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## DEVELOPMENT

### DRAMA AND ORALITY IN KENYA'S RADIO ADVERTISING 304 to 312

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#### ABSTRACT

The relationship between drama, cultural practice and electronic media in Kenya is built around a history of intricate relationships informed by history, aesthetics and values adored by the African people since time immemorial. By function, drama has always addressed cultural, historical and emerging themes. For quite some time now, it has become a very fashionable technique of advertisement production in Kenya, yet research on drama as a persuasive genre remains scant. This paper examines the relationship between advertisement drama in radio and indigenous literary practices of the African people. It is based on the assumption that since the purpose of advertisements is to influence mass buyers, the choice of drama genre by advertisers imply that it possesses unique persuasive elements that can render for scholarly analyses. Since radio is a purely oral-acoustic medium just like primary orality, elements of primary oral cultures serve to enhance the expressiveness of radio-mediated advertisements. The paper begins from awareness that drama has always been a cultural production in Kenya, and that indigenous literary forms have always punctuated dramatic experience at every phase of its development both in content and style. Using a qualitative design, data is in the form of audio recordings of advertisements that use the technique of drama in radio. These are transcribed, translated and analyzed to arrive at conclusions about the persuasive strategy of theatre in the radio medium. Walter Ong's theorizing about transiting from primary orality to typographical forms will enable us understand the psychodynamics of how audio messages are crafted to resonate with those who hear them. Ong's ideas about the notion of 'imagined audiences' will also be used. These ideas enable us examine how advertisers imagine their audiences via virtual experience. It is expected that aspects of indigenous literary forms will manifest, and that these elements have rhetorically latent. It is also expected that the language in theatrical ads will be uniquely fashioned to persuade, and that these adverts will reveal how their consumers understand the world around them.

**Keywords:** *Orality, Drama, Persuasion, Narrative structure*

## INTRODUCTION

### Understanding Kenya's Dramatic Radioscape

The average person in both Africa and the Western world is bombarded with several adverts of various kinds each day: billboards, radio blurbs, Television commercials, newspaper and magazine adverts, film trailers, product placement in films and direct personal contact with marketers among others. Advertising is a pervasive part of daily living in any consumerist economy. Considering that the objective of any advert is to grab consumer attention and influence expenditure patterns, and realizing that advertising costs lots of money, advertisers ordinarily select those strategies they believe will work best. Key among these in Kenya has been the use dramatized slices of life.

Research has shown that drama conveys messages better than arguments. (Wells, 1988; Leong, 1994). Whereas lectures and expositions are very good at conveying information, drama evokes references and previews feelings that the product in question can produce. As Wells notes, the logic associated with arguments does not always work, because arguments tend to invite counter-and-support-arguments. On its part, drama establishes verisimilitude, that quality where characters appear plausible and authentic, and so it draws the audiences into the commercial by identifying with the characters and the events in it.

In Kenya and Africa at large, drama has been an integral part of cultural and artistic expression since the early times. Before the coming of literacy to Africa it existed as ritual and play (Mwangi and Chesaina, 2004; Kerr, 1995; De Graft, 1976). Cultural education was transmitted through various creative episodes dramatized during circumcision ceremonies for boys and girls, enthronement and dethronement of kings, birth rituals, funerals and children's imitative plays among other countless ritual activities of the African cosmology. Colonization brought Western theatrical practices in the continent, mainly to rival the indigenous forms which were associated with paganism and witchcraft (Adelugba and Obafemi, 2004; Diawara, 1994; Rakodi, 1997; Kehinde, 2004; Nandwa and Bukenya, 1983). However, by the time Kenya attained independence in 1963 both strands existed side by side. Theatre emerging thereafter was a hybrid, with borrowing geared towards cultural relevance but in most cases through English expression.

