

THE THEME OF A NEW SOCIETY IN THE KISWAHILI PROSE TRADITION

From Oral to Written Literature

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The notion of 'utopianism' or utopian thought has fallen into disrepute, as much as we may think that utopian thinkers are only building vague and unrealistic castles in the air, perhaps utopian thought has a real contribution to make to socialist literature, and in particular, the emerging socialist literature in Kiswahili. In the European tradition, to envision a utopia is to leave the real world to look for a place which is, to translate 'utopia' from the Greek, 'nowhere.' 'Utopian' thinking was part of the European socialist heritage inherited by Lenin, and which traces its roots back as far as Plato's *Republic* through the works of More, Bacon and Swift. Lenin in his polemical writings objected to this utopianism, and indeed, in contrast to Lenin's scientific socialism based on objective socio-economic factors, the utopian thought of many previous thinkers and writers appears as mere wishful thinking and a form of escapism.

The urge to dream of a utopia is based on a desire for a better life. Whether it can be a useful tool in the nation-building process is a matter of its commitment to and understanding of the present historical realities. At its best, utopianism can combine a realistic sense of society as it is with a desire to transform it as it ought to be. At its worst, it is a form of wishful thinking - one has only to look at the history of 'New Harmonies' in the United States and the present flight of its youth into a pre-industrial age of crafts to affirm this escapist tendency.

Nevertheless, the dream of a better society has been incorporated into the Russian socialist tradition as the urge to build a better society based on better principles and total well-being. Lenin emphasized, for instance, the fact that we need to dream more often, provided our dreams maintain a foothold in reality. In the following speech he quotes Pisarev to make his point:

If man were completely deprived of the ability to dream in this way, if he could not from time to time run ahead and mentally conceive, in an entire and complete picture, the product to which his hands are only just beginning to lend shape, then I cannot imagine what stimulus there would be to induce man to undertake and complete extensive and strenuous work in the sphere of art, science and practical endeavour.

Socialist realism as well accepts as part of its heritage the 'revolutionary romanticism' of the Russian writers of the late 19th century, who articulated the desire for new society. The following quote from a summary based on the as yet untranslated *Bases of Marxist Leninist Aesthetics*, underlines this 'utopian' heritage:

Socialist Realism embodies the 'pathos' of the creation of a new society and of the vision which urges people on. This is not idle dreaming but a vision of the future based on an understanding of reality and the process of development.²

Tanzania is at present engaged in the process of building a new society based on the concept of 'Ujamaa', African Socialism. Implicit in the decision to assume this task are a number of assumptions which are basic to the utopian and the socialist scheme of thought: a belief in man's basic goodness, that is, that man desires good

as opposed to evil and that with proper guidance he can if not eradicate at least contain evil or transform it. Second, it posits a belief in man's ability to control and manipulate his own environment and history. In short, it posits a belief in progress towards a better society through man's own endeavours and dedication.

Such assumptions are part of a utopian as well as a socialist point of view. The main difference between the two trains of thought lies not in their optimism as to what man can achieve, but their understanding of the forces which underly history and therefore their conception of evil and the nature of the ideal form of government. For a utopian, for instance, it may be enough to define evil as greed, eradicate greed and then set up an ideal government based on the concept of an ideal king, i.e., a form of monarchy. Or it may define evil as the product of the machine age and commercial economy and advocate an escape or return to primitive communalism as a form of escape from the pollution of a commercialized and decadent society. Socialist Realism, on the other hand, reflects a socialist understanding of evil and projects a socialist form of government as the best means of combating this evil.

The Kiswahili prose tradition reflects a growing understanding of this socialist sense of history and its concepts of evil and ideal government. It shows evidence of a steady trend of utopian thought in the sense that it portrays the birth of a new society through the confrontation with evil. Beginning with oral literature, this trend continues through such works as Shaaban Robert's *Kufikirika*, *Kusadikika* and *Siku ya Watenzi Wote*. After Independence, later the Arusha Declaration, Kiswahili prose shows a deeper socialist understanding of the process of development of a new society in such works as *Mtu ni Utu* and *Shida*.

In this paper I will examine the growth of this theme of a new society, focusing on the following elements: the birth of a new society through the confrontation with evil and the nature of evil; the nature of the ideal government or society; the nature of the historical process. Through an examination of these features we can see not only that the utopian tradition has a strong base in the Kiswahili prose tradition, but that this tradition has nourished the birth of a socialist literature which, although it has altered in its understanding of evil and the historical process and the ideal form of government, nevertheless retains its fundamentally optimistic view of man and his capabilities and the utopian dream of a new society.

The Oral Tradition

Our information regarding oral Kiswahili literature is, relatively speaking, fairly extensive, but has by no means even begun to tap this rich source. There are collections made by early missionaries and linguists such as Steere,³ Velten, and Büttner, and less valuable and suspect in terms of their authenticity are the numerous stories published by the colonial government for educational purposes. As sources for this paper I have relied mainly on my own research in Tanga and the collections of Steere, Velten, and Büttner.

The theme of a new society in oral literature is most often marked by the instalment of a new ruler or the reform of the old government. In the first case, the story follows the pattern of a younger son who proves himself superior to his elder brothers. In the latter case, either the ruler or one of his ministers has proven evil

and/or unjust and is stripped of dictatorial powers.

The "Mziwanda" or last-born group of stories are like the story of Joseph and his brothers. The key to the youth's superiority lies in his moral superiority, his perseverance, magnanimity and ability. The brothers, on the other hand, are lazy and evil, dominated by jealousy and greed.

From the material available there are four versions of this story. In each case the younger brother passes a test which his brothers fail, undergoes a series of adventures and is proclaimed ruler when he returns home, while his brothers are punished.

In "Hadithi ya Mtoto wa Sultani na Ndugu zake" (The story of the King's Son and his Brothers), recorded by Velten, the last-born, a mother's boy, succeeds in guarding the rice harvest from birds. His six brothers are thrown out as ne'er-do-wells, but the younger follows them in order to help and save them. The brothers kill him, but he is brought back to life by a supernatural bird whom he had befriended earlier. Once again he sets out after his brothers, who are now held captive by a sultan's daughter. He wins the girl and his brothers are executed.

A second story, "Sultan Majnun" (Steere), follows a similar pattern. The seven sons are in turn sent out to guard the date harvest. The elder sons are easily distracted by various pastimes, "ngoma" or dancing, reading, playing cards and hunting, while one falls asleep in a storm. The last-born mother's boy saves the harvest and re-instates his banished brothers. Later he pursues and kills the monster which ate three of his brothers, and as a reward is given the country and all its wealth, which he then shares with his remaining brothers.

