

**FORM IN YUSUF DAWOOD'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL  
WORKS: BEHIND THE MASK, YESTERDAY, TODAY  
AND TOMORROW AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.**

**BY**

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**A project paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements to the degree of masters of arts in literature at  
the University of Nairobi.**

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## DECLARATION

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

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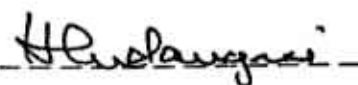
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## **DEDICATION**

To God who gives us the ability to prosper and to fulfil our potentials. To Mr Henry Asego Oluoch after whom I am named. To the many that bear the name of the Asego, this is a proof that it can be done.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The prime concern of this study is give critical attention to the form in Yusuf Dawood's autobiographical works and specifically Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, Behind the Mask and Nothing but the Truth: The Story of a Surgeon with Four Wives.

Our study in its examination of the forms of the autobiographical works is guided by the tenets of the Theory of Autobiography and Formalism. The theory of autobiography will help us identify what marks out the genre of autobiography from other forms of writings. Formalism will on the other hand help us look at the overall structure and the deliberate ordering of the literary works.

The study has focused on the structure of the autobiography and how these have contributed to the overall cohesiveness of the text. Certain aspects of the style in the autobiography have also been looked into.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION.**

Autobiography as a genre of literature is one of the many forms in which writers can speak of themselves and incidents of their personal experiences. Autobiography involves the reconstruction of the movement of a life, or part of a life, in the actual circumstances in which it was lived. Through autobiographies, writers are able to win us over because of their worthy achievements. This is because the best autobiographies suggest a certain power of the personality over circumstance. By using introspection and retrospection the autobiographer offers the readers representations of their personalities.

An autobiography is the story or an account of one's life written by oneself. Its writing entails the reconstruction of the movement of life (from birth) or a part of life, in the actual circumstance lived. The writer is essentially the authority of his/her life bringing out what Rousseau calls "the chain of feelings." This ability to offer "behind the scenes" episodes in both private and social life, emotional involvement, prejudices, passions, beliefs and convictions make them fascinating. The quality of the personality (the

autobiographer) according to Roy Pascal in Design and Truth in Autobiography is most quickly detected in the style of the autobiography.

Yusuf Dawood is an accomplished storyteller who has published several novels, one of which received the Commonwealth Literature Prize and another was nominated for the IMPAC, the Irish Literary Prize. His ability is evident in his real life stories in The Surgeon's Diary published weekly in The Sunday Nation, East Africa's highest circulating newspaper.

Although his novels have received a fair amount of critical attention, his autobiographical works have not been studied in detail despite their literary merits. An Asian by birth, European by marriage and education and Kenyan by choice, Dawood bares his heart and soul as he pursues his four passions: surgery, writing, rotary and his family, what he fondly refers to as his four wives.

The early part of his life was spent mainly in India. After his 'A' levels Dawood joined Miraj Medical School, Bombay for his undergraduate studies in medicine. After qualifying as a doctor, he left for Britain. There he joined London University where he took his intermediate fellowship

examination in surgery. It was while in Britain that he met Marie who according to him “was very attractive, a warm and friendly person, always cheerful, resilient and charmingly unpredictable.” (124)

His life as a writer and a Rotarian has been equally successful. His writing skills have not gone unnoticed in literary circles. His book *Water Under the Bridge* was second in the Commonwealth Prize for literature in 1997, while *Return to Paradise* was nominated for the Dublin Literary prize in 2001. As a Rotarian he became internationally recognised as a major donor for which he received international awards.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.**

This study examines the form in Dawood’s autobiographical works: Behind the Mask, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow and Nothing but the Truth. This is an area that has not been studied before.

The autobiographical voice is very central in the establishment of identity. The autobiographer tells his story in his own voice. As it seeks to answer the question “who am I ?” the autobiography delves into the concerns of identity and self-definition. Hence an investigation of the style will inevitably give insight into the autobiographer’s personality in terms of identity and how he defines himself.

Dawood is a person of multifarious interests and activities namely surgery, writing, Rotary and family. These are all covered in the autobiographical writings, this study will look into how the author’s diverse interests cohere in the texts. This is necessary because it’s the same person who is a surgeon, writer, Rotarian and a family man. Hence it’s important to examine how unity in all these is achieved.

In relation to form, the study will examine the techniques in the autobiographical writings under study to expose the structure and how various elements of the autobiographies are interrelated to achieve a cohesive whole.

The examination seeks to contribute to the understanding of the thematic and aesthetic wholeness of the text and to the study of autobiography in Kenya.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.**

The study aims to realise the following objectives:

- i. To identify the traits that are unique to the genre in the texts under study.
- ii. To establish the concerns in autobiography as revealed in the texts.
- iii. To describe the artistic value of the text by evaluating the various stylistic techniques.
- iv. To evaluate the structure of the autobiographical writings under study and how they contribute to the cohesiveness of the texts.

## **HYPOTHESES.**

The study will be guided by the following hypotheses. That,

- i. The form of the texts under study reveals the features characteristic of the genre
- ii. Yusuf Dawood uses his own experiences to raise awareness on societal issues.
- iii. In his autobiographical works the writer makes conscious effort in asserting his identity.