It is also during the colonial period that radio came to Kenya. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) was launched in 1928 with a view to informing the settler about events back at home and around the colony. Little is known about radio theatre then since most of the content was prepared outside the country and only a handful of Africans had analytical competencies to record or comment intellectually about the new media. This is partly because few could understand English. Even the few who probably understood the 'white language' may not have had professional literary interests (King'ara, 2010; Kerr, 1995; Heath, 1986). Broadcasts in African languages of Kiswahili, Kikamba, Kikuyu, Kinandi, Kiluhya, Dholuo and Arabic were started much later in 1953. These broadcasts struck quick rapport with African audiences because of their linguistic familiarity, familiar social stereotypes and indigenous literary motifs as they commented on the various facets of the social situation (Kerr, 1995). In these broadcasts, theatre was a major item in programming. KBC changed to Voice of Kenya (VOK) at Independence, and later to KBC again in 1989 through an act of parliament. This did not change much in terms of programming content (Ligaga, 2006). It was not until 1982 when the serial *Radio Theatre* was first produced on KBC by the late Nzau Kalulu. This was a dramatized serial running for around thirty minutes per episode per week. The programme was produced in line with the ideals of Theatre for development (TfD) in that it addressed developmental themes such as patriotism, morality, family planning, education and health. By this time, KBC was the only radio station operating in Kenya (Ligaga, 2006).

When Kenya became a democracy in 1992 many more radio stations were licensed, freeing the listeners from the monotony of mainstream KBC and her vernacular subsidiaries. An opportunity arose for opening up spaces for greater variety of art. Liberal vernacular radio stations came with the licencing of *Kameme FM* in 1996 (Nderitu, 2008). Many other vernacular radio stations followed, informed by their instant popularity with mass listeners. For instance, the dramaturgy *Mucii ni Ndoogo* and *Utuku*

*wa Mathekania* became very popular on *Kameme FM*. These programmes focused on addressing society through humour. Since the advent of multi-radioism in Kenya, the national radioscope has expanded tremendously, and radio has kept close association with masses because of cultural awareness, variety in entertainment, instant transmission of issues affecting people in the villages, low purchase and maintenance costs, portability, humour and wide reach. It is possible that today a majority of Kenyans have access to a vernacular radio station, and that these stations have dramatic content. This popularity can be contrasted with other media such as magazines, television, video and social media platforms which combine colour, motion and sound, yet find much less attraction to advertisers compared to radio.

According to President Uhuru Kenyatta's Hero's day speech on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2015, there were 126 radio stations in Kenya, and many more were waiting licensing by the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK). The popularity of the medium has recently attracted substantial studies (Ligaga, 2006; Odhiambo, 2007; Njogu, 2009; Wa Wanjiru, 2011), all focusing on Tfd. On these radio spaces, there has been an upsurge of dramatized advertisements intended for mass persuasion.

### **Understanding Kenyan Drama from Oral Traditions**

Any modern study of theatre in Africa must visualize in retrospect the pre-literate era when all forms of communication and entertainment were orally transmitted, before moving on to see how these rich traditions have influenced any emergent forms. Kerr and Chifunyise (2004) observe that "Any study of theatre in an African region must stumble against the conceptual boulder of indigenous performing arts because they form the bedrock of the attitudes and practices on which modern theatre is built" (p. 265). Additionally, African theatrical histories have all along been defined by inter-relationships between people in their cultural milieu, aesthetics, social dynamics and technology. Lihamba (2004) notes that theatre and people in Africa have a great bearing on "inputs brought about by technological developments, population and social movements from within and outside the African continent, as well as the creativity, dynamism and ingenuity of the people as they respond to developments and changes individually and collectively" (p.233). Theatre carries along with it rich dialogues informed by both tradition and emerging issues of all kinds, and can thus be analyzed from divergent points. Unfortunately, in most accounts of African theatre, analysts give only a passing genre reflection to indigenous performance before passing on to emerging themes. Proper analyses should be guided by awareness of African indigenous literary cum ritualistic practices. The indigenous form must be seen as a foundation upon which modern discourses borrow. Orality should not be seen merely in the prism of tradition, but a form that metamorphoses and catalyses contemporary cultural productions. It should be interrogated to see how it continues to influence how Kenyans perceive the world today. The idea is not to merely identify elements of oral tradition and argue for their occurrence in modern persuasion, but to explore the applications, meanings and themes they relate to in the broader context of commerce and society.

