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**Whither the Satirical Mode as Popular Public Sphere in
Tanzania?**

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Introduction

In 1993, the University of Chicago Press published a very interesting book on the relationship between art and the public sphere.¹ In this book, authors ask very pertinent questions concerning the fate of art in an age of publicity. For example, how has the role of conventional public - that is to say, government-controlled, art changed in contemporary culture? How have the changed and changing conditions of public space and mass communications altered and continue to alter the correlation between art and its potential audiences? These are very relevant questions to ask in connection with the role of culture in general, and the arts in particular, in the public sphere.

This paper examines the public sphere(s) as manifested in the popular, mostly satirical arts in Tanzania by looking at the potential for transforming the lives of the poor through a discourse that, to some extent, is of their own creation and outlook. The majority of the popular satirical arts and literary outputs from Tanzania aim at creating a more humane, just, and egalitarian society through the realization of the human potential for reason, albeit with or through humor. This, it seems to us, is brought about by the “neglected” other expressive public sphere via a different type of discourse ethics as revealed by the popular arts and culture in Tanzania.

More specifically, the concept of the public sphere in this paper is based and, to some extent, literary works,

from Tanzania. While the paper examines this public sphere in terms of its rational debate on matters of immense social and political importance; it also examines the reasons for the appearance and dominance of the satirical genres and modes, probably made possible by the development of bourgeois, so-called global culture through the print and other media.

While examining the issues of equality, human rights and justice that seem to guide this public sphere, the paper also investigates and analyses the norms of rational argumentation and critical discussion in which the strength of the channels of this public sphere rests.

Some Theoretical Considerations

Popular arts seem to have traditionally been seen as being less valuable by aestheticians and art (including literary) critics (see Shepherd 1991:195). However, it is clear that examining

¹ University of Chicago Press, *Art and the Public Sphere*, with an Introduction by J.T. Mitchell, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993)

them in the realm of public sphere provides useful understanding of the social, artistic and cultural meanings of a particular time in history. More so, because there are different cultural, artistic and thematic characteristics, that are specific to different genres of popular arts, which may not be found within the tradition of so-called *serious* arts. Indeed Holmberg (1988:10) has warned that 'those who ignore popular culture are ignoring daily life'. In other words, ignoring the popular arts of a particular people in a particular time of their history implies, in a way, ignoring the making of that peoples' history.

The above being the case, then, it becomes imperative for us to ask several pertinent questions regarding the role of the arts in creating and representing public spheres. What is the destiny of such arts in an age of media hype? How has the role of conventional public art, largely owned by governments, changed in the contemporary scene and within the dynamics of "new" cultures? How have the altering circumstances and face of public space and mass communications transformed the link between popular art and its potential audience?

In order for us to answer the above and other similar questions, we need to explore the social, aesthetic, and political dynamics that make contemporary "public art" so controversial and that have placed recent art productions at the centre of the public debates and, thus, turning the arts into a very important public sphere.

While Jorgen Habermas' work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* has had a major impact on cultural theory and has generated many academic debates in various forums, we may as well find that his concept of the "Public Sphere", that was largely begotten by the 18th century Europe leaned heavily on bourgeois public sphere, which, at that time, was used to express personal needs of bourgeois society and individuals.

Molly Kaushal has had the following to say on Habermas framework:

This 'Public Sphere', in the Habermas framework was available, only under the conditions of bourgeois democratic state and modernity. What about societies, which did not necessarily follow the Enlightenment agenda of the West and whose notions of relationship between the State and Individual were different from that envisaged by the Western style democracy? Was there a pre-bourgeois 'public space' available to individuals to articulate and generate opinions? What was the nature of such a 'space'?