In two other stories of the last-born the sons are sent by their father to procure a treasure. In "Mfalme Tajiri na Mfalme Maskini" (Velten) (The Rich King and the Poor King), they have to bring home a drum of seven voices to honour a bargain their father had made. The elder brothers are lazy and prefer to remain idle while their younger brother undergoes various hardships and returns with the drum. The brothers try to kill him. They return home without the drum and, according to the original bargain, they are sentenced to death. But the last-born arrives, the brothers are saved from execution but are banished.

According to the another version, "Msiwanda" (Velten) (Last-Born) the sons are sent to procure a marvelous bird if they want their father's blessing. The elder sons are lazy but the last born ventures out to bring home not only the bird, but a series of other treasures and a wife. On his way home he meets his brothers who try to kill him by throwing him into a well. But as they arrive home, the youngest appears to claim his treasures, his bride and his father's blessing. The elder brothers are tossed into the sea.

These "Mziwanda" stories can be viewed as generally based on the struggle of good (the last-born) against evil (the brothers). In each case 'good' is defined by general moral goodness, magnanimity, respect to elders, as well as tenacity and perseverance under hardship. Evil, in the guise of the elder brothers, is characterized by laziness coupled with greed and selfishness and disrespect for human life.

In this confrontation of good and evil it is, of course, always the good which wins, and the more episodes which are added to increase the hardships and victories of the younger son, the harder this lesson is driven home. His defeat of his brothers and his assumption of leadership, therefore, is a statement of belief in the ultimate

victory of good, rather than a statement regarding historical progress or an individual's ability to make history. Similarly, the stories are not concerned with a change in the form of government or the concept of progress, but with a change of leadership; rather than passing the rulership on to the elder brother, it is passed on to the morally superior younger one.

A second group of stories focuses on the principle of reform rather than change of leadership. In such stories the ruler has most often passed an unjust law or made an unjust judgement. Events educate him, the law is rescinded, and the order and well-being of the society is restored.

For instance the story "Sultani Mjinga" (Mbughuni) (The Stupid King) tells of a sultan who threw his wife into a pit up to her neck and left her there for general abuse because she reportedly gave birth to a broom, a bottle, and a gourd instead of the four children she had mentioned before her marriage. Her real children, who had been left for dead by envious relatives, were brought up by an old peasant couple. They eventually return home to restore their mother to her proper place and the sultan is rebuked by a magic tree for his stupidity and gullibility.

A second story from the same source, "Dunia Haina Siri" (The World keeps no Secrets), tells of a sultan who declared that all female children should be left to die, exposed to the elements. The sultan's son decides to follow his sister whom the sultan has hidden into the wilds. He escapes from death at the hand of his sister's ogre-lover by being warned by his genie-nephew. He returns home and the law is rescinded and all people are allowed to keep their female children.

Other stories of a ruler's injustice are the second half of "Sultan Majnun" (Steere), in which the king allows his cat to devour people, "Uza Ghali, Si Uza Rahisi" (Steere) (Sell Dear not Cheap), in which a treacherous minister threatens the society, and "Kisa cha Hassani na Pete Yake ya Ajabu" (Baker) (The Story of Hassan and his Marvelous Ring), in which the sultan has all boys killed for fear they will take over from him, but the one who escapes slaughter eventually returns to save the sultan and his kingdom.

These stories of the unjust ruler define evil as injustice. The 'good' in this battle is not so much represented by the victim of oppression, as by the status quo. The ruler has disrupted society by his arbitrary and dictatorial behaviour. The stories are therefore stories of restoration as well as reform. And even then, restoration takes place as events themselves serve to educate the ruler about his injustice: the missing children turn up or the lone boy returns to save the kingdom. We are once again dealing not with a revolutionary consciousness, but one which believes that truth and justice, order and good will eventually prevail over any evil forces in the course of successive generations.

In summary one might point out that the historical process as envisioned by the oral tradition is one in which the balance of power is accorded to vague or supernatural forces. Although the 'hero' is marked by moral goodness and perseverance, it is in the scheme of things that he will conquer evil, often with the aid of miracles or supernatural beings. It is the course of events, rather than individual or communal efforts, which eventually brings goodness and justice to the fore. Similarly, the new society is not one based on revolution or radical reform; it is a better monarchy because a new leader has taken over or because the leader has been educated. It is difficult, therefore, to speak of a vision of history which is linear and progressive. It

seems rather to be dedicated to maintaining a status quo or an accepted level of well-being, rather than radical alteration which would lead to a restructuring and a totally new society.

Nevertheless, one can call these stories 'utopian' for several reasons. First of all, they envision the ideal leader as a just and moral man, rather than a rabbit-like ruler. Second, they reflect an optimistic sense of life in that the forces of good will eventually conquer the forces of evil; the better society is a realizable goal, not to be defeated by man's own inclination to evil nor by malevolent historical or supernatural forces. Finally, although it seems to be written in the scheme of things that the best will prevail, man remains a responsible animal who must strive for the good of society; he cannot sit back and just let events take their course; he must show his own ability and efforts to confront evil and uproot it. In other words, man does have some say over his own fate; he can opt for the good or for evil, for injustice or for justice, and in so doing he has a share in the making of history.

Shaaban Robert

The theme of a new society received extensive treatment and elaboration under the hands of the classic Kiswahili writer, Shaaban Robert. Obvious examples of 'utopian' elements are in works such as *Kufikirika* and *Kusadikika*, which depict society in the process of change for the better. *Siku ya Watenzi Wote* has the establishment of a utopia as its main theme, while in *Utubora Mkulima* Shaaban portrays the city clerk's search for a better life on the land.

For purposes of this paper I will examine only two of his works: *Adili na Nduguze* (Adili and his Brothers) because it lies close to the oral tradition from which it springs, and *Kufikirika* because it illustrates a growing concern with progressive reform. Both works bear the stamp of the colonial times in which they were written and provide a broader understanding of the meaning of the theme of a new society and historical forces in action as well as an understanding of the ideals and traditions which were to feed later Kiswahili prose.

Adili na Nduguze

Adili na Nduguze is Shaaban's interpretation of the oral tradition of the younger son and his evil brothers. His interpretation is coloured by his religious temperament and his concern for the human predicament of man faced with the forces of evil in his own nature. Man for Shaaban is capable of great evil as well as great good, but with proper guidance and the example of the good before him, man's good nature will eventually triumph over evil.

The story of Adili opens with a description of the paradisaical kingdom of Mfalme Rai, a 'land of milk and honey' and peopled by an industrious and harmonious society. In one of its subject kingdoms, however, the king's emissary finds the ruler Adili beating two apes. Adili is brought before Mfalme Rai to explain his misconduct and his story follows.

Adili has two brothers. On the death of his father, the inheritance was divided. The two brothers went off and squandered their shares, while Adili prospered by careful husbanding of his resources. The brothers return penniless and Adili helps

them by dividing up his wealth.

