

Uhuru Torch Images in Selected Sukuma Praise Songs

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Abstract

This article examines Uhuru (Independence) Torch images in selected Sukuma praise songs, highlighting their significance and the images they embody. The analysis of these songs attempted to capture the Sukuma imagination of the Torch—an independence symbol—in terms of sociocultural, political and economic dimensions. The purposively selected Sukuma praise songs contain Uhuru Torch attributes reinforced through the evocation of praise tones. The Torch is the focal point of these songs since the praising they imbue significantly extrapolate its significance to the society. The qualitative study explored in-depth the Sukuma sociocultural, political and economic practices embedded in the images of these Sukuma praise songs to assess their significance in capturing the Uhuru essence and what it represents. It analyses the Uhuru Torch images in Sukuma praise songs from two angles: the angle of bodily/physical sensation (images of fire and smoke of Uhuru Torch) and the association/comparison perspective (Uhuru Torch in the image of man and the mythological images of the Torch). At the centre of analysis of selected Sukuma praise songs are images interpreted in partnership with Uhuru Torch observable in diverse artistic contexts and perceptions of the Sukuma lore. The study found that these images are primarily a product of the human mind, which is machinery for digesting images for consumption and awareness of the society.

Keywords:

Uhuru Torch, Sukuma Praise Songs, Uhuru Imagery

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Introduction

Uhuru Torch is one of the national symbols of the United Republic of Tanzania. In the history of Tanzania, Uhuru Torch was first lit in 1961 on top of the Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa, on the eve of the country's independence as a symbol of light, hope, respect, and love (Ned 2015). In the context of this article, the term 'Uhuru Torch' refers to a phenomenon depicted in Sukuma praise songs that

appeals to various imaginations among the Sukuma. The images discussed in this paper reflect the Sukuma's point-of-view pertaining to Uhuru Torch vis-à-vis their lives. The article argues that imagining the Uhuru Torch among the Sukuma also implies an understanding of situations and ideas that associate with it from within and outside Sukuma society. The article addresses these situations and ideas as accompaniments that shape the images the indigenous Sukuma create.

The Sukuma praise songs serve as texts used to formulate and transfer meaning to the community. They are the machinery of expressing images of Uhuru Torch in the framework of how the Torch associates and moves with government developmental goals. Okumba (1994) reports that "it is kind of imperative that effective literature uses figures of speech-images. The images conjure up, in the mind, pictures that reinforce the clarity of the subjects. Imagery is thus the oral graphics of literature" (p. 70). Examining the Uhuru Torch images, the article also observes that praising the Uhuru Torch, through the selected Sukuma songs, motivates people's imagination about its significance.

Theoretical Orientation

This study employed the Cognitive Metaphor Theory to examine Uhuru Torch images in the selected Sukuma praise songs. This theory facilitated the understanding of how Uhuru Torch is re-imagined in the Sukuma local context and lore, particularly in considering how song artists use metaphorical images in conveying messages. George Philip Lakoff and Mark Johnson developed the Cognitive Metaphor Theory in 1980 to describe metaphorical expressions. According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphorical language expressions convey underlying conceptual metaphors in which the metaphor topic serves as the vehicle of experience. For Lakoff and Johnson (1980), "Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (p. 3) with the "essence of metaphor [being] understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (p. 5). Moreover, images in literature activate these mappings and help people to understand abstract or complex concepts in terms of more familiar or concrete ones (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, p. 12). Depending on

whether an image reflects the true or accepted meaning of the words or symbols that conjure it, the meaning can be either literal or metaphorical. Metaphorical pictures are derivable from the imagination or inference, whereas literal images are based on a direct sense or recollection (Ureña & Faber 2010, pp. 49-90). Harliani (2014) contends that an image in literature is a term that conjures up a clear mental picture in the reader's mind while expressing concepts, emotions, and descriptions. It happens when people use their thoughts to understand different kinds of experiences. Depending on the sense they appeal to, images can be tactile, abstract, simple, or complex, and they can also be categorised as personifications, metaphors, similes, symbols, tactile, visual, auditory, or olfactory (Okumba 1994).

As a matter of fact, over the past several years, the notion of pictures has enjoyed scholarly prominence both inside and beyond the literary community. Because of how intricately it relates to global issues, it has proven to be one of the most captivating and perplexing concepts. Creative expressions, after all, are not amenable to a single interpretation or construction. Since imagery involves subjectivity in language for the creation of objective realities that are shared by society, it is socially produced and naturally institutionalises (Berger & Luckmann 2002; Denize et al. 2007). It therefore finds expression in the social structure of language, as expressed by an individual and shared (as a commodity) for collective social use. Indubitably, the human mind can be triggered to perception by the art of the imagery—whether by way of words, drawings, or other forms of art. In this regards, Crystal (1987) states that in literature “there are large numbers of words where it is not possible to see what ‘thing’ the word refers to [...] Some words do have meanings that are relatively easy to conceptualise, but we certainly do not have neat visual images corresponding to every word we say” (p. 101). Images in literature occupy spaces that force texts to talk about several topics at once, inspiring readers' or audiences' imaginations in general. Llorens (2015) further contends that it is challenging to conceptually define “image” and “imagery” since imagery appears both everywhere and nowhere in a

literary work. It is frequently seen to have hazy borders, much like other widely used terms like metaphor, symbolism, and figurative language.

