because the author wanted to give the reader an “unmistakable clue” about the country that is depicted in his book. For that purpose, he only transposed two letters in the country's name, calling it Nekya, and used equally transpicious anagrams for places – Baironi (Nairobi), Letrode (Eldoret), and lucid abbreviations for the names of the politicians – Umuke (Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta), Emwaki (Emilio Mwai Kibaki), etc. The novel presents the author's vision of Nekya's modern history, starting from the events before independence (which, according to him, in itself was a complot of imperialistic powers) and up to the very recent times (the last events in the novel take place shortly after Covid-19 pandemic). The novel depicts all the Nekya's leaders, starting from its founder (in the novel called “baba wa taifa”) as a bunch of thieves, grafters and schemers, concerned only with the use of their authorities for personal benefits. As in Olali's book, special focus in the novel is given to the “post-election violence” of January 2008, which, according to the author, were also largely caused by the machinations of the politicians. Considerable part of the novel depicts the relations between the main political figures and their complicated interactions with “mama wa taifa”, the widow of the country's founder, the lady who till her death at a respectful age tightly held the helm of state, the political figures being mostly her marionettes.

It should be mentioned, however, that political figures are not the only and even not the main characters of the book – which again brings us to the post-election violence, because exactly these events changed the lives of the novel's main characters, the members of two families, Kondo and Njogio, which once were good neighbors and friends, but during the post-election violence became enemies, since they belonged to two belligerent tribes, in the novel called “wabonde” and “wamanzili”. The end of this sudden enmity was tragic. John Kondo, a former army officer, during the violence became the head of one of the self-formed squads of *wabonde* youth militia, whose aim was to force *wamanzili* out of the land by burning their houses and killing them. One of the first targets became the house of Kondo's former neighbor and friend Njogio. The house is burned, Njogio himself perishes at Kondo's hand – he shoots Njogio with his pistol – Njogio's body is thrown into the latrine. Fortunately, Njogio's family – his wife Subra and children Elisa and Vitali – managed to escape, and thus their saga started. With the help of a benevolent priest Sunkuli, the

widow with two children make it to the capital, where they live for a while in a custody of Subra's brother Mlokozi. Then things slowly start to get normalized – Subra rents a cheap house, gets a job as a nurse at a private hospital, sends her children to school. Some sores, however, remain non-healing in her mind and soul – the fact that she was “forced down the life ladder” (walilazimika kuteremka ngazi ya kimaisha – 109), but even stronger was the pain from her beloved husband's loss and the fact that the perpetrators of the violence remain unpunished. Subra herself has given her evidence to the investigator from the Hague tribunal (the story about the Nekya leaders to escape the tribunal's sentence comprises a separate sub-topic in the novel), but even the efforts of the international community are in vain. For Subra (whose name is also self-speaking, being derived from *subira* – patience, endurance) the greatest blow comes when she learns that the Hague tribunal's list of suspected violence perpetrators (an allusion to “Ocampo's list”) does not contain the name of John Kondo, who killed her husband and smashed to ruins her family's life. On this all, Subra reflects in a heartfelt monologue:

*Moyoni mwake, palidumu kidonda cha kupoteza mume, mali na hadhi ya kijamii na kutopata fidia yoyote. Uchungu uliotokana na kidonda hicho uliyafanya yaliyotokea nyumbani kwake huko Medani Jumapili ile yaonekane kama matukio ya juzi tu. Yalipotokea, yeye na watoto wake wakanusurika, alipozwa na matumaini (mwanzoni) ya kwamba waliomfanyia unyama ule wangechukuliwa hatua za kisheria. Waliojinyakulia mali yake, wangedhibiwa, kupokonywa mali hiyo ya wizi na wenyewe kuirudishiwa.*

*NG'O!*

*Waliumuua mumewe, kuchoma nyumba yao na kuchukua ardhi yao hawakuchukuliwa hatua zozote. Si kwamba ushahidi wa uhalifu waliotenda haukuwepo. Aliuwasilisha wote, na bado alihifadhi. Lakini vita vilipokwisha kutokana na mwingilio wa jumuiya ya kimataifa, wenye madaraka ambao walikuwa wameahidi kwamba watawachukulia hatua waliovisababisha, walipiga about turn. Kama waungwana waliokuwa wakifuata njia nyofu ya Mungu, mara Shetani akawatolea agizo la kurudi nyuma, wakatii bila kusita. Sasa waliongea lugha isiyoeleweka. Eti oo, lazima tusahau yaliyopita ili tugange yajayo. Eti inafaa tusameheane ili tuweze kuishi pamoja kama taifa moja. Eti wale waliopoteza mali zao watafidiwa na serikali. Miropoko hiyo ilizua maswali mengi.*