Although we shall not deal with the pre-bourgeois public space since this is beyond the present enterprise, in the Tanzanian context, which is of our present concern, one can ask a main question similar to Kaushal's: *Since art played and it continues to play a major role in the formation of such a 'public space' what theories can we formulate with regard to its provision for validation of world views and socio-political order?* The concept of the 'Public Sphere' as explained by Habermas assists us to comprehend the spatial and ideological organization of this sphere and the place of cultural subtexts within it as far as 18th Century Europe was concerned. *How applicable is such theory and outlook with reference to popular arts (oral, written and drawn) in Tanzania today? Doesn't this context demand for fresh theory based on the local perspectives? How do we reconcile the factors of the exclusivist agenda of the Enlightenment that created the dichotomy between mind and body, reason and emotion, culture and nature, and individual and public? How much does the world view emanating from popular written, oral and drawn arts in Tanzania offer counter-public sphere expressing the people's views and ideas?*

The issue that we are grappling with in this paper, and I would imagine it is the same with some other presentations in this forum, is how to investigate and comprehend the role of the arts and, perhaps, humanities in general, in the formation of public space *in the African context*. This state of affairs demands for theories on the relationship between the public sphere and the arts (including fine and theatre arts), folklore, anthropology, sociology, history, philosophy, language and linguistics, films, and music, among others. There is a need for us to trace the metamorphosis of the public sphere within the contexts of traditional art genres that, in Tanzania and perhaps a major part of Africa, were largely of oral and visual expressive nature to modern-day forms. This is a very interesting debate since even within those so-called modern or contemporary forms of expression are contained very active ingredients of the "old" forms that constitute a constantly happening phenomenon within the public spheres. These generate what Molly Kaushal again has termed the "fluid signs and symbols of Nationhood, Personhood and Humanity... that provide space for diverse voices and world views." This implies the need to trace the overlaps; shifting forms and contexts of different modes of expression within the public sphere for, indeed, such forms and contexts are value-loaded and entrenched in unambiguous and sometime hidden, therefore ambiguous, socio-historical contexts that manifest definite political agendas and specific public sphere management strategies.

Cartooning and Other Arts as Popular Public Sphere in Tanzania

In this paper we are attempting to explore the contexts of popular arts in Tanzania and their usefulness in understanding the reality of the public sphere in Tanzania. Specific artistic productions are explored with the aim of understanding their role in the constitution of Tanzanian public space. The paper emphasizes the fact that the organization and management of public sphere in different socio-political and cultural contexts in society, determines the issues of patronage and the ability of specific artistic genres to influence public thinking. Here is where the media and new technology also play an important role. The paper takes into account issues of the shift in the medium and context of presentation of important social and political messages that constantly emerge in the public space. Through cartooning and other popular arts in Tanzania, this public space has been and continues to be used as a vehicle for presenting a critique of the powers that be, through a witty use of satire and humour. It is through the pen of the artist that the role of mediation between the public and the authorities is played. It is through cartoons and other satirical works of art that contesting viewpoints and counter-spheres are realized, spheres that do generate public debates.

Art in public spaces served and continues to serve as a medium and manifestation of world views. One cannot, therefore, speak of a single public sphere since there are multiple 'public spheres' outside officialdom. Currently, there is a very flourishing form of art that has proved to be a very effective medium, capturing the social, economic and political scene in Tanzania – the art of cartoons. Cartooning in Tanzania has offered alternative spaces and counter-voices that have generated opinions not necessarily favoured by the powers that be, defying the “official” public space by the state. In this way, cartoons have reclaimed the public sphere, giving rational explanations and fuelling public debates on matters of social, political and economic importance in society.

The following newspaper clip on the same, will, hopefully, add to our discussion on the role that cartooning and, thus, humour and satire, plays in society, more so in matters concerning public spheres. This is taken from *The Guardian*, one of the privately owned Tanzania's daily newspapers.

I. Tanzanian cartoonists 'among most free in Africa'

Monday, Jan. 1, 2001 *By Henry Lyimo*

Tanzania has been described as a country enjoying a healthy state of cartooning in its media with the artists themselves held in high esteem by government leaders.

A recent international workshop on cartoon journalism and democratization in Southern Africa held in Gaborone, Botswana marvelled at how cartooning flourishes in Tanzania in contrast to a number of other countries in the region.

It was a cartoonist from Tanzania, David Chikoko, who caught the attention of other participants of the workshop with a revelation suggesting that even President Benjamin Mkapa "has always held cartoonists in high esteem." Chikoko, working with The Guardian Ltd, a private owned media company in Tanzania, represented the country in the workshop.

"The evidence presented by Tanzanian cartoonist David Chikoko of the extremely healthy state of cartooning in his country was perhaps the greatest revelation of the workshop," a report on the workshop reads in part.