The brothers then persuade Adili to make a voyage with them. On embarking, Adili saves a centipede from a snake. Later in the voyage the ship is in need of fresh water, but only Adili volunteers to hazard the trip ashore. He discovers a city and its people all turned to stone. The only living creature is Princess Mwelekevu who explains that the city is being punished for worshipping trees. For although warned by the prophetic figure Mrefu, the ruler obstinately clung to his blasphemy. Adili takes the girl to be his wife and returns to the ship with her and countless treasures from the city. The brothers are not satisfied with a third of the treasure each; they want the girl. They toss Adili overboard and Mwelekevu jumps in after him.

Adili is saved by the Princess Huria of the world of genies — it was she whom he saved in the form of a centipede. Huria punishes the brothers by turning them into apes and tells Adili he must thrash them soundly every day. When he refuses, she threatens to beat him even worse.

On hearing this story, Mfalme Rai reaches an agreement with Huria — the brothers are restored to human form, repent and are married to Mwelekevu's relatives, while Mwelekevu herself turns up, saved by Mrefu, and she is married in great ceremony to Adili.

From this short outline one can see that Shaaban has provided us with an elaboration of the theme of evil as greed, of good as good morality and perseverance as well as other fundamentals from the oral tradition such as the ultimate victory of the good. In order to do justice to Shaaban's careful construction of these themes, they will be treated separately and at some length.

Shaaban's conception of evil is based on his characterization of the two brothers. As he first introduces them, he says they are 'heartless;' they have no inkling of the good:

Walilelewa mpaka wakawa watu wazima wenye vichwa vilivyofunzwa lakini moyo iliyosahuliwa. Busara kubwa kichwani haina faida kama moyoni hauna chembe cha wema. (p. 14)

Evil, then, begins with the absence of good, of education in the good. Soon, however, it takes firm root in such fertile soil — the brothers become progressively worse. From being merely careless with their property, they become liars and deceivers. They manipulate the unsuspecting Adili. They become lazy and greedy, reaching their nadir in their greed for his treasure and lust for his bride. Evil is furthermore capable of controlling good as the brothers manipulate Adili, and the age old question — why do evil ways prosper — is raised.

The brother's evil is, to Shaaban, a denial of their humanity. Humanity is distinguished by the fact that it recognizes moral laws which differentiate man from beast. The brothers are therefore sub-human, and their transformation into apes is a metaphorical expression of their denial of humanity. In the following passage, for instance, Shaaban stresses human subjugation to law as the distinguishing characteristic of human as opposed to animal nature:

Adili alibishana kwamba kulikuwa na mambo *yaliyofaa* na yaliyokuwa *haifai* kushiriki. Ndoa ilikuwa jambo moja katika yale *yaliyokataa* ushirika. Ushirika katika ndoa *ulipasa* wanyama na ndege. Mtu *alitukuzwa* mno kuliko mnyama. *Huchukizwa* akiishi katika *maisha bora ya utu*, na kufanya dunia mahali pa *kiasi*, siyo *ulafi* na *uchafu*.

Mwanamume *hakukusudiwa* kuwa fahali wa kila mtamba, wala mwanamke kuwa tembe wa kila jogoo. (p.40) (Italics mine)

Evil for Shaaban, therefore, begins with the absence of good and an education in the good, and soon finds its expression in laziness, avarice and greed which so dominates man that he is unable to distinguish basic moral principles of right and wrong. Such a lack of conscience ends only in the denial of humanity which is murder.

As the two brothers represent evil, Adili represents human good, and it is characteristic of Shaaban that above all he stresses Adili's heart ('moyo') as the seat of human goodness. This human goodness finds its expression in love, sympathy and perseverance in the face of hardship. When, for instance, the brothers return penniless from their travels, Adili responds with empathy and sympathy from his heart:

Alipotambua kuwa walikuwa ndugu zake, *moyo* wake uliwaka kwa huzuni... Hakuweza kujizuia kulia kwa sababu ya mapenzi makubwa. (p. 17) (italics mine)

Similarly, it is Adili's heart which gives in to the persuasion of his brothers to go on a sea voyage:

Moyo hauhimili mshawasha wa mfulizo... *Moyo* wa Adili ulikuwa na mapenzi makubwa juu ya ndugu zake. (p. 21) (italics mine)

On embarkation, when Adili sees the centipede pursued by a snake, it is once again his heart which responds with sympathy:

Mara mlio ule Adili alijua kuwa tandu lilikuwa hatarini. Mara *ule moyo* wake uliingiwa na huruma. Hakuweza kuvumilia. (p. 22) (italics mine)

When he discovered the great treasure of the city, Adili's first thoughts are of his brothers, wishing they were there to share it with him. Even after they had tried to kill him, he pleads for mercy for them and is unable to punish them. When asked whether he can forgive his brothers, he does not hesitate; his 'heart' is full of goodness, perseverance, patience, sympathy and magnanimity:

Adili alikuwa si mtu ovyo. *Moyo* wake ulihitilafiana sana na mioyo ya watu wengine. Alikuwa na *moyo* mwema usiokata tamaa, mvumilivu, wenye huruma, na ulio tayari kusamehe. (p. 56) (italics mine)

This 'heart' then, is the source of great patience and fortitude. This ability to endure adversity is emphasized as a crucial element in Adili's eventual success. It is his courage and fortitude, for instance, which bring him great treasure and a bride:

Moyo wake ulikuwa imara sana. Alitaka kujaribu kujiokoa kwanza kabla ya kujitolea kushindwa. (p. 24) (italics mine)

When he is thrown overboard, it is these same characteristics which save him:

Adili alikuwa si mkata tamaa, na kabla pumzi yake hajakwisha, alikusudia kuebuka. Jaribu lake lilikutana na fanaka, maana kabla *moyo* wake haujakoma alijiona anaelea juu ya bahari. (p. 43) (italics mine)

Furthermore, it is patience and fortitude which keep Adili from surrendering to despair over his brothers:

Alikaribia kukata tamaa, lakini alitahayari mwenyewe alipojiona kwamba alikuwa maskini wa saburi... Alitingisha kichwa chake kama aliyekuwa akikataa wazo la kukata tamaa. (p. 58)

Thus the conflict of good and evil is seen in moral terms as the struggle of virtue

and vice, in particular, the virtues of love, generosity, sympathy, fortitude and patience against the vices of greed, selfishness, laziness and lust. It is also, as outlined earlier, the struggle of humanity against bestiality. For if the brothers renounce their own humanity and become beasts by refusing to follow moral laws, Adili is an example of extreme sensitivity to right and wrong. His sensitive 'heart' is the seat of his conscience and his conscientiousness. Our first impression of him, as he beats his ape-brothers, is of a man tortured by the shame of the 'evil' which he is committing:

Adili alikuwa mtu wa maana. Hakutazamia kufanya ukatili kwa wanyama. (p. 9)

Or, succinctly expressed, he was given the ability to know evil:

Adili alikuwa mwema na msamehevu... Alipewa kipawa cha ujuzi wa maovu. (p. 11)

If society is confronted with the struggle between conscience and amorality as represented in the conflict of Adili and his brothers, this raises the question of the society's method of dealing with evil. For Shaaban, this is the question of justice; what sort of justice should be dealt out?