Following the same line of reasoning, Llorens (2015) first highlights the similarity in meaning between “image” and “imagery,” emphasising that both relate to the entirety of linguistic figures and literary methods. Second, he describes the scope of the two ideas in terms of their significance and impact on the composition and operation of literature generally (in this instance, Uhuru Torch extols the songs of the Sukuma). Since pictures are fluid, slick, and flexible in their operations, many text consumers do not fully understand the concepts of “image” and “imagery,” even though these terms have a crucial role and place in literary works. Impliedly, there is not just one context, which is typically interpreted as the exact angle between an image’s position and purpose.

Overall, all the accounts tied to their presence and usages in the literary works are not set on grounds of certain systematic approaches, and thus, readers normally attend to them in person without caring about critics. Despite the absence of one universal outlook regarding meaning of ‘image’ and ‘imagery’ Preminger and Brogan (1993) in *The Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics*, describe “imagery” in terms of “images produced in the mind by language, whose words may refer either to experiences which could produce physical perceptions” (p. 560). Stated differently, the nature of images aims to articulate certain degrees of mental images in the human mind that result from linguistic forces interacting or clashing with human thoughts. This is quite like the figurative act that occurs in literary discourse when the listener is asked to sketch pictures or portraits of the potential meanings and connections between metaphors, similes, symbols, and a host of other similar devices.

Similarly, Neman (1980) claims that imagery is vital because our language does not have the words or phrases to express all our ideas and feelings directly. Impliedly, ordinary speech contains little power to bring out man’s internal agenda in its entirety. By the same token, Edgar (1987) reports that giving the reader an exact experience in reading one’s literary works, the author uses imagery to present the experiences so the readers will “feel the right responses.” In this regard, the Uhuru Torch constitutes

an image that draws on different senses. Every attempt in form of singing takes a component of the senses about the Torch. Treating Uhuru Torch and Sukuma songs thusly concurs with Jonathan Culler's (1997) claim that "...New Criticism treats [literature] as aesthetic object...and examines the interactions of [its] verbal features and the ensuring complications of meaning..." (p. 122) mainly because the torch is imagined as a powerful object as it is capable of fixing itself in every practice of the society.

When the Sukuma talk of Uhuru Torch, they are symbolically referring to a multitude of subjects and imagery, including a person, symbol, life, visibility, supernatural power, discipline, hope, remembrance, nature, and power, among many other things. In contrast to Nyerere's understanding of the torch as a symbol of illuminating the world with love, hope, and peace, the Sukuma view views the torch as having a variety of creative meanings that it is just and appropriate for it to symbolise. The Sukuma's discernment of images in their songs is also discussed by Masele (2017) in her study on gender and power relations, contends that "the patterns of language which were considered when analysing the discourse of Sukuma songs were the images, repetitions, language techniques such as repetitions, key indigenous terms, keywords in context, linguistic features, such as metaphors, hyperbole, litotes and others" (p. 73-74). Generally, these images are extracts crafted from both the overall physical shape of the Torch and relationship with its independent constituents/accompaniments. These constituents include names of places, objects, people actions or situations which also express some significance under the cover of Uhuru Torch. The sections addressed in this paper include fire and smoke of the Torch images, mythological images of the Torch, and Uhuru Torch in the images of man.

Images of Fire and Smoke of Uhuru Torch

Literary imagination of the concept of fire is common among communities in Africa and beyond because fire has the deepest roots in most of human socio-cultural, political and economic business. In fact, every society has a way or two of imagining about fire in different contexts of life. According

to Pyne (2004) “in simplest terms, fire exists because the Earth holds life [of animals, humans and plants]” (p. 10). The image of fire is frequently associated with the customs of a community, and it is derived from a variety of situations in which people use fire to enhance their performance. However, depending on each community's cultural norms or worldview, it is possible to find disparities in remarks concerning the picture of fire. Individuals within the same community may have varied life experiences with fire. The enjoyment of one's experiences with fire in life is the most significant aspect of the theme of fire as a picture.

Gaston (1938) in *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* proffered: “among all phenomena, fire is really the only one to which there can be so definitely attributed the opposing values of good and evil. It shines in Paradise. It burns in Hell. It is gentleness and torture...” (p. 13). The Sukuma, for instance, treat fire as a weapon against fierce animals and insects. To them, fire is a dangerous weapon that can destroy grotesque enemies of the society. At the family level, the Sukuma believe that there shall always be fire or fire source around. Numerous activities both during the day and at night will require an end to them. The Sukuma employ fire in oral literature not just as a symbol of life and presence but also as a source of illumination. It is a greeting message for a storytelling event that takes place at night. The family's hope for survival is renewed when there is a fire at night. Speaking of the fireplace at night in the context of the Sukuma, Masanja (2016) notes:

Contextually, the fireplace (*shikome* in Kisukuma language) symbolizes unity and compromise in the family. It also portrays a sense of order, system and harmony. The Wasukuma's perception of the fireplace extends to the measures of discipline, a point of correcting any sort of deviance and a teaching ground. The fireplace among the Wasukuma signals presence of life. It is a peace making locale and every time one sees fire outside the neighbour's home ground, he or she feels welcomed. To Wasukuma, the fireplace is a centre for negotiation, in which mismatching feelings of interest are harmonized for good (p. 53).

