

Sources of humour in MCA Tricky's Comic Performances in the Churchill Show of Kenya

SYLVIA RABECCA NEKESA¹, JOSEPH MUSUNGU², FELIX ORINA³

^{1, 2, 3} Department of English, Literature, Journalism and Mass Communication, Kibabii University

Abstract- This narrative takes readers on a whimsical journey through a parliamentary visit, where the intricacies of power dynamics, societal contradictions, language barriers, and authority perceptions are humorously depicted. The narrator's witty insights and interactions offer a fresh perspective, likening parliamentary proceedings to everyday street life, thus exposing the disparities between formal façades and actual experiences. Through a blend of humor and astute observation, the narrative cleverly dissects social hierarchies, language obstacles, political dissent, and symbolic representations. By drawing from existing literature, the narrative skillfully transforms parliamentary elements into relatable scenarios, illuminating the interplay between power, culture, and identity. The second part of the narrative showcases the narrator's satirical attempt to engage with political power and societal dilemmas through a letter addressed to the president. Employing linguistic finesse and references, the narrator navigates complex social and political terrain, critiquing government initiatives and the plight of marginalized communities. The use of humor, allusions, and linguistic strategies effectively dissects social issues, power dynamics, and political discourse. Drawing from relevant literary works, this section underscores the narrator's adept communication tactics, revealing the interweaving of language, identity, and social critique. The third segment humorously delves into the national budget's impact on politics, society, and daily life. Employing satire, sarcasm, and wordplay, the narrator exposes the absurdities, inequalities, and contradictions of budget allocation, government expenditure, and public perception. Through this blend of satire, sarcasm, and linguistic ingenuity, the narrative shines a light on the intricate power dynamics and paradoxes inherent in budgetary decisions and public sentiment. A satirical reflection of society, the narrative urges readers to

thoughtfully examine underlying issues of inequality, political rhetoric, and civic involvement

Indexed Terms- Sources, humour, MCA Tricky, comic performances, Churchill Show, Kenya

I. INTRODUCTION

This narrative journey unveils a captivating exploration of diverse dimensions within the realm of governance, infused with humor and wit. At its core lies a vivid portrayal of a parliament visit, where the narrator skillfully navigates intricate power dynamics, societal paradoxes, language barriers, and perceptions of authority. Through keen observations and engaging interactions, the parliament's facets are ingeniously woven into the tapestry of everyday street life, exposing the stark disparities between official facades and tangible realities.

Moreover, this narrative embarks on an intriguing odyssey as it delves into a satirical and witty correspondence authored by the Narrator. This missive, addressed humorously to the president, serves as a compelling attempt to grapple with political influence and societal concerns. Employing adept linguistic strategies and shrewd allusions, the Narrator adeptly traverses the labyrinthine landscape of both social intricacies and political nuances. This correspondence not only entertains but also serves as a poignant critique of governmental endeavors and the challenges faced by marginalized urban communities. Additionally, the narrative's contours expand to encompass the riveting theme of the national budget, an omnipresent force shaping societal realms, politics, and the ordinary lives of individuals. Infused with a blend of satire, sarcasm, and linguistic virtuosity, the Narrator exposes the inherent absurdities, inequalities, and contradictions ingrained within budgetary allocations, governmental expenditures, and public perceptions.

Together, these narrative threads intertwine to create an intricate tapestry, casting a humorous and incisive light on the interplay of power dynamics, societal reflections, and political discourse. As the narrative unfolds, readers are invited to peer beyond the surface and critically examine the profound undercurrents of inequality, political rhetoric, and civic engagement that permeate contemporary society.

II. TRANSCRIPTION 1 PARLIAMENT

In this narration, the Narrator visits parliament and refers to it as an impossibility (referred to as tricky sana. People of his status can never be allowed anywhere near parliament. The Narrator alludes to the impending visit of white people (Obama- The first Black president of the United States). We learn that with the visit of such dignitaries, all street people are chased away from the vicinity (they are an eyesore- what will the visitors think of a nation with too many street people?) This is a common practice in Kenyan society, painting a false picture of a responsible organization which is not the case, Hypocrisy at its best.