*Majeruhi husahau vipi jeraha lake ikiwa badala ya kulitibiwa anaambiwa kunasubiriwa watakojeruhiwa kesho? Utamsamehe vipi mtu aliyekudhurubu ikiwa hachukuliwi hatua yoyote na ikiwa hamna kinachomzuia kukudhuru zaidi kesho? Na tutaishi vipi kama taifa moja ikiwa wahalifu wanaruhusiwa kuwafukuza watu kutoka makazi yao wakidai kwamba ni ya makabila yao? Na kwa nini serikali iwafidie wale waliopoteza mali zao badala ya kuzitwaa na kuwarudishia waliozipoteza kisha kuwaadhibu waliozitwaa? (100-101)*

**Translation:**

*In her heart, the lasting sore was the loss of her husband, property and social status, without getting any recompense. The pain from this sore made what happened in her home in Medani on that Sunday seem like it happened the day before yesterday. When it happened, she and her children were spared, and they were consoled by the hope (initially) that those who committed this atrocity would face the law; those who grabbed her property would be punished, and the stolen property will be taken from them and returned to the owners.*

*NEVER!*

*No measures were taken against those who killed her husband, burned their house and stole their land. Not that there was no evidence of the crimes committed. She delivered*

*it all, and still was keeping it. But when the conflict ended thanks to the international community, those in power promised that they would take measures against the perpetrators, but they made an about turn. As civilized people, they followed the honest ways of God, but when the Devil ordered them to turn back, they obeyed without hesitating. Now they were speaking incomprehensible language. As if oo, we should forget the past in order to amend the future. As if we'd better forgive each other so that we can live together as one nation. As if those who lost their property will be compensated by the government. This blether caused many questions.*

*How a wounded man would forget his wound, if instead of having it treated he is told that tomorrow others will be wounded? How will you forgive the one who clobbered you, if no measures were taken against him, and if nothing would prevent him to hurt you more tomorrow? And how will we live as one nation if the criminals are allowed to throw people out of their houses, demanding that they belong to their tribes? And why the government should compensate those who lost their property, instead of returning it to those who lost and punishing the grabbers?*

However, as the development of events demonstrates, forgiveness proves to be the key for positive changes, and it looks like solution was brought along even through the divine intervention (this subject, as I will try to show, is also important in Mbatiah's novels). Years after the violence, the already grown-up children from the families of former neighbors-cum-enemies fall in love with each other, forming two prospective couples. Subra's reaction to this is initially understandably negative – but, seeing how true and strong are the feelings between her daughter and son and the daughter and son of Kondo, she decides to bless the young couples. At that, Subra did not forgive Kondo himself and is still planning to avenge her husband's death. On his part, Kondo not only reconciles with the future marriages of their kids, but, remembering all the wrongs that he had done to Subra, offers her an ample compensation, which she initially rejects, but then agrees to accept. Finally, even the life of her fiend falls into her hands: during the pandemics, Kondo contracts the virus and is taken to the hospital where Subra works. For several days Subra nurses the revenge plans, but at the decisive moment the thought of forgiving him (accompanied with the quotation from the bible) comes to her mind, she abandons her plans, and “this deed miraculously healed the sore which lasted in her heart for years” (*tendo hilo likaponya kimuujiza donda lililodumu moyoni mwake kwa miaka – 212*). She takes care of Kondo until he fully recovers – his body, but not his mind.

On his part, Kondo appears to be subjected to the divine punishment for his evil deeds – his wife dies of cancer, his children marry those of the man that he killed, and also he is increasingly stung by Subra's kindness towards him; moreover, in his nightmares he is haunted by the voice of Subra's husband Njogio, his victim, which threatens to summon him to the God's trial. As a result of this all, Kondo loses his mind – “this was the way which brought him to the God to answer the charges” (*hiyo ndiyo njia iliyomfikisha kwa Mungu kujibu mashtaka – 213*).

Generally, the idea of divine support and the necessity to follow the “honest ways of God” is, as mentioned above, an important aspect in the novel. It is thus notable that the character who serves as a guardian saint for Subra and her family is the priest (kasese) Sunkuli, who not only initially helps Subra to reach her brother's house, but keeps a long-time friendship with her and ultimately mediates Subra's reconciliation with her children's marriage and her final accord with Kondo. It appears that this is a kind of advice that the writer gives to the readers – we will never get any good from the powers-that-be, so let us follow the “honest ways of God” among ourselves. In that sense, it is also interesting to mention the use of the metaphorical expression which serves as the title of the novel. It is used throughout the text in different senses – sometimes with a bitter

irony, e.g., when the writers speaks about the Hague tribunal: “finally, the cliff of charges of ethnic killings which was hanging in the air over the heads of the president and its deputy melted down, they were spared miraculously” (hatimaye, jabali la mashtaka ya mauaji ya kimbari ambalo lilining’inia hewani juu ya vichwa vya rais na naibu wake liliyeyuka, wakanusurika kimuujiiza – 119). However, more frequently the writer speaks about the cliffs of enmity and obstinacy which melt down due to people’s compassion and forgiveness. Often these metaphors are accompanied by the quotations from the bible, which reminds the readers that following the ways of forgiveness and compassion may be a recipe against enmity and mutual hatred, incited by the politicians for their shady purposes.