In the analysis of oral products in modern contexts, it is necessary to examine the various ways in which cultural, historical and contemporary situations intersect. As Gemeda (2012) observes, in attempting to study contemporary discourse using traditional orality the best approach would be attempting to understand how the oral form was conceived in the past, and then seek to develop concrete opinions about that tradition, and thereafter locate representative forms that are of contemporary relevance rather than examining orality as a purely traditional form, and the modern researcher as merely a literary historian.

It is true that African orality is the raw material upon which subsequent cultural production is built. As Lindfors (1977) observes, African folklore is no different from the vast uncultivated, unexplored, undiscovered mystical terrain of Africa, with huge quantities of minerals like gold and diamonds. Our folklore, by implication, has not, and cannot be exhausted, and all that is required is greater energies to be directed at its exploration, documentation, application in diverse situations of modern day and enjoyment. The tendencies to see orality as old ought to be discarded because in reality, orality is ever changing to adapt to emerging needs. Waugh (2006) notices that instead of seeing orality in terms of specific, fixed and concrete entities, we should see it as a dynamic process of differentiation.

Understanding the cultural influences on the advertising landscape entails an awareness of a nation's cultural contexts. Kenya is an East African country beautifully incised by The Great Rift Valley which runs from North to South, leaving behind numerous lakes, geysers and other land forms which are habitat to a variety of wildlife species, including elephants, antelopes, flamingoes and all kinds of flora and fauna. It is also divided right in the middle by the equator, making it experience excellent weather all year round. These natural gifts, among others, set the country apart from any other in the world. On her coast is the Indian Ocean whose coastline is laden with various swamps and East African mangroves. It is home to Fort Jesus, an ancient landmark that is testament to colonial occupation of East Africa. Western Kenya is characterized by mountains and several rainforests, including Kakamega and the Mau Forest, the largest forest complex in East Africa. Lake Victoria, home to the Luo peoples, is Africa's largest fresh water lake. Central Kenya is home to Africa's highest mountain, Mt. Kenya. There is not one region in Kenya without geographic idiosyncrasies that attract hordes of tourists or film makers each year. Living around these features are ethnic communities, each with unique cultural beliefs and practices. The nation is hodgepodge of roughly forty two ethnic, and consequently, cultural entities.

The geographical features littering the landscape have informed performances and their content. The people living around these features constitute unique ethnic identities and the interaction between them and their physical environment provides contrasting cultural, spiritual, social and aesthetic elements, and the emergent discourses can best be understood in these contexts.

Since tradition, oral art in its various genres played conspicuous roles in the lives of people. Stories, proverbs and songs were not confined to professional performers. It was a free activity. Nandwa and Bukunya (1983) note that: The spoken word, especially in the form of oral performance, was at the heart of the African mental, spiritual and social activity... African religious, philosophical, legal and political concepts and precepts are expressed in it, and it contains the highest forms of creative and artistic entertainment (p.24).

Myths, legends, folktales, songs, epics, proverbs, wise sayings and tongue-twisters were known by heart, and practiced across the age spectrum. Each of these genres has specific characteristics, specific contexts and specific audiences. Proverbs for instance, are characterized by terseness, memorability and invariability, and were an important marker of adult wisdom and experience, the reason they could only be used by the elder members of society to caution or advise the younger ones. Miruka, (1999) observes that proverbs were also used in "embellishment to speech" (p. 110).

The modern dramatic form is thus a reflection of the 'Kenyan myth' constructed for thousands and thousands of years that the African people have inhabited their space. Almost every community in Kenya has a myth about creation and being. Indeed, it is possible that every Kenyan has heard a narrative from his community. These stories exist because it is a natural characteristic of myth to 'convey truth'. People don't doubt myths. They reinforce communal unity, and create a sense of ethnic uniqueness that no one is ready to give away. Other than their inherent functionality, each of these genres served to bring people together. This way, they were mass movers.

### **Adoption of Orality in Radio Drama**

African scholars who took over radio production and programming after independence adopted the traditional form and transformed it to suit the needs of mass consumption. They realized that a majority of the people in Africa's rural areas were not conversant with foreign culture and ideology (Kerr 1995). The radio of today has merely revisited the oral popular culture to inform and entertain. Bazin (1979) notes that the modern artist "has at his disposition a treasure, a patrimony from which he selects elements with which he re-composes a product which is at least partially new" (p. 450). In his view, the history of creativity involves, to a large degree, a process of production and reproduction.