## **JUSTIFICATION.**

Yusuf Dawood is an immigrant who belongs to the minority Asian community in Kenya and one among the few who have written an autobiography. He offers us a glimpse into the Asian culture and the whole question of identity. Rasna Warah in her autobiography Triple Heritage: A Journey to Self-Discovery offers a glimpse into the Asian culture in her quest for identity as an Asian, Kenyan, and Westerner. Yusuf Dawood's Nothing But the Truth is more elaborate in this regard. With a successful career as a surgeon, writer, rotarian and a family man, the autobiographical

works offers us a wholistic insight to the writer's life. The subject area he covers is important, but has not been scrutinised in detail, especially his use of linguistic and para-linguistic features to generate aesthetic effects and clarify his themes.

Though many scholars have dealt with his fictional works before some of which are autobiographical in nature, none has undertaken to study the form of his autobiographical works in detail. Despite the literary wealth in his fictional works, the genre offers an insight into the author's life in a way other fictional works cannot. Apart from receiving commentaries in the local newspapers, articles, which are not only un-researched but offer just a passing mention of the text, the author is yet to enjoy an in-depth study of his autobiography. This study seeks to examine his stylistic accomplishment through the study of the form of his works.

It's also worth noting that the studies of the autobiography genre have avoided stylistic analysis ostensibly because autobiographies are seen as unproblematic representation of the writer as opposed to artistic objects subject to formalist scrutiny.

Nevertheless a study of the form will enable us to evaluate the linguistic accomplishment of Dawood as a writer. We will be able to not only appreciate the stylistic concerns in the text but also how these unite and contribute to the text's aesthetic wholeness.

Therefore this study hopes to contribute to literary scholarship by bringing out Dawood's stylistic accomplishment by looking at how his diverse interests are unified in him as a character. A look at the autobiographical elements and how they have contributed to the text's cohesion will also distinguish Dawood as an accomplished writer.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW.**

The first part of this review takes into account the nature of the autobiography, and life of the author. This will be followed by accounts of earlier works that have been done on Yusuf Dawood's books.

Peter Abbs in Autobiography of Education devotes a part of his book to the origins and nature of the autobiography. He argues that, "the impulse to



write derives from the desire to enrich one's identity against the destructiveness of age" (16). His observation will help us understand the writer through the autobiographical voice.

In Reading Autobiography : A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, the writers offer a comprehensive critical introduction and retrospective study of autobiography. Though the book explores the building blocks and components of autobiographical acts, review the histories of autobiography and autobiography criticism, it's pertinent to this study because of its "tool kit" that will enable us to approach and engage the text under study.

Henry Indangasi in "The Autobiographical Impulse in African and African-American Literature" recognises the place of artistry in autobiography. He sees autobiographies not just as an I-narrative but rather a narrative seeking higher truth by interpreting reality with acumen and intelligibility. Indangasi's article will be useful in providing an informative background to understanding the genre.

Benson Kairu Kamau in “An Investigation of form and style in Yusuf Dawood’s works” concludes that Dawood’s writing can be both “popular” and “serious”. Though he dealt with Dawood’s fictional works, his approach being stylistic will be of assistance to this study.

Weche, H.O considers the quest for identity in selected works of Dawood. His study is done within the confines of class, race, social affairs and marriage, religion and cultural aspects. Though he dealt with Dawood’s fictional works No Strings Attached, Water Under the Bridge and Return to Paradise, his work is of importance to this study because it offers background information on the writer.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.**

Traditionally stylistics, based on New Criticism and Deconstruction theories has neglected the autobiography because of stylistics’ disregard of the author’s life history. Yet to understand autobiography, one needs to appreciate its form. This will help us understand that the autobiography contrary to what New Criticism and Deconstructionist fear, is not a veridical reproduction of the author’s life. It involves a lot of stylistic re-ordering and

fictionalization to challenge and at the same time bolster an illusion of authenticity and realism.

The conceptual framework of this study is provided by two approaches to literary criticism: Theory of autobiography and Formalism.

The theory of autobiography is largely associated with Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), a German historian and philosopher. This theory will help us undertake the study of the autobiography and the issues arising from this mode of writing. As we look at the conditions and limits of this genre we will be able to identify what marks out autobiography from other forms of writing and what comprises genuine autobiography. More recent scholars of this theory like Roy Pascal point to the historical and aesthetic approaches to the autobiography. He views the autobiography as a strategy for creating illusion of unity and coherence despite the fragmentations of identity. From the above it is clear that the theory of autobiography is rooted in the questions of what constitutes autobiography proper.

Formalism as a literary theory attempts to analyze literature not by identifiable or “natural” content, but consistently by its form. Broadly it

refers to approaches used to interpret and evaluate literary works that focus on features of the text itself (especially properties of its language) rather than on the contexts of its creation.

It looks at how the text is constructed and how it functions so as to have a meaning in the first place. As a theory, Formalism emphasises forming literary study, so as to enhance an understanding of the interior workings of a text. This is important because it is form that distinguishes a work of art as belonging to a particular genre, so that meaning is derived from the form.

A Handbook to Literature, defines form as:

... the organization of the elements of a work of art in relation to its total effect ... form being, the pattern or structure or which is employed to give expression to the content. (192)

Form is therefore the imposition of order to a work. In other words it is the overall structure: a deliberate ordering of a literary work. Of importance is also the effect such ordering ensures. Form is therefore aimed to a great extent at eliciting a response from the reader.

