

## RISALA YA CHUO KIKUU

Kwa niaba ya Jumuiya ya Chuo Kikuu cha Dar es Salaam ningependa kusema machache kuhusu huyu mwenzetu aliyetuacha.

Dk. May Lenna Balisidya (Bibi Matteru) alikuwa mfanyakazi wa Chuo Kikuu cha Dar es Salaam kwa muda wa miaka kumi na minne kama mwalimu katika Idara ya Kiswahili. Wakati tunamwaga tujikumbushe mambo muhimu aliyotenda kitaaluma, kiutafiti, kiufundishaji na kimaandishi.

Katika uwanja wa taaluma Marehemu Dk. May aliandika makala yasiyopungua kumi na tatu katika majarida ya hapa nchini na nje ya nchi, na ameacha makala tatu ambazo zinatarajiwa kuchapishwa karibuni. Amelandika vitabu vya kitaaluma vitatu: viwili vinahusu Fasihi-Simulizi na Sanaa za Maonyesho, na kimoja cha kufundishia wageni Kiswahili ambacho bado kiko matayarishoni.

Kwa upande wa utafiti, alifanya utafiti mkubwa kuhusu nadharia ya Fasihi-Simulizi na hasa Fasihi-Simulizi ya Wagogo na Fasihi-Simulizi ya Kiswahili kwa ujumla. Alifanya utafiti kuhusu uwezekano wa kutumia Kiswahili kama lugha ya kufundishia taaluma zote katika shule za Sekondari, vyo na elimu ya juu. Mchango wake kuhusu suala hili unafahamika zaidi na Baraza la Taifa.

Amefanya pia utafiti wa kutosha kuhusu fasihi na wanawake, na masuala yahasuyo nafasi ya mwanamke katika jamii za Kiafrika hasa Tanzania. Na katika shahada yake ya udaktari katika Falsafa alishughulikia uhusiano uliopo kati ya sera ya lugha na umbuji wa Fasihi-Simulizi.

Kuhusu ufundishaji Dk. May alikuwa mwalimu mzuri. Aliwapa wanafunzi wake motisha wa kujifunza zaidi na kuyatafiti masuala mbalimbali ya Fasihi na Sanaa kwa jumla. Alikuwa mcheshi darasani lakini hakuwa wa kuchezewa. Alitoa alama nzuri kwa wale tu waliostahili. Usahihishaji wake ulikuwa wa haki na kwa sababu hii alikuwa miongoni mwa watu wachache walioaminiwa katika kutunga na kuchihisha mitihani kadhaa ya kitaifa.

Dk. May alikuwa miongoni mwa waandishi wachache wanawake katika Afrika Mashariki. Na kazi iliyompa sifa kubwa ni riwaya yake ya Shida, ishughulikiayo matatizo ya maisha kisiasa, kiuchumi na kiutamaduni. Katika maandishi yake, daima alikuwa mtetezi wa haki za wanyonge. Maandishi ambayo yako mitamboni ni Mihati na Akusamehe dhambi zako. Alishi-



rikiana pia na wenziwe kuandika vitabu vya watoto na tamthilia kama Harakati za Ukombozi na Ayubu.

Marehemu Dk. May amecha pengo kubwa si katika taaluma tu lakini pia kama rafiki wa wengi.

Dk. May amekufa. Lakini amecha fundisho kubwa, kwa wale ambao tumbaki, kuhusu jinsi ya kukabiliana na kifo. Hata wakati alipokuwa ameambiwa na madaktari wake kuwa siku zake za kuishi zilikuwa chache aliendelea kufanya kazi zake za kimasomo. Fundisho hili tunalipata katika barua aliyomwandikia Mkuu wa Idara ya Kiswahili. Alisema hivi:

Kama kifo kinakuja baada ya mwezi au zaidi na kije. Kufa ni lazima kwa kila binadamu. Sitaishi kwa kuogopa kwamba kifo kitakuja wakati wowote, kwani sina mamlaka nacho. Nitaishi maisha yasiyotawaliwa na woga wa kifo. Kwa hiyo nitaendelea na kazi zangu za kimasomo kama kawaida mpaka wakati wangu utakapowadia. Nitaendelea na masomo hadi nitakapomaliza.