Radio remains the most dominant medium owing to a number of factors. It has wide penetration in both public and private lives of the people. It is to be found in homes, public service vehicles popularly

known as *Matatus*, computers, mobile phones and cars. It is free of charge, and meets the listener at his convenience. Arens et al (2011) further describes the radio as a medium that “provides entertainment or news to listeners who are busy doing something else – driving, washing dishes, reading the newspaper or even studying” (p.395). It is therefore evident that geographical spread, cost-effectiveness and adaptability to mass audiences naturally makes radio a preferred medium for popular expression (Diawara, 1994, Kerr 1995).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The paper analyses the workings of ‘cultural theatre’ within ‘advertising’ in the ‘media’, all of which distinct academic disciplines. For this reason, a multi-faceted theoretical approach is proposed. The key analytical criteria derive from Walter Jackson Ong’s concepts of orality in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982). In this work, Ong’ draws the distinctions between chirographically based thought (primary orality) on one hand, and secondary orality and other forms of typographically based thought on the other. In this paper we examine how the aspects of primary orality he identifies may be used to understand radio-orality. Secondly, he examines how oratory through electronic media explores the notions of ‘imagined audiences’.

Ong defines primary orality as “oral cultures untouched by writing” (31). He isolates elements which describe the nature and workings of primary oral cultures, and which provide insights into how all such spoken discourse may be understood.

First, he notes that oral discourses are characterized by inbuilt mnemonic devices and formulae. These are the structures within utterances that enable hearers to recall them with ease. Once words leave the mouth of the speaker they cannot be recalled, and therefore they require frames of memory built within the utterances themselves. He says that such mnemonic patterns are reinforced by: heavily rhythmic, balanced patterns, in repetitions or anti-thesis, in alliterations and assonances, in epithetic and other formulaic expressions, in standard thematic settings, in proverbs which are constantly heard by everyone so that they come to mind readily and which themselves are patterns for retention and readily recall, or in any other mnemonic form (P.34).

Second, Ong notes that oral expressions are message-centred rather than syntax centred. The utterances are concerned more with the convenience of their speech rather than the grammatical organization or correctness of the discourse. The utterance is thus focused more on its purpose and comfort with which the particular speaker utters it. The expressions are least concerned with their own redundancy. They may carry a load of epithets and adjectives and other formulaic baggage which literacy rejects as redundancy. In actual sense the adjectives acquire repetitive referencing.

Further, he says that in primary oral cultures knowledge is conceptualized and verbalized with close reference to human world. Few statistics or facts are divorced from human or quasi-human activities. Ong notes that “names of places and persons occur as involved in doings” (p.42). The cultures are not concerned with preserving knowledge of skills as an abstract, self-subsistent corpus. Speech refers to what the hearers can perceive and appreciate as their own. There are no abstractions of any kind. Ong observes that: In practical matters no one operates in formally stated syllogisms. Oral culture does not deal in such items as geometrical figures, abstract categorization, formally logically reasoning processes, definitions or even comprehensive descriptions, or articulated self-analysis, all of which derive from thought itself but from text-formed thought” (p.54).

Ong also explains that oral material is closely tied to the beliefs and practices of the community producing it. The material is participatory and emphatic rather than being objectively distanced. Its expression is ‘final’ and ‘true’, the same way myths operate in societies.

Finally, Ong notes that orality situates knowledge within a context of struggle. He observes that “proverbs and riddles are not used simply to store knowledge but to engage others in verbal and intellectual combat” (p.43). Such ‘flyting’ is characterized by both attractions and antagonisms. He notes that the other side of agonistic name-calling or vituperation is the fulsome expression of praise,

but such praise goes with the highly polarized, agonistic, oral world of good and evil, virtue and vice, villains and heroes.

