

The Fall of Man: Thematic Survey on Professional Ethics and Integrity in M.M. Mabuza's *Nyuku wa Mbyana*

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Abstract

Mabuza's text presents an engrossingly hooking departure for a make-belief textual display of matters arising in the 'concrete' world. The paper is an attempt to unearth some of the acts exhibited by, especially, professionals, in their narcissist desires and adventures to attain gains, regardless of the means – unconsciously engulfed in 'the result justifies the means' propensity. Corrupt wiggles personified by dramatic key players, Diza and Xiphongo shamelessly and hardheartedly dominate the creative sphere, by creating a huge watershed for corruption and such related anomalies. Through official power manipulation and abuse. This paper addressed some of the anomalies akin to professionals and top post-holders as presented in the said text.

Keywords: Africa, moral, corruption, professional, literature, betrayal.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Literature's emergence into the arty social platform has elbowed deep clarity in the construction, imaging and reconfiguration of human rationality, enabling ideally, the impetuous divulging of critical ideologies between, among and intra-socio-interactive setups. Literature therefore has served in durawalling the otherwise vulnerable sectors of people against humanity's intuitive derives over one another by scathingly, but subtly defending the people from whom the responsible artist(s) has/have aesthetically extracted. Creative writers speak what other people fail to speak out, expose what has at times, no formula through which it can be exposed, defend the vulnerable and gallantly venture the African thickets for Ubuntu. In a sense, creative writers are, to express it differently, critics in society (Mamudu, 1993).

In the text, Mabuza interrogates the actions of the very people whose lives should cement and repair the very fabric of humanness in society. The text under consideration is an incisive engagement with socio-professional phenomena in which morality and a count of corrupt activities are unveiled and heavily indicted by the playwright. It unleashes the fact that literature, being a product of ethnic ideological undercurrents, insightfully doubles as an 'information silo' and the ethnic group's outpouring fissure for rational, ideological and society's indictment of social idiocy as embodied in the gift of humanity's artistic expertise. Thus, the Western kind of education they have received is ridiculed as recreating them misfits in their own societies (Kahari, 2009). They were are learned but not educated in the sense of the word (Kahari, 2009: 286).

The African "novelist writes with the intention of recreating an experience which he then shares with the reader in hopes that it will allow the reader to experience a part of the writer himself.

As cited above, African writers try to, and maintain their statuses as traditional conservatives. They endeavor to be an embodiment of the intact Africa and its moral integrity before its convergence with the so viewed moral decadency of the civilization. There, we strongly declare the literature is literature for moral and life's sake (Ahmed, 2014). The fact that African literary writers are incapable of producing literary sense is delusive and not true (Pellerin, 2012). According to Julien (:296),

African literature is vast and varied, but there are two impulses or currents in African creative works of which we might make special note: the reclaiming of voice and subjectivity and the critique of abusive power.

It is an artist who can humble the lofty and those who abuse power. The hidden follies in society are put to light by the writer. The powers are exposed, questioned and taken to task through creativity. Creators of literary texts bear natural gifts to spontaneously project the impossible, to reach the impenetrable and decisively masquerade, boldly, as unrestricted griots to gospel the delineating sensitive definitions of what it means to be sensible in society. Therefore, literatures are timeless social volumes that critically conserve, teach and salvage, jealously, the surviving relics of a given people's lore. They form a tangible or intangible (if online) option to preserve pieces that would otherwise unperceptibly erase from human memory due to the aggressive dynamics of fates in human history.

THE TEXT *NYUKU WA MBYANA*

Nyuku wa Mbyana (loosely, the dog's sweat) is a uniquely written Tsonga dramatic text that falls within the scarce ecriture feminine (sub) genre. The text details, in a rather mind-boggling density of language, the challenges encountered in the professional work places and within some inexorable networking ventures. It unveils, in a heart-rending fashion, the vulnerability, betrayal, and a concomitant of corrupt acts, particularly on the grounds of beggar-boss, socio-professional ties. The central idea, corruption, composes the professional triangle encompassing the vacant Zamani School Principal Post applicants, the Chief examiner and the chief Secretary and the Commission invested with the powers to employ. The Applicants who had to submit their papers to the deciding Commission via the Chief Secretary's office had to be grilled on the way if they were to be successful. Xiphongo, as Diza's acquiescent subordinate, is fed up 'sweating for another man' and therefore resolves to divert and accumulate for himself, wealth in the form of money, food, clothes and women by cutting the circuit to his boss. Unfortunately, there is a single post for a principal eyed for by a world of burning applications, painfully baptised into many forms of corruption. The tragedy, manifesting in the arrest and disciplinary pains for both Diza and Xiphongo comes when one of the applicants who had given himself wholly to the obsession through bribes, swallowed humiliation from ordinary money lenders and putting of his marriage at stake through continual starvation of his family finally loses the game. To his pain and salted humiliation, the eventual lose unearthes after he had spread the 'good' news that he is now the Head for Zamani school.