Shaaban provides us with three pictures of the relationship of society to evil and the method used to deal with evil. On the one hand, we have Adili's experience as a guide to human response to evil: he is unable to punish his brothers, but continues to act with perseverance and patience and sympathy. On the other hand, Shaaban draws us a picture of a world governed by justice without mercy in the world of the genie Huria. In her father's kingdom, the laws are harsh and immutable:

Jaribu la jinai lilitosha kuhalalisha adhabu ya kifo ujijini. Adili alitaradhia kuwa jaribu la jinai halikutosha kuhalalisha kifo duniani. (p. 50)

This harshness is further emphasized in Huria's punishment of Adili's brothers, her threats to Adili and the condemnation of Mwelekevu's father's kingdom.

In contrast to Huria's response to evil is the paradisaical kingdom of Mfalme Rai. Here evil and its companion vices have been abolished, not by harsh punishment or by mercy, but because of the good example of the ruler who is able to speak to the hearts of his subjects through his own good example:

Hakulazimisha mtu ye yote kutenda tendo fulani, lakini alishawishi kila moyo wa mtu kuiga alivyotenda kwa hiari yake mwenyewe. Alikuwa na mvuto mkubwa juu ya watu mpaka nchi yake ilikuwa haina mvivu, goigoi wala mwoga. (p. 2)

Mfalme Rai's country thus bespeaks an optimistic picture of man; man is intrinsically attracted to the good and thus society, rather than becoming an oppressive instrument of punishment for the wandering individual, becomes an expression of harmony and well-being. Ideally, the government of society would be based on an ideal ruler. The prophetic figure Mrefu explains further that the ruler is God's deputy on earth:

Mrefu alimwambia Tukufu kuwa mfalme ni naibu wa Mungu duniani.

Kwa hiyo, ufalme ni amana kubwa. Amana hiyo ilitaka uangalifu mkubwa kwa sababu ni dhima bora iliyowekwa mikononi mwa mwanadamu. Wajibu wa kwanza wa mfalme ni kuwa mwadilifu katika matendo yake. Kila tendo, jema au baya, ni mfano kwa raia wake. (pp. 36—37).

Therefore we have, on the one hand, the repressive government of Huria and

on the other the ideal and exemplary government of Mfalme Rai. Huria's government reflects the Freudian vision of society and the individual, Mfalme Rai's the utopian vision. For Freud, civilization and its rules, laws, customs and morality was a repressive instrument of the super-ego seeking to restrain and curb the chaotic lawlessness of the individual and his 'id.' Such an image is basically pessimistic as it posits man's potential for evil as greater than his potential for good. In the utopian vision of Mfalme Rai's country, however, man's potential for good, his instinct for good overrides his potential for evil. Thus society is not repressive but an expression of the harmony of the individual's goals and desires and those of the community.

Adili's experience and the work itself supports the optimistic picture of man painted in the kingdom of Mfalme Rai. In Adili's experience with evil, although it may 'flourish' and prosper, it is eventually called to task. For although the brother's potential for evil is great, they eventually undergo a change of heart, a conversion, in which their instinct for the good wins.

In summary, one can point out that although *Adili na Nduguze* provides a picture of the potential utopian society and reaffirms his faith in man's basic morality, it is utopian rather than socialist. The most obvious case in point is his conception of government as an ideal monarchy; kingship is not questioned as an ideal form. Secondly his concept of evil is basically religious rather than sociological or historical. He does not define the causes of evil.

Finally, one must point out that Adili is too passive a hero for modern taste; his relationship to the historical process is too passive and resigned. He reflects an ethic of patience and forbearance in the face of evil and suffering which are no longer feasible. It is the 'powers that be' here represented by the presence of supernatural beings such as Mrefu and Huria, that determine the shape of history, rather than man himself. Such pacificism and metaphysical intervention in the world of history rings anachronistic in the present situation.

Kufikirika

As *Adili na Nduguze* explores the human situation in the conflict of good and evil, *Kufikirika* explores the question of responsible government, depicting the struggle of progressive forces in society against the reactionary forces. At the same time, it draws a picture of a society progressing towards greater well-being and implicitly suggests a more democratic form of government.

The story tells of a ruler who is seeking an heir, as he and his wife are barren. His kingdom, with the one exception of his lack of an heir, is flourishing, overflowing with wealth and productivity. In order to get himself an heir, the ruler calls all the traditional doctors, herbalists, fortune tellers, etc. to provide treatment. After six years of treatment, the various groups of doctors have laid waste the natural resources and prosperity of the land - crops, forests, wildlife, stock, etc. Finally one fortune teller called Utubusara ('wise humanity') predicts that the queen will bear an heir, but that after the child has been born, they must sacrifice a stupid and a clever man. The queen duly bears an heir and Utubusara becomes his teacher. Utubusara's education reforms irritate the ruler and he throws him out. The child becomes ill from too much study, and it is decided that the time has come for the human sacrifices. But the clever man, a shopkeeper, actually turns out to be stupid, while the stupid man, a farmer (Utubusara in disguise) turns out to be clever. The

government then argues over the justification of human sacrifice. Finally the two are released, the boy recovers, and Utubusara and his progressive measures are reinstated.

The ruler of *Kufikirika*, like the ruler of the oral tradition who unjustly punishes his wife, is an example of a ruler whose laws or judgements are unjust. The oppressed in this story are not simply wife and family, but the entire country which has been laid waste. Utubusara, on the other hand, stands in opposition to the ruler, and through his efforts coupled with the course of events, the ruler is eventually educated in his injustice.

The first conflict between the ruler and Utubusara occurs in the case of the traditional doctors. He suggests, when he makes his prophesy as to the birth of an heir, that the vast rape of the land was unnecessary. He prophesies that the ruler and his wife will bear an heir because they have not yet passed the age of childbearing. In other words, according to nature, they will bear an heir if nature is allowed to take its course. He implicitly criticizes the decision of the ruler to lay waste to the land and the form of government which would allow the use of such dictatorial powers.

The second conflict between Utubusara and the ruler favours education both day and night with no time for recreation. He will not tolerate any 'foreign' elements or new sciences to be taught. Utubusara, on the other hand, wishes to encourage new types of knowledge and a plan of study mixed with recreation. As a result of this conflict, Utubusara is fired and the boy soon becomes ill with overwork.