In the novel *Majira ya tufani* (Season of hurricanes, 2012) Mbatiah, however, demonstrates lesser degree of optimism. In this novel the writer attempts to imagine the near future not only of his country, but of the whole Eastern Africa. The novel is set in the imaginary country of Uketa – “after the unionization acronym that came from the names of three countries became the name for a new one” (baada ya muungano akronimu iliyotokana na majina ya nchi tatu ikawa jina la nchi mpya - 136) (i.e. Uganda-Kenya-Tanzania; the capital of this new state is called Nakada – Nairobi-Kampala-Dar). Economic and political situation in the state of Uketa is not a happy one, and is mostly dependent on Uketa’s relations with the country named Ukwasiini – a mighty Western state, resembling both US and UK.

The novel’s main character is Macho, the mayor of the capital city of Nakada. He is a frequent type of a modern politician, closely resembling Nekya’s leaders from the previously discussed novel – unscrupulous, corrupt and greedy. Macho uses the budget of the city and even of the entire country as his private fund – which is facilitated by his friendly relations with the country’s president, and also with Dan Prince, the ambassador of Ukwasiini. Additionally, Macho is fond of grabbing the public lands and turning them into his property, and the novel starts with one of such episodes – in the centre of the capital Macho builds a new shopping mall, named Macho Plaza in his honor. On the eve of the mall’s opening Macho receives a letter from one of the local religious communities named Wahasimu. In this letter, Wahasimu remind Macho that the new shopping mall is built on the plot, previously allocated for their temple, and illegally grabbed by Macho. Wahasimu demand compensation – i.e., another plot of equal size, otherwise they threaten with a violent response. Macho ignores the threat, but Wahasimu are determined – they turn the opening of the mall into a bloodbath, throwing a hand grenade at the group of the city officials; Macho’s life is spared by a miracle. The feud grows – Wahasimu kidnap Macho’s daughter, threatening to kill her if their demands are ignored again. Macho surrenders – he gives Wahasimu a new plot of land, his daughter is released, and justice seems to prevail. This, however, is only an illusion: it turns out that the papers for the plot given to Wahasimu are fake, and in reality the plot belongs to the police department. The police starts an operation against Wahasimu, Wahasimu are defeated, and their leaders make the last desperate step – the explosion of Ukwasiini embassy (this, practically final, episode of the book appears to reproduce rather vividly the events around the explosion of the American embassy in Nairobi in 1998). But even this last step goes in vain – the explosion takes dozens of innocent lives, and Macho, safe and sound, is promoted to a higher post in the government.

*Serikali ilifanya mabadiliko ili kuweza kukabiliiana na tisho la ugaidi ambalo lilikua kila uchao. Wizara mpya ya Usalama wa Ndani ilibuniwa. Tangazo maalumu toka Ikulu lilitolewa kusema kwamba Macho wa Tatu, Meya wa Nakada, Mtemi wa Ulunga, Mkuu*

*wa Maskauti, Moran wa Uketa ameteuliwa kuwa waziri wa wizara hii mpya. Nyota ya Macho ikazidi kung'ara (201).*

**Translation:**

*The government made changes to fight the terrorism threat, which was growing daily. New ministry of Internal Security was organized. Special announcement from the presidential palace said that Macho the Third, Mayor of Nakada, Chief of Ulunga, Commander of the Scouts, Moran of Uketa was appointed the head of that ministry. Macho's star continued to shine.*

Mbatiah uses the story of Macho, very realistic and typical, although told with satirical overtones, for his reflections about a host of problems facing the East African society. He speaks about the grabbing of public land, drug addiction among the young, ethnic and religious clashes, poverty – but, discussing all these topical issues, he tries to put across to his audience his main idea – that all these problems are not caused by “natural”, “cultural” or other such factors, but result from the conscious actions of the people from the corridors of power, who are interested in maintaining, and, if necessary, even creating these social ills. The only attractive character in the novel, a girl named Penzi, at the end of the book becomes the new wife of Macho, the main negative character (earlier Penzi, at the risk of her life, participated in the salvation of Macho's daughter). Such an outcome suits Penzi perfectly – from the housemaid she becomes the wife of a minister. Here a reader may detect an author's hint at social opportunism of modern Kenyan youngsters, many of whom are mostly preoccupied with personal career growth in the existing system.