NAMING THE TEXT: MEANING AND SYMBOLIC RELEVANCE

The title *Nyuku wa Mbyana* comes as an abridged version of the Tsonga proverb, *nyuku wa mbyana wu helela evoyeni* (the dog's sweat varnishes into the skin). The proverb envisages the painful scenario where a person exhausts their efforts in some undertaking, aiming to yield gains and only to discover that their efforts were in vain. Symbolically, the dog incarnates all the applicants who exhausted their 'alls' as they hopefully aimed for the target post. They were 'dogs' who were helpless but believed in the invincibility of the secretarial and examining bosses who would allegedly endorse their applications through with the final decision making entity – the Commission. They were dogs who would be outplayed in sexual triangles and quandriangles despite having families; dogs that presented the hard-earned valuables to the masters at the expense of their families. Hence Phutuma helplessly declares:

Mi ri hina hi rila ka mani Tatana Xiphongo? Hina hi timbyana
ta n'wina. (To whom do you think we beg for assistance? We are
your dogs) p. 77.

Both in the foregoing excerpt and the symbolic import of the entire text, the reference dog in semiotic terms convey connotations of servitude, helplessness, hopelessness, vulnerability and gullibility to multiple and inexhaustible opportunistic forces. In some social respects, a dog would connote dirty drives and dealings exhibited in humanity. In the text, the personified dog's drives and undertakings were largely manifested in the way textual players interacted through the consummate stolen waters, poison-fights, and all forms of underground undertakings that were meant to gain, despite considerations on moral integrity, the potential benefits understood as befitting for human survival, elevation or short-lived pleasure. Dogs are mostly loved for the mere performance of their master's directed tasks. They are owned, used and directed, often with threatening orders, or at times disappointingly betrayed with the master who neither embodies regret nor remorse.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study will be buttressed by "Faction", a theoretical perspective which according to Cuddon (1998), "originated around 1970 in United States to describe fictions which are blended with facts". It is a theory which holds that literature is a combination of both facts, fa-, and fiction, -ction, and ought to be analysed within the context of the writer's economic, social and political backdrop. This theoretical perspective looks at literature in more practical terms, as some form of human practical experience and therefore has to be used to fulfil real life engagements at workplaces, social encounters and deliberations, and the general imaging of the world as disguised and compressed within some given literary exhibition. This theory will be beneficial in guiding the present paper in driving the agenda for highlighting literary art as a diplomatic avenue and non-confrontational centre for a free display of life issues and a resultant admonishment of unwarranted socio-professional engagements, both in private and public spaces.

CORRUPTION

Morality and Loss of Codes at Work Places

Diza is depicted in clear terms, as a morally loose character, who can charge at any female at first glance. His moral loss becomes immediately evident during his conversation with Mikhenso, who doubles as Manoca's wife as well as one of the anxiety-ridden applicants for a Principal's post at Zamani school. Instead of directing Mikhenso towards professional guidance in her endeavour to win the heavily-competed post, he opts to seduce her until she desperately gives in to the 'beast'. The intimacy that concludes the matter unveils in the signature of hugging and kissing, as well as a firm promise not to divulge the secrecy by both parties. In his endeavour to convince Mikhenso as a man of integrity, Diza unconsciously exposes himself as a historical womaniser thus:

Ndzi kale ndzi tshika un'wana wa dlakuta lowo pfumala dikizelo.
(I once let down one prostitute who could not keep secrets)
p. 24

The excerpt above graphically captures how Diza strategically manipulates language for fruitful ends. The term 'dikizelo', which literally means a pot's lid, is here, carefully placed to symbolise and connote the divorcee's black, ugly and no longer enticing humany-mouth. Further connotations would emerge as some mouth that can be opened any time to emit and recklessly release the inner and burning concerns of the human heart (love affairs). In a sense, the zone of intimacy depicted by both Diza and Mikhenso substantially accords them morally loose and corrupt professionals.