## **METHODOLOGY.**

The study will be library based. The starting point of the research will involve a Mark Schorer uses the term form and technique interchangeably in The World We Imagine and argues that form removes the novel from the realm of mere documentation. In other words form gives shape to and moulds the content making the work, art. Hence a close reading of the text and an evaluation its form will reveal a sense of its value and importance. The selected text will be the central focus of analysis and interpretation. The study will also use the internet for more information on the theoretical perspectives within which it will be studied. A limited fieldwork that will involve interviewing the author will be conducted not only to seek elaboration but also to enrich the study.

## **SCOPE AND LIMITATION.**

For a comprehensive stylistics analysis, the study has confined itself to Nothing But the Truth, Behind the Mask and Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. This study will also confine itself to the form of the autobiographical works.

## **CHAPTER TWO .**

### **AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WORKS.**

This chapter takes a closer but a brief look at the form of two of Dawood's autobiographical works. In an oral interview, Dawood traces his earliest literary roots to India. He admits to have been influenced a great deal by Somerset Maugham, a medical student who was also a qualified doctor.

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, is one of Dawood's earliest autobiographical writings, and covers the period of his training as a doctor.

As a literary form, the autobiography is distinguished from other genres, though it may be closely related to them. Roy Pascal proposes that the best way to approach a precise and coherent definition of autobiography proper would be through discrimination between autobiography proper and other literary forms that have an autobiographical content (2, 3).

Autobiography is concerned with the time in which we live our lives, with its three tenses of past, present and future in an effort to answer the basic autobiographical questions who am I? How have I become who I am and what may I become In future?

Mineke Schipper on the Beyond the Boundaries: African Literature and Literary Theory observes that:

The authors of autobiographies wish to reveal themselves to us  
(...) to bring order into their own past (...) ultimately wish to  
explore themselves (qtd Indangasi).

Autobiography involves both self-representations for example narrations of  
one's experience in shaping of the personality presented in the text.

The text is all about his experiences in three different countries and the three  
different cultures. At the core is the theme of identity, which runs through  
the whole text and is symbolically represented by the title of the text. As a  
result of the different cultures, he describes himself as;

I am a child of three continents and feel at home in all three. I have  
Imbibed the three main cultures of the world born and brought up  
In India trained as a surgeon in England and settled for most of my  
life in Kenya. (Nothing But The Truth 330)

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow is a Kenyan flower that has three different  
colours, white, violet and blue. Just like Dawood is a product of three  
different cultures, the flower shows three different colours.

Nevertheless Dawood can be accused of glossing over certain aspects of his  
life that are equally pertinent to his identity. Denzin says autobiographical  
methods are grounded in family as beginnings. They begin either with  
family history or parental biography. Yet Dawood shares very little about his



family or early life or even of his family with Marie. In fact the single entry of his children Jenny and Jan are at the very end of the book where they wait for him at the airport upon arrival from India.

On a positive note, Dawood dwells much on his life as a surgeon and brings out incidents that are not in any of the autobiographical works under study. An example is how as medical students they were engaged in trying to teach the local villagers on methods of birth control.

Form is seen as central to a successful work of art in Aristotle's The Poetics. The elements identified by Aristotle are plot, character, diction, thought spectacle and song. Of these, plot which is defined as "the arrangement of incidents" (27) is described as the most important element:

One of the oldest and most universal plot is that of a journey and this is another major theme in Dawood's autobiographical works under study.

Though not chronologically arranged he dwells on his life's journey to a fulfilling medical career. This journey is evident right from the beginning of the book to the very end, thus acts a unifying element. He traces his early life in India and traces his interest in what he considers as a 'noble profession.' (2) This is the saving of the life of a neighbour's child by a doctor.

For many years thereafter, the neighbour remembered the Doctor most reverently as a saint who had rescued her daughter from the throes of death. This incident had made a great impact on me at my tender age. (3)

Dawood is further encouraged, nay forced, by the other family members into the profession. His two elder brothers having gone into law, his profession was already determined. His father made it clear, that “a doctor was needed in the house.” The family’s efforts are all towards this dream. For example, the father literally camps outside a medical school in Muray, till an accidental chance turns up on his twenty sixth visit. His brothers also sacrifice a lot towards Dawood’s career in medicine.

He talks of his further studies in Grant Medical School in Bombay. His training and practice in various hospitals and colleges is well documented. The book reveals the professional malpractices that forced Dawood to escape from Pakistan and how he landed a surgeon’s job in Kenya.

Having had lofty aspirations for doctors, Dawood gets disillusioned with what he sees in Karachi as members of this noble profession seek for money through dishonest ways. The patients in Pakistan have to foot their own bill and their payment is the source of the doctor’s livelihood and this gives

room for malpractices. The two cases of Aziz his childhood friend and the Muslim priest serve as the proverbial last straw that breaks the camel's back and prompts him to move back to England.

In this autobiographical work Dawood also gives us a glimpse of the two societies that is England and Pakistan (developed and developing societies) and of their effect on the medical profession. On leaving England back to Pakistan, he was proud of taking with him, "the best export product the country could offer a British wife." In England there were questions of professional ethics, medical associations, disciplinary board and medical-legal aspects (82). In Pakistan they are left to their own conscience. Though the rest of his family were in Pakistan, it was not a homecoming for Dawood but an alien culture. To him Pakistan was, "...a very different country...Karachi was hot, humid, sprawling city. Spawning by miles and thousands every day" (78).

Coupled with the professional malpractices, Dawood knew he could not survive.

Perhaps during my stay in England I had grafted a new conscience into mine...One cannot go into sea and not get wet, one cannot live in a country without being touched by it. (83)

He had been positively touched by his stay in England and he feared being touched negatively by his stay in Pakistan.