According to Chikoko, the president has been caricatured so often that he is reported to have quipped; "I can't even remember my own face." The report says another country enjoying a healthy state on cartooning is Zambia but that has been affected with steadily failing currency and declining standard of living.

Zambian cartoonist, Trevor Ford (Yuss) working with The Post of Zambia is mentioned in the report. He is described as one whose pen has enjoyed the freedom to record the country's travails and his work shed satirical light on the political process of post-colonial Africa.

The healthy state of cartooning denoting a fairly robust democratic culture does not prevail in other countries in the sub-Saharan region, the report says. It mentions Swaziland where portraying the Swazi King in caricature is simply not allowed as it is considered "in poor taste" and "anti-Swazi."

Censorship has been cited as the main problem scourging the healthy culture of political cartooning and satire in sub-Saharan region, according to the report.

The participants were also of the opinion that censorship often is in the form of self-censorship by editors and publishers.

The workshop, which was organized by the Department of Sociology of the University of Botswana, was attended by cartoonists from South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania.

While current events in the country can easily tell why the former president was caricatured so much, especially since he has been shown to have involved himself in dubious contractual undertakings that cost the country millions of dollars that went to a few individuals' pockets, still the question of the reasons for the flourishing of the art of cartoons in Tanzania and probably in all of Africa demands to be answered. We shall attempt to answer it vis-à-vis our discussions of the question of the language medium of instruction in Tanzania's secondary, tertiary and higher education and also a debate on the chronic disease of corruption, since cartoons have also portrayed, questioned and stirred public debates on the two issues among other social problems.

Cartoonists' Perceptions of the Language Question in Tanzania

Once in a while there appear cartoons that reflect cartoonists' views on the Tanzania's language question. There is one cartoon in which two people are talking, one of them sweating profusely. When asked why he is sweating so much he answers that it is because he is going for an interview in English. Another cartoon is that of a man and his wife. The conversation of the couple takes place in a little hut and it goes as follows:

Wife: *Mume wangu, yaani kusikiliza kipindi cha bunge mpaka umeze panado?*

(My husband, why would you need a pain killer whenever you are listening to parliament sessions?)

Husband: *Wabunge wanachanganya sana lugha wananiumiza kichwa.*

(The parliamentarians are mixing the languages so much they are giving me a headache)

The third and last cartoon for our present enterprise is that of a man and a little boy. The cartoon, titled "*Kwa Wanaojua Kimombo*" (For those who understand English) has the following conversation – this time in English:

Man: Are you chewing gum?

Young boy: No sir, I am John Peter Maganga.

The characters in the first cited cartoon are typical of so many people, including our University students, whenever they find themselves in any situation that will demand of them to use English as the medium of communication, be it in seminar presentations or interviews.² The characters in the second cartoon represent the sentiments of so many Tanzanians, the majority of who are poverty-stricken people (represented in the cartoon by the windowless hut in which the conversation takes place) who cannot follow the proceedings of the parliament sessions in which their representatives seem to think that explaining a point in broken English mixed with Kiswahili is a show of brilliancy and intellectualism. The irony here is that the people that are represented do not understand what is going on in their own representative's parliament. These parliamentarians don't work with the strange creature known as *the public*. The way they formulate the policies that guide their country is only through consultancies and consultation with what they refer to as the main stakeholders –who do not include this amorphous thing called the public. Policies have to be created by experts, with the help of such world bodies like the World Bank and IMF and business experts! The business of governing is not public business. So, many of these politicians and “public leaders” believe at heart and very genuinely that the public elected them so that they - the parliamentarians – so they may take all the decisions and create all the policies that will guide this “public”. The public plays a role only when five year terms of the parliamentarians expire and the politicians come begging for more terms in office. , that 'the Public' only have a role when they vote during periodic elections. The normal political culture that has been fed to the public creates the belief that the rulers are elected so that they may take all the decisions. This is why the policy making technocrats do keep the public out of the policy making process even by strange language concoctions during parliament sessions.