From the above argument it can be seen, that the discussed novels are characterized by strong satirical – and thereby critical – pathos, stimulating the reader's critical attitude to both historical, current and even prospective reality of the region. But at that, a question comes – why using allegory?

The answer to this question could have been obvious, if this study were discussing the novels written several decades back. Those days, literary activities were heavily supervised by censorship, and thus the use of allegory was quite common (as an example one can again recall the novellas by Katama Mkangi mentioned in the introduction), and Kenyan readers were mastering the skills of “reading between the lines”. But even in the current state of relative democratization and freedom of speech the use of allegory appears considerably effective – first of all because the solution of this “literary riddle” enables the reader to look at familiar things from a new, unexpected viewpoint. And also, the reader does not have to put too much effort into solving this puzzle, for these allegories need no special comments – their images are quite recognizable for the East African audience. Moreover, the author's references “to historical or political events and persons” presume considerable level of the reader's awareness and analytical abilities, which, so to speak, heightens the reader's self-esteem, giving additional stimuli and increasing the reader's interest in the text.

Popularity of allegory in modern Kenyan Swahili writing may also be explained by typological reasons. Emilia Ilieva once characterized these reasons in the following way: “By the mid-1970s, many symptoms were indicating the widening gap between the ideas of the liberation struggle and the hopes for the long-awaited independence – and the real social and economic order forming in East African societies. [...] Life was turning into a certain twisted, caricatured version of those ideals, which were formed in the minds of the people during the long years of struggling

and suffering. [...] This paradoxical fact gave the reality a grotesque coloring, arising among the writers the feeling of rejection, which [...] motivated them to start waving the satirical lash. In other words, the state of East African societies in the post-colonial era not only stimulated the emergence of literary works of satirical stance, but also made this emergence looking organic and natural. The appearance of satire in these societies was undoubtedly and fully predictable” (Ilieva 2004:342) (my translation - MG). The motivations outlined in this inference can be, in my view, rather clearly traced in the above discussed works of Kenyan authors, which allows to consider allegory in Kenyan Swahili literature as a form of satire, that retains its potential in the modern social situation.

### Endnote

<sup>1</sup> Various referential sources give different definitions of allegory. According to Edward Quinn, allegory is “a type of narrative in which the surface story reflects at least one other meaning. Traditional allegory frequently employs personification, the use of human characters to represent abstract ideas. [...] Another type of allegory uses the surface story to refer to historical or political events and persons” (Quinn 2004:12). The article by Childs and Fowler asserts that “it is often defined as an ‘extended metaphor’ in which characters, actions and scenery are systematically symbolic, referring to spiritual, political, psychological confrontations” (Childs and Fowler 2006:4).

### References

- Bertoncini, Elena, Mikhail D.Gromov, Kyallo Wadi Wamitila, Said Ahmed Mohamed Khamis (2009). *Outline of Swahili literature. Prose fiction and drama*. Leiden-Boston: Brill.
- Childs, Peter, and Roger Fowler (2006). *The Routledge dictionary of literary terms*. New York: Routledge.
- Habwe, John (2008). *Cheche za moto*. Nairobi: The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
- Ilieva, Emilia (2004). *Formirovaniye satiry v angloyazychnykh literaturah Vostochnoi Afriki. Satira v literaturah Azii I Afriki*. Ed. N.Nikulin. Moscow: IMLI (The formation of satire in the Anglophone literatures of East Africa. – Satire in the literatures of Asia and Africa – in Russian).
- Mbatiah, Mwenda (2012). *Majira ya tufani*. Nairobi: Longman.
- Mbatiah, Mwenda (2019). *Maendeleo ya bunilizi ya kimajaribio katika Kiswahili. Koja la taaluma la insia: kwa heshima ya profesa Joshua S. Madumulla*. Wahariri Athumani S. Ponera na Zuhura A. Badru. Dar-es-Salaam: Karljamer Publishers.
- Mbatiah, Mwenda (2021). *Majabali yanapoyeyuka*. Nairobi: Queenex Publishers.
- Olali, Tom (2008). *Mafamba*. Nairobi: The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
- Quinn, Edward (2004). *Collins dictionary of literary terms*. Glasgow: Harper-Collins.
- Wamitila, Kyallo Wadi (1998). *Towards unlocking Katama Mkangi’s Walenisi: a case of parabolic narrative? Kiswahili* 61: 83-93.