

**THE USES OF SATIRE IN FICTION: AN
ANALYSIS OF WAHOME MUTAHI'S THREE
DAYS ON THE CROSS AND THE JAIL BUGS**

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By

Wasike Chris J. C

A thesis presented in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts of the University of Nairobi.

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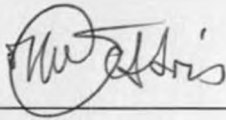


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The Uses of Satire in Fiction: An Analysis of Wahome Mutahi's Three Days on the Cross and The Jail Bugs

DECLARATION

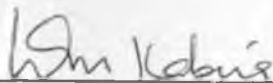
This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.



15.11.2000

Wasike Chris J. C.

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as university supervisor.



15.11.2000

Dr. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira

DEDICATION

To my late mother Sabina Musindalo Wasike who always wanted the very best for me. "Mom you were too young to die. This is for you". And to my father Julius Charles Wasike, "Thanks for being there for me whenever everything looked bleak and insurmountable.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This intense and rigorous academic endeavour would not have been possible without the help and assistance from various individuals, groups and institutions. I first of all thank my supervisor Dr. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira for patiently going through my illegible hand written drafts of my thesis even when I was supposed to give her typed copies. It is because of her unwavering support and understanding that I have finally come this far.

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My heartfelt gratitude also go to my dear friend and classmate Felix Kimingichi for all the support, whether emotional, financial and theatrical, offered during the whole period of the programme. To Pauline Musyoka, thanks for the typing, typesetting and printing. However, I am solely responsible for all the mistakes in this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	(i)
DEDICATION	(ii)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	(iii)
TABLE OF CONTENTS	(iv)
ABSTRACT	(vi)
 CHAPTER ONE	
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem	2
1.2 Objectives	3
1.3 Hypotheses	3
1.4 Justification of the Study	3
1.5 Literature Review	5
1.6 Theoretical Framework	21
1.7 Methodology	23
1.8 Scope and Limitation	24
 CHAPTER TWO	
2.0 Wahome Mutahi as a Writer and Satirist	26
2.1 Introduction	26
2.2 Mutahi's Life and Background	26
2.3 Author's Works	32
 CHAPTER THREE	
3.0 Satire in Three Days on the Cross	36
3.1 Introduction	36
3.2 Satire through Narrative Structure and Techniques	36
3.2.1 Plot and Narration	36

3.2.2	Point of View and Satirical Detachment.....	40
3.2.3	Flashbacks, Flashforwards, Retrospection, Stream of Consciousness and Internal Monologues as Techniques of Irony	43
3.3	Ridicule through Special Linguistic and Stylistic Choices	48
3.4	Characterisation, Themes and Satire	60

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0	Satire in The Jail Bugs	65
4.1	Introduction	65
4.2	Narrative Style and the Use of Special Satirical Devices	66
4.3	Use of Sordid Imagery ad Buffoonery in Satire; Images of Animality, Filth and Vulgarity	78

CONCLUSION

WORKS CITED

ABSTRACT

This study is a stylistic analysis of satire as a technique used in literary fiction. The study sets out to investigate the necessity and impact of satire as a literary technique, when used in prose works. The study proceeds with the premise that satire is a powerful tool in literature and it has both linguistic and social inclinations. The major emphasis of this study is to interrogate the relationship between linguistic, narrative, thematic and characterisation aspects of satire.

This study is, thus, an examination of how narrative techniques, thematic intentions and linguistic choices are closely interwoven and specifically tailored to bring out an intelligible and overall powerful aesthetic effect and beauty in his novels. The research is largely guided by the basic tenets of stylistics which it uses to highlight the power of satire as an artistic tool used by fiction writers in general and Mutahi in particular. The stylistic approach is used because of its emphasis on linguistic evidence and de-emphasis of speculation and impressionism. In the process, we also acknowledge Mutahi's biographical details and how they affect the satirical beauty and thematic structure of his texts. The study essentially explores and implores different satirical techniques and how they are deliberately and specially juxtaposed with themes, characters and the overall narrative success of Wahome Mutahi's two texts *The Jail Bugs* and *Three Days on the Cross*. A common feature of the two texts is their thematic concern with police brutality. But at stylistic and narrative level, they slightly differ. While *The Jail Bugs* has a freer plot and lighter sense of humour and comedy, *Three Days on the Cross* is rather constrained and not gay in mood..

Nonetheless, in both texts the author has employed various narrative and stylistic techniques to develop characters, foreground themes, further his satirical agenda and made his works aesthetically interesting and articulate. All in all, an analysis of the two texts reveals that, satire plays an important role in the overall aesthetic meaning of these works of fiction. Although the author is more satirically articulate in *The Jail Bugs* than in *Three Days on the Cross*, we note that the satirical style has been effectively deployed with immense success in both texts. Of particular interest, is the way in which various

satirical techniques have been used by the author to bring out themes like politics, police brutality and religious hypocrisy. In a word, the author mocks and ridicules the wrong doer while at the same time using his characters as mouthpieces through which he makes his social commentary. Through these two texts, the author affirms that literary style and satire in this case, determines how a text is read, interpreted and understood.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Wahome Mutahi has over time established himself as one of Kenya's leading social satirists and his works are informed by an assemblage of expansive and solid yet realistic views on a range of issues ranging from concerns about politics, religion, self pride and gender issues. As a well-known newspaper columnist, Mutahi has made his contribution as a gifted humorist with a rare flair for rib-cracking wit and creatively thought sense of comedy.

But besides his journalistic writing, Mutahi has also published other serious literary works of which *The Jail Bugs* and *Three Days on the Cross* are the focus of the present investigation. On drama, Mutahi has also written and directed plays in the Gikuyu language among them *Mugaathe mubogothi*, *Mugaathe ndotono* and *Profesa Nyoori*, which he co-authored. However, despite the prolific nature of this writer, most critics have chosen to give him little attention. Incidentally, most of the critics who in our view are elitist casually regard his works without due and close analysis of his satirical craftsmanship, which is aesthetically interwoven with his intellectual attitudes in order to express his social values.

Literature has often been defined as a reflection of life. But in the post-modern reality, it has also been seen to depict absurdities and oddities that constantly impede on daily human strivings. Indeed, it is these daily stumbling blocks that Wahome Mutahi chooses as the target of his satire by making us laugh about them. The aim of this study therefore is to investigate the use of satire in Mutahi's novels and particularly to evaluate the satirical techniques used in his two texts – *The Jail Bugs* and *Three Days on the Cross* – and how this relates to the themes, character and style of narration.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Literary critics tend to dismiss popular writers like Wahome Mutahi as not serious. A careful survey carried out prior to this study indicates that very little research has been done on the writings of Wahome Mutahi. In fact the absence of any scholarly treatises on the author goes a long way to point to an unbeaten track and academic neglect of Mutahi as a writer of promise with more than five titles to his name.

Although there have been a number of newspaper and other reviews of the works of Mutahi, there is evidently a lack of systematic and critical research on his peculiar stylistic qualities. In particular satirical techniques have not been analysed with a view of establishing how they are interwoven with his characters, narrative style and the themes. Our study therefore hopes to open new gates in a literary analysis of the works of a writer whose satirical genius has long been neglected and even when noticed, it is only by newspaper critics whose views in our opinion are non-exhaustive and therefore cannot agree with the ideas that precipitated this study.

All in all, three things are certain before we embark on our study. The first is that Wahome Mutahi's *The Jail Bugs* and *Three Days on the Cross* and his works in general have not been accorded any serious and critical attention. Secondly, Mutahi's satirical techniques have not been critically evaluated. Thirdly, any commentaries on Mutahi's works are just book reviews meant for newspaper publication and nothing about them offers insights into the real contribution of Mutahi to social satire and popular literary forms for which he is well known. The lack of literary and scholarly critiques on Mutahi's writings confirms the common accusation that critics in Kenya have borne for a long time- paying lip service to popular works without attempting to critically and systematically analyse them for their own sake.

This study therefore seeks to examine and evaluate the specific satirical techniques that have been strategically employed by the author in his novels and how they have overall aesthetic implications to the eventual understanding of the texts. In a nutshell we inquire whether Mutahi's use of satire in fiction is stylistically effective or it falls flat.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research sets out to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) To analyse the various aspects of satire used in the two novels and their relationship to the themes, characters and narrative style.
- (ii) Evaluate the impact of the various satirical techniques used and how they help in achieving the aesthetic and thematic understanding of *Three Days on the Cross* and *The Jail Bugs*.

1.3 HYPOTHESES

This study proceeds with the following assumptions:

- (i) The author has used various satirical techniques, which are closely related to the themes, characters and the narrative style.
- (ii) The satirical techniques used in the novel contribute to a better understanding of the novels.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Often in literary debates, critics easily drift into the trap of instinctively ranking works of art into the serious/non-serious hierarchy without due attention to the particular texts for their own merits. It is true some novels, especially the comic type could be unrefined and not woven into the so called 'aesthetic whole', but as Peck and Coyle observe:

In a comic novel, events, which could be treated seriously, are presented as funny. - - - We must recognise that the novel is an 'untidy genre' - - - and a novel can be both comic and serious (102).

In the same spirit, this study seeks to explore the stylistic techniques of the author with special emphasis on satirical devices peculiar to Mutahi's works and therefore merit serious academic attention.

His use of simple and easily readable language coupled with his use of biting sarcasm, ridicule, humour and cynicism makes him a writer who should be accorded serious attention from our literary critics. The light-hearted and comic way in which human vices and follies are pointed at and ridiculed in the typical Gogolian style is a technique that warrants serious scholarly attention. Contrary to what most serious writers fear, Adams contests that a book that has a “funny story doesn’t mean it is less than great.” (White XVIII). Adams further observes that:

Most great writers; are at considerable pains never to associate their name with anything, funny or flippant or nonsensical or ‘light’ for fear it would hurt their reputation (White XVIII).

This rather unfounded anxiety with satire especially of the comic type, stems from the elitist view that in ‘serious’ art one cannot afford to laugh. But as Northrop Frye argues, two elements are essential to satire:

One is wit or humour founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, the other is an object of attack.
(Bergman et al 191).

Thus serious writers need not neglect the light-hearted and humorous aspect of art for the sake of wanting to be ‘serious’. After all as Bergman and Epstein argue, “the satirist hopes that by laughing at our own errors, we can best correct them” (191).

This study is therefore justified in examining techniques because there is a tendency by most readers to treat the subjects of particular novels at the expense of stylistic techniques. Often satire in the comical sense is treated in a cavalier manner and our study seeks to prove that there are both serious and interestingly aesthetic accomplishments that can be realised by use of satire in fiction.

Our present study is basically inspired by the apparent lack of systematic and critical research on the writings of Mutahi. The research further intends to contribute to the literary body of knowledge by underlining the author as a satirist whose stylistic and thematic concerns have not been accorded scholarly attention. Through this study I aim

to broaden the concept of literature to include popular and satirically stimulating works like Wahome Mutahi's *Three Days on the Cross* and *The Jail Bugs*.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

As earlier mentioned, very little has been written about the works of Wahome Mutahi. If anything, the little material that could be found were nothing but short book reviews mainly contained in newspaper articles. In the same short articles, there is merely a brief mention of his novels with little attention accorded to the author's literary and satirical style. From what we have gathered, all reviews of Wahome Mutahi's two novels appeared in a local daily (Daily Nation) apart from Justa Wawira's review of *The Jail Bugs*, which appeared in the Journal of the Writers Association of Kenya.

In the first part of this literature review, we intend to focus on the few newspaper articles that reviewed Mutahi's works. The final part of the review, endeavours to explore texts that explore the use of satire as a technique in fiction and how this is related to our present study and African literature in general.

Margaretta wa Gacheru, in an article titled '*Taste of Hell*,' acknowledges that Mutahi is one of Kenya's leading social satirists:

His fascination for society's misfits and marginal men and those urban survivors and strategists who are always fighting poverty and the police and dread the pitfalls and prospects of prison life (Daily Nation 14).

On Mutahi's *Three Days on the Cross*, she comments thus:

the author condenses and crystallises all the inhuman and unsavoury tricks of our present generation of African regimes in a Kafkasque style (14).

In relation to *The Jail Bugs*, she says that the novel was published and produced at a time when "the conditions of Kenyan prisoners and its inmates continues to be a sore spot and delicate point of vein" (4). Though serious attention is not given to the author's use of hilarious satire, wa Gacheru briefly mentions the use of diary form as a narrative technique and what she refers to as Mutahi's "use of wit and rye sardonic sense of humour".

In his review of Mutahi's *How to be a Kenyan*, Daudi Kahura notes that the author is concerned with the foibles, traits and behaviour that are peculiar to Kenyans. Besides this comment, the reviewers biographical detail about how the author's writing of the book was inspired by his (author's) fascination with a British writer George Mikes who wrote *How To Be a Briton*, is not useful to our present study. However, the reviewer's assertion on how the book "is a mirror in our eyes by which we can see who we are and how we behave", actually echoes the writer's philosophy of satire in general.

Justa Wawira's review is probably the only literary analysis of the author's *The Jail Bugs*. In her review, she observes that the novel is "a stunning intrigue which testifies to the prolific nature of this skilled writer" (101). Wawira goes further and appreciates the contemporary setting of the novel in which the Kenyan penal system is under scathing attack by the author. Nonetheless, like all the other commentaries, the author of this review does not enjoy the liberty of treating the satire in the novel in detail as our study intends to do. At best all the book reviews amount to nothing but brief synopses of the novels.

As a stylistic technique, satire in literature has been used right from the traditional genres of art such as narratives, epics, tragedy and comedy. However, according to Mathew Hodgart, true satire originated from:

a state of mind which is critical and aggressive usually one of irritation at the latest examples of human absurdity, in efficiency or wickedness (7).

In light of this, therefore, Hodgart regards satire as a way of looking at life with a mixture of laughter and indignation. He therefore defines satire as:

the use of ridicule, sarcasm, irony etc. to expose attack, or deride vices, follies etc. (7).

Essentially, the main impetus of satire is the anger of the satirist coupled with his superiority and contempt for the victim. As a result of the hatred, the satirist aims to make the wicked wrong doer to lose face and the best way of achieving this is through humiliation by contemptuous laughter.

On the other hand, literary satire is not just about humiliating the victim; it also involves the mocking affectation and attempting to laugh at people and their follies because as Plato says "laughter is a mixture of pleasure and pain and it is closely allied to envy". (Bullitt 291). It is also important for the victim to take cognisance of the fact that the point of focus of satire is never ominous nor malicious. For its efficacy and credibility, satire is first and foremost corrective in intention. As H. W. Fowler puts it, "its motive is amendment, its province morals and manners, its method accentuation and its audience the self-satisfied" (Worcester 114).

Under the guise of masks, satire makes fun of human follies and wickedness and it is an indirect device through which truths are hidden and communicated to the audience with a sense of rapacity and stinging honesty. In a word, the use of satire in literary art forms sets out to warn, advice, educate, ridicule and entertain the audience.

Since the classical period, satire is rarely forthright and candid as far as honest expression of emotion or opinion is concerned. According to Arthur Pollard, the satirist is often 'furtive and secretive' yet persuasive in his or her allusions to issues. But eventually, the satirist has a premeditated purpose to inculcate a given set of emotions and opinions into the reader.

In my present study, satire is regarded as criticism especially the vitriolic kind that affects victims because of its close reference to rational and objective standards for a moral purpose. This is also supported by Bullitt when he argues that:

even in the classical days, the concern of the satirist was the vice and especially the affection which attended men in their daily active lives; the satirist actually considered himself as a practical rather than speculative or abstruse moralist (44).

Ethically, the satirist since time immemorial, is expected to be a role model of his society, and his art was supposed to be an effective 'test of truth'. Incidentally, the human 'love of glory' and fear of shame are universal passions, which are exploited to the fullest by satirists for moral purposes. By appealing to man's susceptibility to shame, asserts Bullitt:

Satire sets up as it were, a more reaching and immediately affective tribunal and increases man's moral sensibility by goading him through shame and ridicule, which goes back to the cardinal intentions of satire; to amend vices and therefore heal and restore societal moral fabric (18).

However, the satirist's condemnation of the follies of his society is not without wrath from his victims. Though he is usually conscious of the sordid weaknesses and wickedness of his fellow beings, he cannot just avoid condemning them with all the rancour and venom he has about them. His enthusiasm with verbal bludgeon, rapier, flail and tirades is just but an illustration of the elements of satire that the satirist so loves to employ. Satire is necessary in society because it is 'a means to arouse moral action through an appeal to present shame and a means to expose men's (also women's) in a shameful and ludicrous way'. (Bullitt 24).

To Jonathan Swift satire, as a healer and corrective, at times gives way to satire as punishment and retribution. On this, he further describes satire as:

At best a kind of moral policeman restraining the righteous but helpless against the wicked, assisting to preserve well inclined men in the course of virtue but seldom or never reclaiming the vicious (Bullitt 29).

The nature of satire is such that it exploits the discrepancy between appearance and reality to expose hypocrisy and pretence and thereby lambaste those who do not practise what they preach. This discrepancy is what Jonathan Swift aptly refers to as the 'ridiculous'. He defines the ridiculous as:

perception of an objectively real discrepancy between what a thing is and what is pretended or appears to be" (Bullit 49).

In Swiftian terms therefore, to ridicule a person, an institution or an idea consists of, at least in part, the mere exposure of this discrepancy.

It is true that satire ridicules and laughs at social affectations and weaknesses behind a mask. However real good satire transcends this and it requires the author to be detached from such emotions as rage or anger. According to David Worcester:

A satire may be inspired but may produce rage in its reader, but ninety-nine times out of a hundred rhetorical analysis of its language will reveal the wide difference between its style of attack and the style of a rattling good set between man and wife or between a communist lecturer and a member of the American Legion (117).

Thus, satire is intended to be the engine of anger and not the direct expression of it. Like Mark Anthony in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, the satirist must develop a sense of coolness, humility and detachment.

As a matter of fact an apparent sense of detachment from too intense a personal involvement is a necessary precondition to satirical greatness. In all his sobriety the satirist should exercise restraint because according to Robert Elliot, he is a public servant fighting the:

good fight against vice and folly whenever he meets it, he is honest, brave and protected by the rectitude of his motives, he attacks only the wicked and then seldom or never by name, he is in short a moral man appalled by the evil around him or her. (213).

In satire, there are various techniques that are used. These include invective, comedy, wit, humour, buffoonery, diminution, sarcasm, cynicism and sardonic, burlesque and irony. Basically, these devices are used to ridicule folly and wickedness in human kind. David Worcester captures the spectrum of satire when he says:

The analysis of satire runs from the red of invective at one end to the violet of the most delicate irony at the other. Beyond either end of the scale, literature runs off into forms that are not perceptible as satires. The ultra-violet is pure criticism, the infra-red is direct reproof or abuse untransformed by art. This could degenerate into direct attack that is open name-calling and nose-thumbing (117).

However, as keen readers we should appreciate the extremes and be able to notice the distinctions between direct criticism of invective and the fine stroke of ridicule and irony.

If all satire is criticism, then invective is the crudest and lowest level of butchery in which the author vilifies an object directly and openly without recourse to wit and with no attempt to arouse the comic spirit. Such kind of satire is not sustainable according to Worcester because “it is a frontal attack and its abuse is not mingled with sufficient wit or technical ingenuity to evoke any response lighter than the vehement emotions of anger and rage” (116). “The substance of this kind of satire,” adds Worcester, “is outright and unadulterated denunciation”.(116) Ultimately, good satirical invective should demonstrate and invoke a sense of detachment and complexity in the author’s basic attitude towards an object. But gross invective often lapses into personalised tirades where abuse is direct and intense, coupled with blatant and tactless sincerity of expression. This kind of invective says Bullit, J. M:

tends towards extreme emotional involvement thereby resulting in a tendency to exaggerate the demonic and vicious aspects of the object (67).