When talking of the unity of a plot, Aristotle holds that an imitation of action must represent one action, a complete whole, with its several Incidents so closely connected in the construct of the plot. (qtd in Daiches 98)

E.M. Foster in Aspects of the Novel seems to concur with Aristotle position as regards the mechanism of plot construction when he says;

(Plot) will constantly rearrange and reconsider, seeing clues, new chains of cause and effect, and the final sense will not be of clues or chains but of something aesthetically compact...(88).

Part of the plot is Dawood's clever use of allusions and anecdotes. Like in other autobiographical works anecdote remains the most dominant technique in the text. This technique not only breaks the monotony of narration but also reveals certain traits in a character. For example his description of Miss Falkland, a sex pervert is quite telling:

She was short and stubby, her legs were like oaks,  
Sturdy and unsightly and she had a mild duck-like  
waddle...(27).

...As I said this a vicious look came into the eyes of Miss Falkland which reminded me of a cross between a witch and a vampire (29).

Through the appropriate use of the anecdote, Dawood draws makes the readers draw conclusions regarding a character.

Appreciation of the cohesion inherent in the text entails perception of Dawood's mode of narration. By using the first person narrator, Dawood's credibility is enhanced by the fact that he is a character in his story. According to Scholes and Kellog the narrator- character will dominate the narrative, taking over precedence over event and situations (256).

The first person narrative voice creates a kind of rapport between the reader and narrator. Being a character accords him a personal touch with the experiences he lives and reports about.

Like all other autobiographical works Dawood's work shows that his life is shaped by the impact of his family social events and personalities encountered.

### Behind the Mask

This book is written much later in life (1995) and it contains the doctor's experience as a consultant surgeon for the Nairobi Hospital, Kenyatta National Referral Hospital and the Aga Khan Hospital.

Literature is a product of the society and gets its impetus from the said society. Dawood writes from the confines of the hospital, which is his environment. This text hardly ventures out of the hospital. The hospital in the text becomes a microcosm of the society showing all the traits that are present in a society.

Despite the initial belief that the medical profession was like a divine calling, Dawood shares the fallibility of doctors. Like any other person, they experience moments of loneliness and indecision.

As I sat alone in my office, the loneliness of the surgeon in making decisions descended heavily upon me... Was my indecision an undesirable by-product of a surgeon's pride? (40)

The mortals that they are, doctors also have weaknesses. We meet Dr. Petrowski who is addicted to drugs and this leads him to commit suicide. Dr Griffith, his former Registrar at Banbury, was initially hooked onto chloroform and then pethidine forcing him to change work stations. During

their meeting he gives Dawood a cigar stuffed with a narcotic drug.

We are able to gain insight into his relationship with other doctors, nurses and other patients and their relatives. His human frailty is shown when he is drawn into his patient's world of sorrow and pain. This can be seen when a patient Mrs Lakhani loses her husband and Dawood has to break the news to her.

Her tears fell on my white coat, as I sat on the bed beside her,  
bringing down the traditional barrier that normally exists  
between a surgeon and his patient. (29)

His admiration of some of his patients are evident. Though Mrs Grant is suffering from pneumonia, she could still afford to joke with her husband Henry, in a way that moved even Dawood. "It was a measure of their love and affection that they could laugh at each other, even under some trying situations."

Dawood is also made privy to many private happenings in the life of his patients, their romantic escapades and scandals.

Looking at the form of Dawood's autobiographical text will help reveal the structure and how the various elements are interrelated to achieve cohesion.

The autobiographical work *Behind the Mask* is compiled from articles submitted to the *Sunday Nation's 'The Surgeon's Diary.'* Each article is therefore complete and Independent story. A reader needs no reference to a previous story to understand the one at hand. The work has the layout of a play. It starts with a prologue and ends with an epilogue. The stories have distinct sub headings.

Evaluation of the stories reveal a conscious and consistent care has been put In the selection and arrangement of the episodes.

Indangasi In "*The autobiographical Impulses in African and American Literature*", observes : The writer of an autobiography being the artist that he is, selects, reorganizes, rearranges and reshapes the fact of his life in order to communicate a higher truth ...*(114).*

Norman Denzin sees autobiography as "a first person account of a set of life experiences" (34). All experiences are seen in terms of their meaning to the creation of the personality that Dawood has become as he recalls and writes in the book. Thus deliberate choice and order is involved and coherence is achieved in reshaping the lived experiences. The autobiographical work captures and reflects on pivotal events In Dawood's life that shape his personality as a distinguished surgeon.



Unity of plot and general cohesion in these stories is achieved through the author's mode of narration. Once again the use of the first person narrator like in other autobiographical works makes Dawood not only an eye witness but a character as well lending credence and cohesion to his narration.

The prevalent doctor/physician as the main character also contributes to the cohesion of the text. The stories are presented to us in form of a plot marked with beginning, middle and the end phase.

The beginning always consist of the patients arrival to the doctor (Dawood) or the hospital. The middle consist of the medical problem at hand for which the doctor successfully deals with at the end phase.

An analysis of the levels of the plot will help us analyze the issues of struggle and medical difficulties on the individual level, as a social person, and the transformation there of predicted on the heroism of both the individual Dawood and the society. This interractions and conflicts result in a plot pattern which Dawood utilises to reveal his medical prowess.