The third and last cartoon is just a representation of what has been going on in our schools. English is just not making sense at all. “Are you” (*wewe / ninyi ni...*) in Kiswahili only implies being in a certain state or being called someone, and it does not connote an action. The young boy therefore, rightfully thinks in Kiswahili in responding to an English question. He represents

² I have, in another paper titled “Mauaji ya Halaiki ya Watoto wa Tanzania Kupitia Lugha ya Kufundishia Sekondari na Vyuoni” (*The Cognitive Destruction of Tanzanian Children Through the Language Medium of Instruction in Secondary Schools and Higher Education*) dealt with the same issue. This paper has also been published in LOITASA booklet form with the same title, (Dar es Salaam: KAD Associates, 2008) while it also appears in Senkoro, F.E.M.K. (ed.), *Lugha na Fasihi ya Kiswahili Afrika ya Mashariki*, (Dar es Salaam: CHAKAMA, 2007).

many of our students from secondary to university levels of education whose essays and answers to questions clearly indicate that they have to first think in Kiswahili and then transfer their answers in English, as a result of which a brand of *Kiswahinglish* has been born – a medium through which communication between teachers and students makes no sense most of the time.

Generally, these and numerous other daily newspaper cartoons in Tanzania view the language question with a satirical touch. Satire in its various shapes and forms is a mode that has delighted and at times repelled men throughout history. As one looks at it one discovers how at different times and in diverse societies, satire has either burgeoned, been subdued, stifled, forced into camouflage and disguise, or even driven to operate underground. Ironically (and irony is one of the basic ingredients of satire) in Tanzania satire has been feeding fat and, at times surprisingly very openly, on various social, political and economic realities. It has become an important ingredient of the public sphere.

Interestingly even the Juvenal/Horatian satirical taxonomy is quite applicable in today's Tanzania, and the birthright that Juvenal proclaimed to have been stolen falls squarely in present-day language scale in Tanzania. Numerous research results indicate clearly that the Tanzanian children have been robbed of their birthright to use the language of their upbringing, the language that expounds their cultural sensibilities as the medium of instruction in secondary, tertiary and higher education institutions.³ Such research results do indicate that

³ In addition to earlier works such as those by Mohammed A. Mohamed, "The Introduction of Kiswahili as a Medium of Instruction in Secondary Schools: A Diagnostic and Evaluative Survey", M.A. dissertation (University of Dar es Salaam, 1975), M.S. Muze, "Kiswahili Kama Lugha ya Kufundishia Katika Shule za Sekondari", in *Studies in Tanzanian Education*, 7, - *Special Issue*(Dar es Salaam: Institute of Education, 1976); P. Mlamba and M. Matheru, *Haja ya Kutumia Kiswahili Kufundishia Katika Elimu ya Juu* (Dar es Salaam, BAKITA, 1977); Trappes-Lomax et al, eds, *Changing Language Media* (Dar es Salaam, UDSM, 1982), C. Crippen and W. Dodd, *Report on the Teaching of English and its Use as a Medium of Instruction* (ODA/British Council, 1984); B.A.J. Katigula, *Factors Affecting the Achievement or Non-Achievement of the Objectives of National Language and Mother Tongue Policies and Teaching Programmes in Africa: The Case of Tanzania* (Dakar: UNESCO, 1987); Lwaitama A.F. and J.M. Rugemalira, eds., *Language and Education in Africa: A Tanzanian Perspective* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1990), Ministry of Education, Tanzania, *The Tanzania Education System for the 21st Century: Report of the Task Force* (Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Education, 1993), Ministry of Education, Tanzania, *Tanzania Integrated Education and Training Policy* (Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Education, 1993), P. Mlamba and M. Mvungi, "Past Language Policy and Research in Educational Practice in Tanzania: A Historical Survey", in Trappes-Lomax (1982); Y.P. Msanjila, "Problems of Teaching Through the Medium of Kiswahili in Teacher Training Colleges in Tanzania", in *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 11/4 (1990); S. Yahya-Othman, "When International Languages Clash: The Possible Detrimental Effects on Development of the Conflict between English and Kiswahili in Tanzania", in *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 10/4, pp. 279-296; R. Rajabu & D.Ngonyani, "Language Policy in Tanzania and the Hidden Agenda", in C.M. Rubagumya, (1994), Z.M. Roy-Campbell, "Power or Pedagogy: Choosing the Medium of Instruction in Tanzania", Ph.D. Thesis (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1992); and Zaline M. Roy-Campbell and Martha A.S. Qorro,

English no longer functions effectively as a medium of instruction, and that using Kiswahili as the medium of instruction is, by and large, the way out of the language confusion in secondary schools and tertiary/higher education levels of education in Tanzania. Again, this kind of cry by the public has fallen into deaf ears of policy makers for, indeed, what has the public got to do with such complicated issues like that of the language question in Tanzania?