The fireplace serves as a symbol for teamwork against rivals and the willingness of a particular group of individuals to engage in competition and battle for the team's triumph while singing and dancing are also

taking place. It fosters peace within the group by introducing a sense of unity, particularly when team members are compelled to gather around the fireplace at night. Fire is the catalyst that turns darkness into light and establishes a regular pattern of waiting for the following day. The “change,” a traditional torch used by the Sukuma, is mainly used to shed light in their surroundings. As a result, the Uhuru Torch concept is not new to the Sukuma in terms of custom. On the other hand, the Sukuma appear concerned about the description, in contrast to the conventional understanding of the torch. They do not perceive Uhuru Torch as traditional because of its extended engagement into human matters. They believe that Uhuru Torch has extra-ordinary power because of the fire it produces—as reflected in songs such as “Tubhinagi” (Let’s Dance) and “Ku Bhanhu Bhoze” (To All People).

Among the Sukuma, the fire of the Torch is everlasting and comes all the way from days of independence as the persona articulates in [verse 33] of the song “Ku Bhanhu Bhoze” (To All People). The songs under review cultivate Sukuma people’s experience and interpretation of fire as a reality around them. In this regard, Nketia (1974) contends: “[T]he treatment of oral songs as a form of speech utterance, arises not only from stylistic consideration, consciousness of the analogous feature of speech and music, but also by the importance of song as an avenue for creative communication and as a medium for creative verbal expression which reflects both personal and social experiences” (p. 46). The Sukuma re-defines the fire as a nucleus of the whole idea of Uhuru Torch. Other aspects that make up the Torch are identified as complements of its fire. Moreover, among the Sukuma even the great defence that go towards protecting the Torch is principally organised for the fire of the Torch.

A number of situations expressed in Uhuru Torch praise songs of the Sukuma reveal people’s perception of the fire associated with the Torch. The song “Tubhinagi” (Let’s Dance) in stanza two and three stipulates: “Jimiyagi itala jing’we jose,/ E-lelo u-ng’wenge gukubhacha eshi jiji shoes...,” (Switch all your lamps off,/ The Torch will lamp your village

today...) to announce for the strength of the Torch's fire. The persona's imagination on the ability of Uhuru Torch through its fire exaggerates the coverage of the Torch's light. The song/verse compares the Torch's light fashioned by its fire with the lamps found in people's homesteads. The difference is in the power of lighting, and that caring about the lamps in the face/presence of Uhuru Torch is counted as waste of time. Also, the artist signals a need to embrace the light of the Torch and withdrawing investment on lamps.

Since every house needs its own lamp for lighting purposes, there appears to exist matured traits of disunity between families of the same society – against Per Brandstrom's (2022) argument that "the very start [of] Busalama in [Sukuma] village[s] was the unity of ng'wano" (p. 61). Ng'wano represents people's commitment to fully responding to and offer all the necessary support/help to the one troubled by something. The Torch represents all the individual lamps to suggest oneness. It appears the Torch's fire makes a universal level of bringing light to the society. Also, it outwits the traditionally marked division by upholding lamps possessed and meant for individual households. The singer is assured of what is marked ahead of the Torch's fire and its assumed responsibility of checking into the affairs of the village without help of lamps' lights. The first verse of the same stanza declares a day on which Uhuru Torch's celebration is occasioned in the village as "...the big day in (the people's) history." The singer's tone alerts on the privilege that has befallen his village to have on the ground. He notices the day's bigness in observance of the Torch's bigness through the strength of its fire. In the understanding of the Sukuma, Uhuru Torch is not only a daybreak event but also a mission of plotting a historic action for the society. Thus, the Torch is for drawing a long lasting mark in the lives of people and the society at large. This feeling further explains the gravity of value committed to the fire of the Torch among the Sukuma.

The fire also advances the overall notion of Uhuru Torch in terms of reputation among the people resulting in an indigenous definition of the Uhuru Torch and its flame. Masanja (2016) clarifies how the Sukuma original conception of fire with reference to the fireplace thusly:

..., the fireplace, among the Sukuma, is a responsibility of everybody in the family. The adults are liable of reminding and organizing the youth for firewood collection, igniting the fire after sun set and cleaning the area around the place. The youth, on the other hand, are set to respond actively to the duties assigned to them and develop strong attitude of respect towards the fireplace. They are tuned to see, believe and agree that the fireplace is a character of love, hospitality, life, worth and power (pp. 54-55).

Although the extract clarifies a fire context practical in oral narratives, it still offers clues on how fire impacts on the Sukuma's understanding of Uhuru Torch's fire as expressed in the praise songs. In other words, fire is a reason behind social mobility since it invites readiness to seat in common grounds. It addresses and sorts out social divisions and performs for commissioning benefits of the society. This idea tallies with the Torch's fire mission of enlivening social growth, bringing awareness to the people and rescuing dwarfism in fulfilling developmental purposes in all sectors of the Sukuma society. "Nguzu ja Ng'wenge" (The Torch's Power) conveys the Torch to imply a responsive reaction of people's conscience aimed to cause peace in the land. Here, the persona's perception of the Torch benefits from the Sukuma's indigenous discernment of what 'fire' stands for in different social context.