This is in tandem with Scholes and Kellog's assertion that sequential ordering and dynamism are two important elements of a plot. The authors also argues that "all plots depend on the tension and resolution" (212). And that plot is endowed "with a beginning, a middle, and an end' (211).

### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **AUTOBIOGRAPHY PROPER: Nothing But The Truth: The Story of a Surgeon with Four Wives.**

This chapter will be approached through the autobiographical framework and will consider pertinent characteristic of the genre of autobiography: structure, selectivity, subjectivity, identity and the element of truth and how these contribute to cohesion.

Autobiographies are often written after the author has been transformed or has achieved certain ambitions. Nothing But The Truth is a rendition of Dawood's life from the time of his birth to 24<sup>th</sup> December 2000. In writing the autobiography, Dawood puts the self on a pedestal. This creates an idealized image that the author projects to us. The autobiography captures his achievements as an accomplished surgeon, writer, rotarian and family man. He leads a successful life as a surgeon culminating in his appointment as the Executive Director of the Aga Khan Hospital.

As a Rotarian he rises from a Club President to a District Governor and fulfils one of his long cherished dream of starting a philanthropic organization; Rahima Dawood Foundation. Dawood also celebrates his accomplishment as a writer with several titles to his name. His first book, which was published by Heineman East Africa Ltd, was No Strings

Attached (1978). This was followed by The Price of Living, One Life too Many, Water Under the Bridge and Return to Paradise. The Surgeon Diary, a successful column in a leading Newspaper in the country has been going on for almost 20 years. The column's success has given rise to Yesterday Today and Tomorrow (1986), Off My Chest (1988) and Behind the Mask (1995).

Dawood regards his marriage of forty-two years a feat to be proud of. "In modern times, when marriage as an institution is on the way out, being married to one and the same spouse for forty-two years must be considered a feat of endurance (334).

This is in line with Roy Pascal's argument in "Design and Truth in Autobiography," that best autobiographies are by men and women of outstanding achievement in life. The indubitable result of their life's work is evident.

The title of Yusuf Dawood's autobiography: Nothing but the Truth: The Story of a Surgeon with Four Wives brings to mind several thoughts. One such thought is a sense of candidness and honesty overcoming all natural

inhibition to telling the whole truth. He confirms this in the preface. "...I must say that everything written here is – nothing but the truth." (x)

Henry Indangasi alludes to truth but of a different kind in his article "The Autobiographical Impulse In African American Literature" says "The writer of an autobiography being the artist that he is, selects, reorganizes, re-arranges and reshapes the facts of his life in order to communicate a higher truth. A photographic reproduction of these facts would be unthinkable."  
(114)

Though we don't expect the author to "tell the truth" in the same sense as the historian, he will lead us to a more profound kind of truth which Indangasi calls the "higher truth."

In an oral interview Dawood confirms that his candidness is only as far to separate the truth from fiction. He also asserts the same in the preface.

The second part of the title, "The story of a surgeon with four wives" is tempered with mystery and easily raises the reader's eyebrows. Muslim are allowed to marry up to four wives and being a Muslim, Dawood is allowed to have the same number of wives. He alludes to this when talking of the ruling Nawabs. "Being a staunch Muslim, the Nawab could only four wives." (43).

Yet for those familiar with him through his Sunday Nation's column The Surgeon's Diary it's an intriguing title because many don't consider him polygamous.

While still on the sub-title, it's worth mentioning that structure of the autobiography negates the sub-title. As readers, we are eager to read about the surgeon's four wives only to find that the 'surgeon' is catered for in the second part of the autobiography. This means that it therefore cannot be a wife and we are left with a surgeon with three wives. A more appropriate sub-title would have been, "The Story of a Surgeon with Three Wives."

The autobiography is intimately structured around the different stages of Dawood's life though not in a chronological order as far as the plot is concerned. This is accomplished through the journey motif, which is very evident in the autobiography and runs through the whole text. The journey that is Dawood's life is at two levels: Physical and mental or intellectual; the latter journey being as a result of Dawood's changing academic environment that exposes him to a different culture and gives him a different perception. This movement or journey leads to character formation and a deeper understanding of issues.

At his birthplace in Bantwa, the author is introduced to informal education at a mandrassah where he learns to recite the Quran. When his father later on buys a nut factory in Mangalore in the South of India, the family gets introduced to Western schools. The eldest brother Janmohammed is enrolled in St Alloysius College, Umar and Sattar are enrolled in Garnapati and St Sebastian Schools, the author and his sister are enrolled in St Agnes Convent School. The result was a positive and lasting influence on him by the teachers.

Their (teachers) kindly faces were framed by their wimples and flowing black veils, but it was their kindness, their caring attitude, their purity and their gentleness which left a lasting impression on me. (19)

Dawood then proceeds to Junagadh, and Bahaudin for his “O” and “A” levels education. He later gets admitted to a medical college at Miraj and it's here where he gets introduced to writing. He becomes the editor of the school magazine and helps revive the Miraj Christian Medical School Magazine. It's at Miraj where Dawood first hears of Africa through his co-students Vasant and Bhasin.

From Miraj Medical School Dawood goes to Grant Medical College to attain the standard MBBS. Upon completion he chooses to go to Britain for the internationally recognized FRCS. In Britain Dawood get introduced to the television for the first time in his life. He gets a job at the Maidenhead General Hospital bringing an end to his suffering from “Vitamin M” deficiency. It’s at Maidehead hospital that he gets his first media publicity when he is given a job of organizing and conducting a baby show. He settles down in Britain and grows to appreciate the British way of life, respect for law and order and the reasonable level of their society.