It is noteworthy that satire has permeated most art and literary works especially from the mid 1970s to the present. The most important question here is: why has it happened that the age of satire in Kiswahili art, literature and even music has been mostly from mid seventies to the present and not before. I have made a summary of the answer to this question in another paper, maintaining that satire is peculiarly one of the modes that presuppose a body of settled social and political standards which shall serve as sanction for its rebuke, and at the same a certain security and resultant tolerance in the application of the standards.⁴ The body of settled standards here refer to the Tanzanian public expectations that the national language which, having gained supra-ethnic, nay, supranational character to most people, and which to most people is, therefore, the language of their cultural upbringing, is relegated to the periphery whereas a foreign language they are not comfortable with is elevated to the national medium of instruction in secondary, tertiary and higher education levels with catastrophic, cognitive genocide results.

There is laughter at the ridiculousness of sweating profusely as one is forced into using a language he or she does not understand, the weird act of taking aspirin to wad off the headache brought about by the strange melange and language concoction by the members of parliament; and the bizarre answer to the question “Are you chewing gum”. In the end, however, the laughter subsides, and the venom of the whole outlook is distilled as it quietly eats its way to the very foundations of the language question in Tanzania. We are made to ask serious questions that demand for answers regarding the language question, and in this way laughter becomes the initial panacea for the malaise of the stolen birth and democratic right of Tanzanian public. Satire, humour, laughter – all these are used cleverly by artists, be they

Language Crisis in Tanzania: The Myth of English Versus Education (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 1997), just to mention a few among many others, the most recent books on the subject, emanating from research by LOITASA project researchers are worth reading. These are *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa – LOITASA* (Dar es Salaam: KAD Associates, 2003), *Researching the Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa* (Cape Town: African Minds, 2004), and *LOITASA Research in Progress* (Dar es Salaam: KAD Associates, 2005) – all edited by Birgit Brock-Utne, Zubeida Desai and Martha Qorro.

⁴See my article, “Mediocrity and Creativity in Tanzania’s Literature”, in Hartmann Jeanette, ed., *Rethinking the Arusha Declaration*, (Copenhagen: Centre for Development Research, 1991), pp. 280.

cartoonists or literary fellows, to create a public sphere that counters the official one by politicians. The posturing of an education wrongly offered through a medium that neither students nor their teachers could understand and fully employ had to be exposed. No other art form, technique or mode was better than satire to issue forth the sharpest social lash that was needed.