The song describes the Torch at the expense of power produced as it lights. This representation of Uhuru Torch clarifies its meaning at the level of the depth of its power to uncover the hidden misconducts going on in the society. As novelist John (1984) once argued, "true art clarifies life establishing modes of human action, casts nets towards the future, carefully judges our right and wrong directions..." (p. 67). Similarly, the persona in "Nguzu ja Ng'wenge" (The Torch's Power) admits that the society is uncomfortable with the existing inequity characterised by corruption, theft and insubordination, and similarly regenerates the spirit of victory by means of the Torch. Verse three of the first stanza is an inquiry by the persona to understand if other Tanzanians are taking note

of the fire on to the Torch.

What follows in the subset verses is a commentary statement about the function of the Torch's fire that it comes to cancel lineage for infertile actions such as corruption and drug abuse businesses. Consequently, the Torch serves as an opportunity for eliminating injustice in the society. The source of the Torch's mandate is the burning flame/fire which categorically consumes all the causes of afflictions. In the confidence/course of the Torch's presence the artist finds no space which is excused from the power of elimination of evils. Outlining to the public that the whole country is brought under the light of the Torch, the practitioners of transgression become fenced within the Torch's arena; they lack the hiding place in the whole society in response of people's tiredness to live amongst the rivals. In this regard, Rudolf (1969) believes that "[the interface between light as good and dark as bad] probably goes as far back as the history of man....Day and night become the visual image of the conflict between good and evil" (p. 313). Thus, "...U Ng'wenge guli sehemu jose ja nsi,/ Na gulina nguzu ya kubhayabhula abha mashetile mabhi..." (...The Torch is everywhere,/ And it has the power to reveal the wicked...) [verses 9 and 10] are sung by the artist to allude to every sociocultural, political and economic inconsistency pertaining to the Torch for judgment through light. In this case, the verses exhibit the singer's determination to handle over the task of dealing with the wicked to the Torch, and the reason behind this confidence is the power which is contained within its fire.

In line with the Torch's flame, some of Sukuma praise songs present the image of the Torch's smoke as a depiction of wealth in life. As Abrahams and Harpham (2005) have noted, "literature as inescapably conditioned - in the choice and development of its subject, the ways of thinking it incorporates, its evaluations of the modes of life political and economic organization and forces of its age" (p. 298). Among the Sukuma, 'smoke' is normally allied to the composition of clouds. The Sukuma society believe that any fire smoke has a space in the universe and is responsible for the next rain season.

The song titled “Lyochi lya Ng’wenge” (The Torch’s Smoke) identifies the Uhuru Torch’s ‘smoke’ as special because of the reputation accredited to the Torch itself, hence the recitation: “Nilyochi lya Ng’wenge go Bhuhulu isoga,/ Lyochi lya kubheja malunde ga mbula,/ Lyochi lya bhuponi” (...Even the smoke of the Uhuru Torch is good,/ The ‘smoke’ that makes the rain clouds,/ The ‘smoke’ of plentiful harvest...) [verse 7-9]. In these lines, the persona highlights peculiar qualities of the Torch’s flame in terms of life empowerment and livelihood. On derivative basis, the persona is convinced by the flow and recreation of the Torch’s meaning. The relationship between the Torch creating fire and the fire producing smoke leads him to conclude that the torch's flame is beneficial to the community. Consequently, everything that is a part of the Torch naturally stays under the same umbrella of respect since it is seen as something that commands respect from others.

Mythological Images of the Torch

Anything mythological “serves to explain (in terms of the intentions and actions of deities and other supernatural beings) why the world is as it is and things happen as they do...” (Abrahams and Harpham 2005, p. 178). The myth surrounding the Uhuru Torch centres on the question of whether it is an extraordinary idea that endures and is supported by supernatural power(s) or whether it is just a genuine item and everything about it is nothing more than an extract from people’s knowledge of its physical shape. Among the Sukuma, Uhuru Torch’s imagery comes from both the ground of reality and idealism. As a reality, the Uhuru Torch stands for an ordinary object whose meaning and power are normal except when professed across the borders of human exaggeration. This worldview stems from the belief that the materiality of the Torch comprising an iron container as its outward cover. In this regard, Kabira (1988) contended, “man wants to understand his environment. If he cannot understand it, he will try to create myths for himself so that he can cope with the reality around him” (p. 95). To the Sukuma, Kabira claims, the Uhuru Torch is a kerosene flame composed of a piece of cloth-like thing on its top on which fire is lit in completion of the concept of fire. This

outset of the Torch presents it as a naturally respected object by virtue of the meaning arbitrarily attached to it.