### **Orality, Intertexts and Imagined Audiences**

In “Media and Human Communication” (pp. 171-173), Ong conceives the human mind as a ‘box’ taking in units of information, encoding them, putting them through a ‘pipeline’ called medium, and on the extreme end another mind encodes and ‘fits’ the message in his own box. The difference between the encoded and the decoded messages is the medium which “massages the message” (p. 171). For the process to be effective the speaker must also put himself in the receiver position because he expects a feedback. As he speaks, he also listens to his own voice. Ong says that “to speak you have to address another or others...; what I say depend on what possible responses I might anticipate” (p. 172). The implication of this in an advertising atmosphere is that as the advertiser tells his story, he has ideas about possible reactions of his audiences.

In this respect, the speaker must have established some virtual understanding with his listener prior to the interlocutory encounter. This could be through shared beliefs, past relationships or by an understanding negotiated by a third party who brings the interlocutors together. The speaker does not therefore fictionalize his audience since the social and cultural inter-text has been established. Ong sees that for oral communication to be effective, some recipient must be present (physically or psychologically), and that the interlocutors should be aware of the social and cultural contexts in which they operate. As a person to person encounter, such engagements become performances.

### **AD#1 The Trickster Motif in Diamond Property Merchants**

The ad *Diamond Property Merchants* is based on a cultural myth about communities in Kenya. Here, the advertiser uses a cultural stereotype to draw conflict between a Gikuyu, Kenya’s largest ethnic group and a Maasai, world famous for their varied traditions. The Gikuyu are known as money loving and astute in business, while the Maasai are stereotyped as rural, unenlightened pastoralists. The advert, drawing from this stereotype, uses a trickster motif and runs on *Kameme FM*, a Gikuyu vernacular station and therefore the target audience is mainly Gikuyu.

When the advert opens it occurs that earlier, the Maasai man had sent his Gikuyu friend to get him a girl to marry. The Maasai enquires if the girl has been found. He asks,

Hello Mzee,  
Umenitafutia ile kitu?  
(Hello Friend,  
Have you found that thing?)

It then occurs that the ‘thing’ has been found with ‘Diamond Property Merchants’, a real estate agency. The use of ‘thing’ denotes a secret, in that matters sexual are spoken in euphemisms. It also prepares ground for the Maasai to be fooled. The use of ‘thing’ further serves to create suspense in the audience because the only thing a Maasai would be looking for is his lost herd.

Curious like the listener, the Maasai wants to know where that kind of girl comes from. This is the turning point of the drama, and the Gikuyu man answers a question with a question that reveals the ‘girl’. He asks,

Turaria uhoro wa mutumia kana wa migunda?  
Ningi mutumia ona wamuguraari  
Ariikaraga rieraini ta hungu?  
(Are we talking about a woman or land?  
Even when you marry a woman,  
Will she be living in the air like a hawk?)

The derogative simile ‘ta hungu’ and the rhetorical question is, to a Gikuyu listener, a mockery of the pastoralist Maasai who has not discovered the worth of investing in land, and spends all his time looking for girls. By extension, it is a metaphor for that Gikuyu who has not discovered that he needs to buy himself a piece of land. It is a mockery of every Gikuyu who spends his money on rent and luxury rather

than buying a plot upon which he can settle a family. This notion promoted by the advertiser reinforces the idea that investment in land is the vogue for any Gikuyu who wants to get rich quickly.

The setting reflects a contrast between ‘enlightenment’ and ‘idiocy’, represented here by the Gikuyu and the Maasai respectively. The Maasai confuses the term ‘Diamond Property Merchants’ with his presumptive father – in – law. On the other hand, the Gikuyu hold the capitalist ideas that one should not get a wife before he has put up a house for her. This is reinforced by the ad’s ending that ‘*Tununue shamba, alafu tutafute bibi*’ (Let’s first buy land, and later look for a wife).

The trickery exhibited by the Gikuyu is a source of humour and cultural pride in investment wisdom among Kikuyus. It is understood in the context of gentleman’s agreements done traditionally since there was no writing or courts of law. The enticement of a girl throws mockery to the Maasai, and a non-Kikuyu listener wonders whether the Maasai will be interested in the land deal after getting conned by the allure of a beautiful Kikuyu girl.