Incidences of moral corruption also surface during nocturnal encounters and deliberations between Mikhenso and Xiphongo in which Mikhenso found herself entangled in a 'catch 20' situation. Her initial decision to have intimate ties with Diza became a trap for further seduction and psychological neurosis by Xiphongo who threatens to deliberately divulge the secretly locked affairs. This keeps Mikhenso trapped by a perpetual snaring hook of womanisers. She cannot retreat tough advancing is evidently and continuously becoming cancerous to her psychological stability and consciousness. She is a victim of some masculine circumstances.

Usualizing the unusual: Financial and material bribery called to question

Besides the implications delivered through moral corruption, the text is further darkened by situations that are tailored to initiate and coerce people "ku ba mati tingwenya ti etlela" (idiomatic construct for 'bribery') Chief among the beneficiaries of bribery are Diza, Xiphongo, who may at their will, extend their hands to direct the affairs of the Commission. When the text opens, the setting reveals Diza's office as a haven for deliberating professional, but especially corrupt schemes. It is already clear that some applicants have filed their applications with them, and that they are the powerful deciding 'devils' on who should be employed where, irrespective of higher offices on top of theirs. Hence, they often address themselves as "valoyi" (witches) who machinatively redirect people's course of life through their "vuloyi" (witchcraft) clandestine powers. This *vuloyi* motif is quite

recurring in the text, and it alludes to the otherworldly life exploits that are akin to a limited few, (hidden to many), and successfully defeats people's plans, privileges and fates unawares

Though Diza as the Chief Examining Officer appears to have been gaining a lot through bribery, the text details Xiphongo as having gained more than his boss. Xiphongo complains of having toiled for Diza for a noticeable space of time, and this has given him enough chance to learn the twists and turns of the game. He therefore finds it befitting for him to divert all the fortunes to himself, side-lining the master. He does this through directing applicants to himself and go on to generate lies to blind Diza. Though a preponderance of the applicants remain unveiled, the two prominent figures Xiculu and Phutuma make Xiphongo's corruption tower even higher through their 'conditionally coerced generosity'. On page 28, Xiculu presents a live sheep to Xiphongo, and continues to stretch the bribing process through a count of gifts. He desperately utters:

Famba u ya hlangua non'wini wena muhanyisi wa mina. Ri ta fika ra ku wisa ni ra mikhuvo ... Na mina ri ta ndzi xela dyambu ... (Go and clean your mouth my saviour. There shall be a day for rest and feasting ... It will dawn for me as well.) p.28

Xiculu displays a ready and deliberate move, but caught up in a self-reflective situation, yet unyielding to surrender. He is tired, financially broke and anxiety-ridden. His only hope is the chief traitor who is a man of many words entangled in a multiplicity of skewed deals. This corrupt chain is later on joined by Phutuma who bribes Xiphongo and finally defeats his friend Xiculu who had previously suffered pains to nourish Xiphongo with wealth accumulated from money lenders.

BETRAYAL

Confidence betrayal (betrayal of trust)

Instances of betrayal immediately become clear with Xiculu's encounter with Xiphongo. Xiculu, being a naive applicant of the vacant post at Zamani, he is seized by Xiphongo's deceitful claims of advocacy at higher levels to represent him so that he gets the post. Xiculu, having tried many posts before, in vain, thinks God has descended particularly to rescue him. Xiphongo's assuring words makes Xiculu a die hard, and even denies his family the luxury they deserve by taking special offers to "muhanyisi wa mina" (My sustainer) (p. 28), Xiphongo. In rethinking his double dealings, Xiphongo is ploughed by the realisation that he has betrayed Xiculu and makes futile efforts to erase the boggling notion thus:

Yaa, vanhu va hlupheka! ...Hi yena yexe a nga ba mati ya kona?
...Swona u ri khomile risiti ra ku ba mati? (Ooh, how desperate people are! Is he the only briber? Does he, in any case, have a receipt for bribery?) p. 88.