Therefore, the Sukuma's attribution of full honour to the Torch is a way of obeying the national order of treating national symbols with high discipline. The persona in "U-ng'wenge Gobhita" (The Torch has Passed) says ".....Ninga-eshi kado kado,/ Ensi yikazinije,/ Ensi yigeshimile,/ Kalina nguzu u munsu.... (...Although it (the Torch) looks small,/ The country accepts it,/ The country respects it, It has power in the country...) [verse 8 to 11]. Implicitly, the persona in the song is aware of the magnitude of the Torch, and how people might judge it by analysing its size and shape. This imaginary expression of the Torch exposes the slippery nature of literary language in interpretation. According to Strunk and White (2000), "the shape of [...] language is not rigid; in questions of usage; we have no lawgiver whose word is final" (p. 39). In other words, the description of the Uhuru Torch in terms of size benefits from the flexibility of literary speech in Sukuma songs. The words "...Ninga-eshi kado kado,..." (...Although (the Torch) looks small...) [verse 8] confirm that people are not only sensitive to the meaning of the Torch but also attentive to what it embodies physically.

The word "small" in the verse represents people's worldview regarding the Torch—that it matches an ordinary phenomenon whose shape and size do not necessarily present any threat. In the culture of the Sukuma, shape and size matter in influencing people's attitude over a particular phenomenon. For example, wealth is associated with one's rotund or gigantism. Therefore, in an ordinary sense, the Torch expresses an original/flesh meaning about itself. Its appearance presents very limited conceptual definition on itself, meaning that it explains the Torch in terms of the reality of its shape, or the components that comprise and give it a structure.

The worldview of idealism, on the other hand, is also associated with the images drawn from the existence and meaning of Uhuru Torch among the Sukuma. Stubbs (1968), for instance, recognises the statement which Copley gives on Drown's work that, "it is as ideal as an antique statue, and yet as real as any lovely woman at a fire side or in the street" (p.

1440). The meaning of the Torch in this regard extends beyond common reasoning as articulated in “Ng’wenge gwi Lagilo” (The Guide Torch) through the following verses: “...When he took the country,/ Nyerere was told by God, that go/ and make a Torch and light it...” [verse 5 to 7]. As pointed out in “Welelo Ntale” (God is Great), “Women, Stand Up” and “U-ng’wenge Gobhita” (The Torch has Passed), there is an attribution of knowledge beyond human’s natural grasp to the understanding of the Uhuru Torch. The review of the songs highlights what, according to the Sukuma’s belief, has to do with the Torch’s supernatural connections, which support it in possessing significant influence in its operation.

This ground of looking at the Torch results from the view that it was not for funny that Nyerere opted to have the Torch in place. Firstly, people’s explanation of the Torch as supernatural bases on how it is allied to power(s) which are not natural. The Sukuma generally believe that the Uhuru Torch’s existence is a Godly instruction given to Nyerere for the Day of Independence. Therefore, all the forms of submission that people demonstrate upon it and in the presence of the Torch are driven by the supernatural circumstance tied to the Torch. The belief is that it was spiritually imperative for the beginning of the journey of independence to be encapsulated within the light of the Torch. Tanzanians generally and the Sukuma particularly tend to hold the view that the country’s footsteps towards the realization of the appointed goals are covered and surrounded by the light from God (produced) through the Torch.

Leaders of the country, the Sukuma generally believe, have the divine information about the Torch, its origin, position in the country and the supernatural commitment attached to its existence. In “Welelo Ntale” (God is Great), the persona expounds that, “...Aho u Nyelele akabhinja abha Zungu,/ Akabheja u Ng’wenge kulanja lushikun lo bhuhulu,/ Akagubheja u Ng’wenge ku nzila ya ng’wa Sebha,/ U Ng’enge go Bhuhulu gukalanjaga bhutogwi bho ng’wa Sebha ku Tanzania... (...When Nyerere chased the Whites,/ He made the Uhuru Torch to light the Independence day,/ He designed the Torch by the help of God,/ Uhuru Torch

shows the love of God to Tanzania,...) [verse....to.....]. The life of Uhuru Torch appears to be guaranteed by the supernatural forces, which cannot be opposed or unreasonably be questioned by the common knowledge of man. As a result, any human intervention that targets blacklisting Uhuru Torch attracts censure reprimanded by the society.

The Sukuma admit that when one fearlessly opts to challenge the Torch's practice, his or her survival is on the losing side. The general belief is that such a person can face direct confrontation from God who is daily watching after it. The Sukuma treat the Supreme Being (Liwelelo/Sebha) to have powers to oversee and guide other spirits. Maganda (2002) writes: "they (the Sukuma) view the universe as existing in levels: The Supreme Being (Liwelelo), the spirits of ancestors (bakulugenji), man himself, and in the last category are animals, plants and minerals...[They believe that their] God does not in any way change from good to evil like man" (p. 3). Therefore, the Uhuru Torch's position in the country is not natural in nature. It is a supernaturally engineered opportunity that suggests God's will to take note on the country's practices by ensuring that light is available throughout the year.

Moreover, regarding the relationship between man and Uhuru Torch, the Sukuma normally compare man's influence, response and consideration of what it stands for. Among the Sukuma, the arrival of the Uhuru Torch in the village entails suspending other commitments and wait for the Torch's departure from the area. This mythological outlook reflects what Wilfred et al. (2013) call "the motives that underlie human behaviour....shaped by manifestations of mythological elements such as [the Uhuru Torch]" (p. 82). Although there is no clearly defined punishment for any perceived defiance during Uhuru Torch occasion, people conventionally and arbitrarily strive to avoid landing into trouble for mischievousness during the Uhuru Torch's operation.