Tanzanian Cartoonists' Impression of the State of Corruption in the Country

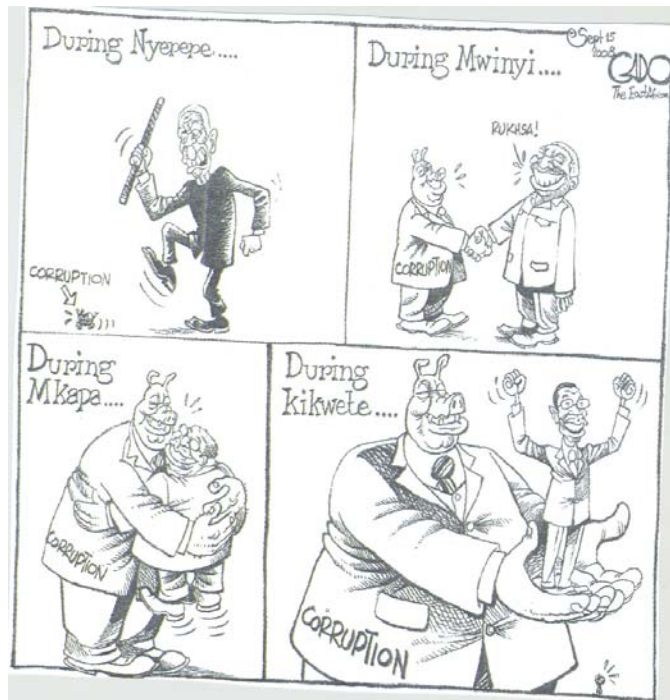
Opposition, protest, messages of social reforms and political concerns permeate the cartoon scene in Tanzania. Historically, when Tanzania was a one-party state cartooning articulated one-party policies and it was the voice and agency of Government policies. This was more so since at that time (1961-1985) the media was government-cum-party controlled. However, since the introduction of multiparty system, the media has been liberalized, so that even some of the opposition parties and private individuals do own their newspapers. The shifting contexts and political forces have, in this way, lent voice to contemporary issues and concerns through, among other channels, the illustrative art of cartooning that has taken a centre stage in expressing and mobilizing public opinion with the aim of effecting social change. It was at this time that what Jonathan Swift has termed "the public spirit" prompted the artists to ridicule the follies and corruption's of individuals and institutions which tramped on the very foundations of the policies they so fondly proclaimed. The satire that we get at this time is tragicomic. It fits Northrop Frye's definition that sees satire at its most concentrated, therefore, as tragedy robbed of all its dignity and nobility, a universal negation that cheapens and belittles everything.⁵

The above have been enhanced by the accompanying amphitheatre of mass culture through "globalization". All these forces have been galvanized by new technologies that do respond to the needs and changes brought about by the "new" world, thereby creating new public spheres. The use of these new technologies has, for example, made it possible to produce a popular cartoon called *Dogo* interactively so that it is available on a daily basis at [www....](http://www.dogo.com) In this way interactive telecommunication has produced a new public sphere that plays an important role in the dissemination of culture.

The four-phases of corruption that match those of the government in Tanzania are well-illustrated in the cartoons hereunder.⁶

⁵ In Scott, Sir Walter, ed., *The Works of Jonathan Swift* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1883, Vol. Ix) pp. 86-93

⁶ This cartoon by Gado appeared in *The East African* of September 15-21, 2008.



The cartoonist's impression of the different phases of corruption begins with the Mwalimu Julius Nyerere's phase whose time in power is portrayed as almost corruption-free. Yet, Mwalimu Nyerere, with a strong cane in hand, is shown to have been so serious about this public evil, unlike during the second phase when President Ali Hassan Mwinyi shook hands with corruption inviting it in. The third-phase government led by President Benjamin William Mkapa is illustrated by a huge hug between the government and corruption. This time corruption is already bigger in size than the government itself, a size that gets to that of a giant in phase-four government led by the current president, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, whereby corruption is so rampant and so huge that the government is so tiny that it can be held in the colossal corruption's palms.

It is as if the cartoonist is giving us the historical perspectives of corruption showing how in the process of the organization of public space in different socio-political phases there have been changes in the patronage of the space. One would imagine that during Nyerere's time the public space was very much available to or for the actual public, but as time went on the space was occupied by corrupt leaders so much so that by the time the current president took power, the space was fully occupied by corruption. It is this state of affairs that has led satirists, including cartoonists, to use their specific outlets to try to influence as well as inform public thinking on the serious malaise of corruption.

With gentle pokes and a smile, this satirical public space lampoons and ridicules such follies as uncouth and ill-mannered behaviour or propensity and predisposition beyond tolerable limits, more so in economic, political, sexual, and social issues. At times this public sphere ferociously and ruthlessly exposes the vices of Tanzanian politicians, contrasting them with the honesty and tranquillity of the ideal, rural society.



As seen in the above cartoon, this sphere deems overindulgence, acquisitiveness, gluttony, corruption, theft, forgery, and uncontrolled luxury as a big burden to the people. These pretensions of the rich are viewed as kinds of peccadillo and wrongdoings of very large scale and atrociousness. The cartoon portrays a corrupt political leader, popularly referred to as *Fisadi* in Tanzania who has definitely been feeding fat on the poor masses of the people of Tanzania. Recently, such corrupt and gluttonous people were given one month to surrender the money they had swindled from the EPA account of the Bank of Tanzania. That is why the overfed character in the cartoon laughs at the idea saying “*I have been given one more month of luxuriating*”. The cartoon and, thus, this public sphere, vehemently decry the brutality of the government and the state organs supported by the top enchilada against the citizens. The overblown pretensions of some gluttonous and greedy people in the corridors of power had to be deflated by artists and writers.