Hili ni fundisho kubwa. Tumwage kwa beti mbili kutoka shairi liitwalo "Dunia Kaburi Wazi" lililoandikwa na Mathias Mnyampala:

Kila kiumbe hukoma, kama maji kiangazi,  
Ya mitoni husimama, hunyauka michirizi,  
Na ndivyo wetu uzima, hukatika kama uzi,  
Dunia kaburi wazi, humeza kila kijacho.

Kifo hakina huruma, na hakina uchaguzi,  
Hakina mwenye hekima, kuwa awe mbakizi,  
Viumbe dunia nzima, vizazi hata vizazi,  
Dunia kaburi wazi, humeza kila kijacho.

MUNGU AMLAZE MAHALI PEMA PEPONI





IN MEMORIAM: DR. MAY BALISIDYA MATTERU  
(1947 - 1987)

F.E.M.K. Senkoro

The death of May Balisidya Matteru on 27th December, 1987, though already predicted by her doctors, for she had a terminal case of cancer, shocked not only us, her colleagues at the University of Dar es Salaam and those who were so close to her at the University of Wisconsin- Madison, U.S.A., where she had obtained her Ph.D. in African Literature hardly a month back, but it also saddened the Tanzanian Community in general. Having taught in various schools and also at the University of Dar es Salaam for more than fifteen years, May was a person who in many different ways had deeply and profoundly affected and even influenced the lives of many people.

May was among the foremost promoters and reknowned scholars of Tanzanian and African Oral Literature; a very keen developer of Kiswahili language (she had held the position of Vice Chairman of the National Kiswahili Council of Tanzania for two terms), and an excellent, just teacher who knew very well how to challenge her students in literary discussions, not even once treating them as Paulo Freire's empty pots but making them formulate freely and give their opinions openly about the numerous literary topics which she dealt with in and outside the classroom. She was strict with her marking, yet very fair when one supported one's views with clear, literary evidence. The most lasting and memorable of my encounters with this earth's warmest soul can hardly be sorted out



of the many associations I had with her as my former teacher and later on colleague at the University of Dar es Salaam.

As a writer, May's works leave a very lasting effect both in content and in form. She was among the first to appraise the Arusha Declaration, Tanzania's blueprint which had spelled out the country's development strategy. This appraisal comes out clearly in her novel, Shida ("Hardships", 1975). Always an Advocate for equality among all people in society, she shows in Shida, the plight of the people of the lower classes in Tanzania where, she cautions, the economic rift between the leaders and those they lead is bigger and bigger, contrary to the Arusha spirit. Shida tells the story of the lives of a boy called Chonya and his childhood girlfriend, Matika who is rebaptized "Shida" by the city's man-eat-man culture. Balisidya's Bildungsroman shows the two characters undergoing a gradual re-education as they discover the realities around them. Out of the hardships, filth, deprivations and inequalities which they experience, Chonya is forced to turn into a "thief" while Matika becomes a prostitute. Chonya is caught and jailed, and in prison he re-examines his life as his elders visit him. Finally, he is convinced that the best solution for his predicament is to return, after his hard life in jail, to the rural areas and start a new, "freer" life. Meanwhile, Matika had already taken that step and had gone back to her village after spending many years in the city.

Such was Balisidya's first literary work. It followed that time's popular trend of back-to-the-countryside-approach, but in a much more analytical way which related the town-country conflict to the whole socio-politico-economic system pertaining in Tanzania, as evidenced in Chonya's re-examination and re-education which reveal the class nature of his problems:

In that spark of a moment...he decided that money was the source of his problems; but behind this money there were other factors too... He knew that he did not have the money to bribe the big shots in government offices and companies... "It is true," he thought, "However, even if I had a job I would not manage to live in comfort and luxury like the big people do so long as the



prices of essential goods and life in general is extremely expensive." Money, as he saw it now, was a secondary reason. The environment and the whole system was then the primary source of all unhappiness and poverty in peoples' lives. (pp. 53-54)

Such were Chonya's and thus, May's views on the class division of Tanzania. We see the author questioning this kind of life in the hilarious plays Harakati za Ukombozi ("The Liberation Struggles", co-authored with Penina Muhando and Amandina Lihamba, 1977) and Ayubu ("Job", co-authored with the Paukwa Theatre Association, 1984). These satirical works laugh at the social, political and economic situation in the country, showing how the very people who announced the Arusha Declaration on political platforms and rooftops are the same ones who have gone all the distance to trample on the very foundations of the pronouncements.