A third conflict is over the question of human sacrifices. According to the country's laws, human sacrifice is forbidden. This law applies to the ruler as well as his subjects. In order to push through the sacrifices, the ruler calls his council. This council is made up of two houses, one representing the government and headed by a badnatured chairman, one representing the citizens. The latter, as they are outnumbered, rarely win a vote, but act in an advisory capacity. In this case, the citizens object strongly to illegal murder, while the government representatives, using sophistic rhetoric, agree with their leader. The ruler would appear to have won, until Utubusara, by proving the stupid man clever and the clever man stupid, dramatically wins a reversal of the decision. The sacrifices are released and the boy, under the direction of Utubusara, is sent to a hospital where he is soon cured.

The ruler himself, reflecting on the events of the last 16 years of his reign, points out that Utubusara has taught himself and his country a great deal:

Mimi mwenyewe naona fahari kubwa sana kuona mtu ambaye amefadhili sana nyumba yangu na nchi ya Kufikirika mara nne katika muda mchache wa miaka kumi na sita tu. Ni dhahiri kuwa katika kila miaka minne ya muda huu, wewe ulitenda jambo moja kubwa ililofanya alama katika historia. Matendo manne haya kwanza ni utabiri uliotoa jina lako katika makumbusho ya Kufikirika; pili ni ualimu wako mwema; tatu ni ushindi wako katika kuchinjwa kwa kafara; na nne ni njia bora uliyotoa ya kutibiwa mwanangu ambaye sasa amepona. (pp. 47—48)

In summary one may say that in this work Shaaban has pitted the reactionary forces, represented by the stupidity of the ruler, against the progressive forces, represented by the wisdom of Utubusara. The ruler's injustness is a sign of his stupidity, and Shaaban implicitly criticizes the top heavy government which is low on democratic forces which may bring such injustice and stupidity to a halt.

Considering that this book was written during the colonial period, particularly

if one remembers the conscription of African troops in World War II and the exploitation of African resources, Shaaban's work appears even more critical of a colonial and monarchical government.

The book shows development as well in the treatment of its main hero and the vision of history; Utubusara is a far more active reformer than Adili. Man does not just suffer and persevere, he takes an active stance towards the formation of society and government. Finally, the vision of history provided by the book is definitely a progressive and reformist one. As a result of Utubusara's efforts, superstition gives way to hospitals, the drudgery of the colonial schoolroom gives way to an education of the whole man, and one suspects that a more democratic form of government than monarchy in which the ruler holds dictatorial powers will soon be introduced to Kufikirika.

Lila na Fila

Lila na Fila, like Shaaban's works, uses elements of the oral tradition. The story itself, which tells of the downfall of an evil and greedy king is itself a variation of the greedy elder brothers. Its characters, including the greedy king, the adventuresome youth hero and miraculous characters such as a beautiful genie - girl, ogres and giants, are part of the oral tradition. We are already familiar with the motifs of the youth who ventures out to bring back a treasure and the genie who assumes another form to appear in the human world.

Although such elements have their roots in the oral tradition, the treatment of such themes and motifs is quite different from that of the oral tradition or Shaaban Robert. Whereas these focus on the moral concept of evil and the moral consequences of misconduct, *Lila na Fila* stresses the political consequences of evil in its guise as greed. While in the oral tradition and Shaaban's work, history and change were to a certain extent outside man's sphere of influence, they were rather an expression of the benevolent powers that be, *Lila na Fila* lays greater emphasis on man's ability and his responsibility to make his own history — to change, reform and even overthrow by force an unjust and imperialistic government.

Lila na Fila is the story of Mfalme Binta who, once his land becomes prosperous, falls prey to insatiable greed. He sends a youth to retrieve the tail of an ogre, as he has heard that this tail brings great wealth. After a series of adventures in the land of the ogres, the youth brings back the tail. The ruler uses it to frighten his subjects and coerce them to pay higher taxes; they become hostile. Strangers bring a new 'medicine', liquor, to the country, spreading disruption and discontent. The ruler then under the influence of liquor marries the girl brought by the family of strangers. This girl turns out to be a genie, the spirit of the people's ancestors, and she brings a new government to the land, one based on the principles of equality, democracy and socialism.

The concept of evil in this story is based on greed, a greed which leads the ruler to act more and more detrimentally to his people as he becomes more and more obsessed with wealth. It is, in a sense, the story of imperialism. First he sends the youth into the land of giants and ogres, then he oppresses his people with greater and greater taxes. With the introduction of liquor, bloodshed begins and, under the influence of his genie-wife, he has the 'waganga' put to death. In the final grisly scenes he has people boiled alive and eaten. This last act, like the transformation of

Adili's brothers into apes, is a metaphorical expression of the consequences of greed — in this case imperialism. Imperialism has established an equally ruthless reputation of brutality and disrespect for human life in its efforts to amass wealth. It robs and kills the exploited in order to feed its own hunger — just as the ruler cooks and eats people.

At the same time that the notion of evil as imperialistic greed is being developed in the image of the ruler, hints of inevitable justice and retribution are foreshadowed with each misdeed. When the ruler first becomes caught up in the dream of wealth, for instance, his health begins to deteriorate. When the youth returns with the ogre's tail, he also returns with the ogre's warning that greed will only lead to death ('tamaa mbele, mauti nyuma'), and that the ogre has sworn to come in some other form in order to revenge himself. When the ruler decides to marry the stranger, he is again warned of this prophesy, but he is too enamoured with the beautiful appearance of the girl. When he executes the 'waganga' for objecting to his marriage, their leader warns him that he must remember his injustices, for truth and justice will prevail and in the final analysis he will pay for his sins.

Coupled with those foreshadowings of imminent retribution is the growing resistance of the ruler's subjects to his increasing imperialistic oppression. Resistance first develops as the ruler imposes taxes. They begin complaining until it is clear that open resistance will soon break forth, but the ruler is bent only on his own greed. The 'waganga' who are executed also act in the capacity of spokesman for the people and warn him of imminent disaster. Likewise, when the ruler runs into troubles with his wife the elders rebuke him and say he deserves all the trouble he is getting. When the people learn that the ruler's wife has turned herself into a genie, they plead lack of freedom and oppression. The genie says she is actually the spirit of their ancestors who has come in answer to their prayers for deliverance. She predicts that the ruler will die at the hands of his own people, and indeed, in the end he is killed by the people's representative in a battle of single combat.

Within the framework of the story, therefore, the girl-genie can be seen as an allegorical expression of the people's will. She and the other 'ogres' are not ogres at all, but the people's ancestors who ran away from the ruler's family long ago when they began their oppressive rule. They had tried to wipe out the entire family, but Binta had escaped to wreak havoc on the country. Furthermore, as the image of the girl-genie is developed as a figure of retribution and justice, so the people's consciousness of oppression is raised to the point where they are ready to overthrow the ruler. The people and their ancestors are thus linked in the revolutionary spirit and the will for a better society.