The fun of the advert is further reinforced by stories in the minds of the audience about foolish men who ask other men to help them hook a girl, only for the emissary to have the girl for himself. This, though not stated in the ad, creates a comic relief for the Kikuyu audience who have within the patrimony of their folklore or popular music such stories. It could actually mean that the Kikuyu man tricked the Maasai man with the idea of land so as to have the girl for himself!. The question of a Maasai herder buying land in the city, which is obviously exorbitant, could be seen as a diversionary strategy from the duplicity of the Kikuyu man.

The ad utilizes cultural conflict to reflect emerging ways of thought. The Kikuyu man represents independence, while the Maasai represents dependence. The simile ‘*ta hungu*’ points to ignorance on the part of the herdsman on what comes first in life’s priority list.

#### **AD#2 The Riddle Strategy in Equity Agent**

The advert *Equity Agent* is meant to exhibit various services rendered by various agents of Equity bank across the country by use of the riddle technique. Riddles are common in most East African communities. They mainly involve two parties, with one posing a question and the other applying his reasoning, intellect and his environmental or cultural awareness to crack the question for an imaginary reward.

Riddles are focused on testing one’s wit, and are the intelligence quotient (IQ) tests of the traditional child. The riddling session ends up enlightening the person to which they are posed. Modifications to the traditional riddling schema would be expected as people interact with life each day. For instance, whereas traditional riddlers used gifts such as popular rivers, trees and animals as rewards, the modern riddle forms provide gifts of money, happiness, prestigious universities or modern gadgets such as cars and mobile phone models. Before the introduction of agency banking in Kenya, large queues were popular in banking halls and ATM machines, especially around end-month. The purpose of the *Equity Agent* ad is to enlighten the bank’s customers to embrace the agency concept rather than crowding banking halls.

The advert is informed by the need to inform the bank’s customers that they don’t have to go physically into the banking hall to perform banking transactions, but can as well utilize the agents closer to them. The bank is popular for the low segment of the banking population and often the banking halls are overflowing with people. It is a mass bank and the advertiser reassures the customers that the message is coming from “Benki uipendayo” (The bank you love). In riddles a question is posed in challenge and the person to which the question is posed is expected to provide correct answers. If on first attempt he doesn’t, he’s given another opportunity but if it gets hard to crack the puzzle he surrenders an imaginary gift to the poser for the response to be revealed.

In this scenario, the poser asks, “Penye Equity Agent Pana?” This loosely translates into “What do you find where there is an Equity bank agent?” The respondent then enumerates a number of services

available at Equity agents: Account opening, application for ATM services, Deposits and withdrawals, M-Shwari services and so on. Contrary to expectation, the respondent gets the answer right, ending the session. The riddling process is shortened to save the advertiser money in radio airtime. The concept of the advert here is to make the bank customer aware of the services offered by the bank. The advertiser probably expects the customer to figure himself in the riddling session. Being an old form, the riddle situates the ad within cultural relevance. It seeks to make the concept of banking indigenous and 'acceptable' to those hearing it. The technique can therefore be seen as an attempt to 'localize' the banking concept to the lower cadre of the economic ladder for which Equity bank is anchored.

The riddle, being an 'old' and consequently a popular form, situates the advert within cultural relevance. It attempts to make the idea of agency banking 'old' and 'traditional' amongst a population that is skeptical of technology. This way, he hopes that his idea will be acceptable by association. The use of the riddle also points to attempts at anchoring the idea in rural areas where riddling sessions are common and well entrenched. It is evident from its content that the ad attempts to allay all fears and suspicion that the various agents are not recognized by the main banks. There is awareness that rural populations are susceptible to conmen and counterfeits. The voice affirms that the agents "have been permitted by Equity bank". By reiterating that "tuko hapa kukuhudumia" (we are here to serve you), the bank reassures the people of the Agents' legitimacy as well as their commitment to alleviate the troubles of queues.

The advertiser is keen not to engage in the riddle at the expense of the message. As soon as the question is posed, the respondent goes straight into enumerating the services found at Equity bank agents such as deposits, withdrawals account activation loan applications and money transfers. Similarly, the poser is quick to confirm that the response given is "correct!" This way, the riddle posed in the beginning serves as a hook to the ad message.