May did not end at just writing on the plight of the poor man and on the desired equality between men, but she actively showed this in her practical life. I remember way back in 1981 when she and myself were invited to Lund, Sweden to attend a meeting of the International Association for Applied Linguistics (ALLA). We had arrived rather late, one day only before the conference, and quite tired after a long trip from Dar es Salaam. I remember being given the conference's documents and may drew my attention to the fact that racist South Africa was being officially represented at the conference. That, she said, was contrary to OAU's and UNO's resolutions regarding boycotts (including cultural) against the inhuman system of apartheid. This sparked off a series of consultations which finally ended with us and many other delegates boycotting the conference and going back to our respective countries.

Such was May who, politics aside, showed also tireless efforts in securing the desired reputation and right for Kiswahili language to be used as the medium of instruction at all levels of our education system in Tanzania. Such was May who, being a loving mother of two, endeavored, with Penina Muhando, to write the much-needed books for pre-school children to alleviate the acute shortage of children's literature in Tanzania. Such was May, whose many scholarly articles in may literary periodicals show a deep-thinking scholar who, with a broad mind, tackled such issues like "the Woman Question", "Theory of Literature" and Gogo Oral literature.



May courageously wrote to me, "I want to get my Ph.D. while I live. It has been such a great investment to be given up." And so she battled with death and defended her Ph.D. dissertation in bed and celebrated her success in a wheelchair! Yes, such was the unique, irreplaceable person that May was. A strong-hearted soul, ready to declare in the same letter to me, "I still cherish the idea that I shall be back and happy once more with you, my colleagues in our department." And that was after doctors had told her that she had hardly three months to live. Indeed, such was May who leaves us a formidable example of courage in the face of death, summarized in her letter to the Head of Kiswahili Department at the University of Dar es Salaam:

"If death comes in a month or two or more, so what? I am not immortal and so is no one of this flesh... I shall not live in anticipation of death. That is a domain I have no power over. I shall live a life worth dying; and so here I am, carrying on as normal until such a time.

May Balisidya Matteru - a woman of compassion, ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of others. A beloved teacher whose being here mattered so much. A dedicated scholar and an advocate for equality and happiness for mankind. Above all, a friend, a cherished colleague. Goodbye May. We all loved you and feel a strong sense of loss and grief for your departure. Rest in peace, dear May.

### CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME: May Lenna Balisidya (Mrs. Matteru)

Birthdate: May 10, 1947

Birth Place: Dodoma, Tanzania

Marital Status: Married

Children: Two

#### EDUCATION:

1982 - 1987 Ph.D. Student in the African Languages and Literature Department, University of Wisconsin - Madison. Degree awarded in 1987.

1974 - 1977 University of Dar es Salaam, Master of Arts in Oral Literature. Degree granted in August 1978.



- 1967 - 1970 University of East Africa at Dar es Salaam, Bachelor of Arts (with Honours). Degree granted in August 1970.
- 1965 - 1966 "A" Level Secondary School, Jangwani Girls' School at Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Cambridge High School certificate granted, three principal passes with distinction, December 1966.
- 1961 - 1964 "O" Level Secondary School, Msalato Girls' School in Dodoma, Tanzania. Cambridge School Certificate granted, 2nd Class, December 1964.
- 1953 - 1960 Primary School, Mvumi Girls' School in Dodoma, Tanzania. Form One Entrance Certificate granted December 1960.

#### ACADEMIC AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- 1982 Fulbright Scholarship for graduate studies in the United States (Ph.D.)
- 1978 Ford Foundation Grant for the Summer Language Institute at the University of Illinois.
- 1974 DAAD (West German Government) Scholarship for graduate Studies (M.A.).

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 1984 January-June Teaching Assistant, African 277: African Survey, Department of History, University of Wisconsin Madison. Major Professor: Dr. Feierman.
- 1983 June-August Research Assistant for the Swahili Dual Tense Research, Department of African Languages and Literature, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Principal Researcher: Magdalena Hauner.
- 1980 - 1987 Senior Lecturer, Kiswahili Department, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.



- 1977 - 1980 Lecturer, Kiswahili Department, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- 1974 - 1977 Assistant Lecturer, Kiswahili Department, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- 1973 - 1974 Tutorial Assistant, Kiswahili Department, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- 1970 - April to 1973 May Secondary School teacher in "A" Level Schools for English, History and Kiswahili Language and Literature.