In Tanzania, the 1967 *Arusha Declaration*, one of the most important political landmarks for the country as it proved to be the blueprint that charted out the country’s development strategy, set those standards. Our artists were, therefore, keen in following the implementation of the objectives stated in the Declaration. They were particularly interested in witnessing the realities of the qualities of good leadership, and the quality of good, meaningful and relevant education

as stipulated in the policy of *Education for Self Reliance* and trumpeted by those who shouted it on platforms. The result is a big group of writers and artists whose pens could not help but satirize the whole situation. A quick example of such writers' satirical reactions to the negative aftermaths of the mishandling and tramping of the Arusha Declaration can be found in E. Kezilahabi's short poem fittingly titled "Azimio" (Declaration). It goes thus:

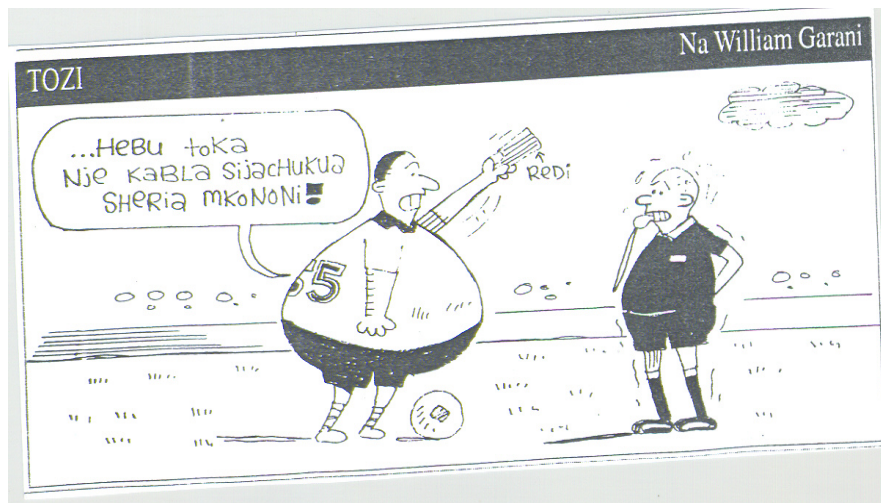
Azimio sasa ni mabaki ya chakula
Kwenye sharubu za bepari
Kalamu inayovuja katika mfuko wa mwanafunzi
Vumbi zito
Baada ya ng'ombe kupita...
Kilichosalia sasa
Ni punje za ulezi
Zilizosambazwa jangwani
Na mpandaji kipofu.

*(The Declaration is now the leftovers
On the beards of capitalists
A leaking pen
In a student's pocket
Heavy dust
After the cows have passed...
The only thing that remains now
Are millet grains
Scattered in the desert
By a blind planter).*

The sense of mockery contained especially in the last four lines of the poem summarily gives sharp piercing statement of what really happened in the country, which includes just a leaking pen in a student's pocket. The imagery of a "blind planter" who scattered millet grains in the desert, hoping that such seeds would sprout symbolizes, among others, those who have planted the national seeds in the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction, falsely hoping that from such a move the seeds would sprout into a promising future. The poems could as well be mocking those who have blindly and without consideration of the welfare and birthright of Tanzanian children, adopted and even worshipped a foreign language as the medium of

instruction at secondary, tertiary and university levels of education, thereby committing what I have termed elsewhere an intellectual genocide of our people.