The revolutionary sense of the story is also underlined by the specificity of the ruler's crimes and the image of the new society. The list of grievances against the ruler, which was drawn up by the people, is as follows: he is ungrateful to his people; he is a thief who kills for wealth; he withheld freedom from the people; he killed; he was proud and wouldn't listen to others; he refused to repent his evil deeds. This list of grievances indicates political as well as moral crimes, i.e., he withheld freedom from the people; he refused to listen to the people in an interchange of ideas between government and people. Furthermore, all these grievances may be summed up as the consequences of the king's imperialistic greed; it is for this crime that he is finally killed and his government overthrown. A second point of greater revolutionary

consciousness is the image of the new society which is drawn. We are not merely told that a new society began which lived happily ever after. The form of government is changed, and the principles upon which the new society are to be based are specifically given as justice, equality and the division of wealth.

Therefore we may say that *Lila na Fila* represents another step in the development of the theme of a new society. It has moved away from the almost exclusively moral concerns of Shaaban Robert and the oral tradition to an interpretation which stresses the political consequences of evil in the guise of greed. Furthermore, one can say that the image of the people as a revolutionary force is emerging. It is the people and their metaphorical expression, the genie, who combine as the moving forces of history, a history which is progressively moving towards a better society. For although it is true that the 'events' educate the ruler in his injustice, as in the oral tradition and, to a lesser extent in Shaaban Robert, the people are given a higher degree of influence over the making of their own history. It is in the 'scheme of things' that justice will prevail and retribution will be given, but the people are envisioned as a force acting with increasing consciousness of their political and human rights.

Mtu Ni Utu

Mtu ni Utu has a very different relationship to the oral tradition than the works previously discussed. It illustrates the development of a more realistic literature dedicated to exploring and elucidating the birth-pangs of a socialist society. The characters in the novel, although they remain 'stock' characters in the sense that they are painted in black and white, are no longer the miraculous creatures of another world. Similarly, societal change and revolution is seen as emerging completely from the people rather than being instigated from above by supernatural powers. Finally, all elements in the work are drawn in greater detail to approximate the picture of the daily round of life.

The story of *Mtu ni Utu* tells of the youth Sozi's rise from being an outcast to being the leader of a new society. On the death of his father, he is adopted by relatives. His stepfather is a drunkard and his stepmother hates him. He is beaten and starved. His mother tries to remove him, but is deceived by the foster parents into believing that Sozi is well taken care of. Sozi runs away to another village and is picked up by a surrogate father. When his story is heard, the elders are ashamed of their silence before injustice. They decide that from now on their community must be based on and pay higher regard to the principles of equality and justice. The foster parents are then banished, and Sozi is adopted by an old woman who leaves him great wealth on her death. This wealth is then entrusted to the foster parents, who have been thrown out of another village for stealing and have come in disguise to Sozi's area. They disrupt village life and breed discontent with their liquor and their laziness. They are warned by the community to reform their ways, but when their real identity is discovered, they flee to another village. Sozi's wealth, the community decides, should be divided among the people. When Sozi returns from his studies, he is chosen as 'Bwana Maendeleo.' He encourages the people to work hard and not be greedy and individualistic but to work together in cooperative

labour schemes. He has new houses, schools, hospitals and roads built by co-operative labour of three villages. The story ends as he is married to the most beautiful girl in the three villages.

In its outlines, this story bears similarity with stories of the oral tradition in which a youth, usually an outcast or a marginal figure such as the last born, proves himself through a series of hardships and eventually brings a new society to birth. The notion of greed as the root of evil and the main obstacle facing the birth of a new society is also a familiar one from previous discussions. However, the emphasis on socialism, the securing of the story in an historical rather than an allegorical or imaginary setting, the full treatment given to characterizing the new society, and the emphasis on man's responsibility for shaping his own history are all further developments of the trends we have seen in earlier works.

Evil in this story is conceived of as greed — not imperialistic greed, but the individualistic greed which threatens to undermine society and oppresses the individual. This individualistic greed is represented by Sozi's foster parents, Samesozi and his wife. In the community's continuing confrontation with this individualistic greed, the new society takes form and shape as the people's consciousness is raised.

The first attempt of the community to deal with the foster parents takes place in the council called by Sozi's surrogate father. The elders decide they have been remiss in their attention to injustice. They must bring about a revolution in which all are equal before the law and in which all misdeeds are punished by the community:

Ni lazima tukubali kuwa hatukufanya wajibu wetu wa kuwazuia watu hawa kutenda maovu. Iliyobaki sasa ni kuleta mapinduzi. Mapinduzi yatakayodumisha haki za kila mmoja wetu... Kwa hiyo toka leo kila mtu lazima aanze upya... Kila mmoja wetu ni lazima aheshimu sheria za umma. Binadamu wote tu sawa, asiwepo hata mmoja wetu ambaye ataleta vitendo vya dhuluma. (pp. 40—41)

The second attempt to deal with the foster parents is also a community effort aimed at reform. When Samesozi begins drinking again and disrupts the general life of the village, causing discontent with his laziness, the people take action and call a meeting. The foster parents are rebuked and told to join in co-operative labour. They try to force them to change their ways by collective opinion. A final attempt is made to make the foster parents mend their ways when they are discovered in another village after having fled from Sozi's area. They are allowed to stay here only if they promise to reform.

But a complete transformation of evil occurs only when the foster parents have a 'conversion' or change of heart and decide to join in the socialistic spirit of the villages. This conversion occurs when Sozi goes to see his foster father, forgives him completely, and brings him home. He and his family are overcome by the hospitality and unity of these people, and are instinctively drawn in to share in their efforts:

Walijifunza mengi kutokana na namna walivyokaribishwa tena na wanakijiji wa Chiva. Walijifunza kuwa kujirudi ni jambo la maana sana baada ya mtu kung'amua kuwa hayuko katika njia iliyo sawa. Wageni hawa walishangazwa na umoja wa wanakijiji hawa. Baada ya kuona mambo yalivyokuwa yanakwenda Samesozi na jamaa yake waliona hakuna njia yoyote ila kufuata yale yafanywayo na wanakijiji wote. (p. 71)

Evil in the form of individualistic greed, therefore, is overcome not only by

collective efforts at reform, but by the example of the good, somewhat as in the utopian kingdom of Shaaban's *Mfalme Rai*. For the gradual development of Samesozi's conversion parallels the development of a socialistic society. As has been pointed out, in each confrontation with the foster parents a new consciousness is raised and more concrete steps are taken towards the realization of a better society; the realization that the principles of justice and equality must be carefully guarded and the realization that the individual ownership of wealth causes discontent and laziness which can be remedied by the collective ownership of wealth. Finally, Samesozi's conversion takes place at the height of the society's spirit of co-operation and their new prosperity, for just as Samesozi must reform his basic greed and individualism, so the villages and people must join together to realize a better society. The community and communal efforts take precedence over individualism, and humanity comes before wealth.