This betrayal of trust was not only leading to some kind of financial trauma, but created in Xiculu a psychological neurosis that, though not explicitly stated, branched to wildly embrace live anxieties on his image in society, back to his school Tirhelani, reasonable words to convince Basela (the money lender), his relationship with his wife who had previously rebuked him for wasting resources on Xiphongo for nothing and a myriad of such encircling opportunistic notions.

Betrayal of trust scenes further emerge when Xiculu opens wide his heart to Phutuma, who later on schemes to grab the same post initially reserved for him. Phutuma envied the post for a principal at Zamani School, and disappointingly, he probes and taps details from Xiculu on how he won the post before nicodemously tracing Xiculu's footprints to Xiphongo with the idea to offer the highest bid. The ultimate betrayal exhumes on the very opening day when Xiculu is heavily shocked to discover that the new Principal for Zamani is not him but his friend Phutuma.

Another betrayal of trust emerges from Mrs Xiculu's impatient and anxiety-ridden wait for Xiculu's unyielding endeavours. She is a victim entangled in a myriad of betrayals. She suffers betrayal from her own husband who has high and exaggerated hopes for the Principal's post at Zamani School. Xiculu himself suffers betrayal from Xiphongo who masterminds the corruption jingles as a middleman, or allegedly so, between the applicants and Diza as well as the Commission. Xiculu had great faith in Xiphongo and would visualise the greener parts of his life ahead. He consoles his wife thus:

Nkata mina, hakunene wo lava ku cukumeta nkateko lowu nga hi wela? Swilo leswinene phela a swi ti hi ku

olova. (My wife, do you really want to cast away the fortunate that has fallen us? Good things are not attained that easily) p.6

The final tying of events proved how the two were mere victims of betrayal when they discovered how fake the promises were. It is pathetic that the text is mired with numerous taints of betrayal throughout. Other instances include non-payment of monies borrowed from Bazela as well as incidences involving Xiphongo betraying Diza by denying him the truth regarding what transpired to Mikhenso. Xiphongo would also betray Diza by not submitting the bribes as he was supposed to.

Sexual/intimacy betrayal

Sexual betrayal or betrayal of intimacy is witnessed when Diza engages in love affairs with Manocha's wife, Mikhenso. The love tying the two manifests as betrayal to both Manocha and Diza's wife though she is not appearing on the pages. Readers are confronted with a dramatic scene where Diza successfully seduces Mikhenso (p.23) as evidenced by a kiss of intimacy that comes as a signature to their love covenant. Mikhenso reluctantly or otherwise gives in for want of a post that latter on slips from Xiculu's hands to Phutuma in the last miles of a long wait for it. This unveils how many a woman are tricked into half-hearted palmy moments for either petty benefits or nothing at all.

Diza is a tested and certified deceit when it comes to women. He has dealt with females before, driving them through the sweetness of his tongue to open wide their hearts for him. He had played the game before and has much faith in his tricks. He humbly advises Mikhenso saying, "Ntsena loko n'wina mi nga kota ku tshama hi xihundla lexi." (If only you would harbour this secret) p.23. Diza adds emphasis to his courtship by proving to Mikhenso how foolish she is to avoid a necessary path that all successful women in offices have trod. This intricacy compelled Mikhenso to slowly and helplessly succumb to the affair that later proved to be unyielding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that job applicants use proper channels when applying for work irrespective of their pushing factors. Those responsible for guiding the channels or shortlisting the successful applicants are also highly encouraged to be guided by professional ethics in all their endeavours to maintain the etiquette of professionalism. It is also recommended that married couples strive to maintain the chastity of their matrimonial relations by eschewing the seduction of unscrupulous womanisers posing either as government or company administrators.

CONCLUSIONS

The paper attempted to explore the varying dimensions and dynamics of folly at work places by government officials-cum administrators, endowed with the duty to exercise and display dignity, work etiquette and an enviable example in society. The greater population of key players in unscrupulous exercises were civil servants in the form of practising teachers thronging for a promotional post at Zamani School. The paper found out that many workers in government are guided by 'the end justifies the means approach' to attaining what you want. It has also been exposed that the many professional guides brought to the attention of employees at induction have no place in practice. The paper also found out that corrupt activities do not start at the bottom but at the top where administrators exercise it to squash out benefits from their desperate subordinates.

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