### **AD#3 The Ogre in Pegasus**

The advert "*Pegasus*" is built around an ogre story. In traditional ogre stories, the dramatic hero is faced with a life threatening situation from which he is unable to extricate. The drama is set in the background of a farmer's home. Sounds of cows mooing and goats bleating can be heard. Here too, the advertiser chooses the accent of a Maasai man. The man, in his ignorance of agricultural techniques, spells out his frustrations about various kinds of insects which have invaded his farm, destroying all crops season after season. The use of a Maasai as a farmer is a contradiction of the cultural stereotype that Maasais are mainly herdsmen. The magnitude of his disillusionment is reinforced by the incessant scratching of his head. The advert is set within an agricultural background, and the awareness that Kenya is largely an agricultural economy is a necessity. The insects are not only a threat to the farm but to the farmer as well. The insects invade his farm 'like KDF', he says. This simile recalls the involvement of the Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) in combating the Al-Shabaab terrorists within Somalia at the time of this advert. In the social scene, the advert carries notions that despite the massive loss of Kenyan troops at the El-Adde military camp within Somali and the death of a hundred and forty eight students in a terrorist attack at Garissa University College, and earlier the slaying of several civilians at the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, the KDF are a sting in the vein of terrorists whom it seeks to eliminate from the Horn of Africa.

Reference to the war is a real life reference at the time of the advert, as well as a mnemonic device. The question of the ad's morality does not arise here because the KDF is praised rather than demonized for failing to protect students and civilians during the series of terror attacks. Whether the ad could be interpreted as a mockery of the army is a question of cautious debate, but it is not explicit in the ad. Similarly, for this farmer nothing seems to work. It is at this point that his friend emerges to inform him of a new insecticide called *Pegasus*.

This advert recalls a sub-text that Kenya is mainly an agricultural economy where vast majorities of the people depend on farming. The mention of insects that invade farms 'like KDF' is bound to attract quick attention from listeners at such a time when Kenya is at war. It also magnifies the dilemma due to its association with terrorism, and its effectiveness is largely in the choice of context and genre. Only a

few months before this, CNN had described Kenya as a ‘hotbed of terror’ prior to a visit in Kenya by US president Barack Obama in June, 2015. The substance of the ad is the struggle between good and evil. The insects are analogized to terrorists who need no mercy. It is an urgent call to the farmer to arm and attack the terrorist causing him pain by use of *Pegasus*, lest he gets finished.

#### **AD#4 The ‘Direction Giver’ in New Dumu Zas**

This advert is based on a stereotype that there are members of some Kenyan communities, especially the drier areas, who will always mislead every time a traveller asks directions. Traditionally the navigation technology we find in cars and mobile phones did not exist, and people relied on asking others for direction. It is held that if you asked a person used to walking long distances for direction they will tell you ‘it’s just here’ when in actual sense the distance is several miles. There is this myth that if you ask a Kamba for direction he will tell you ‘Nwa Baa’ (It’s just here), only to end up walking a hundred or so miles. This advert involves two friends. One is interested in visiting the other’s new home. It is clear that when the owner of the new house is confronted with the question ‘*Buda, Kwako ni wapi by the way?*’ (Friend, Where is your home by the way?), he’s not ready to reveal. So he quickly gets into giving his friend cryptic instructions that will make sure his friend does not know the exact coordinates to his new house. The question is unwelcome, and this is what sets the drama in motion.

The man decides to lie in the directions he gives. So he asks his friend to go down a road, turn left at the junction, go all the way to the mountain, turn right, and walk up to the garage. When he sees the garage he should know he has lost direction! The instructions get more comical and confusing, and the traveler discovers that his friend does not want to reveal the direction to the new house. But since he’s familiar with the landscape, he figures out that there is a new house that everyone thinks belongs to the Governor, and upon further inquiry, the owner admits that the house is actually his. It then emerges that when one is putting up a house he should choose the ‘New Dumu Zas’ iron sheets because they make houses exquisite, and are durable.