This notion of the gradual raising of consciousness of the people is underlined by the fact that most decisions are made collectively rather than being caused by supernatural beings or being implicit in the frame of things. All major changes, for instance, are made in town meetings which are pictured in full detail as democratic proceedings. This elaboration of the people's decisions and actions lends their image a real power over history; it is they who make and change their lives and who influence the development of a new society.

The depiction of Sozi as a hero reflects this active stance towards history. Adili was an example of the moral man caught in a dilemma of conscience. Sozi is an example of the emerging leadership dedicated to changing society. Like Utubusara and the genie-girl-ancestor, he brings real progress to the society, but in even more concrete political and economic terms. Finally, his own life history, from being an outcast to being a student to bursting forth in a flourish of activity aimed at bringing progress, parallels the life history of his own community in its gradual movement towards socialism.

Mtu ni Utu, therefore, is a good example of an emerging socialist literature. Not only does it make use of elements of the tradition of oral literature in its structure and characters, but it adheres to a new realism grounded in an historical setting of the struggle for socialism. Sozi's development as a hero reflects the development of the society as it moves from exploitation and weakness through the educational process of raising consciousness to the final fruits of this process, a society marked by the socialistic spirit of harmonious co-operation and unity. Finally, the historical process is here given into the hands of men rather than metaphysics, who are able and ready to bring about progress in the greater well-being and prosperity of the society.

Shida

Shida continues to develop the theme of a new society as well as the realistic trend emerging in *Mtu ni Utu*. It shows a growing understanding of the problems facing the real society and stresses the problems of class distinction and the urban rural gap as a major obstacle to socialist development.

The story it tells is once again the story of a youth and the various hardships he undergoes before joining in the effort to build a new society. Chonya, a rural youth,

is lured into the big city by its apparent life of ease and wealth of amenities. His childhood sweetheart, Matika, has fled home because her parents were forcing her into an unwanted marriage. After four years she returns from Dar es Salaam and her appearance and behaviour bespeak a better way of life than the drudgery and hardship of the rural area. Chonya follows her to the city, but cannot find her. He witnesses both the amenities of city life — its tin roofs, clean clothes, electricity and water, as well as the cheapness of human life. Unwanted, he gets a job as houseboy. His immediate goals are clothes, women and the 'freedom' of a place of his own. He leaves work to live with friends in Manzese, and at first, attracted by the glitter of women and beer, he soon discovers the filth and vermin of the dog-eat-dog life of the poor. When his funds run out and he cannot find employment, his friends leave him, and he goes to seek daily labour, living in the lean-to shack of the destitute. He sinks lower and lower in spirits, health and morals. He smokes 'bangi' and drinks illicit liquor. Finally he meets Matika, now called 'Shida', who has become a common harlot. She becomes pregnant and he takes her in. As money becomes scarcer, he becomes a thief and is caught and jailed. The elders come to see him and Matika, and eventually he is convinced to return to the rural area to start a new life.

Although this story follows the basic structure of the adventures of a youth, in effect it is a novel of education, a novel which depicts the gradual formation of principles, ideals and the search for a role in life. The book is, in fact, planned as a series of lessons in which Chonya gradually comes to realize the problems, first of the rural area, then of the city, and finally the wider scope of the roots of all his problems in a money society which perpetuates class distinctions and the urban/rural gap.

When we first meet Chonya, he is characterized as a simple country boy who has ambitions. He is allured by the new, as he is always there to meet the car from Dodoma, to look over the strangers and the world they represent. When Matika, who calls herself by the city-name Shida, returns home, he is forced into an acute consciousness of the back-wardness of the rural areas. It is Matika who gives her relatives their first pair of shoes and who, in contrast to her classmates who have aged from childbearing and the hardship of life, is sleek and refined in pecos.

When he first glimpses the city, his thoughts reflect his consciousness of this gap between rural and urban life. He is caught up in the glitter of the city and dreams to himself of everything he will have in the city:

Hapa nitapata kazi, nitapata wenzi, hapa nitapata fedha na utajiri, hapa nitapa... (p. 16)

Another lesson soon begins, however, and the city teaches him of its disrespect for human life, its deprivation and filth as well as its language and the airs and graces of the sophisticated city dweller. A girl is attacked and people just stand by. At the hospital money speaks louder than humanity. In Manzese, litter and garbage cover the streets although a woman can be had for a few bottles of beer. Nevertheless, he shoves such thoughts of the city into the back of his mind and concentrates on his lessons in smoking, drinking, making love and talking, now calling himself by the city name of Sefu.

Once his money has run out, however, the city begins to teach him its true face, as he learns to live under hardship: "Elimu yake imepaa... 'Sasa najifunza kuishi kwa shida,'" (p. 59). In the midst of this deprivation, he examines the cause of his

problems. He realizes that money is at the root of his troubles, and that the lack of money was caused by the environment and circumstances of life:

Aliamua kuwa pesa ni sababu ya matatizo yake; lakini nyuma ya pesa kulikuwa na mambo mengine... Pesa alivyoiona Sefu sasa, ikawa ni sababu ya pili — mazingira na mfumo wa maisha ukawa ndio maisha ya (sic) kitu cha kwanza kilichofanya maisha ya binadamu kuwa 'mabaya.' (pp. 53—54).

The circumstances of life for Chonya include a growing class separation in which the big shots care little about the life and welfare of the poor, and a government which appears to be deaf to the problems of the city dweller as well as the rural dweller who is deprived of even the basic amenities of the city. It is in this bitterness over the circumstances that Chonya decides to become a thief; the rich are rich enough, let the poor have a better way of life.

Chonya's entire education is brought before him in a series of pictures as he tries to decide whether he should stay in the city or return to the rural area after release from jail. He envisions three pictures. The first is of rural life as he knew it: it is hard, the people are backward and unsophisticated in some ways, they lack freedom and grow old quickly; they lack the amenities of the city life. The second picture he brings to mind is of the city: its deprivation for the poor man with lack of opportunity and the corruption of wealth. A third picture is drawn by relatives when they come to visit him. It is of the rural areas as they are changing: through co-operation and self-help the village is making great progress. The government is helping them, but they need the strength of their youths.

For Chonya, however, the government he knows is the government which perpetuates the hardships of the common man: it means longer and longer queues, bribery, corruption, low wages and the perpetuation of the class distinctions between rich and poor, rural and urban. Nevertheless, Chonya is gradually convinced that the government has really begun to help, and he is caught up in the new vision of progress and a life of well-being in the rural areas as well as the city. In the city, the people will work together to change the life of the poor and to close the gap. In the rural areas, he envisions all the amenities of city life: schools, hospitals, roads, etc:

Mipango tele ilijaa kichwani. 'Tutatekeleza "mtu ni afya", tukazindue utamaduni wetu ... Tukajenge shule kubwa zaidi, tukaanzishe "shule ya vidudu" mahali pa kujifunzia maarifa ya nyumbani kwa akina mama ... mahali pa kujifunzia kazi za ufundi na kilimo bora ... kila kitu...' (pp. 81—82)

This education is a socialist education as Chonya learns that although money and greed are part of the problem affecting his well-being, the real root of evil life is the system and environment which allows such problems to flourish. Although, for instance, one might at first place Chonya among those 'greedy' men whose main fault is the desire for wealth, it is not Chonya, but the men and machinery who perpetuate the class system and the rural/urban gap who are the root cause of the evil. Chonya is not 'evil' — he is ignorant, and he has been misled by his ambitions. Once he reaches an understanding of the real situation, he is able to channel his ambitions into the hard work needed for the development process, rather than the dreams of quick money in the city.