In "Bhamayu Tujagi" (Women, Let's Go), the persona begins with an instance of pleading everybody in the village to stop tampering with other assignments in the presence: He says: "Bhamayo, nzugi hanze,/ Ili liti ikanza lya kuzuga,/ Gwingelega u Ng'wenge umchalo,/ Bhoze ditanagwa ku mbokelelo,..." (Women come outside,/ This is not time for cooking,/

The Torch is already in the village,/ We are all asked to be at the receiving point,) [verse 1 to 4]. The Sukuma's idea of the Torch is traditionally associated with what they use in their indigenous knowledge to make light in darkness. The mobile light source like the Torch is normally a piece of burning wood or a collection of dry burning grass and is active for only a short time before flickering out because the source(s) gets consumed. The By contrasting the Uhuru Torch with the Sukuma's conventional light source, one can see why the Uhuru Torch is considered more durable and takes precedence over the Sukuma. Because the Uhuru Torch race outshine the local torch (transient) like the burning piece of wood to become a national torch that outperforms all other mobile sources of light in the nation, the Sukuma see the Uhuru Torch race as authoritative.

In the song titled "Ng'wenge" (The Torch), the persona recites these words: "Laisi wisee bhabha ng'wana Nyerere,/ Akabheja Ng'wenge dwikale mhola..." (Our president, the father and the son of Nyerere,/...He created the Torch to make us safe) [verses 4 and 5] to compose a statement of appreciation to the power which accompanies the Torch. In the common belief of the Sukuma, as the persona insists, the Torch carries some divine instructions. In this regard, the Uhuru Torch represents divine strategies and powers in its existence. Thus, the fundamental concept of the Torch among the Sukuma connects to superhuman engagement. Kabira (1988) presents a similar outlook in relation to the Gikuyu society that, "among the Agikuyu you will note that God gave the Agikuyu land and cattle. He also gave Gikuyu a wife and He gave daughters husbands. Supernatural powers provide for man..." (p. 98). The Sukuma generally believe that it was not just for funny or simply for decorating purposes that J. K. Nyerere decided to design the Uhuru Torch for the Independence Day, which was famously placed at the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro on the eve of independence in 19by Brigadier Alexander Nyirenda. The belief associated with the torch is that it was rather out of spiritual inspiration that guided Nyerere as a leader of the new country to come up with the Torch.

In fact, something else, that is probably more realistic than the Torch, as an object, would be introduced for the independence occasion. The Torch, as a symbol of love, peace and hope; the Torch's size and the energy of light it produces do not, in real sense, capture the said meaning and power of the Torch. In the last stanza of the same song, for instance, the persona underlines how no mortal has the power to remove the Torch from its operation, and that the day they will attempt to, they will perish, according to that belief. This stanza illustrates the community's endearing confidence in the Torch's existence. The persona alerts the entire society by pointing at every individual that trying to act against the Torch's operation/existence is, in simple terms, dangerous. The question here would be "where does the danger come from?" The answer is associated with both the hand of the government and the supernatural power that the Sukuma believe protects the Torch.

Thus, any individual intending to draw distractive commissions upon the Uhuru Torch can encounter trouble. However, the community, at the same time, seems to belong to the Torch's life and that it harbours confidence that the Torch's mission must be the leading one. It also means that the Torch's life, according to the perception of the Sukuma, is such an authoritative phenomenon that the level of having a say in the lives of the people. In one of Uhuru Torch occasions, The Britain-Tanzania Society (2012) quotes President Kikwete explanation that "the colonial had no intention of developing the country but just wanted to exploit its resources...But Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and his colleagues vowed to fight for our independence and Tanzanians climb out of poverty" (p. 6). In other words, the Torch's supernatural energy cannot also affect individual's lives, based on this belief. Implicitly, survival can also believe to rely on what the Torch will officially approve, in one occasion or so, to be used for a certain purpose in the society. The society is forced to shape every member to abide by the principle of being respectful and submissive to the Torch.

Uhuru Torch in the Image of Man

Of the numerous Uhuru Torch images, human traits have taken a peculiar position. Many a time, the Uhuru Torch is idealised to assume human

qualities in varied socio-cultural, economic and political circumstances. This case happens in a way that posits the Torch in the responsibilities and powers of a person. According to Walters and Bart (2016), this is called a rhetorical figure by which a non-human entity assumes a human identity of 'face' recognisable in the figure's cognitive form and function (p. 1). Within the selected Uhuru Torch praise songs, there are images of a person in the face of the Torch, speaking or acting to accomplish certain duties in life. "Sensa ya Numba" (Household's Census) presents the Torch in an image of a teacher who takes measures to coach the society on the benefit of partaking in the National Census: "...Ungwenge go Bhuhulu, Gwizaga kulanga mhayo go Sensa..." (The Uhuru Torch has come to teach us about the Census...), claims the persona [verses 7 and 8] to insist on what the Torch evokes I accordance with the themes of awareness on the importance of census country-wide. This personification demonstrates that there are contexts in which the Torch can operate, act and decide beyond its level of a non-human object by assuming human attributes.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) refer to this phenomenon "as an ontological metaphor involving a cross-domain mapping where an object or entity is further specified as being a person" (p. 3). The definition of the Torch as a teacher with human traits has to do with power to change attitude and opinions the Torch embodies. In fact, the bards among the Sukuma normally sing about the Torch by revealing the trust people have invested in it because it reflects values of human instructive capacity, which allow the Torch to direct, guide, demonstrate, lead, protect or correct people for societal benefit. Basically, the personification of the Torch is a literary commitment that composers of songs succeed to cultivate subconsciously but has due effects in the text as in the "Household's Census" song.