Consequently, it is not surprising to note that much of the vocabulary used in invective satire is in the lexicon of billingsgate and hyperbole.

In all fairness however, we have to credit invective satire for its candid and brazen nature, which acts as a tool for direct expression of opinions. But a closer look usually reveals

that invective is poor as satire because of its excess of expressed feelings, not to mention the fact that it does not survive when the social occasion that countenanced it passes.

Comedy is another technique that is frequently used in satire. Derived from the Greek word 'Komos' – meaning a revel – comedy was originally meant to be everything that is not tragic. While tragedy traditionally dealt with the fall from power and eventual death of heroic personalities, comedy was classically supposed to be light-hearted and somewhat 'filthy'. This is because it was known to concern itself more with the goings-on of everyday folk like corrupt religious leaders, prostitutes, venal slaves and sloppy magistrates. So while tragedy was about heroes, gods and unhappy endings, comedy was about ordinary citizens and happy endings.

Presently, comedy is acknowledged for its important role, just like the purging effect of catharsis in tragedy. According to Frank Muir;

the immoral conduct of the foolish is changed by pointing
at them the finger of mockery (viii).

For purposes of this study, comedy will be defined as that violent yet amusing attack on somebody, or something judged to be wicked or foolish using invective parody, mockery or anything else that might wound. Thus, comedy is taken to be a satirical entity, not just sheer amusement.

While differentiating pure comedy from satire, Worcester argues that harsh derision denotes comedy. Thus, while the laughter of pure comedy is relatively purposeless, the laughter of satire is directed towards a preconceived end (114). Again comedy demands less from the audience than satire. To the satirist, what is of utmost importance is the comedy inherent in a work that portrays the disparity between appearance and reality.

Another satirical device that is commonly used is wit. This is defined by the Collins English Dictionary as "the talent or quality of using unexpected associations between contrasting and disparable words or ideas to make a clever humorous effect". This definition reveals the fact that wit dwells on the unexpected collocation of words and ideas. It expresses that which is more designed, concerted, regular, and artificial yet

amusingly effective. It is also plausible to assert that wit, as a device that thrives on surprise, is usually intended to throw light on something or an issue, its province are words and ideas, and its target audience should be fairly intelligent.

But according to Frank Muir, wit is the “aristocratic aspect of comedy” that has sharp, intelligence and wisdom (iv). Muir insists that wit was originally, “an aristocratic mannerism because it was an intellectual sport played between gentlemen using ideas as shuttle cocks” (v). Thus in the classical period, the language of wit was a matter of necessity, rich in poetic references and paradoxes and puns, which only the expensively and properly educated could exhibit. Wit therefore was so much in use in upper social circles as an offensive weapon during the classical period and the Greek philosopher Aristotle once referred to it as ‘educated insult’.

On the nature of wit, Arthur Pollard observes that wit wounds with a neat and unexpected stroke. The reader:

is surprised, comically shocked by the unexpected collocation of ideas, yet he recognises in them a certain truth or sufficient truth for the wit to be acceptable (65).

Though not usually preferred in literature, buffoonery is another satirical device in art that involves overt and uninhibited comicality or popular fun. It is basically at the opposite end of scale to wit in just every aspect and its roots are in the cheap and cheerful. According to Frank Muir, ‘buffoonery is that section of comedy whose aim is to induce laughter; laughter as hard and as long and public as possible’ (iv).

Buffoonery is easy to create in comedy and satire because cracking and telling jokes is by far the most widespread and easy self-contained method of triggering off laughter. And as Muir argues, “laughing at silly people who are not bright or rich as we are makes us feel warm and secure.” (ix).

In a word, the effect of buffoonery is the opposite of comedy. While in comedy the aim of laughter is to benefit the person laughed at but with jokes, which are the basic component of buffoonery, the laughter reassures the one who laughs. For purposes of this study, buffoonery is therefore regarded as comedy that is invoked at the expense of other people or what is also referred to as ‘humour in bad taste’.

True humour in art is defined by Jonathan Swift as:

the best ingredient towards that kind of satire, which is most useful, gives the least offence; which instead of hurting, laughs men out of their follies. (Bullit 37).

In relative comparison to other techniques of satire, humour lies between wit and buffoonery. If wit belongs to the well-educated and buffoonery to the lower classes, humour is for the middle class. Unlike wit and buffoonery, humour is observational. Wit usually concerns ideas, while buffoonery is about deeds but humour is concerned with people. To the original English people who first coined the word, humour referred to an 'odd embarrassing or funny incident' experienced or observed and described later in a manner which might or might not provoke laughter. In this study, therefore, humour will be analysed as any agreeable admixture of a sense of fun and a sense of proportion, which is effective and has a satirical appeal.

Diminution is also another satirical device used in literary art. It usually entails the use of 'ugly or homely' images, which are specifically intended to diminish and belittle the dignity of an object. Ordinary speech diminution could also refer to any kind of speech, which tends to either by the use of low or vulgar imagery, or by any other insinuations and allusions, place an object below its accepted status. According to J. M. Bullit, diminution in satire is in three different:

First, it involves drawing a similarity between an object and one, which is universally acknowledged to be inferior. Such a comparison eventually results in the primary object absorbing the contemptibility of the second object. The second kind of diminution entails dwelling upon certain physical characteristics of a person and then by synecdoche, the whole object is equated with that one part which in most cases may be ugly or disagreeable. Alternatively, diminution may also appear as high voltage chides, direct abuse, irony, litotes or any other way of belittling, something (45).

A common example of diminution is the attribution of failure to impotence in the case of one's adversary or opponent. Basically, this is solely aimed at debasing and denigrating the other person. Characteristics of diminution also involve the use of belittling imagery and sexual allusions. For example, a man's intellectual failures could be easily equated to

his poor sexual prowess just to disorient and discredit him. Diminution could also take bestial proportions especially when certain perverted human qualities and mannerisms are given animal associations.

Sarcasm is yet another very effective satirical technique. In literature, it usually refers to a taunting remark or remarks sometimes ironical but always bitter and ill natured with the sole motive of inflicting pain. Worcester refers to sarcasm as 'a form of verbal irony produced by inversion of meaning' (117). Because of its 'frontal attack' nature, sarcasm usually draws attention to itself. It never deceives its victim and usually carries its 'sting' so that it is not misunderstood. Alongside the verbal jibes, sarcasm has also established a peculiar set of features like a curl of the lip, special intonation and falling inflection, shaking and nodding of the head or even just pulling faces. Arthur Pollard observes that, 'sarcasm is irony without any mystery and refinement' (61). He goes further to emphasise that it is essentially 'incidental and verbal, but however, it is cruder than irony and it is a much more blunter instrument and lacking in generosity" (61). Indeed sarcasm has also been referred to by literary scholars as the 'lowest form of wit'.

In literature, cynicism and the sardonic are yet other powerful satirical devices used. They are more about tonality and the mood created by the use of certain words. These tones in satire usually emanate from a deep sense of disillusionment and near despair and often occur closely. A cynic's critical remarks, for example, are made against a backdrop of hollow laughter. The speaker may have the chance and liberties to laugh but his will be a lonely and embittered delight. The sardonic comments on the other hand are too pessimistic to accept even hollow laughter; he would rather weep instead. According to Melville Clark:

the laughter of the cynic is edged with contempt but sardonic laughter is blunted with chagrin and mortification – the sardonic is on the edge of weeping because he is on the edge of uncontrollable anger; that's why its laugh is so bitter (Pollard 53).

Burlesque is a very peculiar satirical device in literary art. According to A. F. Scott, burlesque is an imitation of a literary work designed to ridicule the speech action and 'ideas' (114). As a satirical stylistic device, burlesque does this when it presents ludicrous imitations, caricatured reproductions, parodies, handling a crucial issue in a

trivial way or alternatively it also entails a low subject being treated with mock heroic dignity.

From another perspective, burlesque can be regarded as satire by comparison. It is a kind of extended simile – a literary vehicle capable of carrying a multiple series of comparisons between the ideal and the real and revealing the discrepancy between them in the strongest light. Far from the brash goad of the invective, burlesque usually lures the audience when the artist masquerades as a passive agent and slowly lets the satire come home to roost on its own.

In satire there are two types of burlesque, high and low. High burlesque is where the victim of the satirical butt is held up against a standard that is obviously too elevated for him and in the process make his flaws and shortcomings stand out oddly. If for example a person perceives himself as an exalted personality with an inflated ego, he will be embellished with the trappings and dignities of a real hero and yet retain only his proper features. His vanity and pretentiousness will then stand out, to the exclusion of all the other qualities and when we notice this discrepancy we cannot help but laugh at how the victim makes a fool of himself. Low burlesque on the other hand, is where the satirist creates a standard below its victim against which it is measured. Basically, low burlesque calls forth for sympathy for the victim.

Lauded as the most effective technique of satire, the term irony originates from the Greek word 'eironeia' which means 'simulated ignorance'. But in the post-modern reality, the term is used to refer to the use of words with humorous or satirical intention so that the meaning is the direct opposite of what is actually said. Generally, therefore, the ironist is simply a person who appears to say or be one thing while making it apparent to his audience that he means or is something quite different.

In the classical Greek period, irony was used to simply imply the simulated adoptions of another's point of view for the purpose of ridicule and sarcasm. Developed from the element of concealment or simulation, Socrates, who in discussions was known to adopt another person's view point in order to finally ridicule him and reveal his weaknesses, originated what was then referred to as 'Socratic irony'. Nonetheless the effectiveness of irony in modern art is contained in its capacity to create the appearance of the satirist's

emotional detachment. Aristotle, in his Rhetoric argues that “the ironical man jokes to amuse himself” (Bullit 39). Thus, through irony the satirist does not exert himself directly against his opponent and therefore manages to preserve a dignified status of superiority to what he attacks.

Irony also uses distortion as its weapon; total distortion, which involves the inversion of what, we expect. And as a satirical technique, it includes among other things in its effect implication, insinuation and omission. Because of this, Arthur Pollard advises that:

irony requires a select and responsive audience to recognise its peculiar direction of meaning, otherwise the readers may think that the distortion is the work of a lunatic whose own values have been disturbed (67).

An example of a satirical work that is ironical and knows no bounds in its ferocity is Jonathan Swift's, A Modest Proposal. Swift's irony entails his proposition to cure the problem of poverty and over population in Ireland through a wanton and systematic rearing of children who would later be served as meat to the wealthy. Such an idea sounds absurd and incongruous but in a nutshell, Swift was only trying to bitterly lash out at his countrymen because of their lack of care and prudence in raising families.

Ian Jack argues that "satire is borne of the instinct to protest; it is protest become art" (Pollard 7). However, even as a form of protest, satire is about every subject of human life and behaviour. Among the common topics of satire are religion, politics, women and self pride. However, experiences such as death and love are in their essential magnificence beyond the reach of satire. In tragedies and comedies these issues are celebrated and exalted but satire as Pollard puts it 'does not exalt, but it deflates' (7).

Infirmity is another of issues that is never the topic of satire. This is because no satirist wishes to make fun of another person's unfortunate circumstances. But topics like religion impose on human kind serious demands and the satirist delights in making much fun of them. Affectation and hypocrisy are also interesting topics in satire and they are even more interesting when related to religion. The clergy and especially those who pretend to be holy are always good targets of the satirist's attention. A good example of a religious satire is Wole Soyinka's The Trial of Brother Jero in which he portrays the

phoney activities of a beach prophet named, Brother Jeroboam, a self confessed 'rogue' who capitalises on the insecurities of his followers to defraud them off money.

Politics is another popular subject of satire. Politics is all about power and as Harold Laswell defines it, "it concerns who gets what, when and how (Odegi – 16). Essentially, politics is about who wields power and who is subjugated. In this kind of game, satire is a useful tool for political subjects who want to fight the elite subjugating them. However, political satire, especially the emotional type often degenerates into propaganda. A good example of a political satire is Nikolai Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, which satirises the Russian bureaucracy in such a way that officials of a small town are ludicrously held ransom by a junior copying clerk because they have mistaken him for an Inspector General.

Women's sensuality is also another popular topic of satire. Often it is associated with mock-modesty or a concern for her reputation. In the words of Mathew Hodgart the origin of this topic in satire is because:

men perhaps feel some guilt about their exploitation of women's inferiority but they also feel resentment because with all their advantages their power over women is far from complete, and in some ways women have power over them (79).

In most satirical works, what is emphasised is women's unpredictability and vulnerability. They are usually portrayed as licentious, vicious and primitive in their lust and usually jealous of one another. Consequently, says Hodgart,

Women have been expected to be more chaste than men as well as more modest in dress and demeanour. The fuss made by the moralist about women's fashions, cosmetics and coiffure is based only partly on the very reasonable grounds of expense; it also voices the suspicion that such adornments are meant to allure men other than the husband (81).

Despite this attitude it is however true that men do not easily resist the spell of beauty in women. A good example of a woman character who spell-binds men with her beauty is Segi in 'Wole Soyinka's' *Kongi's Harvest*.

Pretence and self pride are other aspects of social human behaviour that often bear the brunt of satire. By pretence, we are here referring to man's vain attempt to be what he is well aware he cannot be. Pretentiousness therefore is the act of a person with an inflated ego who feels inadequate and he/she can only, make up for this loss by imitating other people's way of life. A good example is Soyinka's subtle portrayal of Lakunle's split personality in *The Lion and the Jewel*.

Evidently, satire as a stylistic technique is not strange in African Literature. Right from the original oral forms of art, like songs, narratives, riddles, etc., satirical techniques were used to admonish and ridicule wrong doers. According to Paul Radin:

Examples of every conceivable form (of satire) are found in oral art ranging from broad lampoon and crude invective to subtle innuendo and satire based on man's stupidity, his gluttony, and his lack of a sense of proportion. (Hodgart 14).

Thus, satire is indeed part of African literature and has been extensively employed as a technique, in literary texts.

However, most of the early written works in African literature tended to evolve from the instinct to protest. Because of the colonial subjugation experienced by blacks, most African writers tended to articulate political grievances by responding to the racist charges levelled against Africans. In the final analysis, such works ended up bemoaning the cultural alienation that Africans risked because of the colonial legacy left by the whites. Okot p'Bitek, in his *Song of Lawino* and *Song of Ocol*, is up in arms against the colonialist's cultural 'hydra' that seems to spread its tentacles to affect people like Ocol. Okot's strategy however is to contrast the natural grace and dignity of traditional African customs with the absurd 'plasticity' of modern habits and practices that the so-called 'educated' Africans have copied from the West. The primary target of Lawino's tirades is Ocol's 'apemanship' and as Bernth Lindfors asserts:

Lawino's complaints also widen their scope to embrace the much larger social, political and religious issues arising from valid and unthinking westernisation. (Killam G. 149).

In other words, Lawino is not satirically lamenting about the alienation of her husband Ocol alone, but she is complaining about the whole Acoli community that is caving in to westernisation.

Nonetheless, in Wole Soyinka's Interpreters, Achebe's A Man of the People, and Ayi Kwei Armah's The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born, the focus of satire shifts from cultural alienation to post independence disillusionment due to misgovernance by the African political elite. Soyinka, for example, condemns the false ideas of civilisation and progress in a story that revolves around young intellectuals who try to understand themselves and the meaning of life in a society they are dissatisfied with. Through the experiences of young determined people like Sagoe and Sekoni, the novel exposes follies like racism, corruption, social pretence and immorality.

Achebe's A Man of the People satirises the African Independent regimes and the hypocrisy they are mired in. The protagonist Odili Samalu finds himself in a world in which the truth comes out too late and when nobody is listening. On the other hand, Odili's political commitment is also questionable. He conveniently becomes involved in politics because he wants to change the existing order and there is a lingering feeling in him that politics is that kind of weapon he will be able to use to get back at Chief Nanga for stealing Elsie from him. His political ambition is therefore not sanctioned by his alleged intention.

Ayi Kwei Armah's The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born is a satirical novel on the social decay and corruption in independent Africa. Set in Ghana soon after independence, the story unfolds around two anonymous characters simply referred to as 'the man' and 'the teacher'. 'Man' and 'teacher' are portrayed as pious characters seeking to escape the sleazy reality of cacophonous chaos and sordidness that permeates their very political, social and economic lives. In the novel, the author makes known his misgivings about the state of affairs in independent Ghana and the two characters seem to be his mouthpiece in his search for alternatives and options in a hopelessly despairing situation. The climax of the novel is an inevitable coup where the evil doers are rooted out but only to be replaced by rulers who sing the same old songs.

A number of literary critics have also analysed satire as a stylistic technique in African Literature. Monica Wanambisi in her *Thought and Technique in Okot p'Bitek's poetry*, discusses the use of satire in Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino*, *Song of Ocol* and *Song of Malaya*. Horiuchi Rijmer -Kazumi attempts a comparative study of Alice Walker's *Colour Purple* and Mariana Ba's *So Long a Letter* with special emphasis on the use of the letter form and satire. Chris Wanjala's *Stand points in African Literature* analyses Achebe's satire and its teachings, while Masumi Odari in her M. A Thesis investigates the use of satire in Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreters*. Wanjala's article titled Achebe as a *Satirist and Teacher* is relevant and useful although it leaves Mutahi's works out of its scope, while Wanambisi's work is equally relevant though it discusses a different author and a different genre – poetry. On the other hand, Masumi Odari's M. A Thesis has a useful and relevant framework for our study but regrettably, it does not have Mutahi in its purview. As for Horiuchi Rijmer Kazumi's analysis, her adoption of the feminist paradigm veers out of the scope of our present study and of course the study does not consider Mutahi.

Up to this point, this review reveals various things. First, is that Wahome Mutahi's *The Jail Bugs* and *Three Days on the Cross* and his works in general have not been accorded any serious critical attention. Secondly, satire as a stylistic technique, is quite interesting because of its solid intention to correct an individual by exposing his follies and ridiculing them. We have also discussed the various satirical techniques and ascertained that, of the many topics of satire, religion, politics, women and self pride are the most common. In the final part of this review we appreciate the fact that satire is not new in African literature, and as a device in literature has been used right from the oral forms of art.

Thus the sole purpose of this study is to establish the fact that Wahome Mutahi is a literary artist who uses satire effectively in his fiction and is therefore worth serious attention. This review is useful because it, not only reaffirms the apparent lack of systematic research on the works of Wahome Mutahi, but also the need to study the use of satire in fiction. In particular, this study focuses on the specific satirical devices that have been used in relation to the topics (or themes) of the novels.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The fact that we are investigating satire in fiction demands in my view, that the stylistic approach be adopted in the study of Mutahi's two novels. In the words of Peck and Coyle:

A much more productive and precise way of talking about the language is to concentrate on style. This involves describing how a particular piece of writing functions and discussing what words are used and why. (138)

In the same spirit of a stylistic appreciation of text, Northrop Frye observes that when we read a text:

we find our attention moving in two directions at once; outward or centrifugal in which we keep referring outside our reading from the individual words to the things they mean and the conventional associations between them and inward or centripetal; whereby we seek to develop from the words of a sense of the larger verbal pattern they make. But essentially in all literary texts the final direction of meaning is inward (Lodge 7).

In a word, what Frye is advocating for when reading a text is the response to language use. In all fairness therefore, stylistics is a guiding paradigm for our study because it takes language as its premise. This is also echoed by Philip Rahv when he supports the fact that a linguistic approach to reading a text is useful in establishing the overall coherence of a text because:

all we ask of a novelist in the matter of language is that it be appropriate to the matter in hand. What is said must not stand in contradictory relation to the way it is said (Lodge 5).