While exalting the unity of plot in The Poetics, Aristotle holds that an imitation of action must represent one action, a complete whole, with its several incidents so closely related in the construct of the plot. Structurally the autobiography is divided into five parts and chapters and both echo the journey motif and consequently unify it. The parts are nevertheless not arranged in chronological order though they deal with major stages in Dawood’s life. In part one titled ‘The Early Days’ where he talks of his formative years\_he gives us a glimpse of future years in Kenya through the use of flash-forwards. He compares their loss of their favourite horse as

children to his own children's reaction to their loss of their Alsatian dog Simba (23).

This agrees with observation made by Jeremy Hawthorn in his book, Studying the Novel: An Introduction:

Very often the chapter and sections division made by the author impose a structure upon a work- or bring out one that is implicit but not overt already...very often such divisions perform the useful functions of telling the reader when he or she can pause and put the book down for a bit, and as it is at these point in time (sic) that we think backwards over what we have read and forwards on what we hope for or expect, such divisions can be very significant. (57)

Dawood manages to structure the enormous number of events and people and the long period (78 years) it covers into a coherent parts and chapters.

Movement from chapter to chapter within a part does not always constitute a forward movement in time. Sometimes it goes back in time in order to



provide background information to a current situation that is about to be narrated and therefore integrate it into the complex matrix of events that move as a mass. Prior to the marriages of Zainab and Janmohammed, Dawood offers background of such customary marriage, where prospective spouses were ear-marked by "remote control."

We would not have known how difficult a decision it was for Dawood to marry a foreigner if he had not told us before hand how his family was deeply rooted in tradition. "My three elder brothers, all advocates, had followed the conventional orthodox route and were supremely happy" (128). He describes his decision as asking his family "to swallow the Himalayas."

This is necessitated by the fact that due to the number of events taking place at the same time without affecting each other but rather affecting future events.

Nevertheless movement from one part to the next consist a forward movement in terms of growth or development and shows how the four wives came to be a part of Dawood's life.

Equally important in the structure of the autobiography is its narrative mode of the first person narrator or the autobiographical persona. This is a unifying element because of its consistent use, which lasts the length of the

autobiography. Events are presented from a single perspective of the persona who is also at the centre of the thick of things. The persona ensures that he is not only an eyewitness to what he narrates but an actor hence giving credibility to the narration.

On a few occasions the persona achieves omniscience status in his ability to read what goes on in the mind of other people for example his stepmother. “My stepmother had a strange notion about her role and had decided that it could only be fulfilled by being as unkind and cruel to us as possible” (35).

Through such we can interpret a situation from other character’s perspective without a change in the narrator.

Dawood at times manipulates this voice so that though it remains the central one, it ceases just to represent Dawood but a representative of a group of people. This happens when the pronoun ‘I’ is substituted with the plural “we” or “our” and such nouns as ‘a surgeon’.

The other example where he represents others can be seen when he thinks of the possible ripple effect his marriage to Marie might have on the community. “My move might be misconstrued as one of the hazards of

sending our boys and girls overseas for higher education thus discouraging future sponsors and aspirants” (129).

Dawood uses dialogue as another narrative device blended into narrative perspective. It varies the narrative voice but does not change it. The dialogue between the father and the doctor when the mother is sick serves the purpose of breaking the monotony of narration using words like “I did that, I heard that” or “I saw that” and introduces other voices. As a first person narrator he cannot delve into the minds of the characters, this is surmounted by the use of dialogue.

Through the use of dialogue Dawood gives us a glimpse into the character of individuals. For example his dialogue with the canteen manager after his father’s death gives us an idea of the father’s “never say die’ attitude and determination. The dialogue makes it more vivid and credible than it would have been had the author simply narrated it.

In simulating his life experience, Dawood makes use of anecdotes, a rudimentary element of the plot and this is the most dominant technique in the autobiography. He uses anecdotes not only to break the monotony of

narration but also to reveal certain traits in a character. For example while his father was always eager to keep abreast with world news, his mother was completely un-interested. This he brings out in the story surrounding the death of King George the fifth of Britain and the ensuing struggle as the father tries to explain this to the mother.

Laced with humour the anecdotes enliven the autobiography and captures and maintains the interest of the reader. Like Dawood's mother's version of the human anatomy. After a glass of milk, she would tell him to stand up and walk about to allow the milk to flow into his legs and make them stronger.

The autobiography is rich in figurative language. These include similes and metaphors are effective communicators. A good example is Oldfield and Shucksmith who though were both brilliant surgeons were, "as different as chalk and cheese" (134). Another common technique rife in the autobiography is the use of satire. A well-deserved testimonial to an intern from Oldfield read: "Dr. Brian Newsome tells me that he has been my house-surgeon for the last six months. If so, he has worked entirely to his satisfaction during this time" (134).

Dawood's encounter with different cultures in the course of his life and his ability to adjust to the different environments has led him to be a product of different cultures. This can be seen in the blending of the three cultures in his literary works. The autobiographer sets out explicitly or implicitly to reflect how he has related with the outer world. He describes himself as:

...a child of three continents and feel at home in all three. I have imbibed the three main cultures of the world- born and brought up in India, trained as a surgeon in England and settled for most of my life in Kenya. Putting differently I am an Asian by birth and upbringing, European by marriage and education and African by adoption or choice. With this trinity implanted into me, I have learnt to enjoy equally the diverse pleasures of this world (330).