In *Shida*, the answer to the evil impeding the progress of a new society is education and dedication to hard work. The people must be educated to understand the causes of the problems facing development, and they should work together to overcome these problems through the co-operative effort of the people themselves and the government.

Conclusions

In summary, one can say that the theme of a new society has been developed quite away from the oral tradition from which it sprung, and this development reflects the development of Tanzania as a socialist country. First of all, this development is based on the growth of a socialist sense of history and society which has lent both depth and scope to the treatment of the theme. The latter works indicate this change of understanding in 1) the picture of the new society which is to be realized; 2) the understanding of 'evil' —the impediments to the birth of a better society; and 3) The concept of the historical process which involves such social change.

The new society pictured has always been a better society, but it is better for different reasons. In the oral tradition the form of government — chieftancy — does not change; it is only greedy or misguided and unjust rulers who are either removed from office or educated. In the two works of Shaaban Robert, we see the beginnings of a more complete movement towards reform, in which the representation of the people is seen as an important element in the society's well-being. In *Lila na Fila*, the entire structure of the government is to be changed to be based on the principles of socialism, equality and justice. In *Mtu ni Utu*, although we are not dealing with a change of government, there is a raising of consciousness which leads the people to self-reform in affirmation of the need for equality, justice and socialism. In *Shida* a similar type of enlightenment takes place with the education of Chonya and he realizes that a new society should be based on principles of socialism and co-operative effort.

The understanding of the concept of evil also reflects historical developments and a rising revolutionary consciousness. Evil in the oral tradition was seen in moral terms and was based on greed as the root of evil. For Shaaban, evil continues to manifest itself in greed, giving rise to the moral predicament of how to deal with greed. In *Lila na Fila*, the concept of evil as greed has been expanded; it no longer manifests itself in just greed, laziness, selfishness and injustice, but takes on the garb of imperialism as well. In *Mtu ni Utu*, evil is seen as individualistic greed which impedes and disrupts the formation of a socialist society, and finally in *Shida*, evil as greed perpetuates the class distinctions and is responsible for the large gap in life styles. But the real root of evil lies in the system and the environment in which this gap flourishes.

The concept of the historical process and societal change also reflects a growing confidence in man's ability to make history and bring about concrete changes. In the oral tradition, it is the moral superiority of the individual hero and the 'powers that be' which effect a change in which society moves towards greater well-being. In Shaaban's two works, we see an increasing emphasis on the role of the man dedicated to change and progress, rather than on the moral framework in which the

good necessarily prevails. This emphasis is developed further in later works in which the forces which move history are seen as the community and the dedicated individual.

This increasingly active and responsible stance towards history is reflected in the characterization of the hero. He develops from being an adventuresome youth marked by moral superiority and ability to a political revolutionary. The hero of oral literature is a 'stock' or flat character; things seem to happen to him from above, rather than as the result of a new understanding — his conflicts are external and often with a miraculous being. Shaaban's Adili does develop, but his education is moral and brings him to an understanding of the presence of moral evil and how to deal with it. Utubusara begins not only a moral, but a political or historical education which is further developed and elaborated in the later works, culminating in the socialist education of Chonya. With this increasing understanding, man is seen as capable of greater influence on his surroundings and his history; Chonya and his fellows as well as the community in general play an increasingly active role in shaping their history.

In general, one may finally point out that although the overall structure of these prose works remains the same — i.e., the story of a youth-hero who undergoes hardships in the confrontation with evil and eventually brings, with his victory, a new society, the articulation of this basic structure has changed greatly with the historical change of the country. We have moved from the story of adventures — in which evil is often in the guise of vague and allegorical moral outlines — to a novel of education which takes place in a specific historical setting in which the evils as well as the goods are given a specific and more realistic elaboration.

The development from the novel of adventure to the novel of education is particularly fitting for a country involved in the building of a socialist society. For while the novel of education is like the novel of adventure in that normally the good prevails, the novel of education involves the reader in a deeper understanding of the forces which move history, as represented by the hero's fate in confronting his particular problems. A novel of education focuses the attention of the reader on such problems, as the hero is educated, so is the reader.

In reviewing the elements of oral tradition which have nourished our contemporary prose works, there are perhaps a few which would still need greater attention and development and which can just be touched on here. One is the development from 'stock' to 'representative' characters. The 'stock' characters of the oral tradition are flat figures of good and evil, sometimes allegorical and show no development; they undergo a series of adventures. With the development of the novel of education, such stock characters are rounded out and given greater dimensions; representative characters are, like real people, a mixture of good and bad, stupidity, ignorance and the ability to learn. They may represent types, in the sense that the hero is an 'mshamba' or 'rural' dweller, or a city slicker, but they show greater total characterization. We can see this difference, for instance, developing in the change from Utubusara, an allegorical figure, to Sozi, an historical figure who is not seen in depth and also never does wrong, to Chonya, a representative figure from the village areas who has both his good and bad points. This development should be continued in an even fuller representation of the hero

confronting the problems of development. Similarly, the basically episodic structure of oral tradition can be transformed to a unified structure.

Hand in hand with this tendency to leave main characters flat or merely outlined, is the heavy reliance on the sort of 'deus ex machina' happy ending. In the oral tradition, things always turned out well as this was an expression of the way the frame of things ought to be. The heroes get their girl and their country and people live happily ever after. In *Lila na Fila* it is a genie, although she may be an expression of the people's will, who brings about the happy ending. One might also object to the fact that Sozi and his community seem to burst forth into prosperity once the decision for socialism has taken place, there is no real or comprehensive representation of the problems which confront people in co-operative labour and their means and methods of overcoming them. In *Shida* this problem is sidestepped by focusing on the problems of reaching the decision for socialism and leaving the problems of implementation for a generalized and idealized vision of the future. Perhaps at this point more attention ought to be given to the problems, not of choosing socialism but of implementing socialism. Then perhaps the happy ending would not reflect the expression of just benevolent powers that be, but of the basic faith in man grounded in a realistic understanding of the key problems which confront him in the struggle for socialism. The latter would be the socialist expression of the utopian faith in man's goodness and his ability to make history.

FOOTNOTES

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