Inadvertently, attention must be drawn to the fact that over-reliance on a purely linguistic analysis of a text is not only potentially restrictive but risks straying into pure scientific empiricism which is not a literary domain. According to Emmanuel Ngara:

The meaning of a work of art is therefore not purely

cognitive, it is emotive, it is affective, it is not subject to a purely rational analysis. A purely rational analysis of literature cannot do justice to it for literature is not scientific and so a purely scientific approach to the study of literature can only kill the writer's creative effort (11).

Thus in as much we need to use stylistic criticism we cannot afford to be overly scientific.

In the study of satire as a stylistic device, stylistic criticism is however inevitable as a framework. As Ngara further observes that the stylistician is:

usually interested in theme, plot and character except that his interest is always related to the role that language plays in delineation of these features of the novel (12).

Inescapably, in stylistics we also reckon with the readability and point of view. What this means is that we cannot avoid an analysis of the narrative structure in fiction. But perhaps the best reason for the use of stylistic criticism in our study is again given by Ngara when he says that, "stylistic, criticism is not merely concerned with aesthetic and formal aspects of fiction. It does regard the political, social and moral issues raised in contemporary literature" (34).

Though it is true that a purely linguistic analysis offers a precise methodology for revealing the stylistic peculiarities, our study which intends to focus on stylistic and thematic issues in Mutahi's novels cannot escape a combination of both linguistic and sociological biases. It is because of this that we have adopted stylistic criticism because as Gikandi further puts it:

Focus on the linguistic format will lead us to a greater understanding of content and character, and the content value indeed contributes to the overall quality of a work of fiction. This leads to a recognition of the fact that the sociological and aesthetic are of equal importance in literary criticism (35).

This study therefore hopes to proceed with the assistance of stylistic criticism not because of its (study's) emphasis on stylistic evidence, but also because of its leaning towards the aesthetic and thematic implications of style. It is our view that emphasis on the aesthetic and formal aspects of fiction only helps as to discover how ideological, social and moral

issues are portrayed and given weight in an artistic way in a work of art. The stylistician's interrogation and investigation of the 'artistic' and extra-artistic, linguistic and extra linguistic proportions of art is just the paradigm that befits our study of satire that treads on both the stylistic and thematic aspects of the two novels.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

This study is mainly based on library research of relevant material. During the study it was also imperative to thoroughly read Mutahi's writings and analyse them for textual evidence and critical insights about them. As a study involving two of the author's novels our research is comparative in terms of analysis. The two novels have not only been separately interpreted, but they were compared to each other in as far as satirical techniques are concerned. Further, hand-written materials that were relevant to this study were referred to in order to give credence to the exhaustive requirements and spirit of research.

For purposes of biographical information on Mutahi the writer, it was necessary to interview the author directly. Though stylistic criticism emphasises linguistic evidence over extra-linguistic impressionism, the interview was necessary all the same. The interview formed a very important part of this study, because it revealed issues that were specifically telling and relevant to the topic of my study. Though a visit to the author's home had initially been planned, due to his busy schedule, this could not be possible. Nonetheless, the unofficial and impromptu interview with the author was satisfactory and exhaustive. In fact, it helped shed light on the otherwise little-known details about the author and the satirical tendencies in his life. During the interviews, notes were taken and later incorporated in the study.

In this study, textual evidence has taken precedence over speculation. However, both evidence from within and without the texts has been used in this study. This is because in my view textual and extra-textual evidence contributes to a better understanding of the two novels and their satirical agenda.

1.8 SCOPE AND LIMITATION

In order to obtain focus and an in-depth analysis, the study confines itself to two novels *The Jail Bugs* and *Three Days on the Cross*. These texts have been deliberately selected because of their thematic and stylistic semblance. However, it is true that Mutahi has a number of other titles to his credit including three unpublished and performed plays in Kikuyu. But our research concentrates on the two novels because they are among his most elaborate works of fiction. The Gikuyu plays for example have been left out because, our focus in this study is on fiction and not drama. *Three Days on the Cross* and *The Jail Bugs* are chosen for the study because they are very ones that put Mutahi into the creative lime light. In fact it is through his publication of *The Jail Bugs* that Wahome Mutahi was jointly awarded the 1992 Jomo Kenyatta prize of Literature together with David G. Maillu's *The Broken Drum*.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 WAHOME MUTAHI AS A WRITER AND SATIRIST

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the study deals with biographical issues about the author. However, not everything about the writer will be of interest to the study. The author's individual lifestyle for example, will only be cited in so far as it relates to his works.

Though the stylistic approach in literary criticism usually excludes the writer, it is our view that close reading of the text alone may not assist in having an overall understanding of a satirical text. Thus, in this case we presuppose that delving into the personal life of Wahome Mutahi is important in understanding the mindset that inspires his works. It is also our view that, details about the author's experiences in life will go a long way in helping us to better interpret and explain away instances in his novels and why he has such a biting sting of satire.

Finally, we shall discuss his published and unpublished works.

2.2 MUTAHI'S LIFE AND BACKGROUND

A balding man of dark complexion and short stature, Wahome Mutahi was born in 1955 in a village in Nyeri District of Central Province. Born in a religious family (mother-Octavia Muthoni and father – Mutahi) of staunch Catholics, he studied at a local village primary school before joining the St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary. While at the seminary, he had a chance to encounter the strict doctrines of Catholicism while training as a priest. At the same seminary, he also had a chance to learn philosophy and theology for 6 years before dropping out. In a rather jocular and yet humorous way, Mutahi recounted to this researcher his seminary days with a touch of nostalgia, but no regrets. In his own words, he says; "I dropped out of the seminary after realising that my intellectual leaning and

social orientations were not particularly cut for the priestly formation” (unpublished interview).

Nonetheless, he further admitted to this researcher that he has no regrets for dropping out of the priesthood training. If anything, he is grateful because he now has a bigger congregation than what he could probably get as a priest sermonising in church.

After completing A-levels in 1974, Mutahi joined the University of Nairobi enrolling for a Bachelor of Arts degree and specialising in Literature (three-one-one). He later enrolled for the Master of Arts in Literature programme in 1979 but was later to quit before completing. Again he is rather casual and not eager to explain why he did not complete the course, but jokingly he quips, “I suspect I am still a registered student of the University of Nairobi”.

Generally, Mutahi has no regrets for quitting the postgraduate programme but he acknowledges that his university education served as an eye opener for his creative inspiration. He is forever grateful to his university lecturers and peers. He is particularly proud to have been taught by renowned author Ngugi wa Thiong’o.

As a writer forged by the University of Nairobi’s literature department, Mutahi recalls that during his undergraduate years, he was fascinated by such satirical novels like Mongo Beti’s *Mission to Kala*, Ferdinand Oyono’s *House Boy* and Chinua Achebe’s *A Man of the People*. He attributes his biting satire and humour, to the inspiration he got after reading the works of the great Russian satirist and playwright Nikolai Gogol. He also admits that it is because of the same writer (Gogol) that he developed interest in fictional humour and satirical drama.

The author further recalls that after quitting postgraduate studies at the university, he worked as a District Officer because of what he interestingly refers to as “the lack of a better job”. Shortly after leaving his civil service job, he decided to go into print journalism full-time joining the Nation Group of Newspapers in 1981 as a sub-editor. He later moved to Standard newspapers as a features editor, where he had an opportunity to experiment on writing humour, feature stories and book reviews.

According to David Worcester in his *The Art of Satire*, “the satirist also tries to seek support of the readers in his task of pointing out and castigating behaviour and people he considers vicious, crooked and wicked” (114). Incidentally, this is the ultimate philosophy and impetus of Wahome Mutahi as a satirist. In an interview with this researcher, he confessed that his main intention as a writer is to communicate a story to his readers and especially the lower class in society. Thus as a popular writer, he is categorical, he has no time for the elitist pretensions about good and bad literature, fine or popular literature.

To him what matters is being able to share his experiences with the reader. Towards this end, it really excites him every time he encounters shoe shiners, touts or even kiosk owners going through a copy of *The Jail Bugs*, *Three Days on the Cross* or *How to be a Kenyan*. This, he says, encourages him as a writer because it points to the fact that his works are readable to the poor in society who are the vast majority.

As a word of advice to fellow authors, Mutahi strongly feels that Kenyans like reading books unlike the complaints that most critics make about them. In his view, the best way to have Kenyans to read even more is to publish books that are immediate to their environment, relevant to their experiences and easy to read.

He vows to keep writing in simple language as long as he gives his ardent readers what they want. On the other hand, the author admits that he is not conservative, though he was born and brought up in a Christian way. He says he believes in breaking rules and canons. He therefore loves exercising freedom in his writing and he does not allow his Christian faith to limit him. He also believes in casting doubts at anything and everything that sounds dogmatic, but in the final analysis as a creative writer, he contends that it is not important trying to look clever. The ultimate to him is that works of art must be widely read and enjoyed.

An author, journalist, playwright and theatre practitioner, the easy-talking and naturally humorous Mutahi is quick to acknowledge that his germ for satire and humour was instilled in him early in life by his father. His late father, who died in 1974 just after he (author) had completed his A-levels, was a frequent reader of newspapers and magazines. Thus, early in his childhood, Mutahi had the opportunity to read regular newspapers and

identify with journalistic humorists like Brian Tetley, the then popular Malimoto of Drum magazine and Sam Kahiga's 'Norman the Nomad'. To this day, he still pays his respects to the late Brian Tetley for inspiring him to start his popular 'Whispers' column, in the Sunday Nation paper.

However, Mutahi is also grateful for his staunch Catholic upbringing. Indeed, he says it is his mother's devout Christianity that has brought him this far, because she instilled in him the values and virtues of hard work, patience and dedication in everything he does. In a rather affectionate tone, he admits being very close to his mother. He has even immortalised her in his popular 'Whispers' column under the fictional name 'Appeklonia'. The same religious upbringing is also reflected in his works, which are full of biblical allusions and allegories. For example in Three Days on the Cross, there is a hypocritical priest – Father Kerekou and in The Jail Bugs, Meshak the prisoner is a hypocritical semblance of the biblical character. He says that he acquired all this kind of knowledge about the bible during his six years in the seminary.

Born in a place which was among the first to receive Christian missionaries in Kenya, the author certainly was amused as a child about the truancy and submission of his villagers to the new religion. Apart from joining the Christian faith in hordes, his relatives and parents also had a strong liking for real Roman names at baptism. Names like Caesar, Vilgillo, Vigetho etc. are particularly popular in his home village. At baptism, the author was given the name Paul, which is mispronounced as 'Pauro' by his rural folks because of the strong Gikuyu accent. The name Paul, he says, was chosen by his mother who insisted on him getting baptised after the name of an alleged tough surgeon (Paul) who trained the author's mother in a medical school. However, he has since dropped the name for personal reasons, but influence of African language on the pronunciation of English words and names is ridiculed in the Jail Bugs. In the novel, the prisoner, Mnyonge refers to an appeal as 'a bill'.

Having admitted that he is a popular writer whose main objective is to communicate to as many readers, as possible. Mutahi says he decided to write his unpublished plays in Gikuyu as a way of experimenting on his competence of his mother tongue idiom. 'Of course, he denies having been influenced by Ngugi wa Thiongo's idea of decolonising the mind through the use of local languages, but he still agrees with the latter's assertion that

personal feelings are best expressed in one's language. He confesses that as a satirist there are some issues and expressions, which are more satirical in the Gikuyu language than they could ever be when translated in English. To him, writing the plays in Gikuyu offered a challenge of employing satire in the local idiom to facilitate accessibility of language and communication to his readers.

Apart from just writing in simple and easy to read English, Mutahi admits that in some instances in his novels, he dispenses with the rules of grammar to colloquialise English for easier understanding. For example in *Three Days on the Cross*, Mrs. Momodu explains to the priest about the domineering influence of Chipota on her husband. She says, "he has become his wife". In *The Jail Bugs*, however, the author admits having used Swahili names for people and places just to enable familiarity and immediacy of the audience with the setting of his novel.

Even more adventurous, the author plans to write a play or novel in 'Sheng' – a popular slang language for Kenyan urban youth, which is a mixture of English, Kiswahili and local languages. This he says will give him an opportunity to communicate satirically to the youths in a language they best understand. A fluent speaker of 'Sheng', the author intimated to this researcher that his idea of writing a novel or play in 'Sheng' is prompted by the good response to his popular Sunday humour column, where he has effectively experimented on the use of it (sheng').

Widely published and even more eager to be published, the author is glad about liberalisation in the publishing industry. To him, liberalisation has finally made publishers take manuscripts from little known writers. In the past only text books, which could sell fast were accepted for publication. However, he is still not amused with long delays that publishing companies take before remitting the meagre pay cheque of already published texts. This he complains, rather dejectedly, makes it hard for him to live off his creative works as an author and a freelance journalist. But this means he has to work for long hours and even frequently burn midnight oil, leaving him very little time for leisure. Good enough, because of his hard work, he has opened up his own publishing firm; 'Views Media' incorporated which he runs on a busy schedule to earn him every coin he requires.

The author alleges that his change of ambition from full time journalism to freelance writing was ignited by an epithet from a friend who once teased him thus; “If you don’t look beyond the newspaper you will still be rubbing your elbows on the counter at 60”. Thus fired by this stinging remark, the author decided to start writing full scale and quit full time journalism.

Though he is a busy man, the author still manages to squeeze a few hours for a couple of drinks at his popular joint at the Kenya National Theatre pub. He says he has no hobbies although he considers theatre both as a profession and hobby. At the time of the interview with this researcher, he was busy drafting a proposal in order to get funding for a project that would take theatre to the streets and public parks. Such a project, he says is cheaper given the expensive costs of hiring the National Theatre and paying the cast before eventually running a profitless show. On a light note, the author opines that it is easier to get people to watch a performance in the streets as Kenyans are known to either languish in public parks eating “air burgers” or idle in the streets watching street comedians. “Thus, it is far much easier to get an audience in the streets than congregating them in a theatre auditorium”, he adds rather pejoratively.

Away from his writings, Mutahi has also tried his hand at farming as a way of trying to live a normal rural life. He owns a piece of land in Ng’arua, Rift Valley province, which he tried to cultivate at one time only to realise how expensive the whole exercise could be. However, he blames his abandoning the whole business of farming to the notorious tribal clashes that rocked Rift Valley in 1992, forcing him to leave his land. As an artistic rendition of this experience, he plans to write a satirical novel on what he calls the “national evil” that made him quit farming.

Born of a humble family, the talkative, jovial and almost garrulous author likes living a modest and simple life. Asked about his lifestyle, he replies “life is more rich when you know a managing director and shoe shiner for a friend”. He also contends that, just like a bus driver does his job, he is also glad to be an author doing his thing and leading an ordinary life. To him, a down-to-earth lifestyle suits him well as a satirist who ridicules and makes fun of wrong doers across society.

Back at home, Mutahi is a loving husband to Ricarda Mutahi, a staunch Catholic like his mother. He is also a proud father of three – two girls and a boy, with the eldest son aged 19 years. He also cares and spends time with his family and in fact gets inspiration from them to write his weekly 'Whispers' column where he uses them as his artistic tapestry for humour.

2.3 THE AUTHOR'S WORKS

An author, journalist, playwright and actor, Mutahi is essentially happy with what he has achieved so far as a satirist. Alongside numerous trifles written for Non-Governmental Organisations for civic education purposes, the author has established himself as a household name in his now famous column of 'Whispers' in the Sunday Nation newspaper. As a matter of fact, the column for which he is well known for even more than his novels, has earned him the nickname of 'Whispers' 'Son of the Soil'. The column which, he has been running for over ten years now, has received tremendous plaudits from his readers.

And as earlier mentioned in this chapter, Mutahi uses his own family members as the launch pad of his humour. For example, in most of his humour articles he refers to himself as 'Simba wa Slopes', while his wife is simply referred to as 'Thatcher'. According to the author, his use of pen names to represent people who are otherwise close to him is a sign that he in fact gets inspiration from them and really loves his family. Thus, by incorporating them in his humour, he is in essence immortalising them.

Apart from the famous 'Whispers' column, in which the author castigates various personalities, institutions and ills in the Kenyan society, Mutahi told this researcher that he wrote a satirical play that was incorporated into a discussion theme at a 1998, Christian Conference for the African Council of Churches synod, held in Harare, Zimbabwe. And of course, the author has also written quite a number of published and unpublished literary pieces.

Among the very first publications by the author were Secondary schools guides for Francis Imbuga's Betrayal in the City, and Babhani Babachandra's The Coolie. But the

novels under our study were the first texts to be published as fiction (*Three Days on the Cross* [1991] and *The Jail Bugs* [1992]). A collection of his newspaper humour essays was published in 1996 under the title *How to be a Kenyan*. This collection he says was published after reading through George Mikes *How to be a Briton*, which is a collection of satirical essays that ridicule the general pride of the British people.

His unpublished plays in Gikuyu contain his best attempt at employing satires both in his local Gikuyu idiom and drama as a literary genre. These include *Mugāāthe Mubogothi*, *Mugāāthe Ndotono*, and *Profesa Nyōōri*. In his plays, the author admits that he realised the most scathing and biting satire because in all of them he indicts political corruption, hypocrisy and tyranny in Kenya.

Commenting on his two novels, *Three Days on the Cross* and *The Jail Bugs*, the author is rather melancholic. In a tone of indignation mixed with humour, Mutahi categorically told this researcher that *Three Days on the Cross* is a rather 'painful book' to him. This, he adds, may explain its constrained style, which he says was due to the circumstances under, which it was written and the fear of censorship.

Though most of the experiences recounted in the novel are not a direct replica of what really happened, the author contends that most of them happened to him. Almost in tears, the author says that there are certain instances that happened to him, which were just too painful to be recorded in cold print.

According to the author, *Three Days on the Cross*, as a novel, was inspired by the events of the MwaKenya movement that were rife in Kenya in the early 1980's. Working as a journalist that time, Mutahi always wondered why the purported suspects of the then MwaKenya group, which was alleged to be involved in subversive activities were getting easily arrested and thereafter quickly pleading guilty of charges levelled against them. With the urge to discover more, the author went ahead to investigate. It was in the process that he came up with the first manuscript of the novel, which he sent to Heinemann Publishers in 1986. However, the manuscript was not only rejected, but barely a month later, he was arrested, put in police custody for 30 days before being arraigned in court to answer treason charges. Though he knew nothing about the MwaKenya movement, the author told this researcher, that he pleaded guilty to all the

charges against him because of the torture he had undergone. He was eventually sentenced to a jail term of fifteen months.

Incidentally, his experience in jail at Industrial Area prison and Kodiaga prison where he served his sentence alongside eight other political prisoners is recounted in *The Jail Bugs*. However, the thirty days in confinement (of the title – *Three Days on the Cross*) according to the author, represented actual death and resurrection for him. Such were the times when he actually believed in biblical miracle happenings.

At a more personal and emotional level, the author says that for example, the character of corporal Wandie who is polite in the novel, is a true portrait of a cop who took care of him while he was in prison by allowing him (without the permission of his seniors) to walk and stretch in the corridors and even look at himself in the mirror. Despite what he went through, the author accepts the reality of what happened to him. Rather than leave heart broken, as had been intended by his captors, he says the experience moulded him into a more resilient personality. On a sincere note however, he confesses his hatred and contempt for the police and politicians.

On the plot of the novel, the author intimated to this researcher that the major plot was not tampered with, although he was asked by his publishers to enrich his manuscript after he had come out of prison. He later gave the publishers an enriched copy that was to be published into the present novel.