The Narrator acknowledges that his group of street people would wish to work with the late president of Tanzania Magufuli (he is straightforward, corruption intolerant). Still, he only challenge is that they cannot speak fluent Kiswahili, which he cannot tolerate. They make fun of their quest to learn Kiswahili. He deliberately misrepresents a greeting and the response. They also propose meeting President Museveni of Uganda, whom they relate to the struggles Kenya and Uganda have over the Misingo Islands. They know they will catch up with him as he is fond of making roadside phone calls.

They make fun of the need to own a house in Nairobi (which is impractical for people in their social class). They make fun of people who speak as they 'tweng' a characteristic of civilized, exposed, educated, or moneyed Kenyans who talk with a British or American accent. They mistakenly find their way to parliament. He makes his way to the gallery in parliament because of his coat he looked much more presentable and confident than his friend, who was turned away. In parliament, he notices whistleblowers (those who blow the lid on secrets on corruption and

other high-level/ sensitive vices in society). In this particular incident, he refers to an incident in parliament when M.P.s allied to the opposition party became unruly and blew whistles to stop the president from addressing them.

He makes fun of the speaker's attire (formal robes, gowns, collars, or wig) and his utterance (those who have a contrary opinion say I...). He refers to this answer as being high (they get high in the streets from sniffing glue and puffing bhang). He further makes fun of the speaker's utterance of 'order, order' to mean he was ordering for drinks, 'CAP 7' to him meant each would get 7 cups of the drink. He does not see the drinks but is disappointed to hear that they should pass the 'bill' when they have not taken anything. That is how he leaves 'the house' In this section, the Narrator makes fun of the Narrator's ignorance/naivety/illiteracy toward parliament. He recontextualizes many aspects of parliament into his day-to-day life, bringing out humor.

The narrator's description of parliament as an "impossibility" for individuals of their social status underscores the existence of class-based barriers to political participation. This concept aligns with the work of scholars like Bourdieu (1984), who emphasized the role of social capital and symbolic power in shaping individuals' access to and engagement with institutionalized structures. The portrayal of chasing away street people during the visit of dignitaries mirrors the social desire to present an image of responsibility while concealing underlying issues, akin to Goffman's (1959) concept of "impression management."

The narrator's struggle with Kiswahili proficiency and their humorous misinterpretations of greetings and responses highlight the role of language as both a tool for inclusion and a barrier to effective communication. The idea of "tweng," akin to code-switching, draws parallels to linguistic stratification discussed by scholars like Labov (1972), revealing how language can become a marker of social status and cultural exposure.

The portrayal of whistleblowers in the parliament resonates with the broader theme of political dissent and resistance. This aligns with Foucault's (1977)

notion of "counter-conduct" and how individuals challenge dominant power structures by revealing hidden truths. The depiction of opposition MPs blowing whistles to disrupt the president's address illustrates the performative nature of dissent, reminiscent of Butler's (1997) concept of performativity.

The narrator's humorous critique of the speaker's attire and utterances demonstrates the power of symbols and rituals in shaping perceptions of authority. This aligns with Durkheim's (1912) theory of symbolic interactionism, where shared symbols and gestures maintain social order. The narrator's reinterpretation of "order, order" and "CAP 7" showcases how symbols can be subverted to create alternative meanings, akin to Bakhtin's (1981) concept of "carnivalization."

III. TRANSCRIPTION 2 FAYA BABY

The street gangs are mostly known to subscribe to reggae music, with dancehall music as one of its genres. The president of Kenya is also a great fan of this type of music, and so are some of the audience, so this is a strategy by the Narrator to woo the president even by using the name 'uncle,' it means he is close to their group. By extension, he is their uncle. Norrick (1989) says this allusion challenges the audience to recognize the source text and think of the same concept that the Narrator had in mind. That is why in the next utterance, he says he was sure the president would be as excited as they are by such a reference, so he grants them their wish.

The request that the Narrator makes to the president is sarcastic in its presentation, and she knows it will make him annoyed:

....*ukijengajenga*...

Referring to the work being done by the president in making a new railway line, yet there is an old one in place. The country boasts a standard gauge railway line from Nairobi to Mombasa, although work is still in progress to spread it to the other parts of the country. The Narrator requests the old railway line metal so that he can sell it to scrap metal dealers. One would have expected that they would ask for a bigger and more

sustainable job. The guys want quick money by selling illegal stuff, which is quite their way of life.