Personification makes one of the prominent literary devices which give the text the qualities of the literary family. Songs of the Sukuma exhibit a significant tradition of addressing people and the matters concerning them (whether they are positive or negative). As Ojaide (1981) pointed out, "[...] songs strongly attack what the society regards as vices, laziness,

vanity, wretchedness, miserliness, be watching, flirtation, adultery, wickedness and greed" (p. 32). "Ng'wenge gwa bhuhuru tuliho, /Tuliho u-mshijiji shise..." (We welcome you Uhuru Torch,/ We welcome you in our home village...) [verses 1 and 2] from "Ng'wenge go Bhuhulu" (*Uhuru Torch*) indicates that the persona is talking to the Torch as he welcomes it. The Torch is addressed as "you" because of the human traits the Sukuma attribute to it based on what it represents in society. In full confidence, the persona submits his expectation to the authority of the Torch immediately after the welcoming note that the Torch should "...light everywhere to expose the thieves (Yelaga utime bhafisadi bhoze na bhalya rushwa) ... and ...move around to see the corrupt beings..." (Yelaga ubhone...) [verse 3-4]. In the selected Sukuma praise songs, the Torch is represented as providing directives, orders, and instructions to members of the community. The Uhuru Torch is associated with individuals receiving governmental directives to influence societal norms and development. During the Uhuru Torch race, the leaders, who wish to disseminate information on surmounting obstacles facing the community, hold the Torch aloft to drive home the message. In this context, such directions also provide viable options on how to approach certain societal problems.

Similarly, "Nidegelekagi" (Listen to Me) highlights the Torch's instructions, as the persona recites: "...Tushitunze inzvyilo shaminzi bhatanzania,/ Gohayaga shene u-Ng'wenge go Bhuhulu..." (And let's keep the water sources, Tanzanians,/ Says the Uhuru Torch...) [verse 6-7]. Alongside guiding and showing proper location worth following, the Uhuru Torch is also depicted to represent a person whose duty is to protect the society. As Akivaga and Odaga (1982) explicates:

Oral literature explains man's relationship to his world. Through oral literature man expresses his relation to the world he knows and understands and to the world beyond. Using oral literature, man tries to come to terms with the social world of his fellow men, but also with world of faith and beliefs, the world of religion (p. 125).

Indeed, from the time of independence many Tanzanians have believed that the Torch safeguards—even at a symbolic level— social welfare. The beginning of Tanganyika, as the country was known before its union with Zanzibar in 1964 to forge the United Republic of Tanzania, was marked by

the installation of the Uhuru Torch on the eve of independence, which also at a symbolic level makes it a protective force designed to secure the rest of Tanzania's life. In the song "Ng'wenge go Bhuhulu" (Uhuru Torch), the persona alerts the youth and the community at large to the need to secure harmony by employing sensitivity against HIV/AIDS when he says: "...Mhola ya welelo yawiza,/ Tuyibhike yitubhike." (Peace of the country is important, let's protect it so that it protects us.) [verses 13 and 14]. Peace-making and hope-drawing are crucial tasks for protecting social values amidst divided interests and thoughts in society. Uhuru Torch is a symbol of social accord and cultivating peace and love through light. It presents protection of community vision, people, and natural resources as possible upon possession, portraying Uhuru Torch as in charge of the country. The songs aim to cultivate a spirit of peace and love.

The songs also integrate the Uhuru Torch in various social missions, hence signalling the act of committing power to the Torch and what embodies it in terms of meaning and significance. The persona in "Bhupina Munholo Yane" (Solitude in my Heart) cries out to the community that has turned against itself. In the midst of time for cultivating shared success, the persona finds an upsurge of ideological hatred in religions and politics. He, however, finds hope in the Torch's existence, and immediately rebukes the society with a question "Ni bhuli ng'olemile ukwigwa ama hano ga Ng'wenge go Bhuhulu?" (...Why have you refused to consider the warning from the Uhuru Torch?...) [verse 3]. The Uhuru Torch, in this context, assumes a role belying the aesthetics of being an overseer of social responsibility among individuals. Okombo and Nandwa (1992), similarly comment:

When [...] principles and elements, which are used to judge an art object are fixed into cultural conventions, they become symbols signifying economic and social values. In such a situation, art objects are not mediators of aesthetics but of ritual processes and institutional laws that define and maintain relationships of the sexes, age groups, clans and with neighbouring ethnic groups. (p. 49)

The persona's disappointment with the failure to heed the Torch's warnings aligns with Okombo and Nandwa's (1992) claim, indicating a decline in personal urge to follow the Torch's guidelines. The persona is aware of the consequences of acting against the Torch's warnings, and the Torch's position (as the assumed) owner of businesses suggests it aims to rectify wrongdoings and pursue protective measures for society. The Torch's human qualities are also evident in its presence for supervisory purposes, as it is believed to check on the running of projects in society, with leaders taking this opportune moment to reprimand those derailing such initiatives.