Though more relaxed in its narrative style, the author says *The Jail Bugs* also has its share of realism in its story line. Essentially, the book is a diary of what happened to the author while he was serving his jail term. Some characters, says the author, were moulded after real personalities he encountered. For example, according to the author, Sergeant 'Walrus Moustache', the prison warden in the novel, is a realistic portrayal of a prison commandant who was at Industrial Area prison. The author alleges that the character is described exactly in the same way the true warden looked like. He also contends that even his ridiculing of the uniform is true because he remembers vividly how his mother (author's) went to visit him while he was in prison only to be dumbfounded to find her son in a worn out short pant with a barely covered behind.

But despite all the examples of incidents in the novel related to his life experiences, the author insists, the whole text was a product of his own fictional imagination and not just a regurgitation of what happened to him. By and large, the author considers himself as a satirist who has a duty to point out the evils of the political elite and in the case of the two novels under our study, he castigates state-sponsored police brutality. Nonetheless as an artist, he says politics is a rather interesting subject, because politicians easily render themselves vulnerable and good targets of satire.

At the time of this interview, the author had just released another satirical novel *Dooms Day*, which is based on the August 7th, 1998 bomb blast in Nairobi. In this latest novel, which the author claims is entirely different from his earlier works he, indignantly points an accusing finger at terrorism and religious fundamentalism. He particularly attacks the evil of using terror to achieve desired goals. At the same time, the author chronicles the social and political rot and psychic backwardness that led to the bombing. Though the book is related somehow to the historical event, it is not a direct reflection of the actual events as they occurred. Rather, in the novel, the author pokes fun at the many forms of terrorism that Kenyans experience everyday.

Referring to himself as 'a jack of all trades' the author intimated to this researcher that among his forthcoming works are two biographies of prominent Kenyans. He also hopes to publish a series of younger reader books with one major character, where he satirises street preachers. The title of the series will be "*The Miracle Merchants*". Though the author did not divulge the actual names of the personalities he intends to write biographies about, he promised that they will be interesting to read. According to him, among his greatest ambitions as a satirist is to script satirical pieces for the screen in order to give Kenyans a chance to laugh at their own follies.

In this chapter, the study has briefly looked at Mutahi's biographical details and how they affect his satirical ingenuity. We have, for example, established that aspects of the author's life filter into his texts without necessarily affecting the creative imagination of the author. Finally, the study has also established that the author is a freelance journalist and prolific satirical writer who has written and still intends to keep on writing satirical texts. We shall now proceed to investigate how he employs satire in his novels.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 SATIRE IN THREE DAYS ON THE CROSS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we analyse specific satirical effects that emerge in the novel *Three Days on the Cross*. Of particular concern to us in this chapter will be to identify and illustrate how the structure of the novel, narrative point of view and other narrative techniques have been strategically deployed by the author to enhance satire in the novel. As a matter of necessity, we acknowledge the use of certain linguistic and stylistic choices for satirical effect.

In conclusion we demonstrate how all the above mentioned literary devices together with issues from the author's personal life have been blended with the characters and themes of the novel. In a nutshell, in the analysis of satire in *Three Days on the Cross*, we get down to the following levels: the narrative, linguistic and stylistic choices, characterisation and themes.

3.2 SATIRE THROUGH NARRATIVE STRUCTURE AND TECHNIQUES

3.2.1 Plot and Narration

It is Viktor Shklovsky, the renowned Russian formalist, who once distinguished between the underlying substance or material of a story – '*fabula*' – and its compositional form or plot – '*syuzhet*'. In what has turned out to be his personal contribution to the raging debate about form and content, Shklovsky asserted:

the central point around which the narrative structure pivots is the *peripeteia*, and the nature placing and stylistic marking of this turning point determines the nature of the conflict, whether on physical, psychological or moral level (Fowler 49).

In this case, we certainly recognise the relationship he appreciates as existing between form and content. For purposes of this study we need to acknowledge the mutual interdependence between the structure of the novel and its themes. Needless to say, this is important because in satire form and content are closely intertwined and are therefore mutually inclusive.

Mutahi's *Three Days on the Cross* is composed of eleven chapters apart from the prologue and epilogue. As part of the basic structure of the novel, the prologue and epilogue are important elements of the novel's structure. Petrovsky, in 1925, showed that classically, the prologue and epilogue form a central phase of a novel's narrative structure. He was also of the view that the epilogue and prologue have both a general and specific role because they form part of the total social perspective out of which the world of the story arises and to which it reverts. To be more specific, the prologue and epilogue therefore provide the much-needed prior and subsequent information about the lives of the main protagonists.

Most classical models of a narrative structure of which that of *Three Days on the Cross* is a good example, start from the assumption of a previous state of rest or normality which is disrupted by an external force of some kind. The condition initiated by the force of aggression usually gets worse up to a certain degree of extremity. It is at this point that another force (an *ex deo machina*) comes to bear, reverses the process, and paves way for gradual resumption of normality.

In *Three Days on the Cross*, the use of prologue and epilogue serve to enhance the satire of the novel. As important parts of novels structure, they together provide the essential foregrounding, exposition and denouement which in turn portrays the satirical catharsis that the reader feels at the end of the novel. In the very opening of the novel, the protagonists Albert Momodu and Ogundipe Chipota lie blindfolded at the back of a police jeep being driven to a destination they do not know. We also learn that the two were

good friends who had been arbitrarily arrested, blindfolded, tortured and held in comunicado in some underground cells of a building in the city. Interestingly, none of the two prisoners knows about the other's presence as they are transported together at the back of the jeep. Because of the kind of inhuman suffering and torture they undergo, they each seem to be in a psychic delirium. Chipota, for example, 'inwardly hoped for death because it was now three days since his arrest by the special police force for political crimes he could not yet remember to have been involved in'. In the face of all this suffering, he could only afford to live with memories of 'a warm bed' and he had also 'forgotten how food tasted'.

In the same prologue, we are told that Momodu, imagines how he would 'leap high in the air, tear his blindfolds off and then fly away', if and when the canvas of the jeep suddenly flies open in the city to expose them. He even further fantasises, when he imagines himself 'flapping his wings in ecstasy as the crowds below him gazed with awe at the latter day Icarus (2). Chipota fantasises about raising his clenched fist and addressing a gathered crowd. But the irony and paradox of the two prisoners imaginations is that they are wishing for life and freedom and yet in the actual sense they are being led to a deserted hideout in the jungle for execution. Indeed, this is what dawns on them at the hour of reckoning when their blindfolds are removed and they stare and gape at each other with disbelief and total surprise. Unfortunately, it is while they are still staring at each other to digest the truth about what is happening that they are ordered to run for their dear lives – apparently in no particular direction. Of course, this was a trick to enable the police officers to shoot them from the backs as they run.

In the epilogue, the author gives an account of the aftermath of the shooting of the protagonists. Chipota who is certainly the only one who survives the shooting lies groaning in bed, under the care of Corporal Wandie who had saved his life. Unfortunately, Chipota's best friend dies from a fatal bullet injury in his back. Summarily, the prologue and epilogue are important to the narrative structure of *Three Days on the Cross* because they recount in brief the tribulations of the heroes of the novel – Chipota and Momodu. The rest of the chapters of the novel only attempt to fill in on why the two characters had to be arrested and tortured until one of them gets killed. Thus compared to the other chapters, the epilogue and prologue create a kind of dramatic irony.

As an exposition to a tragic novel, the eleven chapters indulge a detailed narration of the circumstances that lead to the two protagonists' predicament. The prologue and epilogue are thus important as foreword and afterward of the storyline in the novel, which in turn makes up its plot. Although the novel starts in 'media res', towards what is actually the end of the novel, the eleven chapters help explain the conflict that is immediately established in the prologue. And the epilogue in the true classical sense attempts to re-establish a new equilibrium, but of course without one of the protagonists. By and large, the narration of the different and yet similar experiences of the protagonists right from the prologue through to the epilogue all re-enact dramatic irony which is the main pivot of the novel's satire. For example, at the start of the novel, we tend to assume that the heroes may be guilty and that is why they have to go through all the suffering. But we later come to realise that Chipota and Momodu are arrested on suspicion of involvement in the July 10 movement activities because of a note Momodu receives from a friend while drinking in a bar. It sounds really ridiculous. It is even more ridiculous because after receiving the note, Momodu never reads it, nor does he remember it.

Out of fear for the unknown, Mrs. Momodu reports to her parish priest, after coming across the seditious note in her husbands' pockets. Ludicrous and hypocritical, the parish priest seizes this opportunity to seduce Mrs. Momodu. He reasons that if he reports the matter to the special police to have Mr. Momodu arrested, he will definitely get the chance to have his wife even more vulnerable. It is also funny that the priest who is supposed to give his parishioners helpful counsel, calls the police without even stopping to think about the repercussions of such actions.

In the narratological sense, therefore the satire of the novel has been emphasised through the structure of plot. In the prologue, the author immediately presents a critical situation, whose cause is explained in the ensuing chapters and in the epilogue, he tries to retain normality. At the opening of the novel, the heroes have already been arrested and are being tortured. We later get to know that they are suffering from something they did not do. At the end of the novel, justice seems to come to play albeit belatedly as the protagonists are vindicated, but it is unfortunate that Momodu gets killed in the process.

3.2.2 Point of View and Satirical Detachment

In any story told, the narrative is given by someone involved in the action or someone wholly outside the action. The point of view therefore is the position from which the story is told. For example narration from the first person point of view enables the author, without any kind of artificiality, to enter the ego of his protagonist's mind and betray its most intimate and secret thoughts and feelings to his readers. However, the major weakness of this technique is that if access to the hero is privileged and made extensive, and since we are not able to read the minds of other people, the thoughts and feelings of other characters often remain a matter of conjecture to the hero, author and even the readers.

It was mentioned in our first chapter that detachment is a necessity for good satire. For this reason, therefore a third person narration is mostly preferred. This is because it involves an impersonal style of narration where reference by the narrator to himself is avoided. In the words of Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short:

the absence of an 'I' invites the reader to assume that there is no explicit 'you'. The narration is therefore presented to the reader directly without an intermediary (266).

The third person is therefore a more widespread and natural mode of narration in satire because it gives the author some omniscience and the absolute knowledge that is necessary in satire.

Three Days on the Cross is a cynical and sardonic novel that has been written in the omniscient narrator mode. The all-knowing, all-feeling and all-seeing narrator is apt for the satire of the novel. First and foremost, because of this kind of narration, the reader is able to get a picture of what is happening, in the minds of the characters as differentiated with what is actually happening in their real world. The discrepancy between their fantasies and the real world opens the characters to ridicule because of both the situational and dramatic irony that is involved. For example, in his encounter with Mrs. Momodu, Father Kerekou feigns bravery by putting on a stoic face in the face of adversity and yet deep within his soul, he is scared stiff of the seditious piece of paper. When Mrs.

Momodu reveals to him that his husband is involved with a clandestine group that is engaged in anti-government activities, he almost jumps out of his skin:

He felt his temperature rise instantly and his heart nearly missed a beat. All talk about men of God showing strong hearts in the face of adversity came to nought. It took him a whole minute to recover and assume the face of a person who can be relied upon to relieve others in the face of distress (8).

In satire, the omniscient narrator also helps make a piece of work look less personal. This is because the omniscient attitude of the narrator enables him/her see inside the mind of all characters, and not just the major one. In the final analysis, the satirical work steers away from sounding like a personal tirade from the author. For example, in *Three Days on the Cross*, the narrator makes certain that he gives accounts of both the villains (perpetrators) and victims (sufferers) involved in the acts of police brutality. While Supt. Ode and his coterie of brutal police officers enjoy meting out violence on Chipota and taunt him about his naked physical features, he on the other hand feels totally embarrassed. Even after raining blows on him, Supt. Ode and his officers still have the temerity to say:

We are just giving you inspiration so that you can do the press ups. Don't plead for mercy; instead you should thank us for helping you do some exercises that you need (54).

Bruised, battered and totally helpless, Chipota raves in desperation, "kill me if you wish. Kill me now". Thus from these two accounts we easily make a value judgement on the discrepancy between the good and bad, and the ensuing irony which is actually the basis of satire. By getting the two sides of the story, we immediately condemn police brutality and therefore join hands with the narrator as he castigates the vice and its perpetrators. We thus join the camp of Chipota and Momodu who suffer arbitrary arrests and torture related to imagined political crimes as opposed to the cruel police officers who unleash violence on unsuspecting citizens with impunity.

In the same camp of the villains is the 'Illustrious one'. Being a head of state, he is lividly scared of losing his grip on political power and any slight challenge to his position is met with the force of a sledge hammer leading to untold suffering of innocent citizens.

The special police force assigned to crack down on suspects of the July 10 movement, do it mercilessly because they claim they have been sanctioned and funded by the state, and they also have the backing of the head of state. In the same breath, we also notice that the Police Commissioner is least baffled by the complaints of the citizens about increased incidents of police torture. For example, he urges the Director of the Special Police force to make sure that they prevail on Chipota to divulge information on his involvement in the July 10 movement because it is what the head of state wants. He says:

You had better because the Illustrious one wants results. He wants to hear that the July 10 movement people are being arrested and taken to jail. So far he is happy with your work, but he can be very unhappy if further progress is not made. (139).

Thus the satire that is revealed in the novel is illustrated by the mode of narration, which gives allowance for a good sense of detachment between the satirist and his target audience. The most important aspect for the satire in the novel is the absolute knowledge of omniscience on the part of the narrator, which accommodates a wide spectrum of issues in the moral sense. Omniscience has also helped the narrator to portray the different perspectives about an issue.

3.2.3 Flashbacks, Flash forwards, Retrospection, Stream of Consciousness and Internal Monologues as Techniques of Irony

To sharpen the satirical butt, the narrator in *Three Days on the Cross* has employed a number of other narrative techniques. All these techniques have been used with considerable success to particularly create dramatic irony. The prologue of the novel for example is a flash forward, because what happens to the heroes is technically, what should be happening towards the end of the story. On the other hand, the novel starts in 'media res' and it is only after going through the subsequent chapters that one can retrace the events at the opening of the novel. Stylistically, we can say that because of the kind of suffering the heroes go through, the author structurally decides to present first the conflict before the exposition of a tragic plot.

In tandem with the nature of satire as an attack on the vices that afflict the society, the satirist has a duty to expose ridicule and condemn the ills of a society. Thus while we commiserate with the two protagonists as they suffer under the hands of the police, in the prologue, we certainly are outraged to learn later in the novel that they are in fact paying dearly for something they never did. As a journalist, the closest Chipota has come to locking horns with the establishment is when he exposes a scandal that involves government officials who include high ranking cabinet ministers who have exported all the grains until the government stores run dry. This also causes famine. By exposing the shady deal, Chipota risks being put behind the bars. Nowhere is he portrayed as involved in the subversive activities of the July 10 movement.

On the other hand, may be Momodu could be the guilty one of them, because he confesses to having received the seditious document. Though the note was given to him by a friend under a table as they were drinking, he claims he did not even remember to read it. Not until his wife discovers it in his clothes and takes it to her parish priest does hell break loose. In all fairness therefore, Momodu cannot be blamed for anything apart from the fact that he has carried an extremely seditious document, which he inadvertently does not realise could be self-incriminating. When he is asked about it by the police officers, he can only vaguely remember and even then, he admits, he does not regard it as that serious.

Ogundipe Chipota and Albert Momodu are therefore arrested and held by the special police force because of a paranoid fear of dissidence by the head of state. Apart from the anonymous call that the Director of special police receives, there is virtually no evidence to link the two heroes of the novel with the July 10 movement. If anything, they are arrested because they are long time friends, right from their sophomore years at university. Again it is because the special police force boss wants to capitalise on such an opportunity to add up the list of dissidents who had been apprehended, and thereafter chest-thump about his success in cracking down on the July 10 movement.

The use of flashbacks, flash forwards, streams of consciousness and internal monologues helps the reader get a picture of the horrifying happenings in the cold dark dungeons and squalid torture chambers in what looks like a civil capital city. In the beguilingly tranquil city and 'peaceful' state under the 'good and wise leadership' of the 'Illustrious One', two innocent people are undergoing torture. But interestingly and ironically, they go through the agony with a strong sense of hope for freedom. Even when they lie blindfolded on the floor of the jeep with neither of them realising that his friend is sleeping right beside him, Chipota and Momodu slip into moments of fantasy and internal monologue. For example, because of the horrendous treatment they have been subjected to by police, for three days Chipota is one specially despairing man. As the narrator says:

Chipota inwardly hoped for death. It was three days since he was arrested by the special police in charge of political crimes and he as well as Momodu had been held incommunicado in underground cells where day and night are the same. In those three days, death seemed so close yet it did not arrive. It eluded them as much as the freedom that they had yearned for.

A suicidal thought now crossed Chipota's mind. He imagined a speeding bus ramming into the jeep, reducing its occupants to masses of torn flesh. He wished for the death of everybody in that vehicle (1).

Indeed the irony here is that Chipota wishes for life and death at the same time. Though he will be glad to be set free, he at the same time feels tortured until he contemplates death.

Amidst all this suffering and despair, the two prisoners are more surprised by the total sense of indifference with which their predicament is regarded. In a melancholic sense of reflection:

They wandered how blind everybody was to an inhuman act that was being done in the open (2).

To them, the whole world stands accused and guilty of police brutality, which is practised in the open. And because of the contempt and rage they possess against their torturers and the society as a whole, they keep on imagining what would happen if by any chance the canvas of the jeep opens up to reveal them lying down blindfolded. Momodu imagines he "would fly like a free bird over the city, proclaim his freedom and soar away to another country where there would be no police" (2). In his retrospection, Chipota fantasises that:

he would stand proudly with his blindfolds still on, raise his clenched fist and address the gathering crowd (3).

But paradoxically, against the background of all these sweet thoughts, the two prisoners are facing imminent execution. This indeed is the irony of it all.

While her husband is languishing away in the dark chamber of an underground cell, Mrs. Momodu painfully agonises about his inexplicable disappearance. It is in this condition of fright, helplessness and vulnerability that she has a dream that her husband had been found strangled and drowned in a river. She even agonises more when she receives an anonymous call from a group of people who tell her that her husband is not co-operating with them and therefore would not be released. Instinctively, Mrs. Momodu thinks that those who have detained her husband are captors who want ransom. In the process, she toys with the idea of calling the police to report the matter. But little does she know that the same police she wants to inform of her husband's disappearance, were in fact the ones holding him illegally.

For Mrs. Chipota, it is all acrimony and remorse when she learns of her husband's mysterious absence. She breaks down remembering the nostalgic moments and

reminisces on the good old days when she first met him. She remembers how she met Chipota under very unfortunate circumstances. It is incongruous and ironical that she first met him when she was in pain bleeding after attempting to abort and almost dying in the process. This flashback and reflection by Mrs. Chipota serves to foreground the moral hypocrisy and ridicules self-pretence. Thus when we get into the minds of the characters, we certainly notice the discrepancy between what the reality is and what they imagine. It is from this perspective that we laugh and ridicule the character's follies. For example, Mrs. Momodu's attempts to get spiritual counsel about her husband's involvement with the July 10 movement seems ridiculous because Father Kerekou is not sincere in his intentions to help her. He secretly lusts for her and intends to seduce her as is clearly demonstrated by what goes on through his mind. When Mrs. Momodu requests for a meeting with the priest, the father deliberately pretends that it would not be possible because he has a series of scheduled meetings with other parishioners. The truth however is:

Father Kerekou lied hoping that she did not detect anything in his voice that would reveal his plans which were building in his head (107).

The use of streams of consciousness is another very apt technique in satire. According to Roger Fowler it is:

a technique that seeks to record the random and apparently illogical flow of impressions passing through a character's mind (59).