The listener’s awareness of Kenya’s political landscape after the promulgation of the constitution in 2010 is important in understanding the advert. In this constitution, the government adopted a devolved system of governance where resources were devolved to the country through forty seven counties headed by Governors. The Governors emerged as very powerful personalities, as ‘presidents’ of the county governments. It is not strange then that a Governor, with all his power and money and situated right in the middle of rural villages, is the only person who can afford the extravagance of a posh mansion.

The advertiser makes ‘New Dumu Zas’ sheets ‘great’ by comparing his imaginary house to that of a Governor. Notable still, is the fact that the advert comes at a time when the media is awash with reports about the spendthrift behaviour of some Governors. For instance, a few months earlier, it had been reported that the Governor of Kakamega County had purchased wheelbarrows at over a hundred thousand shillings each, yet the street value of a wheelbarrow is three thousand Kenyan shillings. Immediately afterwards, there were reports that the Governor of Meru had bought curtains for county hospitals at seven million shillings. The news were not taken kindly as many thought the Governors had misplaced priorities so as to get an opportunity to steal public finances.

The ‘Governor’ is thus used as a symbol of expense in this advert. In a society engulfed by consumerism and hedonism, expense is a symbol of social status. Whoever owns an expensive house belongs to the high class. The beauty of the advert is in the realization that the owner has not looted, but has discovered the secret to class by using ‘New Dumu Zas’ roofing sheets, which gives houses an executive finish.

The conflict in the ad also borders on peer competition, as seen in the owner of the house’s refusal to identify the location of his new house, probably because he does not want his small trick to be imitated. The complicated directions and references point to a peri-urban setting, with references to ‘Mama Mboga’, ‘Garage’ and ‘Governor’. The language is also a mixture of codes, from English to Kiswahili and Sheng.

The advertiser is aware of the capitalist thinking that each Kenyan should own a house. He is aware that his audience harbor dreams of owning a home, preferably an expensive villa or an ocean-side mansion. He also imagines that most people do not know how to give their bricks and mortar a beautiful finish. It is an indirect attack on those who make beautiful plans but fail to realize that the beauty of a house is in its roofing. The advertiser hopes that his audience, just like the man asking for directions, would seek to discover the beauty of 'New Dumu Zas'.

We find that there is little concern for the grammaticality of utterances, as long as the audience grasps the message. In fact, it is right to argue that the grammaticality is in ensuring easy access to message by the listener. The owner tells his friend that when he gets to the corner, he should "nyonga left". This could be transcribed as 'murder left', and has no meaning to an English speaker. He only means 'turn left'. The words are reinforced by emphasis of voice, which gives the advert an amazing aesthetic quality.

His words also point to both action and movement. He says,

Teremka na hii njia,  
Uendeeee,  
Ukifika kwa ile junction,  
Nyonga left.  
(Go down this road,  
Then goooo  
When you get to the junction  
Turn left)

From the use of the onomatopoeic words such as 'uendeee' the listener can literary visualize movement down the road. The struggle envisioned by the advertiser adds to the adverts mnemonics and overall aesthetics. Instead of saying 'No' to the request by his friend, the owner of the house decides to take the challenge and circumlocute in a comical way. This too acts as the attention magnet for this ad. He actually 'forces' the message on the 'traveller' because at some point, the asker feels that the owner of the house is avoiding giving a direct answer. This is evident in the progression of exclamations to lamentations as the dialogue moves along.

When the owner begins to give directions, his peer uses the exclamations 'eh!' and 'Ehe' to show approval. These turn into 'Aaai!' 'Ai!' 'Maaan!', suggesting the distrust and the insincerity of his host. It should be noted that on realizing the torment he's giving his asker, the owner persists with 'Wee tulia!' (Be patient), indicating that the answer is intended to torment the asker.

## CONCLUSION

This analysis demonstrates a special intercourse between drama and the world of business on one hand, and the so-called 'old' literary form and the emergent and ever evolving on the other. It is evident that advertisers have on various occasions fallen back to orality for persuasive effect, and that there is little attention to grammatical correctness at the expense of 'message'. It emerges that advertisement stories are anchored on dramatic conflict, and that advertisers use the 'drama of life' as people live it, embellishit with humour, sentimentalization and imagination, and that each of the adverts has culturally-based attention grabbing and mnemonic devices for rhetorical effect.

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