The acrid and pungent smell of satirical biting from some of the cartoons that the present author has collected, including the one below, does not come out of a true-to-life depiction of people and events, but from the allegorical undertow where hired revolutionaries get their instructions mixed up, show off their red placards and yell under the palace windows, “More working hours, less pay! More taxes, less bread!” In this cartoon purportedly on sports, the referee is given a red card by a player whose looks do not differ from those of the *fisadi* in a cartoon that we have already examined. He is over-fed, and he definitely can knock-out the referee as he charges, “*Get out before I take the law into my own hands*”. Again the cartoonist, William Garani plays on reversal roles to drive a political point home. Those who are supposed to be in charge, guarding the public sphere, are at the mercy and hands of a corrupted lot. Laughter from this cartoon and from satirical works in general, arises from the view of two or more inconsistent parts or circumstances, considered as united in one complex phenomenon or as acquiring a sort of reciprocal and interdependent relation from the peculiar manner in which the mind takes notice of them



As we look at the referee being given a red card by a player, we can't help but laugh at this action's ridiculousness. However, as the laughter subsides, we realize that we have been cleverly cheated by the cartoonist who would have it that the one who hands the red card is, in actual fact, the one who is, paradoxically, in charge. The red card does not differ from those handed to developing countries by hegemonic powers through multinationals and such bodies like the IMF and the World Bank with regard to strange economic policies such as Structural Adjustment, NEPAD, Africa Commission and the like.

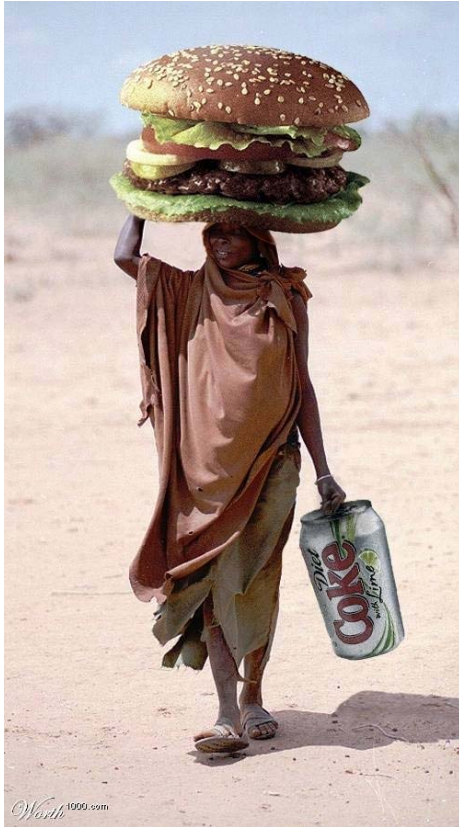
Whither Satire in Tanzania

If we agree that any piece of art or literature does, at once, constitute a historical category, and that such a piece echoes and replicates the mentality of society or of a group of people in that society at a given time, then contextual identification becomes indispensable. Such a piece is a perceptual manifestation of a stage in the relevant society's cultural development, and its analysis must, of necessity, take that fact into consideration. Satire appeals to certain deep-laid elements of human persona, to anger and contempt, to the love of mockery and of laughter while interfacing wit and intellect.

As has been seen, the cartoonists have often used this space to present a critique of the powers that be, through a clever use of satire and humour. In such a case then, the cartoonists and their cartoons and satirists in general, mediate between the public and the authorities. Through the cartoons and other satirical works, the public is provided with some space for airing contesting viewpoints and, in the process, staging counter voices that generate public debate. Satirical works then form public spaces that provide a means for articulating alternative discursive spheres and counter opinions on not only the language and corruption issues, but also on other social, political and economic concerns.

A few pertinent remarks arising from the above state of affairs and also from the newspaper report quoted earlier on need to be made. Several questions may be asked here. First, what exactly constitutes a "healthy state of cartooning" and from whose point of view? What is the objective of cartooning in Africa? Why did cartooning, at least in Tanzania, flourish at a certain time more than ever before? If the then President of Tanzania was excited and more concerned with just his actual bodily rather than political face and, consequently, the economic, social and cultural face of the whole of Tanzania, how effective are the cartoons' critical stance? How far do cartooning and satirizing change the state's impinging of public space that has so often happened in the course of organized and methodical disarticulation of the major part of the public in Tanzania, if not in Africa in general?

The art of cartooning as shown in this presentation capitalizes on satirical **expressive space** that in turn rests on humour and laughter as the best medicine for the ills that go along with misguided and damaging political decisions on the language question and the wickedness and immorality of corruption in Tanzania. How effective is this public sphere in the discussions of such and other social evils in Tanzania and in bringing about the desired changes? Whither the art of cartooning and satirical knack as popular expressive public spheres in Tanzania?



Food for Thought

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