Thus by recording the actual flow of thought in a character's mind coupled with its paradoxes and irrelevancies, the main intention is to ensure a kind of inclusiveness by the author. For purposes of satire, when the inner thoughts occupy the foreground of attention, they in the process give the novel its satirical punch especially when such thoughts are contrasted with the reality on the ground as lived by the characters.

In *Three Days on the Cross*, the religious-looking priest, Father Kerekou, is after all more hypocritical and lecherous than he is given credit. Although he vows to do all within his capabilities to help Mrs. Momodu, he secretly admires and sexually covets her. Deep down in his thoughts, he congratulates himself for such outrageous designs because:

His plan was working ... since ordination as a priest he had broken the vow to be chaste about four times and every time regretted. Despite his youth he had kept himself in control for the most part (108).

From his confession, we realise that the priest is a notorious liar to his priestly calling, and he is not breaking the canons of priestly chastity for the first time. Because of his perverted thoughts about Mrs. Momodu, he imagines how it will be when he finally gets Mrs. Momodu:

Father Kerekou saw victory coming ... he saw himself in the arms of Mrs. Momodu while her husband was away in prison (40).

The methods of torture that the police use are mind-boggling and soul-breaking. Momodu, for example, becomes totally confused because he does not remember getting involved in any subversive activities related to the July 10 movement, a mistake he is being accused of. However, the police lie to him that his friend Chipota belongs to the group, and that he had confessed to have recruited him into it. In retrospect, however, Momodu only remembers good times with his friend:

he remembers incidents of sharing joy and sadness, moments that cemented friendship. There was nothing in their mutual relationship that showed they were sympathetic to subversion He remembered one incident when Chipota showed that he was a friend even in times of crises ... (116).

Through his (Momodu's) flashback and retrospection, we immediately notice dramatic irony. That while the police want to apply divide and rule tactics to psychologically break down and separate two friends, Momodu and Chipota individually know and trust each other as friends. The use of torture to break each of their hearts and egos to consequently make them renounce their friendship is just as futile and preposterous as it is ludicrous and foolhardy. And since the police have not succeeded in breaking their bodies, they intend to break their souls by making them distrust each other.

In a nutshell, flashbacks, flash forwards, retrospection and streams of consciousness have been used to create a discrepancy between the reality as it is and what is assumed to be. This discrepancy creates a sense of irony and the ridiculous. In the process, the author has

ended up poking fun, not only at the world of the novel, but at the world in general. He has thus, deliberately used these narrative techniques to foreground irony and therefore attack the wickedness and hypocrisy that the characters indulge in.

3.3 RIDICULE THROUGH SPECIAL LINGUISTIC AND STYLISTIC CHOICES

In the words of B. I. Chukwukere:

Language is the thing by which we judge the success of an author (Gikandi 10).

Therefore, because of the stylistic nature of our study we cannot escape an analysis of the language used in the novel and particularly its satirical features. This in essence calls for an analysis of the linguistic format. According to Emmanuel Ngara, the linguistic format is:

the sum total of minute linguistic choices which are divisible into two subsets; - linguistic features proper and paralinguistic devices. Paralinguistic affective devices include features such as symbolism, myth, allusion, allegory etc which are not analysable in terms of normal linguistic description. Under linguistic features proper, we isolate... the grammatical level, phonological level, lexical level and the graphological level. (17).

But for purposes of our study of satire in *Three Days on the Cross*, we shall not enter into the greater details of linguistic features proper. Instead we concentrate on the 'paralinguistic affective devices', which generally play a big role in the satirical style used by the author.

In our case, the study of stylistic choices will go hand in hand with the peculiar language used in the novel. This is because it is our view that specific linguistic choices give forth to the overall aesthetic effect made by the author. In other words, the language used dictates the style in a novel and conversely, the style adopted (satirical in this case) dictates the choice of words to be used.

In *Three Days on the Cross*, Mutahi has strategically chosen to use short simple sentences thus making the novel easily readable. The legibility of the novel is further enhanced by the author's use of cracks, jokes and analogies which are rendered in almost vernacularised English. The register is basically African or Kenyan to be specific and there are times when the author has directly translated from the Swahili language. For example, Mrs. Momodu, in a hysterical mood, complains of the bad influence that Albert Chipota has on her husband. She says:

He has become his wife ...er...er... I'm sorry. I meant to say that he controls my husband's thoughts, actions and movements as if he were his child. They are always together either drinking their lives away or plotting. That husband of mine does not get home until the small hours of the night (13).

Indeed we easily notice that the use of 'become his wife' is common among African communities where a domineering character is taken to be the husband and vice versa. Thus, Mrs. Momodu is ridiculing her husband by referring to him as his friend's wife.

Politicians and people in high positions in any African government or state are usually regarded with respect. Generally they are known to be people with a lot of wealth and rare ruthlessness. They are therefore equated to the former African kingdom chiefs and kings. *Three Days on the Cross* is set in a country, where the head of state is simply referred to as the 'Illustrious One'. Of course, the title is not consistent with the head of states' barbaric acts, but it is still typical of the African penchant to heap all sorts of platitudes on their leaders. The head of state is also referred to as the 'Star of the Continent' and 'Father of All'. But we certainly realise that all these titles sound ridiculous because they are in total incongruity with his ruthless demeanour when he orders for the crackdown on imagined dissidents of the July 10 movement. Sadly, the suffering of innocent citizens makes him feel better.

Biblical allusion is another technique that has been used in *Three Days on the Cross* to elucidate the satire employed. According to the common Christian doctrine, men of God are expected to be strong willed and brave enough to guide others in case of any problem afflicting them or their congregation. However, this is not the case for Father Kerekou. The author pokes fun at the priest's cowardice and vulnerable personality when he

literally shudders with fright on being told about Momodu's alleged involvement with the July 10 movement:

The weight of that statement hit Father Kerekou like the fire and brimstone that he had always preached about. He felt his temperature rise instantly and his heart nearly miss a beat. All talk about men of God showing hearts in the face of adversity came to naught. It took him a whole minute to recover and assume the face of a person who can be relied upon to relieve others in the face of distress (8).

Given the faith they preach about, we often expect pastors and priests to be strong emotionally and to possess a kind of imperturbability that guides them through seemingly insurmountable problems. But though Father Kerekou is supposed to 'assume the role of a dispassionate pastor of souls', we see him vividly broken down and even more helpless than his parishioner, Mrs. Momodu.

However, the man of God rationalises his fretful and cowardly demeanour by subconsciously convincing himself thus:

even a shepherd of souls could not allow himself to walk into the mouth of a lion just for the sake of heroics. The age of Daniel and the lions was no more. The clever thing would be to keep away from the path of the lions in the first place (14).

Obviously, Father Kerekou is only trying to placate his ego and the fact that he is hypocritical and an easily shakeable man of God. Though he may talk of the need for every Christian to be formidably strong when faced with threatening situations, it is true he doesn't practise what he preaches. If anything, he is the first to fidget and cower down in the face of adversity. Thus when he draws an analogy from the biblical story about Daniel, we cannot help but laugh at the way he tries to give excuses for his fear. Although he struggles to put on the face of a strong character, he does not have even the moral authority and emotional strength to advise Mrs. Momodu who in fact heavily counts on his counsel to save her marriage.

Though it is true that matters related to subversive activities against any reigning regime are particularly sensitive and dangerous, the priest as 'a shepherd of human souls' should

demonstrate an extraordinary sense of steadfastness in order to be able to advise members of his congregation. For example, when he reads through the uncrumpled piece of paper that has seditious writing he trembles:

He felt as if he had swallowed a sizeable goblet of hemlock. Bile rose to his mouth. He felt harmed by the words of the leaflet... (10).

In a sudden turn of events, the priest no longer looks at the seditious document with fear the next morning. And because of his lecherous designs, he says the piece of paper:

was no longer a grave; it was the key to the sweet forbidden fruit (40).

This statement subtly relates to the biblical forbidden fruit that was eaten by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Thus, the priest looks at the seditious document as a stepping stone to reaching Mrs. Momodu's heart. This essentially paints him as a hypocrite who makes a fool of himself by first pretending to be concerned with Mrs. Momodu's problem only to later on attempt to capitalise on her vulnerability to get intimate with her. In a word, the author ridicules not only the priest's cowardice but his hypocrisy.

Nevertheless, biblical allusions are not only used frivolously for the sake of poking fun at certain characters with perverted behaviour. Because of the nature of subject dealt with in the novel (police brutality), there are instances where references and analogies from the bible are used with serious intentions of depicting the gravity of an issue. For example, after he has been arrested and blindfolded, Chipota is taken to a tiny cell which was used as torture chambers. And as he was being led to the cell like a blind man, he reflects thus:

For once he knew what Daniel of the Bible felt when he was being led into the lion's den (32).

Generally, the author has chosen to give relevant biblical stories that directly relate to the kind of situations the characters in the novel find themselves in. The Daniel story, for example, has been variously used to portray the persecution that Chipota and his friend Momodu go through. And from the title *Three Days on the Cross*, we certainly conjure up images of Christ's persecution like heroes of the novel. Indeed the torture that Chipota

and Momodu go through can be likened to Jesus Christ's crucifixion, in the sense that they suffer for something they did not do at all.

Despite the melancholic mood and gloomy setting of the novel, there are still instances of satire and comedy coupled with ridiculous situations. The narrator of the novel makes fun of the illiterate police officers, especially when they make idiots of themselves in situations that are laughable.

After Chipota's arrest, he is taken back to his house to have it searched for any items and documents that may be incriminating. And as soon as the police officers descend on his house ransacking it inside out, we cannot help laughing at their stupidity. One of them gleefully shakes a book in his face saying it is a 'bad book' because it looks like 'communist stuff'. It is even more ridiculous when the same officer clings to the book like a newly found diamond just because it is titled 'Revolution in Guinea' by Amilcar Cabral. As it turns out, it is just another history text book, but the officer would not hear of it. He tells Chipota naively:

Nonsense! That is bad literature, no book about revolution is good. Revolution is communism. And bad things are bad (25).

However after the above incident, the comedy of errors has only but started. An officer cries out after coming across a portrait of Mao Tse Tung. Though he can not quite tell whether the picture is that of Karl Marx, Stalin or Lenin, he is all the same excited to the point of drawing his colleagues' attention to come and see what he has discovered. Funny enough it is only a portrait of Mao Tse Tung, contained in a world history textbook.

But perhaps the most ridiculous portrayal of the officers' foolishness is when they plough into the book shelves, scattering and tumbling all the books from the shelves just to get anything 'communist' or 'revolutionary'. The officers even go to the lengths of unscrewing the back of the television set and opening the ceiling latch. In the bedroom, the blankets, sheets and clothes are ruffled and hustled while pillows are ripped open. Even the small baby's cot is searched, though the kid has soiled his bedding and the toilet water cistern is not spared either. But despite all these ingenious efforts, the officers manage to take away only a handful of items which included a photo album, three books,

press cuttings, a head cap, a pair of boots and two diaries. Indeed the officers' efforts defeat their purpose as it only serves to show their naivety and tactlessness especially when they are carrying out orders from their seniors. There is a sense of futility in everything they do and at the end it is not worth the harangue and intrigue involved. Or may be this is just in tandem with Supt. Ode's confession that the job promotions to officers heavily depends on how best they carry out such dirty jobs and prove to the head of state – The Illustrious One – that something is being done about dissidents.

It is also outrageous that despite the heinous crimes the police commit when they subject innocent suspects to cruel and inhuman torture, the special police force is budgeted for by the state funds. The paranoia and fear that dictatorships have towards any form of challenge makes them institutionalise state torture and harassment. In the case of the two heroes in the novel, it is unbelievable when the police act only on receiving an anonymous call from a person who even later calls back to refute everything he had alleged. But this does not deter Supt. Ode and his men from going ahead and torturing the two suspects. In the words of Inspector Ummure, they have a good case against the two, because they both like reading things that deal with communism'. (43). Supt. Ode is even more shameless when he honestly reveals that:

the more suspected dissidents arrested and jailed the happier
the Director would be. It showed that work was being done (45).

Indeed the shamelessness with which Supt. Ode brags about managing to have more suspects jailed or detained and others forced to plead guilty to charges they know nothing about because of 'certain persuasive methods that he and his men used' is baffling and ridiculous. It seems that what matters to Supt. Ode is doing his bosses' bidding in return for a promotion.

On a subtle and lighter note, the author has also satirised and indicted the Catholic faith and especially the hypocritical adherents and priests. As a young man, Father Kerekou had joined the faith because of the simple reason of speaking in Latin and the privilege of riding on the padre's noisy motorbike. And also during his days in nursery school, Kerekou had a hypocritical teacher named Catherine. The author makes fun of her when he says that she was so religious. Even when she told children about heaven and hell, she

hated children who asked wayward questions such as what happened to the priest's wife. Later she (Catherine) disappears and the villagers learn that she had been jailed for murder. Catherine's (also referred to as 'Kathlina') story on hypocrisy is juxtaposed with Father Kerekou's fear of failure, a premonition he is so obsessed with. Ironically, the priest fears failure in case he assists Mrs. Momodu and yet he is a moral failure. Though he pretends that he will help Mrs. Momodu out of her problem, he secretly desires to sleep with her. Eventually, the priest fails as a spiritual and moral adviser when he capitalises on her unfortunate circumstances to get at her intimately. He even imagines her sleeping besides him as the husband languishes away in some prison. To enhance his hideous machinations, the father decides to call the Director of the special police force to report that Albert Momodu and Ogundipe Chipota are members of the dreaded July 10 movement. He hopes that by ensuring that Mrs. Momodu's husband and his friend are behind bars, he will get the golden opportunity to have her all for himself. This is hypocritical and morally wrong, especially coming from a professed man of God. The failure of all his manoeuvres is meant to ridicule this kind of wickedness.

Sarcasm or the use of wounding words is another satirical device that has been conveniently used in *Three Days on the Cross*. For example, on his arrest, Chipota is detained at a police station despite his protestations. He is told:

There is no need to get excited, Mr. Chipota. Like I said earlier, you will have the chance to know why you have been arrested (19).

Obviously this is meant to wound his ego, and the officers deliberately decide to keep him in the dark because they are aware of the trumped-up charges he is being held for. Chipota is more surprised when he is denied the chance of making a phone call, and his name is not entered in the occurrence book nor his personal effects removed from him. When he complains about the kind of mistreatment he is being subjected to, he receives a casual reply:

There is no harm intended and you should be as free as a bird if you co-operate. We are just investigating a small affair in which you, as a good citizen, could help (22).

But Chipota does not maintain a cool demeanour when he realises that the police have tricked his wife to go to town so that they can have the chance to later go with him in her

absence and search the house. He raves mad and warns the officers not to involve his wife in the harassment they are subjecting him to. Again, the police shamelessly quip:

cool it newspaper man, we just sent her on an errand for your sake. (24).

At the time of his interview with Supt. Ode, a lot of sarcasm is directed at Chipota. The superintendent, for instance, introduces the interview on a sarcastic note when he addresses him as Mr. Chipota also known as "the Mud Raker in 'journalistic circles'"(49). This statement is initially meant to intimidate him so that he can open up and probably tell the officers what they want to know. On his part, Chipota knows he is innocent and is eager to know why the police are holding him in custody. But then Supt. Ode further teases him:

I am sure that this is not a case of mistaken identity. You are surely Mr. Chipota of the Daily Horn. About that we have no doubts. We also do not have any doubts about other things that you have done which cannot be said to be patriotic.... Does any of you gentlemen have doubts of what I have said? (49).

This mockery and ridicule hardly escapes Chipota's notice and he is both incensed and incredibly surprised but maintains his cool. Instead, he complains of being held for eight hours, without any charges preferred against him, "by what he understands are police". Of course, this is an attempt to get back at the officers, but he is reminded that the interview is supposed to be one way where he is expected to keep quiet and answer questions.

But the most belittling and demeaning scenario is when Chipota is asked to give his life history. And after saying a few things about himself in three or so sentences, he keeps mum. It is then that Supt. Ode ridicules his 'very brief history' when he remarks:

A whole man's life summarised in a couple of sentences. Sounds like you have had a very uneventful life. Just jumping from one school to another, and then landing a good job. (50).

Once again, the sarcasm is intended to disorient Chipota so that he can possibly accept the allegations levelled against him. According to Supt. Ode, he is involved with July 10

movement and all they want is to confirm from him what they already know. However, when Chipota swears that he is clean, one of the officers makes fun of him:

There is no doubt that you are very clean. We can see that you have a clean shirt and all but by the time you leave this place we shall see how clean you shall be (51).

Though the man says it jokingly, the way the officers' nod in unison about the comment mean it is certainly a serious threat.

Before he knows what is happening, Chipota is told to remove all his clothes including underwear. It is at this point that he realises that the derision has turned into physical harassment and torture. Finally naked to the skin, the police officers start making nasty comments about his body and particularly the genitals. This is total humiliation and not sarcasm any longer. The narrator says this of Chipota:

He felt terribly humiliated as they stared at him making him feel like Adam after eating the forbidden fruit (53).

The indiscriminate and inhuman torture that ensues as the officers pound his naked body is merciless. Even then Supt. Ode still has the temerity do ridicule him thus:

We are just giving you some inspiration so that you can do the press-ups. Don't plead for mercy. Instead you should thank us for helping you do some exercises that you need (53-54).

Thus in this incident it is cruel, brutal and sadistic for the officers to reel back in laughter as they unleash terror on an innocent individual.

All in all, the sarcasm of the police officers turns out to be morbid and sour because it culminates in both psychological and physical torture. The sarcasm turns out to be adding insult to injury and it is not comical at all.

Irony is another satirical device employed in the novel *Three Days on the Cross*. Generally speaking, the plot of the novel is riddled with all kinds of ironies, both situational and dramatic. At the opening of the novel, the protagonists seem to be guilty

of what they are being accused of. Though we may not understand why they are being held and subjected to all sorts of inhuman treatment, we certainly empathise with them. Later on when the truth unfolds, we realise that the two are suffering because of Mrs. Momodu who knowingly and tactlessly gives a seditious note found in her husband's coat pocket to a scheming priest. Incidentally the man of God had a crush on her, and when she goes to him desperate to keep her marriage going, the priest thinks this is the opportunity to make a move.

In a sense we can say that the two heroes' problems stem from the paranoid fear of the 'Illustrious One' on loosing the reins of power, but it is true that self-made impatience and haste for a solution to her breaking marriage on the part of Mrs. Momodu is to blame. It is therefore quite ironical that a temporary and unfounded feeling of insecurity experienced by Mrs. Momodu leads to the tragic ending of the two protagonists. It is also interesting to note that the priest who confesses to religious piety and sincerity is in fact the very undoing of (the two heroes) piety and sincerity. Instead of helping his parishioner in trouble, he makes her sink even deeper into trouble because of his intentions to get romantic with her. When her husband disappears, Mrs Momodu seeks advice from the priest because of the trust she had in him.. He pretends to assist her when he advises:

I would suggest that you go home and wait for new developments. If he can't come home by this afternoon call the police and tell them everything. However, don't mention anything about what you know about his involvement in the July 10 movement. That could turn against him if it happens that he is being held by dissidents. It could give police ideas. The same God who provides is the same God who takes away. Pray that he gives you back your joy (110).

Given what was actually happening to Momodu at the time the priest is saying this to the wife, this is mockery. The priest is also hypocritical because it is true that he reported about Momodu and Chipota's involvement in the July 10 movement to the Director, yet he pretends to advise Mrs. Momodu not to mention her husband's involvement with July 10 Movement to the police. This is quite untrue and it is no wonder the priest, out of a guilty conscience, decides to call the Director to exonerate Momodu from the charges

avelled against him. He is even foolish to lie to the police that he had falsely accused Momodu because of a personal grudge.