His identity is seen in multifarious forms through his assertions of personal and cultural identities. He is a product of his interaction with people, events and circumstances.

According to Karekia, this is the reason why Dawood's characters unexplainably blend in so well in their adopted cultures, that they even outdo the natives.

His ability to adapt can be seen through his feelings when he is leaving. A good example is when he leaves Britain for Pakistan. Through out his stay the impact of Britain was strong on him making his decision to leave difficult. “It was a Britain I wanted to remember and cherish for all for all time. It was a country where honesty was still the best policy” (148).

His leaving was hard on him and he openly showed it. “Though I was leaving England with a heavy heart and uncertain Future...” (150).

Yet Dawood’s love for Britain and the Western world did not start when he went to England for education. Right from his childhood, Dawood was a product of a colonial mentality and had been taught that the Whites were innately superior. Herein lies his main reason for portraying the West as ideal-in education, mannerism, apparel to mention but a few.

His father believed that speaking the language of the colonial masters was a sign of higher education and was therefore setting his children to a path of future progress and prosperity. When they spoke English, the father was proud and the community amazed. “The Memon men were agog and their eyes popped out! A Memon girl of twelve speaking the Englishman’s lingo – fascinating, incredulous, unbelievable,” (20).

They were like the Kenyan children described by Ngugi wa Thiong'o in

Writer's in Politics:

The English language dominates a Kenyan child's life from primary school to university and after. ... Thus a Kenyan child grows up admiring the culture carried by these foreign languages, in effect western European ruling class cultures, and looks down upon the culture carried by the language of his particular nationality, in effect Kenyan peasant rooted national cultures. (43)

At his father's factory only the English-speaking clerk used the old typewriter. His father had also picked up the 'British' habit of punctuality. Dawood's appreciation of the British mannerism and apparel were already in place before he even thought of going to Britain. The highlight of his unhappy stay in Bombay was listening to the "totally anglicised" Pakistani (Mohammed Ali Jinnah) who could not even speak fluently in Urdu, the language of his listeners. When Dawood met him again Jinnah, "was in an immaculate suit and spoke impeccable English. His clarity of thought..." (39).

The rich history credited to The Miraj Christian Medical School where Dawood got admitted was that it had many Americans and Canadians among

its teaching staff. “They made a great impact due to the North American culture and their personalities,” (56)

Every Sunday he cycled the three mile distance between Miraj and Sangli to watch English classic movies. Apart from studying classic English authors like Shakespeare, Charles Lamb, Jane Austin and others, Dawood’s break into print was with a lead article eulogizing Wanless and Vail, the founding fathers of the mission institution who were both foreigners. Over time the Shakespeare quoting Dawood’s admiration for Western ideals and ideas was perfected.

Upon arrival in Kenya, Dawood blended in well with people of different classes. He was much at ease with the self-confessed MauMau fighter Mugambi who came dressed in animal skin as he was equally at ease with the first President Jomo Kenyatta. His interaction with powerful politicians like Tom Mboya and the fact that together with Marie they both occupied prominent seating positions during the Uhuru and Madaraka celebrations attest to their blending.

Masumi H Odari in her essay, ‘Self Identity Reflections on Yusuf K Dawood focuses on the theme of self identity in Dawood’s work. She argues



that Dawood's work carry the mark of a Kenyan identity. During the oral interview he maintained that Africa should not be mistaken for the colour black, hence he not only captures the experiences of Kenya but Africa as a whole.

Though Aga Khan Hospital where Dawood first worked was the first to accept a multi-racial staff and clientele, it's worth noting that Dawood's clients were mostly from the upper class stratum of the society. The reason for this is that Africans could still not afford even the subsidized fee. This might explain Dorsey's contention in "Yusuf Dawood's Patel Paradise," that, "there are no poor, abused, destitute, over-worked, underpaid, malnourished, under-educated or unemployed Kenyans," in Dawood's novels (12). The ordinary Kenyan is simply absent. This explains why in characterization, greatness is more readily ascribed to the Asians and Europeans than it is to the Africans.

This ability to blend in can also be seen in his four passions or "wives". Dawood's passions as a Surgeon, Writer, Rotarian and Family man do not collide with each other. He recognizes surgery as his first love and something that comes naturally to him. (226) Yet even in his rise as a

surgeon, Marie has stood by him offering support and counsel. On a light note he reveals that he makes all the major decisions while Marie makes all the minor one. But the real secret of their happiness lies in the fact that Marie decides what is major and what is minor.

Dawood traces his passion for literature to books by doctors cum writers chief among whom is Somerset Maughan. He nevertheless attributes his writing to stress and writing provided the way out. "Obviously my tensions were bottled up and needed a healthy outlet, lest they explode" (273).

Writing had a therapeutic effect, portraying his adversaries as enemies and supporters as friends worked as a balm to his jangled nerves. Over time it has become part and parcel of his life that he sees Dawood (his name as a writer) as a Siamese twin to Kodwawwala (his name as surgeon).

I look upon medicine as my lawful wife and literature as my mistress.

When I tire of one, I go to the other. (271)

Though he regards writing and surgery as twins, Dawood believes that his writing will go further than surgery. "In this respect I believe I will be able to hold the pen steadily than the scalpel. This is ironical because in all his works, the hospital provides his literary world, providing him with scenes of crisis, passions, suspense among others. Whatever honours he portrays in his autobiography and other novels are as a result of his career as a surgeon.