In "Bhabhyaji Tohubhile" (We Parents Have Mistaken), the verses "Izukagi giki, Abhana bhalelindwa na selikali bhize bhazenge nsi yise,/ Hiyo ikahayiwa nu Ng'wenge go bhuhulu x 2," (...Remember the government is waiting for the children to build our country, that is what was said by Uhuru Torch last year x 2) [verses 10 and 11] personify the Torch as the father. In this regard, the Torch can avail to tasks and situations by applying reasonable forms of behaviour such as redirecting the society to embracing taking children to school. Walters and Bart (2016) acknowledge this characteristic as the strength attributable to personifying objects: "personifications, in giving voice to arguments, convince us by speaking eloquently and movingly more than this, their eloquence confers on them an evidentiary value, persuading us..." (p. 16).

Significantly, the persona projects the Torch as an image of carefulness in running, governing and controlling societal issues. The persona recalls a lesson from the Torch about the government's desire to safeguard the future of children, including establishing the foundation of education. The persona finds it necessary to overcome laziness, ignorance, and irresponsibility of some parents rooted in mistaken beliefs by reviewing the Torch's voice. This image of the Torch submits knowledge on its influence in monitoring and revising actions meant for a particular code of conduct. In natural life, it is common for the Sukuma to make sense of the world by interrogating their habits so that the action taken does not compromise common goals of the society. Commenting on the significance of every legible member of society checking in for the country's New Constitution, the persona in the song "New Constitution"

says: "...Kuyichagula ikatibha mhya,/ Ni lelo de-nhelwa Ng'wenge go bhuhulu,/ Nago gohaya chene... (...To choose the new constitution,/ And today we have the Uhuru Torch,/ It is also telling us so...) [verses 14 and 15]. Thus, the Torch succeeds to impart knowledge among community members on the value of self-determination in examining the conduct of parents in society.

In the selected Sukuma praise songs, personification, as a literary technique, covers a long list of human attributes. One significant scenario in which this form of imagery occurs is the enlivening of an item and ultimately shifting it to the human level. Because of the reputation the people, and the artist, place on the object it morphs into a messenger who exaggerates such a social image to reinforce the intended message, which according to Quintilians (2020), constitutes "a device which lends wonderful variety and animation to oratory," and gives us the ability to "display the inner thoughts of our adversaries as though they were talking with themselves" (p. 4). The Uhuru Torch in the praise songs of the Sukuma, for instance, warn individuals of the society and to those who seem to oppose the Torch and its spirit by violating the accepted societal norms and values. By doing so, the Torch—through the praise songs—points out certain impediments of social progress, and singles them out as enemies that the society should be aware of in a bid to root them out.

To solve the problems threatening sociocultural, political and economic sectors, the Torch is deliberately invested with the power of victory for the benefit of society. The statement "U-ng'wenge... Gwizaga kumala bhali bha lushwa!..." (...The Torch... has come to eliminate the corrupt!...) [verses 1 and 2] in the song titled "Nguzu ja Ng'wenge" (The Torch's Power) states the role of the Torch in the position of restoring justice by legally dealing with corrupt people and the likes. The community's trust in the power of the Torch against the cabals of evil is built on its ability "...to expose the wicked" [verse 10] is linked to the fire—the power—it produces. The persona laments that the wicked continue to multiply in the country because the of the limited agenda or blunt follow up due to lack of fierce fire like that of the Torch. For example, the Torch cautions

the youth on the dangers of HIV/AIDS. Disease, in this context, signals something eventual and can produce collective embarrassment in the society. Masele (2017), for instance, reports that, “Kishapu faces challenges like any other district. Among the big challenges it faces are high spread of HIV/AIDS, killing of elderly persons associated with the belief in witchcraft, and severe drought” (p. 54). The citing of Kishapu, as part of Sukumaland, exemplifies and reflects the persona’s opinion in the song that HIV/AIDS can strike families and rob them of the youth in the absence of serious measures. The Torch also declares that worry is prone to creep into families due to the repeated deaths of important individuals. This message is delivered on the assumption that the path to secure society stems from increased sensitivity to the challenges the still incurable ailment cause.

Conclusion

The essential theme of the imagery depicting the Uhuru Torch in the chosen Sukuma praise songs has to do with the interaction between people – in this case, the Sukuma – and the Torch. The Sukuma attempt to use the songs and Uhuru Torch events as platforms for communicating how they perceive the Torch in connection to their lives. The images of the Uhuru Torch discussed in this article imply that people’s perceptions of the Torch are shaped by its characteristics, particularly its flame and the smoke it emits – and significantly what it embodies, and the multiple meanings associated with it. Like the Uhuru Torch’s portrayal of man and its mythological imagery, they also understand it in connection to their beliefs and people's attributes. From both perspectives, the study found that the images illustrate how the indigenous Sukuma view Uhuru Torch in their lives and explain the significance of praise songs for Uhuru Torch among the Sukuma.

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