It is quite ironical that the character of the head of state is in total contrast to the title given to him. Certainly he is not 'illustrious'. If anything he is a ruthless brute obsessed with power and prepared to go to whatever lengths – even murder - to maintain his power. Typical of any dictator, he paints a demonic picture of his perceived dissidents (July 10 movement). An obvious, trivial and ridiculous lie is when he claims:

They want our country to become a Marxist state where nobody owns anything. In communist states everything is owned by the state even people's wives (136).

To further discredit the July 10 movement, the head of state pretends to be a champion of the masses. He says:

We shall not let uncircumcised boys tell us how to run our affairs. They are being paid by communists to ruin our government, which is based on African socialism. African socialism makes sure that you can own a car, own a home, own as many acres of land as you can afford and generally enjoy yourself. This is a government, which lets those who can work for themselves get the value of sweat (136).

Of course this is a blatant distortion of political ideology to fit one's political designs, but the conviction and confidence with which the lie is said is incredible. Interestingly the same head of state, 'a man of the people', had just acquired a new fleet of cars for his retinue and had hired more bodyguards. All this is funded by the 'sweat of the citizens'.

Through the character of the 'Illustrious One', the narrator is ridiculing the misuse of power. Right from the irony of the name, the head of state, is seen to abuse power. As the Director of the special police department confesses:

We all knew that the July 10 movement was nothing to worry about. It was just a bunch of a few fellows who had printed a seditious document and circulated it in the city. They were not a threat to anybody; they were just like other groups that have surfaced in the past and disappeared as fast they came. But who would have told the Illustrious One that the July 10 people

were not a threat when he was convinced they were? We had to produce corpses so as prove him right (163).

In conclusion, we note that a great deal of satirical irony in the novel arises from the situation which characters find themselves in, but at the centre of it all are the two protagonists. Right from the time they are arrested, questioned, blindfolded, tortured, stripped and finally taken for execution, the two are not aware that they are going through all the agony because of their supposed involvement in the July 10 movement. In fact they are pronounced guilty before arrest, and everything else including questioning, was only a matter of procedure. It is also interesting that Mrs. Momodu, in her anger, strongly feels that her husband is a member of the dissident group being hunted down by police. When her husband disappears, she imagines that he is being held by the dissidents. At any one time, the two protagonists are surrounded by people who are either in the dark or think that the heroes are actually members of the clandestine group. Perhaps it is only Corporal Wandie whose compassionate act, of sympathy, which finally helps to give information to the newspaper editor, who knows the truth about the heroes' innocence.

3.4 CHARACTERISATION, THEMES AND SATIRE

According to Arthur Pollard:

satire is all about people and there must therefore be some form of characterisation; the simplest form is that of description by the author. (47).

From Pollard's assertion, we agree that any novel whether fictionalised or realist, relates to human beings. Or even if it may not have real human characters, the fictionalised characters must have a close semblance or association with human life. Characters in a work of satire should not necessarily bear any recognisable relationship to anyone we know in real life. More often, the character is an author's mouthpiece.

At a thematic level, we should acknowledge that satire is not art for art's sake. This explains why characters in satire are specifically chosen for specific intentions. On this note, Pollard observes that the satiric character can only possess limited independence because:

He is the creature of his maker ... the creature of his master's satiric intentions (54).

Essentially therefore, the intention is declared early enough in satire, and in the course of the novel, the characters only strive to illustrate the position already taken by the author. Consequently, characters in satire 'are' and rarely do they 'become'. In other words, the characters do not develop and if they ever do they still have to further the original purpose of the novel. It is not surprising therefore to come across morose, boring one dimensional characters in satire. In the words of Pollard Arthur, the satiric character is limited to the purpose of the author. He says:

His action will be basically repetitive, his interest will lie in incidental versatility, in the way in which the author plays the satiric variations on his theme (54).

However, most characters in satire are moral examples of human vanities like self-pretence, pursuit of power, wealth, beauty, pride and general self-importance. The satirist therefore assumes the role of a stern moralist who castigates the vices of his fellow men. This usually calls into play the categorisation of characters into good morally upright as opposed to the evil and unpleasant ones who deserve satirical retribution.

In this regard, we shall explore how the preceding argument about characters and themes is reflected in the novel *Three Days on the Cross*. As a novel that explores, implores and castigates police brutality in African states under dictatorial regimes and tyrannical leaders like the Illustrious One, the novel is a modern tragedy. The storyline revolves around two protagonists who have been friends since childhood, and seem to lead a fairly normal life before they are both arrested by the police for alleged involvement in dissident activities. During the three days they are in police custody, they undergo spine-chilling and traumatic torture. Leading normal career lives as a journalist and banker respectively, Chipota and Momodu are totally mesmerised by the manner in which they are arrested and throughout the horrendous ordeal, they each do not have the slightest idea about their mistake. For Chipota, he is only told that the police are investigating a small issue about which he could be of help. But when he is blindfolded he suddenly gets scared and realises the great danger he could be in:

For once he knew what Daniel of the bible felt when he was being led into the lions' den. (32).

For Momodu, the nightmare starts when he is accosted by a man – a total stranger – who convinces him that the bank at which he worked had been robbed and he was required to first record a statement at the police station before entering the building. At the station, he is blindfolded mysteriously despite his protestations, and the next thing he knows he finds himself in a tiny cell with a mattress and a blanket. It is in the cell where one of the officers who had been with him all along, declares that he is under arrest. Later on when he is interrogated, he confesses that he had received a note from a friend and had not bothered to read through it because he had not thought it was seditious. The police can not hear more of this, and he is slapped several times before being strapped on a chair and one of the officers proceeds to scald his private parts with a burning cigarette butt. Despite his pleading innocence, the police keep torturing him until he wets himself.

In his castigation of police brutality, the author has painted horrid pictures of how they work in cahoots with the political leadership to mete out violence on hapless and unsuspecting citizens. Even more preposterous is the fact that these heinous acts are carried out with the good will of the head of state. It is also grotesque and absurd that the Director of special police department congratulates himself for cracking down the July 10 movement, when it is only the innocent who are suffering. The head of state, on his part orders for the crackdown on 'dissidents' without ascertaining whether they are dangerous or not. And the Director of Special police force acts impulsively after receiving an anonymous call. Unfortunately, the two heroes suffer because of the ridiculous excuses and coincidences that the police officers claim to give. For example, according to Supt. Ode, Chipota and Momodu are suspects because they graduated from the same national university at a time when the movement was founded. Thus convicting the two for their involvement in the clandestine group is circumstantial and contrived by the officers.

Through the character of Father Kerekou, the author also ridicules religious hypocrisy. It is ludicrous that it is the priest's hasty call to the director of police that lands the two heroes in trouble. Even laughable is the fact that the priest makes the call at the spur of the moment when he erotically admires Mrs. Momodu. Thus, whatever suffering befalls the two is always traced back to the priest's lecherous ambitions, which make him to call

the Director and tell out on them. It is small wonder that when he realises his blunder, he quickly makes a similar call to the Director as a way of damage control, but it is too late.

Apart from police brutality and hypocrisy, the author also satirises institutionalised corruption. At the forefront of it all, is the head of state the Illustrious One, his cabinet ministers and civil servants. He is not a role model to his citizens, and because of his paranoid fear of real and perceived enemies of the state, he orders for a crackdown on a group of people who are in fact harmless. The police officers who are instructed to do this kind of job go ahead to track down innocent people torturing and forcing them to confess and plead guilty. And as the Director of special police confesses, they 'had to produce corpses so as to prove him right' (163). For all these heinous and beastly activities of the police, the head of state has sanctioned a hefty budget.

As a journalist, Ogundipe Chipota exposes a scandal in which the minister of health has supplied drugs to government hospitals by evading the tendering system. But according to the officers interrogating him, he did whatever he did, because he was being paid by the July 10 movement. It is ridiculous that the police officers believe they cannot tell a lie, and their way of refuting when accused of lying by Chipota is by raining blows on him.

In yet another 'explosive story', Chipota reveals how some cabinet ministers are involved in a racket that leads to the draining of all the stocks of maize initially meant to feed the national population. Though the truth is evident in his story, the *Daily Horn*, the paper for which Chipota wrote is vilified and condemned. Chipota is also heckled by party leaders who call for his arrest for tarnishing the good name of 'respectable people'.

In the religious sense, Father Kerekou is corrupt because he is a masquerader who hides behind the mask of religious pretence to do despicable things. According to his religious views, he is supposed to be celibate and chaste but from his confession, he has broken the vows severally though he regrets every time he does it. And because of his notoriety he can hardly check his instincts and especially his sexual urges in order to serve God. When he contemplates having an affair with his parishioner, it is both religious and ethical sacrilege. Even more devious and unscrupulous of him is the justification of his misdeeds: "Even the bishop himself does it and gets away with it" (40).

Instead of being accountable for his own actions, he rationalises his misbehaviour by seeming to be arguing that everybody is a sinner

Essentially, Father Kerekou is a hypocrite. Right from his childhood days, he does not quite cut the image of a patient, strong-willed and honest man of God. He lacks humility and dreads failure to the extent of being claustrophobic. For example, he initially goes to work as an altar boy for his parish merely because it means being able to speak in Latin. He is even more hypocritical when he makes the call to the Director of special police. He tells him over the phone, “me I am just a patriot doing the right thing by giving you information”.

Up to this point, we have noted that characters and themes have been strategically interplayed to contribute to the satire of the novel. Most of the characters have been conveniently developed to ridicule the social evils of police brutality and hypocrisy. This is mainly done by painting characters in their worst light or by making them look stupid in front of others. In most cases, the author lets us make our own judgement about issues especially when the good characters are pitted against the worst.

In the preceding chapter, it has been revealed that the narrative structure point of view, stream of consciousness and other narrative techniques have been used by the author to enhance the satirical butt of the novel. We also note that the author has specifically chosen language that befits the satirical ends of the novel.

We also acknowledge that the author has ably employed well known satirical devices like irony, sarcasm, humour, parody and ridicule. In conclusion we also appreciate how characters have been deliberately chosen and developed to give the novel its thematic and satirical punch-line. Nonetheless, we have also acknowledged the fact that the satire occurring in the novel is not of the lighter type because of the nature of the subject – police brutality. The author does not sustain satire for a good part of the novel and at certain instances, the author merely chronicles the character’s experiences.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 SATIRE IN THE JAIL BUGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Unlike in *Three Days on the Cross* where we noted that there is mockery and ridicule without much laughter, in this chapter we shall explore the hilarious and humorous kind of satire employed in *The Jail Bugs*. We shall also analyse the use of easy-going banter and bawdy imagery to ridicule the follies and wickedness of man. To illustrate this, we shall look at the use of specific stylistic devices like similes, sarcasm, irony and humour and how they contribute to the light-hearted tone of the novel.

We will in this chapter, also evaluate the use of diary form as a narrative technique and for what effect it has been used in the novel. In particular we shall look at the use of cynicism and the sardonic tone throughout the novel. Thus, though the narrator evokes a lot of laughter, we easily notice that he would rather cry than laugh. But may be laughter is just the antidote for the social predicament that the narrator goes through.

Finally, we will conclude this chapter by looking at the author's use of vivid description, specific idiomatic expression, motifs and images of animality, filth and vulgarity and buffoonery to elicit laughter, ridicule and disgust at the state of affairs in prison.

4.2 NARRATIVE STYLE AND THE USE OF SPECIAL SATIRICAL DEVICES

The Jail Bugs, as a novel is essentially a realistic novel that seeks to reveal the horrifying happenings in Kenya prisons. Though the events recounted in the novel may not have a one-to-one relationship with what might have actually happened in real life, a lot of what is related resembles what happens in post-independence Kenyan prisons. On this score, we can assert that the author tries his best to reflect on reality without necessarily giving a mirror like image. In the words of Ngugi wa Thiong'o in his collection of essays titled Homecoming:

Literature does not develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape and direction and even area of concern by social political and economic forces in a particular society (180).

Thus, we can say that Mutahi's *The Jail Bugs* is basically informed by his disgust and contempt for the decrepit, dilapidated and filthy conditions in Kenyan prisons. Though he does not directly mention the name Kenya, the events and setting of the whole story is obviously in a fictionalised country similar to Kenya. Inspired by his hatred for the sordid and murky conditions in prison and the society in general, Mutahi writes a social satire that ridicules the prison system and the general sense of negligence, lethargy and oppression among government servants.

The Jail Bugs is narrated in the first person narrative point of view. This is a perfect narrative strategy for a satirical text of this nature because it allows the author ample space to give an alert, direct and lurid description of characters. And because of the passion involved, the author generally demonstrates honesty and intensity of feeling required in satire. For example, though *The Jail Bugs* is basically a collection of daily events during a prisoner's short stay in prison, the whole story is rendered without making characters flat. The author is also able to develop the plot and themes fully at the end of the novel. At the end of it all, what appears like a simple account of the happenings in prison, reveals a compact and detailed account of systematic police brutality, human suffering and dirt-sodden conditions in prisons.

It is evident that the author's choice of the diary form is deliberate and purposive because it allows him the freedom of expression. Because of his use of the diary technique, the author is not unduly bound to write in a particular stylistic pattern, but in the end, there is an emerging sense of consistency and biting satire. The author has also used a narrator through whom we get a balanced portrayal of all the other characters. This is because through him we get to know the strengths and weaknesses of the other characters. For example, the narrator (Albert Kweyu) easily develops trust for Pancho more than the rest of the prisoners because he (Pancho) had offered him a place to sleep in his first night in prison.

Essentially, the novel is made up of prison notes that narrate the experience of Albert Kweyu (Narrator) who is convicted to serve a prison sentence after he accidentally knocks down a boy with his car. As a personal account given on a daily basis for 17 days (from November 26 to December 12), *The Jail Bugs* has been written in a humorous and not-so-serious tone without being too sentimental. Through the use of the personalised point of view of the narrator, the reader certainly identifies with the protagonist. Thus, because of the nature of narration, the audience immediately strikes a rapport with the narrator, and subsequently the reader shuttles with the narrator throughout the ordeal right from the tribulations and agonies, to the triumphs and his final freedom from the suffocating and filthy environment of prison.

The use of diary form as a technique is also a spellbinding technique, which gives the story more credibility and makes it even more realistic. For example, in the opening paragraph of the novel, the narrator starts on a humorous note and immediately establishes the mutual relationship with the reader through the use of the first person plural 'us'. He says, "Let us start by way of one-way introduction" (1). He goes ahead to explain why he should give an account of his predicament. He explains that he is 'in' and the reader is 'out' and therefore, it is his onus to explain why he is not like his audience, a free man.

As earlier observed in this study, stream of consciousness is a technique that appreciates the random flow of impressions that flow in a characters mind. Alongside other literary styles like internal monologue, and dialogue, the in this novel has managed to offer a very vivid impression of the psychic activities of the characters. One way the author has

succeeded in using this technique is by allowing the narrator to talk in the first person. In so doing, the narrator communicates his views directly and lays bare his psychological impressions.

At various points in the novel, the narrator seems to be talking to himself. Yet on several instances, he addresses an imagined audience—the reader. Again there are times when what the narrator says is merely happening in his own. Nevertheless, dialogue as a technique also features prominently in this text. In most instances, it is used for comic effect. For example, we can't help but laugh at Albert Kweyu's naivety concerning the grimy state of prison. In his conversation with Pancho it's amusing to hear Pancho refer to prison lice as "*prisoners guards*"

Internal monologues and streams of consciousness are also used as a device of enhancing satirical mockery. For example, the narrator causes ridicule when he is honest enough to say what is transpiring in his mind:

At that point I was convinced beyond doubt that we had in the namelical officer, a sadist who wouldn't take an off-day so at he could not miss a chance to reduce sexually active men into neutered cocks! (34)

Certainly, all this thoughts are racing through the narrator's mind. But the irony of it all is that the clinical officer turns out to be none of what he is alleged to be. On the other hand, through the thoughts of the narrator, he author is mocking government servants who abscond duty by asking for off-days.

Much of the humour generated in the novel is by use of various literary techniques ranging from similes, irony, sarcasm and ridicule. In the use of similes, the narrator ridicules other characters, by drawing laughable comparisons between their disagreeable features with ludicrous and almost clownish characters. For example, the narrator blames all his woes on the magistrate "who mumbled something to the effect that it was unsafe to have him 'out there'" (1). He further ridicules the jurist when he makes fun of the way he spoke while passing the sentence. "He spoke as if he had a hot potato in his mouth; one that he did not either want to spit out or swallow" (1). Interestingly, the narrator comforts himself about his quagmire by rationalising that at least he is safer in prison than outside

where he reckons one is vulnerable to all sorts of dangers including tripping on a banana peel and getting one's skull broken in the process or even being mugged in a dark alley. Of course this is not from the bottom of his heart because he definitely wishes to be outside the intimidating prison walls.

The author has also used similes to ridicule characters that the narrator dislikes. For example, in the description of the head warden, the narrator nicknames him 'Walrus Moustache' – because of his twitching moustache. He goes ahead to contemptuously describe him thus:

a voice that sounded like a concrete mixer pouring out its contents at full blast, while the man himself panned out faces like a rattle snake staking its prey (3).

This description is calculated to belittle the warden and paint a caricaturish picture of him and true to the narrator's description, he turns out to be an insensitive, brutal and vulgar buffoon.

Although the narrator is a bitter man because he has been thrown in prison, he still makes fun of himself and the prison surroundings and characters. In a humorous and yet bitter tone he, for example, observes that in prison there are all sorts of people serving sentences for various crimes ranging from:

people who were once out there cracking either walls, safes or skulls. Others were doing nobler things like fiddling with account books while others were being too passionate with minors or taking a 'no' for a 'yes' with women in the woods, or in a room somewhere (2).

While outside prison, one can easily be injured by thugs on the loose. The narrator ridicules prison wardens by insinuating that they are 'thugs in uniform' who can easily have one's head broken.

The narrator invokes biting sarcasm and ridicule through his dexterous use of suspense. He does not introduce himself by name at the beginning; instead, he talks about his precarious situation and bemoans his agonies. When he makes an attempt to introduce himself, he refers to himself by the prison number. He says:

I was introducing myself. I am Number P/F/1270. Only yesterday, I was Albert Kweyu; Mister Albert Kweyu to my juniors at the post office; A. K to the boys at my regular drinking joint and Alb to my wife on those occasions when she wants to touch my soft spot.

They took away my name yesterday. They took away nearly everything that made up Albert Kweyu and replaced them with things that say that I am No. P/F/1270. The only thing that they have not taken is my face but I can see myself losing it very soon (2).

From this confession, we can easily notice the narrator's cry for justice because of the dehumanising process of losing his very identity – from a name to a number.

About the reason for being put in jail, the narrator does not discuss it until almost towards the end of the novel. In fact when we come to know that the hero was serving the sentence for accidentally knocking down a 15-year-old boy, it is an anticlimax. This is because the kind of maltreatment he goes through befits a gangster robber, and not a harmless driver who inadvertently run over a young boy. Thus, by revealing the real cause of his incarceration, we as readers suddenly realise the irony of it all and we immediately take sides with the narrator, as he ridicules and attacks his tormentors.

In prison, the narrator realises that there is no freedom of expression and to ridicule the prison authorities he makes fun of himself. He says:

I have been in prison for the past 24 hours and I have learned a very vital lesson. The lesson is that your mouth is a mere ornament in the presence of prison guards of whatever rank. Your ears however, are supposed to be very functional. That is while you are supposed to be mute, your ears are supposed to pick up even the silent rustle of the guard's whiskers. (2).

In this case, the narrator is attacking the state of tyranny and oppression that prevails in prisons. But instead of launching a direct tirade against the prison authorities, he draws attention to himself and evokes laughter at his vain attempt to be truant and submissive, yet he hates what he does.