Dawood was propelled into the world of Rotary by a Rotary volunteer, a Physiotherapist from Scotland who was helping disabled children in Uganda. Deeply touched she realized that this humanitarian project was Rotary.

He makes a statement of commitment to all his four wives towards the end of the autobiography.

As long as my surgical judgment remains sound I can wield a scapel, I shall remain a surgeon. As long as my brain can conjure up stories- factual or fictional- and I can put pen to paper, I shall remain a writer. ... as long as I can hear the cries of the hungry and see the human misery around, I shall remain a Rotarian. As long as I can breathe and hear my heart beating, I shall remain a loving husband and a doting father. (333)

All his four wives are intricately tied up with Dawood's life.

Nothing but the Truth can therefore be viewed as an attempt to bring the relevance of experiences that reveal the wholeness of Dawood's personal identity. In this endeavor memory is pivotal to the autobiographer. This is what Ron Price in "Some Speculation About Autobiography" calls the imposition of "spatial form" entirely derived from memory which provides

“the writer’s reality” (2). No doubt then that Dawood depends on his experience to discover how he has become who he is. In other words he is revealing the formation of his quadrupled identity in whole through time.

To achieve this, events and personalities are arranged and evaluated from memory. In this light these (events and personalities) become the determining factors directing the selection of events. Those to be included are privileged by the manner in which they illuminate the autobiographer’s intention.

Dawood reveals how intricate experiences affect, shape and reveal his identity as “child of three continents”. This means that the autobiographer’s identity as perceived through the narrative is an intricate derivation of resonating past and present responses to situations, people, events and circumstances.

The autobiography has also been approached as a means of not only self-revelation, but also an explorative tool that lays bare the autobiographer’s life as narrated in the autobiography. In fact, Mineke Schipper in this regard cogently confirms that through autobiography, autobiographer’s intent “to bring order into their own past and ultimately wish to explore themselves.”

In the Autobiography a series of painful situations lead to Dawood to self discovery and the reality of the medical world. When pushed out of Aga Khan, Dawood is taken goes through a time of self revelation. It was during this time that he moved on to Nairobi Hospital, joined the association of surgeons, re awakened his activity at the Rotary Club and took to writing to release stress. He sees his action as some sort of reawakening:

In time the phoenix rose from the ashes and what happened  
at the Aga Khan proved a blessing in disguise.

Earlier on, Dawood experienced a reawakening from his ideal picture of the medical world. Joining the profession from a background where doctors were treated like gods, he experiences a reawakening when he realizes that the profession is not all glory. In England he is confronted by a sex pervert who is bent on misleading him and they (doctors) have to be protected against litigation.

Prior to this Dawood was full of praise to medical practitioners like Dr Ranbhise for example: “ ... possessed all qualities I cherished and tried to emulate. He was a devout Christian, a dedicated doctor....”

This nevertheless changes when he encountered medical practitioners in Pakistan who exploited patients and received money for treatments they could not administer.

The irony is that these are the very people entrusted with caring for life but end up destroying life.

There are in the autobiography interrelations of various elements of the text that support each other and bring out the meaning and coherence towards the realization of the intended purpose. The main body which is the autobiographical utterances or the text are supported by 'paratexts'. These paratexts include private documents such as photographs and these provide a paratextual evidence and creates a sense of achieved identity. These documents are in essence assertions of the autobiographer's sense of self. They are systematic punctuations of Dawood's story that is better told with the visual accuracy supplied through these visual 'narratives'. They provide narratives that may not necessarily fit in the body of the autobiography. They serve the purpose of authenticating the narrated form.

## **CONCLUSION.**

Our study set out to investigate the form in Yusuf Dawood's autobiographical works. We have interrogated three of his books, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, Behind the Mask but the emphasis was on the autobiography, Nothing but the Truth: The Story of a Surgeon with Four Wives. Dawood's has managed to achieve unity and cohesion in his autobiographical works through careful use of autobiographical techniques like mode of narration, plot, and identity. His diverse interests have also been unified into the person of the author himself.

Chapter one established the problem, hypothesis and set the objectives of the study. We also sought to review information that streamlines this study. Noting that Dawood as an author his autobiographical works have not been subjected to adequate critical inquiry, our study proceeded to read his autobiographical works guided by the Theory of the Autobiography and Formalism theoretical approaches.

Chapter two has examined briefly the form of his two autobiographical novels namely Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow and Behind the Mask. Both works are similar in structure and the arrangement in the plot. They both portray Dawood as a distinguished medical practitioner who has overcome

all odds to succeed. In both works, Dawood celebrates his life as Surgeon. Most of the events in these two autobiographical works are repeated in the autobiography itself.

Chapter three looks at Dawood's autobiography, Nothing but the Truth. This study noted that Dawood's autobiography makes a strong impression of a persona who celebrates his life. We have observed that Dawood's life journey through the three different continents and different cultures has contributed to his identity and how he responds to cultural definition. The study has also seen how Dawood's idolizing of the Western world and its ideals was attained right from childhood and how it persisted over time to adulthood.

By placing the self on a pedestal and raising his achievements in all his passions or "wives" that is surgery, writing, rotary, and family, Dawood sets an example to be followed by the rest of the society. Unlike the two autobiographical texts, the autobiography offers balanced view of Dawood's other passions other than surgery. These are writing and rotary, which are, ignored in the first Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow and Behind the Mask.



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