EXTRA CURRICULAR AND OTHER EXPERIENCES:

- 1981 - 1982 Chairperson for the Kiswahili Curriculum Development Panel, Institute of Education, Ministry of Education, Tanzania.
- 1971 - 1982 Member of the Kiswahili Curriculum Development Panel, Institute of Education, Ministry of Education, Tanzania.
- 1979 - 1982 Vice-Chairperson of the Kiswahili National Council of Tanzania.
- 1971 - 1982 Member of the Kiswahili National Council of Tanzania.
- 1980 - 1982 Chairperson of Panel for "A" Level High School Kiswahili Examinations, National Examination Council of Tanzania.
- 1971 - 1979 Grader and Setter, "A" Level Kiswahili Examinations for the National Examinations for the National Examination Council of Tanzania.
- 1971 - 1982 Tutor, Inservice training for Kiswahili Teachers in Colleges and Secondary Schools, Institute of Education, Ministry of Education, Tanzania.
- 1978 Member, Organizing Committee for Kiswahili Writers' International Seminar/Cum Workshop Institute of Kiswahili Research and UNESCO, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- 1977 - 1987 Member of Paukwa Theatre Group.



- 1976 - 1987 Member of Tanzania Writers' Association.
- 1973 - 1987 Member, Kiswahili Language Association, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- 1979 - 1987 Member of the African Literature Association, based in the United States.
- 1973 - 1987 Member of the UWT (Women Organization in Tanzania).

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES ATTENDED:

- April, 1986 African Literature Association Meeting, East Lansing, University of Michigan, U.S.A. Paper presented: "Swahili Literature and the Critics: The Debate is Indigeneyty -vs- Orientality".
- April, 1985 African Literature Association Meeting, Northwestern University, Illinois U.S.A. Paper presented: "Adopted or Adapted to? Neo Swahili Literature in Tanzania".
- April, 1985 Society for Ethnomusicology, Midwest Chapter Meeting, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, U.S.A. Paper presented: "Form, Content and Social Context of Cigogo Ikumbi Songs".
- October, 1985 Black women and the Diaspora Conference, University of Michigan, East Lansing, U.S.A. Paper presented: "The Construction of Sex and Gender Roles in Penina Muhando's Works".
- March, 1983 The 11th Annual Conference of the African Languages Association, University of Wisconsin, Madison, U.S.A. Paper presented: "Tanzanian Language Policy".
- May, 1982 EACROTANAL Experts' Meeting at the Eastern African Center for Oral Traditions and National Languages, Zanzibar, Tanzania.
- April, 1981 The Luther World Federation Conference on Women's Participation in Development, Arusha, Tanzania. Paper presented: "Education for Development".



April, 1980

Theatre Festival, Erlangen, West Germany

October, 1979

Women's Studies Seminar, BRALUP University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Paper presented: "Image of Women in Tanzanian Oral Literature".

December, 1978

UNESCO and Institute of Kiswahili Research Writers' Seminar/Workshop, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Paper presented: "Research in Oral Literature".

October, 1978

UNESCO Experts' Meeting, Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast. Paper presented: "The Specificity of Negro African Cultures".

June-Aug., 1978

Language Institute at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.

## RESEARCHES CONDUCTED:

1985-1986

The Impact of Language Planning on Oral Literary Creativity. (For Ph.D. Dissertation).

1981-1982

Mchango wa Wanawake katika Maendeleo ya Tanzania. (The Contribution of Women in the Development of Tanzania). Completed for UWT, Women's Organization in Tanzania.

1977-1978

Hali ya Kiswahili katika Elimu ya Juu Tanzania. (The State of Kiswahili in Higher Education in Tanzania). Completed for the Kiswahili National Council of Tanzania.

1973-1976

Change in Oral Literature among the Wagogo of Central Tanzania. Completed for M.A. Thesis.

## PUBLICATIONS

## Published Books:

(a) Shida. (A Novel), Foundation Books Ltd., Nairobi, 1976.

(b) Fasihi na Sanaa za Maonyesho. (Literature and Theatre) co-authored with P.O. Muhando, T.P.H. Dar es Salaam 1977.