Of all the characters that the narrator detests, the head warden Sergeant Kazimoto, nicknamed 'Walrus Moustache' is top on the list. From the way he describes him, we cannot help but notice the kind of hatred he has for the warden. Firstly, he dislikes him because of his notorious habit of addressing convicts as 'thieves', 'conmen' and 'rapists'. In a mocking tone, the narrator describes his physical features:

If the man had a normal face, he had now transformed it into a grimace not out of pain but out of obvious disdain for what he was looking at, meaning the new arrivals. His moustache seemed to be doing a dance at intervals as it twitched up and down ... (3).

This kind of description of the head warden, and the fact that the narrator refers to him only by his nickname, clearly illustrates his contempt for him, and for the system that he represents.

Throughout his stay in prison, the narrator is very cynical about any gesture of hope for betterment. However, despite the hard conditions he goes through, he still can afford to laugh and make fun of himself. For example, when the wardens almost go berserk and ruthlessly land blows on the prisoners, the narrator still has the nerve to comment that:

the blows were artistically applied' on the kneecaps. I say artistically because one, there were no bruises and two, because that is where they were supposed to land since it is our knees that should have bent in the first instance so that we could squat. Talk about applying tools of trade appropriately. (6).

Contrary to what we will expect (acrimony) the narrator makes fun of himself, when in fact he is supposed to cry out and curse because of the pain inflicted by the blows.

Another incident of ridicule is the infamous 'head count'. The head count is a form of torture meted out on the prisoners. As the narrator describes, there is nothing like 'finger pointing', which is considered inaccurate. The whole process is a practical exercise of verifying the number of heads by tapping them with a baton in a not so affectionate manner. Even then, 'Walrus Moustache' has little faith in his juniors and often ensures the accuracy of the counting by tapping the heads afresh. Essentially the narrator is ridiculing the wardens for taking such a trivial exercise like head counting so seriously to the point of hurting the prisoners in the process.

Apart from the frequent battering from the wardens, the prisoners also have to suffer the agony of feeding on poorly cooked food. As the narrator comments rather humorously, he wishes to kill the cooks because they prepare the kind of food that is a painful method of 'slow poisoning' apart from the fact that they have perfected the skills of making 'a slimmer's diet' (14). The narrator hates the prison meals even more. For example he refers to porridge as "the molten liquid that does not open itself to any specific taste" (15). But after spending sometime in prison, he suddenly changes heart and confesses that the liquid is 'after all not all that poisonous'. In fact, he takes the meals with relish since he has no alternative.

On another instance, the narrator makes fun of the food in prison, when he vividly describes how prisoners take their breakfast. He aptly puts it thus:

taking breakfast is a daring and self-sacrificial undertaking, which involves the irritating act of slurping a molten liquid from deep comical metal containers. The face disappears into the mouth of the container because it is wide and then you half-eat, half-drink the contents (15).

On top of all this agony, one can easily get kicked as he takes the porridge. Thus, because of all the conditions of torture and the bad food, the narrator develops an attitude of cynicism. Though he makes fun of himself, he in real sense hates the way things happen around him. Indeed, he hates his tormentors.

Apart from the use of humorous and rib-cracking descriptions, the use of names that describe one's character is yet another technique of ridicule that the author has used in the novel extensively. For example, the narrator refers to Sergeant Mdodoi alias Kazimoto as 'Walrus Moustache' because of his twitching moustache. However, this nickname smirks of clownish behaviour, a character that is quite evident in the warden. And because of his penchant for hustle, the prisoners call him Kazimoto – a Kiswahili word, which when loosely translated means 'hot work'. Indeed, he likes things happening fast and rejoices in harassing the convicts, and because of his outspokenness, he is truly 'hot'. The prison in which the narrator and other prisoners are doing time is called Wakora Wengi Prison, which when literally translated means 'Many Conmen Prison'. Considering the cross-section of the people serving sentences in the prison, it actually deserves to be called a prison for 'many conmen'. Uzi the sickly prisoner who helps the narrator get a sample of urine that tested positive for diabetes is very thin just like what the Swahili word suggests – 'thread'; and Haki – Swahili for justice, actually fights for his rights and justice from the way he keeps provoking the prison warders. Last but not least, the man who the narrator helps launch an appeal – Mnyonge – is poor and down trodden just like what his name means in Kiswahili. All in all, the use of names that depict the personality of characters not only evokes laughter but sarcasm and ridicule and also attack the wickedness of the oppressor.

As a novel that probes the theme of police brutality, *The Jail Bugs* is dotted with images of suffering and torture. To ridicule and mock this social evil, the narrator has drawn enormously from biblical stories and occasionally compares the situations he faces with similar episodes from the bible. For example, on his very first time in prison, he encounters unfriendly inmates who are not ready to offer him a place to sleep. He says this of his situation:

... I did not seem to qualify to squeeze rib to rib with these people who were now lost in their own conversation. That was not to be so for even in hell, there is some hierarchy that ensures that the rank and file burn according to regulations, however friendly they are (23).

The narrator is making a joke about his dilemma by drawing an analogy from the biblical Christian concept of heaven and hell. That though (prison) hell is for the sinners, even then, there is still some hierarchy and order of things and not everything is in disarray for those who have been condemned. Of course, finally he manages to get a place to squeeze himself because of the assistance he gets from the prisoner-in-charge who he considers 'a man as wise as Solomon of the Bible'.

According to the narrator, the food in prison is like 'slow poison', and it is only tolerated by the prisoners to ensure their continued stay in prison. Though he honestly hates the food, he reminds us that he cannot stop taking it. He confesses:

Don't imagine that I have been trying to imitate Jesus and starve myself for 40 days as he did in the desert. I don't have such ambitions so I have been taking the most manageable poison in this place; porridge (14).

Thus, the narrator concedes that he takes prison food for his survival, but he still does not mince his words and his contempt for the meals and particularly porridge which he says 'they give the misnomer breakfast' (14). Interestingly, after the clinical officer certifies him as 'a diabetic' he no longer hated the food. Nor does he wish for someone to kill the cooks because he says:

prisoners who are sick as I am are entitled to a double ration of porridge, which I have now come to pass as drinkable.

He goes further to give excuses for his renewed appetite for prison food by saying

I know that Jesus said that man cannot live by bread alone but here I am determined to live on those beans and vegetables daily (45).

In this case, though we sympathise with the conditions he lives in, we cannot help laughing at the way he strives to make fun of his problems, by comparing his predicament to that of Jesus in the bible.

Meshak, the prisoner, is also another attempt by the author to draw parallels with the bible for satirical effects. The author, in this case, is clearly criticising religious

hypocrisy by portraying a character who strives to be as close as possible to the biblical personality we read about. When warden Walrus Moustache orders for a thorough search of all the prison quarters for what is referred to as 'contraband', it is Meshak the man of God who is the first culprit. He is discovered with a razor blade hidden in the bible. In a mocking and humiliating tone, Walrus Moustache ridicules him:

Meshak, the supposed man of God, get out here and let us know whether you will get out of this fire like the man you are named after in the good book that is your store for lethal weapons banned in prison. (65)

When he is still trembling and shaking with fright, the warden continues:

So you are the good Christian boy who gives the good book a bad name by using it to hide contraband? I know God will reward me for stopping you from misusing his book (65).

Basically, the tirade is not only a lampoon directed at Meshak, but it is also a ridicule of the religion he professes to be committed to albeit half-heartedly. Meshak turns out to be not so devoted to his faith as he tries to make his colleagues in prison believe. When the narrator encounters him for the first time, he is so intensely involved in prayer to the extent that he does not even spare a moment and create space for the new convict (narrator) to sleep. He also seems to be constantly preaching to disinterested prisoners, and when he prays for fire and brimstone to descend on them, they hardly listen to his threats. Ironically, to the prisoners, the biblical story of how Paul and Silas made it out of prison is more relevant, and in any case they reason, they would rather have the fire and brimstone than be caged behind the walls of prison. As a professed man of God, Meshak is a hypocrite, who is out of touch with the reality and not as good as his word. In the final analysis, he is just a criminal like the rest of the prisoners.

In the novel, the author paints a picture of a despairing lot of convicts, who have resigned their fate to God. Though they are not devoutly religious, they are still optimistic that somehow a miracle close to what happens in bible stories will take place to lift them out of their quagmire. In the case of the narrator, his being set free on a Sunday has Christian religious connotations. Since his stay in prison is regarded as a kind of persecution like the one Jesus Christ went through, freedom on a Sunday is as good as resurrecting from

the dead. His release is totally unexpected and almost looks like a godsend gift from the heavens. Subtly, the narrator makes a scathing attack on the police and prison systems for dehumanising, torturing and oppressing convicts to the point where getting out of all the agony is like a miracle.

In *The Jail Bugs*, the author has also employed the use of special idiomatic expressions and metaphors peculiar to prison to ridicule and make fun of the conditions there. For example, the narrator learns on the first day that prison is also referred to as 'net'. He learns this through the prisoner-in-charge when he welcomes the new convicts and asks the other old prisoners to find space for them to sleep. He says:

The 'net' was made for men, so welcome brothers. Somebody make room for this one who smells of the air that they breathe out there when they are not in the 'net' (24).

The image of a net certainly sounds interesting for those who know little about prison life but for the prisoners themselves the word conjures up images of hermetic confinement – almost like fish. Thus, the author ridicules the prison conditions through the narrator and prisoners who compare it with the fisherman's tool of trade. The determination to confine the inmates is ensured by the thick and almost insurmountable walls, which cannot be scaled by the prisoners to gain freedom.

Another popular expression in prison is the description of the process of one getting convicted and sentenced to a jail term. The narrator gets to hear about this expression through Pepeto who asks his friend Fixer – a new prisoner thus: "Don't tell me that you have eaten a raw cassava again. It is not like you to eat one so soon" (77). What Pepeto is referring to in this case is that his friend Fixer landed in trouble with the police after being cornered while robbing a bank with his gang. Fixer blames Zaiko, a gang member, for all his problems because as he says he does not know how to use a gun and therefore "does not know the difference between a revolver and a sweet potato" (77). As prisoners narrate their individual experiences, we easily notice the exaggerations, particularly when each one of them emphasises his heroic escape from the hail of 'grains' (bullets) from the police guns. To them, being thrown in jail is child play, simply referred to as 'chewing a raw cassava'. These mock-heroic stories shared among the hard core criminals make the narrator feel inferior and his crime suddenly pales into a white-collar type.

Despite the fact that there is little and poorly cooked food in prison, it is surprising that many prisoners opt to give out their rations especially in the evening, in order to have a cigarette or half of it in exchange. In the barter trade that involves the exchange of the two items, there is also use of a peculiar language – specific to prison, metaphorical and very satirical. Those who wanted a cigarette always shouted, “who wants to kill me?”, while those who were ready to give out the cigarettes go get food shouted “who wants to die?” In this business, the trading of food with cigarettes is symbolic of trading life with death. Thus, life is exchanged for death by way of one skipping his supper in order to smoke. However, the whole business takes place in a seemingly jovial atmosphere. Just like a market fair. Even Uzi the ‘diabetic’ gladly surrenders his ration for a cigarette.

In this whole prison scenario, we easily identify the sense of desperation among the prisoners whose livelihood has been reduced to a matter of two options; life or death. But apparently each one of them treats grave issues like a joke and because of what is visited on them daily, being alive is not different from death. Little wonder, most of them can easily give up their food just to have a smoke that will soothe their senses or probably make them to momentarily forget their problems.

In a nutshell, the barter trade between the prisoners with cigarettes as the currency and food as the merchandise is symbolic and satirises the acts of brutality in prisons and especially the inhuman aspects of torture and the filthy conditions. The fact that the prisoners are prepared to literally mortgage their lives for the sake of smoking cigarettes clearly illustrates their feelings of despair and hopelessness. Though the food is necessary for their livelihood, the way it is cooked and the way the prisoners are treated, it turns out to be not so important and can be forfeited. This means that however much one struggles to be alive in prison, there is still a part of a prisoner that is killed by the prevailing conditions.

4.3 THE USE OF SORDID IMAGERY AND BUFFOONERY IN SATIRE: IMAGES OF ANIMALITY, FILTH AND VULGARITY

In *The Jail Bugs*, the author has employed base and crude imagery almost to the point of obscenity, but at the same time he is also careful not to lose the hilarious and humorous tone of the novel. In his ridiculing of oppressors, the narrator has managed to present to us a whole array of his own worst experiences right from the time he joins the precincts of prison to the time he gains his freedom on his release on bond.

Throughout the storyline of the novel, the narrator takes us through a kaleidoscope of filth, dirt, cacophony, murk and sometimes-total confusion. And because of trying to portray a grimy picture, we easily notice the use of vulgar language, which may sound rather obscene. But on the use of such kind of imagery in satire Northrop Frye in his *The Anatomy of Criticism* asserts that:

... genius seems to have led practically every great satirist to become what the world calls obscene. It is also true that the most unpleasant details appearing in literature are found in satire including explanation about excrementary details, amorous pleasantries etc. (235).

Nonetheless, we should also remember that the details exposed in satire represent the very nature of man that it admonishes. Characters in satire seem indecently carnal, eating, drinking, lusting, copulating, displaying body parts, evacuating, scratching, riddled with ugly diseases and smelling of dirty rotten matter. Any trace of beauty whether of the body or spirit suggested by the satirist is easily destroyed by the over bearing smell of filth.

Due to its use of non-literary forms and by its very nature, satire often gives problems in getting a precise definition for itself. But as Alvin P. Kernan argues:

Satire is, like comedy and tragedy a very ancient form, which appears to have its roots in primitive ritual activities such as formulaic curses and magical blasting of personal and tribal enemies, and just as we find tragic and comic attitudes outside art, so we

find that the attitudes expressed in satire are also felt and expressed by individuals in various extra-literary ways ranging from the sneer to the street corner tirade (253).

Essentially, the argument Kernan is putting forward is that satire sometimes may be expressed in ways that may be regarded as non-literary but this does not mean that we henceforth dismiss it wholesome. Indeed, the didactic nature of satire is to change the individual by ridiculing his weaknesses. More often the ridicule and mockery used in satire may involve painting the targets of satire in the worst light so that they end up looking foolish and stupid.

The use of images of filth, vulgarity and animality is generally consistent with the nature of satire because man always tends towards the bestial instincts in all his follies. It is not surprising to note that the scene of satire is always clogged up, disorderly crowded and packed to the brink – almost bursting. In the same breath Alvin Kernan further observes:

The deformed faces of depravity, stupidity, greed, venality, ignorance and malice group closely together (254).

He further notes that:

The sheer dirty weight, without reason or conscious purpose of people and their vulgar possessions threatens to overwhelm the world... streets boil over with scum (254).

Basically, the satirist is a disgusted being because everywhere he turns he encounters idiocy, foolishness, depravity and dirt. To him therefore, the human ideal is only insinuated as the unnamed opposite of the villainy and idiocy portrayed. With such a prevailing scenario of murk, decency is forever in a precarious position near the edge of extinction and the world is constantly about to slip into eternal darkness. It is because of this reason that the satirist arrogates himself the onerous task of making every effort to emphasise the destructive ugliness and power of vice.

The foregoing argument is actually what informs the satire in *The Jail Bugs*. In this novel, the narrator Albert Kweyu portrays the grotesque and distorted state of affairs in

prison and he concentrates, to an obsessive degree on issues of human flesh and filth. In fact, the scene in *The Jail Bugs* is what Alvin P. Kernan refers to as:

... the extreme, where the bore rattles on without end, the flatterer says any outrageous thing to the vain man who believes all that is said, the miser wants all the absolute wealth, the fop literally smothers himself under a mass of fantastic clothes; the blockhead can be persuaded to do anything the politician actually sells his mother for advancement... (255).

Sergeant Anthony Mdodoi, also known as Kazimoto or 'Walrus Moustache,' as the narrator has nicknamed him, is a master of the abusive epithets. As a head warden, he personally takes part in welcoming new prisoners to Wakora Wengi prison. Apart from the 'artistic blows', he personally supervises to make sure they are effectively administered, he also literally abuses the prisoners. For example, he is disgusted that the prisoners are standing instead of squatting when he is addressing them. In a sudden fit of rage, he orders the other wardens to move in to ensure that all the prisoners are squatting. He shouts at the prisoners thus:

What are you thieves, conmen, rapists, pick pockets, you... you... enemies of the people doing on your feet? You think that we are equals? You expect me to address you while you are standing? You think that I am some grovelling fourth rate politician looking for votes? (4).

And as if the stinging invectives are not enough, Walrus Moustache goes further by mocking them in more sarcastic tone when he says:

I have a feeling that now you are aware that you are not in a hotel or some welfare hostel. I don't look like a matron and I am not going to behave like one. This is prison and you have no doubts in your minds who you are (4).

But the worst verbal ridicule is when Walrus Moustache refers to the prisoners as incorrigible degenerates who are illiterate and fit for prison. He says:

The fact that you are here says that you did not learn a thing from your parents. You did not learn a thing from your teachers if you ever went to school and the world has not taught you a

thing yet. That is why you wound up here, where lessons are in plenty. We may lack a few other things like bread and tea in the morning but we have lots of lessons (5).

All in all, Walrus Moustache is a quintessential representation of the different forms of brutality right from the physical battering with batons to the slanders and abuses.

The epitome of harassment, torture and humiliation is when the same Walrus Moustache orders all the prisoners to strip naked. This is utterly embarrassing to the prisoners, and it is funny how Walrus Moustache enjoys every moment watching the prisoners in the nude because it apparently gives him a sense of authority and confidence. The narrator who is experiencing such a thing for the very first time in his life is befuddled and embarrassed but he is forced to look at bodies he says 'would win no prizes at a body show'. At the same time he is also ashamedly conscious of the staring eyes of other prisoners gaping at his "tummy resembling a three quarter way inflated rugby ball supported by spindly legs with coarse sparsely scattered hairs standing on end" (7).

In what looks like inspecting a guard of honour in a nudity camp, Walrus Moustache orders the naked bodies to jump up and down as he keenly walks through the crowd watching. However, he is disappointed after the ingenious exercise, that none of the prisoners has dropped any prohibited stuff – contraband – from their anuses, which is a well-known hiding place for items like money and cigarettes. In an obscene tone he comments:

It seems that you thieves, conmen and rapists, either have digestive systems that work from the bottom or did not stuff anything down there. I am surprised that none of you laid nothing, not even a stub of cigarette. I have a feeling that you dared not smuggle anything here via that unpleasant but popular passage. The exercise that we have engaged in not only gave you a chance to flex your muscles but also to let the prison machinery do its duties of frisking prisoners of their contraband because some of you might not have heard what happens when any of that stuff is found inside or rather falls out from the anatomy of an inmate. ... We prefer to have prisoners eat what has fallen down from their anatomy in that exercise after all the contraband will have come from their bodies (8).

To say the least, this is putrid, nauseating and sickening. But perhaps what makes it worse is the casual demeanour with which the warden talks about all the excrementary and salacious details of the alimentary canal. As we earlier mentioned in this chapter, the portrayal of such faecal details is filthy and makes any beauty of the soul and body remotely distant. Indeed the hope that things will turn out for the better can only be imagined. What with characters like Walrus Moustache ordering the stripping of prisoners with impunity and shamelessly laughing about it? Thus, the narrator is satirising the political establishment and prison authorities by portraying one of its representatives as a buffoon who cracks dastardly and sickening jokes at the expense of basic human morality. To the wardens, the use of foul language when referring to the prisoners is quite in order. For example, it is very normal for them to refer to the prisoners as 'eating and shitting machines'.

The narrator in *The Jail Bugs* also gives vivid descriptions of the filthy and animal behaviours that are practised in prison. For example, lashing out at the prisoners with batons is savage and brutal, yet it is taken to be an ordinary act. Even the narrator himself sarcastically refers to the blows as 'artistic' and yet it involves pain inflicted on human bodies. On top of these beatings, the prisoners have to put up with poorly cooked food, horrible sleeping places, stuffy conditions, worn out prison uniforms full of lice and poor sanitation.

Initially, the narrator finds the food in prison quite unpalatable – poison – but after sometime he realises that he just cannot do without it. However, the biggest problem arises when after taking the deplorable food one has to go for a long call in the small toilet room that the prisoners call the 'kitchen'. As the narrator ridicules it rather humorously, the 'kitchen' is supposed to be a 'convenience' for his calls of nature but because of its horrible state of cleanliness it turns out to be an 'inconvenience'. The toilet is in such a filthy state and in dire need to be cleaned that the narrator swears he would rather share a bed with a porcupine than to attempt to go to it. And even the whole process of going for a long call is very embarrassing because one has to do it openly as others watch and wait in the queue.

The filthy state of the toilet leaves no room for spiritual beauty. This is because the prisoners are never given tissue paper for toilet purposes and they end up using leaflets from the small bibles they are given by foreign evangelists.

The narrator also makes fun of the prison uniform, which he is given. He first of all acknowledges that he acquired the clothes through a scramble that was 'like a savage rugby game'. Apparently, the uniforms, which were initially white, are now reddish brown due to the dirt and filth they have accumulated. However, the narrator can at still console himself for having at least something to wear, although the shorts have five open holes, each of which could fit his waist. He is nonetheless embarrassed because he looks like a streaker, and he is even more ashamed for having to look at other prisoners' bottoms everyday until the day a tailor will come to fix their clothes.

As for the bedding, he (narrator) shares a blanket with Pancho and each night he has to brave the vice-like grip as the prisoners squeeze for a place to sleep on the floor. Apart from the stinking and stuffy conditions of the prison and the smelly blankets, the prisoners also have to cope with the bite and itches caused by lice. In an interestingly humorous way, the narrator describes how he came to know about the existence of lice in his bedding after a totally unbearable night of itching caused by the parasites:

I was still lying on my back, the blanket which I share with Pancho pulled up near my nose. Then I saw a movement near my nose. At first, it was a tiny speck; a moving speck that made a step then hesitated. The speck became bigger the more I looked at it. It seemed not to like my face; because after taking a step towards my nose it changed direction.... Then another one emerged where the first one had come from, looked at my nose and took the same route along the hemline. ...I shot up as soon as Pepeto himself had risen and proceeded to investigate the visitors who had invited themselves to our blankets. Naturally, I first checked the blanket's hem to see whether the moving specks were there. They were there, and so were their parents, relatives and clansmen (31).

While the narrator instinctively thought of throwing away the blanket in annoyance, Pancho can only smile at him, as he refers to the lice as 'prisoner's guards', which keep them alert and awake. As an inveterate prisoner, Pancho understands his friend's naivety. To Pancho, the lice have the 'freedom of jail' and they are indispensable in prison. The

fact that vermin like lice have been accepted as part of the life of a prisoner illustrates the incorrigible and despicable state of things in prison. This is clearly demonstrated by Pancho's reaction to the narrator's surprise for having discovered the lice. Prisoners like Pancho have come to accept the situation and even learned to live in the filthy conditions.

The use of images of dirt, filth, bestiality and vulgarity can also be interpreted to be symbolic of the tainted nature of the human spirit, which is being satirised. That apart from the dirty bodies and dirty surroundings in which the prisoners live, even deep inside their hearts they are soiled. In relation to the images of dirt, we can discuss the rampant corruption in prison as a microcosm of the filthy state of the general human soul. Corruption is practised by the prison authorities and the political establishment as represented by the prison warders and the prisoners who are doing time in prison. On the other hand, we also discern the use of the madness motif in the novel to satirise the general decadence of human society. Due to the absence of beauty, both of the body and the soul under the existing prison conditions, characters tend to move towards total insanity and moral degeneration. Luckily, the narrator survives this madness until the day of his release, but each day spent in prison, he was always being driven to the edge of madness.

The narrator gives an account of the under-hand dealings that take place in prison despite the stern warnings that prisoners are given on their first entry. For example, he ridicules the prison's clinical officer when he explains how easy it was for him (narrator) to be tested positive for diabetes even when he was not suffering from it. By striking a deal with Uzi who is a known diabetic to use his urine for medical test, the narrator succeeds in being exempted from the hard farm duties and other tedious assignments which are done by those who are confirmed not to have any ailments.

But before going for the test, the narrator is genuinely scared because of the rumour that the clinical officer normally administers injections that kill a man's sexual prowess. With a sarcastic tone, he ridicules the 'hardworking' officer who suddenly seems to threaten his very manhood because of the test. He says this:

He must be exceptional to work for so long without getting a sick off. I thought off days for all sorts of imaginary diseases are mandatory for government workers. They fall sick conveniently (34).

The narrator is ridiculing, not only the clinical officer, but all the inefficient and incompetent government workers. The habit of most government officers to use the smallest excuse to abscond duty is clearly the target of the narrator's satire. Apparently, he questions why the clinical officer is so dedicated to his duties unlike most government servants who spend more time doing their own things. He asks Pancho in a naïve and yet sarcastic tone:

Do you think that it is for lack of nothing else to do say like owning a kiosk as other public servants who spend working time minding their own business? (36)

Though the clinical officer looks shrewd and conscientious, he is no saint to corrupt practices. According to what the narrator gathers from his prisoner friend Pancho, the clinical officer should be a millionaire because of the payments he gets per prisoner. Pancho sarcastically and aptly comments thus:

You pay him and you get sick; very sick. You get as sick as I am. It is that easy... That clinical officer depending on how much you give him, can make you get a disease of your choice... You can develop instant epilepsy meaning that you cannot be assigned any jobs that require tools; he can certify that you have stomach ulcers or a bad case of diabetes like in my case and recommend that you be put on a special diet until the end of the sentence. Just give the right price and you will get the right disease. The man is democratic and gives you the chance to choose your disease, that is if you pay for it (38).

Pancho's revelation thus summarises the state of affairs in prison. Apart from serving jail terms, the prisoners also rub shoulders with blatant corruption in an institutionalised form. The political establishment and the social institution of prison are rotten to the core. In a place where convicts are supposed to serve sentences for the crimes committed, it is quite preposterous that some prisoners easily escape the hard prison duties by bribing the clinical officer and the wardens. Even more ridiculous is the submission that the practice is justified by many through what Pancho calls the 'national motto', which says "You shall not keep your stomach empty when your mouth is capable of chewing". And the comparison of the corrupt practices of the clinical officer to a 'form of democracy' is obviously as sarcastic as it is satirical. Through Pancho's confession, we realise that

corruption is deeply entrenched not only in the prison system but also in the whole human society.

Because of the well-known corrupt inclinations of the clinical officer, the narrator looks like a fool throughout his medical test. He all along thinks the officer is eager to be bribed. He ends up making an idiot of himself when he answers to the affirmative for all the diseases he is asked about and at the end of it, he sure enough looks like he has a mental problem. And as he eagerly awaits the 'notorious injection' for emasculation, which he had been told about by his fellow prisoners, (he isn't given) we cannot help laughing at the way he keeps wondering which of the diseases that had been mentioned, will be officially certified as the one he is suffering from. Nonetheless, it is through the assistance of Uzi that he finally gets certified as 'a diabetic'. This jolts him into overnight fame. He even brags about it and mocks the prison authorities for their gullibility. He says:

Now that I have diabetes, or so says the note to the prison's commandant nobody will try to kill me with 'profitable assignments'. I might end up doing such duties as just lifting blankets as Pancho does or even better, supervising the dusting of those blankets as a prisoner called Mozo does so. Supervising means spreading out your blanket and lying down until you hear the door being opened and then rising to look like a supervisor (45).

The sanitary conditions in Wakora Wengi prison are deplorable. For prisoners, there is no bathing on weekdays because the water, according to the authorities, is strictly meant for drinking and the little that can be spared is only enough to wash around the eyes. Therefore, to the warden bathing on weekdays is a luxury for the prisoners. But to the narrator, he is glad and brags that as 'an officially recognised diabetic' he can bathe as many times as he could, especially during those times when nobody was in the dormitory and he was dusting blankets. The candidness and arrogance with which he refers to himself as 'a diabetic' is mocking and ridiculing the prison's establishment for its foolhardiness and especially its inability to catch pretentious masqueraders like him who manage to get away with little pranks like using someone else's urine for a medical test.

Corruption, as a heavily entrenched vice in the social setting of *The Jail Bugs*, is also illustrated by the way the wardens readily accept money from the convicts in order to

extend them favours like exemption from the dreaded farm gang. Ironically, money is regarded as one of the items that are illegal in prison, but somehow the prisoners still manage to smuggle money into prison. Of course all this is through the help of wardens who assist in having the money reach the prisoners as long as they also get part of it. Pancho vividly describes to the narrator how this happens.

All you need is a co-operative relative out there and a uniformed man here who has a mouth and the deal is done. Send the man in uniform by word of mouth to that relative that you need a hundred shillings. The man in uniform takes fifty and you take fifty. He might decide to take seventy and in that case you take thirty and don't hope to complain that you have been cheated because there is nobody to complain to in the first instance (38).

Further to this game of extortion, the prisoners also have to pay a certain sum of money in order to evade hard duties in prison. For example, prisoners casually discuss and enquire about the fees that the wardens charge for working in different sections and gangs. In one such conversation, a prisoner says that it costs about fifty shillings a month and a promise to give the sergeant in charge of the kitchen two kilos of beans, four kilos of flour and two kilos of meat a week, in order to work with the kitchen gang. However, failure by a prisoner to honour any of the pledges lands him in the farm gang, with no refund of money. Alongside all this, are more and more tales of extortion as wardens solicit bribes from prisoners. Indeed, corruption in prison turns out to be the norm rather than the exception.

But perhaps the disgusting and filthy practice that exemplifies incurable moral decadence is homosexuality and adultery. For example, the narrator comes to learn from his friend Pancho that homosexuality is practised by some prisoners like the Charge. He (Charge) gets a special meal of well-cooked food better than what the prison commandant eats. This, according to Pancho, is:

Because he is the wife of the head cook. He is the chief cook's dolly. They were once caught in the act in the toilet near the kitchen (59).

In prison terms, men who agree to be sodomised are referred to as 'Cockroaches'. Thus, the Charge for sometime was a 'cockroach' before he finally got a teenager boy as 'a

wife". However, we can still look at the shameless practice of homosexuality in prison as a clear reflection of the rotten moral fabric of the society. The homosexuals are ridiculed by their fellow prisoners especially by being given names like 'Dolly' or 'Cockroach'. But even in heterosexual associations, the incident of Sergeant Pilipili taking advantage of a prisoner and sleeping with his wife while claiming he is a devout Christian is sheer hypocrisy. The narrator thus satirises such social vices by painting them in the worst light and letting the audience laugh at the characters involved in the follies.

Last but not least, the author has employed the motif of madness to satirise the social evils in society and prison in particular. Throughout the narrator's stay in prison, he is in a state of hopelessness and dreamlike despair. For one, he does not seem to differentiate between reality and dreams and everything around him drives him insane. In situations in which he is most likely to cry out in pain, he suddenly cracks jokes or turns to sarcasm and cynicism. This is because of the initial shock of seeing what happens in prisons, which dumbfounds him. The best illustration of the madness prevailing in prison are the sanitary conditions and specifically the toilet. The narrator comments thus: "The unholy mixture of pages from the Bible and human waste is part of the order of things in this place" (103).

Worse still, when he is thrown into the Isolation Block for attempting to write a letter to his wife, the narrator awakens to the fact that the 'mad house' as the place is also known, is for those declared insane. In the Isolation Block, he encounters two mad prisoners and two apparently normal ones. The two mad prisoners caress each other, bite and eat lice and even empty their bowels on the same floor they sometimes eat their food on. This is really nauseating for the narrator, but after sometime he comes to accept such as representative of what happens throughout his prison life. Right from the time the narrator is sentenced to jail by the magistrate to the experience with Sergeant Walrus Moustache, the prison food and dirty toilet, and finally his being thrown to the 'mad house'; there is a rising rhythm of insanity. Though all the characters do what they do, thinking it is normal, to the narrator, they all look insane. And by presenting other characters as buffoons who are filthy, dirty, bestial and insane, the author succeeds in ridiculing the deplorable and dilapidated state of the prison.

Indeed, the tendency for the narrator to look at other prisoners and the wardens as demented souls might be the reason for the heightened tone of cynicism and the sardonic.

Thus, he decides to laugh at the whole scenario rather than bitterly complain about it, because everybody seems to have run out of his mind and not sure of what they are doing. In fact when he is set free on bond with a pending appeal by his lawyer, he does not believe it. He even fears the judge may uphold the previous ruling of the lower court and thereby take him back to the harrowing ordeal. It is little wonder, that as he walks out to freedom he still hears echoes of the voice of Walrus Moustache as he abuses the prisoners.

Summarily, in this chapter we have looked at the style of narration used by the author and how effective it is for the whole satirical realisation of the novel. We have also explored the use of diary form as a stylistic technique that is apt for satire and the major themes in the novel.

At a purely satirical level, we have discussed the author's use of devices like similes, irony, allusion, sarcasm and ridicule. And in conclusion we look at the use of imagery and buffoonery, particularly that related to filth, vulgarity and animality for satirical effect. We also attempt to relate this imagery with the motif of madness and how they together have been deliberately and especially applied to enhance satire of the bawdy and hilarious kind.

CONCLUSION

This study has been an examination of the power of satire in fiction. As a style in fiction, this thesis has attested to the importance and impact of satire and its usage in fictional works. From a linguistic perspective, we for example reckoned with the fact that satire uses specific diction and devices such as sarcasm, ridicule, humour, comedy, irony and wit. Nonetheless, it is also evident that other literary techniques have been effectively employed, albeit inadvertently or otherwise to capture the critical and yet comical mood that is associated with satire.

As a matter of necessity, this study also relied heavily on stylistics as a theoretical tool for analysing the satirical craftsmanship of the author, because of the apparent rectitude, and reliability that the theory provides. Indeed satire is first and foremost dependent on the aptness of the language used. Though the real understanding of what is satirical may vary from individual to individual and even to the point of one society to another, the basic tenets of its effects are contained in its choice of words.

However, this study also realises that the broad understanding of satire goes beyond the mere diction of a piece of work. In essence, it also involves the social occasion that countenances specific satirical techniques. In other cases, the whole concept may vary from one society to another depending on the pressing issues of each society. To elucidate this, the study found it necessary to discuss how themes, characters and the narrative style greatly influence the satirical effect of a work of fiction. This was also only possible because of the apparent flexibility of stylistics as a framework of analysis. Though it emphasises linguistic evidence as a prerequisite to overall understanding of texts, it does not de-emphasise or negate any extra-linguistic aspects that directly affect the eventual understanding of those works. It is on this score that the study also finds it necessary to dig into the personal life of the author to determine the extent to which it spills in to his fiction. Indeed, it was revealed in this study that the author's personal experiences are closely linked and are crucial for the understanding of his works.

Apart from the linguistic beauty that satire has to necessarily entail, this study has also contributed immensely by proving that good satire is not merely easy banter and bawdy jokes. Sophistry is in fact requisite for any sustainable kind of satire. It is our view,

arising from this study, that satire is indeed not easy to sustain for a long time in fiction unlike in drama where the plot of events is usually brief enough. But from a general didactic point of view, this study has illustrated that whether in fiction or drama, satire is a very powerful tool because it not only pokes fun at and ridicules folly but also means to admonish and correct wickedness and bad morals.

In the first chapter of this study, background information is reviewed and the objectives are clearly spelt out. For instance, it was observed prior to the study that very little critical work has been written on the works of Wahome Mutahi. Although satire as a style has been extensively studied in general, this study was peculiar in as far as it focussed on the satirical techniques as powerful tools in fiction. Incidentally, the choice of stylistics as a guiding framework against which the two texts are analysed is peculiar in the sense that it steers clear of the tendency of most literary critics to over-indulge in thematic concerns at the expense of stylistic qualities. On the contrary, this study deliberately benefits from the convergence of the style and themes as espoused in stylistic criticism.

In the second chapter, biographical information about the author was assembled with the objective of revealing how the author's life relates to his texts. As earlier mentioned in this conclusion, this study indeed noted that the author's personal life trickles and filters into his fiction. However, we also note elsewhere in the study that this does not necessarily mean that his novels are a veridical duplication of his personal experiences. As a matter of fact, in his works the experiences of the author are fictionalised while the fictional is made real and vivid.

In the third chapter, we dissect the different aspects of the novel *Three Days on the Cross*, and how they all coalesce for satirical and aesthetic effect. Among other issues, we tackle satire through narrative structure and techniques. We particularly appreciate the fact that plot, narrative style, point of view, stream of consciousness, flashbacks, retrospection and internal monologues are employed as special narrative techniques for satirical effect.

In the same chapter, we also identify and discuss a number of stylistic choices like sarcasm, mockery, ridicule, allusion and comic effects are used to bolster the satirical punch-line of the novel. Summarily, we also explored the artistic intermingling of the characters and themes in order to bring out satire in the text. We specifically acknowledge the patronising nature of characters as interlocutors of the author's thematic and aesthetic aspirations.

For instance, we observe that the heroes of the novel *Three Days on the Cross*, while they do not entirely and necessarily represent the author's personal views, are in fact acting as his mouth piece as he (author) engages his social commentary on the issue of police brutality. It is through the vivid portrayal of his characters that the author ridicules and satirises the follies and wickedness of the political elite. Though the kind of satire revealed in the novel is not of the lighter type and even occasionally turns morbid, this study appreciates and attributes this fact to the nature of the subject dealt with in the novel - police brutality and torture - and what the author himself calls 'censorship' constraints.

In the last chapter (four), we come across the lighter bawdy and humorous kind of satire, used in *The Jail Bugs*. We appreciate that the easy banter and ridicule used in the novel is effective because of the use of stylistic devices like similes, sarcasm, irony and humour. At the narratological level, we discover that the scintillating nature of the story is attributed to the first person narrative point of view. Nonetheless, we also note the fact that the author's use of vivid descriptions and images of filth and vulgarity to elicit laughter and disgust at the same time culminate in poking fun and attacking the state of affairs in Kenyan prisons.

By and large, this study has succeeded in accomplishing its objectives in as far as it discusses and analyses the different aspects of satire used in the two novels in relation to themes, characters and narrative style. To ascertain the impacts of these techniques, we appreciate that they contribute tremendously to the meaning and networth of these two works of art. Again, Mutahi's unique deployment of satire through other devices like irony, sarcasm, similes, imagery, internal monologue, dialogue and streams of consciousness, makes his texts interesting and easy to read. His use of simple vocabulary and casual banter were particularly noted to be characteristic of his texts. This study has also contributed to the further understanding of satire as an effective stylistic technique

when used in fiction. In particular, this study opens up doors for future studies not only on the author, but also on the relationship between themes, characters and narrative style in popular works of fiction.

Further studies, especially focussing on this author's use of different narrative points of view for satirical effect and his apparent liking for characters that are victims of circumstances, could be quite interesting to read. It is also important to note that in the course of the study it has emerged that the author certainly concentrates on issues related to politics by making fun of them. It would therefore be interesting for future studies on the author's works to concentrate on his political ethic. For the ardent psychoanalysts, there is also a chance to study the author's preoccupation with images of filth, animality, vulgarity and nakedness. In the spirit of research, therefore, this study is only a precursor to any other studies on the author's works - for example on the religious influence in his works and his love for biblical allegories.

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