- (c) Harakati za Ukombozi. (A Play)  
Co-authored with P.O. Muhando and  
A. Lihamba, T.P.H. Dar es Salaam,  
1981.
- (d) Tujifunze Kusoma. (Children's Book)  
et al., T.P.H., Dar es Salaam, 1982.
- (e) Tujifunze Kuhesabu. (Children's  
Book) et.al., T.P.H., Dar es Salaam,  
1982.
- (f) Ayubu. (A Play) with Paukwa Theatre  
Group, T.P.H. Dar es Salaam, 1982.

## ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION:

- (a) Fasihi Simulizi katika Jamii. (Oral  
Literature and Society) T.P.H.,  
Dar es Salaam.
- (b) Mabadiliko katika Fasihi Simulizi ya  
Wagogo. (Change in the Oral Literature  
of the Wagogo). Institute of Kiswahili  
Research. Dar es Salaam.
- (c) Mihati. (A Novel) Africana Publica-  
tions, Dar es Salaam.
- (d) Tujifunze Kusoma. (Children's Book)  
et al., T.P.H., Dar es Salaam, 1982.
- (e) Kitangulizi cha Fasihi Simulizi.  
(Introduction to Oral Literature)  
Dar es Salaam University Press,  
Dar es Salaam.

## PUBLISHED PAPERS:

- (a) "Wakati Ukuta" (Critique) Mulika,  
No. 2, 1972, Institute of Swahili  
Research, Dar es Salaam.
- (b) "Mtawa Mweusi" (Critique) Mulika, No.  
2, 1972, Institute of Swahili  
Research, Dar es Salaam.
- (c) "Nakupenda Lakini" (Critique) Mulika,  
No. 4, 1972, Institute of Swahili  
Research, Dar es Salaam.



- (d) "Hatia" (Critique) Mulika, No.7, 1976, Institute of Swahili Research, Dar es Salaam.
- (e) "Sauti ya Dhiki" (Critique) Mulika, No.7, 1976, Institute of Swahili Research, Dar es Salaam.
- (f) "Uhuru wa Mwandishi" (The Freedom of the Writer) Zinduko, No.2, 1976, Department of Kiswahili, University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam.
- (g) "Fani ya Hadithi: Riwaya" (The Novel) Kioo cha Lugha, No. 6, 1975, Department of Kiswahili, University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam.
- (h) "Hadithi na Kiswahili:" (The Story and Swahili Language) Semina ya Maofisa Lugha, 1977, BAKITA, Dar es Salaam.
- (i) "Utafiti, Mbinu za Ukusanyaji wa Fasihi Simulizi na Hatima Yake. (Research of Oral Literature) Lugha Yetu, No.34 June, 1979, No.35/36 Dec. 1979 - June 1986 BAKITA, Dar es Salaam.
- (j) "The Image of Women in Tanzanian Oral Literature: Survey", Kiswahili, Vol.50/2 50/2, 1980, Institute of Kiswahili Research, Dar es Salaam.
- (k) "Haja ya Kutumia Kiswahili katika kufundishia Elimu ya Juu" (Kiswahili in Higher Education) Lugha Yetu, No.35/36, 1981, BAKITA, Dar es Salaam.
- (l) "Education for Development" Luther World, June 1981, Lutheran World Federation, Geneva.

## ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION:

- (a) "The Impact of African Values on African Cultures" African Cultures, UNESCO, Forthcoming.
- (b) "The Specificity of Negro African Cultures" UNESCO Experts' Meeting Report, 1978, Forthcoming.



- (c) "Mchango wa Wanawake katika Sanaa na Elimu"  
(Women in Art and Education in Tanzania)  
The Women's National Organization (WWT)  
Manuscript on the Contribution of Women  
in Development in Tanzania.

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

"Hadithi na Utumizi wake katika Ukuzaji  
wa Lugha ya Kiswahili" Lugha Yetu  
No.38 1980/81 BAKITA Dar es Salaam.

"Fasihi Simulizi na Uandishi wa  
Kiswahili" in Fasihi Makala za Semina  
ya Kimataifa ya Waandishi wa Kiswahili  
III, TUKI, Dar es Salaam, 1983.

- (a) Adopted or Adapted to? Neo Swahili  
Literature in Tanzania in Kiswahili  
Vol.54.
- (b) The Construction of Sex and Gender  
Roles in Penina Muhando's Plays in  
Kiswahili Vol.54.
- (c) Swahili Literary Criticism: Orienta-  
lity vs Indigeneity in Ba Shiru,  
1987.