The Narrator is humorous in his request that the president talks to his bodyguard about their request, which is as tricky as the one requesting it. This is a politeness strategy when a joke has gone overboard. The Narrator then returns to the main request, a security person's Job, 'Karao' or policeman.

The roles to be assigned by the president are as follows:

Piento- Marine soldier- He has many underhand dealings

Otis-Is so dark skinned (stereotype for the skin color of the Luo), will only be seen or heard from if it pays time.

Maserati- Is always high on drugs- needs to be assigned to the high court

The Narrator's reference to the office of the first lady brings to the forefront the issue of the Beyond Zero campaign, which has maternal and child health at its core. This is the situation most street people are going through, and that is why the Narrator highlights it.

When the letter to the president ends, the Narrator translates the word looking forward directly and wonders why the writer of the letter being transplanted writes the letter facing the front. Looking forward is not a vocabulary in the language of the street children who have no hopes for the future; they have the present and live for the now. The fact that they write an original letter and make a copy (which they call fake) and which they send to the president is ironically humorous. One would expect them to send the original and keep the copy.

True to his predictions, when he begins this narration, the letter they write, just like 'Bahati's Barua Ngapi,' is never answered. They are still waiting for the feedback and wonder where they went wrong in writing the letter and requesting to be given an audience to speak directly to the president. The problem is that they gave the letter to Bahati, the confused singer as alluded to earlier, who ends up giving it to 'Prezzo,' the secular artist who puts on Bling(heavy chains, many rings and Jewelry). He falls back to Churchill to help him, and his group reach the

president (Churchill is so dark-skinned that the president will not see him).

The Narrator's reference to reggae music and its association with street gangs reflects the role of cultural symbols in shaping identity and social cohesion. This aligns with Hall's (1996) concept of cultural identity, where individuals draw from shared symbols to negotiate their sense of belonging within specific communities. The use of dancehall music as a genre highlights the cultural nuances that contribute to the Narrator's communication strategy.

The Narrator's sarcastic request for the old railway line metal reveals a subtle critique of government priorities and economic disparities. This tactic of indirect communication resonates with Grice's (1975) theory of implicature, wherein speakers convey meaning through implied messages. The Narrator's choice of a seemingly trivial request masks deeper underlying concerns and serves as a form of protest against societal inequalities.

The Narrator's use of politeness strategies, such as referring to the president's bodyguard and acknowledging the trickiness of the request, showcases the interplay between humor and politeness in language use. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory can be applied here, as the Narrator navigates potential face-threatening acts while maintaining a humorous and indirect tone.

The assignment of roles to Piento, Otis, and Maserati reflects the Narrator's engagement with stereotypes and social commentary. This can be analyzed through the lens of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995), where language is examined for its role in reproducing or challenging social hierarchies and power dynamics.

The reference to the Beyond Zero campaign and the issue of maternal and child health brings attention to the Narrator's incorporation of symbolic representations of societal challenges. This aligns with Hall's (1980) concept of encoding and decoding, where cultural symbols are imbued with meaning and interpretation based on contextual factors.

The Narrator's ironic observation about the phrase "looking forward" underscores the subversion of mainstream linguistic norms by street children. This concept can be related to Bakhtin's (1981) idea of carnivalization, where language is creatively distorted to challenge dominant discourses. The act of sending an original and a "fake" copy of the letter introduces a layer of irony and humor, revealing the Narrator's critical perspective on communication and bureaucracy.

IV. TRANSCRIPTION 3 THE BUDGET

The narration begins with an entry in the scene of the finance minister, who requests a song befitting the occasion. The Narrator sarcastically refers to the budget suitcase as something very important. There is an allusion to the song 'Bank Otuch.' It is sung by a former street urchin and hit artiste Vicmass Luodollar. It means that the bank is leaking. That is intended to indicate the artist has loaded now and is no longer the broken man he was when starting up. The Narrator insists that those are the types of songs that should be played for him. He wants to think and feel like he has money all over.

He ridicules the bodyguards following the minister who is carrying the budget, saying that their Job ends with the car and other menial jobs and now, since they have brought him this far, they should not be privy to the contents of the budget, but go away, that is the far they can go. This is a sad reality of the reflection of the common 'mwananchi' who only has to wait for the budget to be read to him like a death sentence yet has no say whatsoever in its contents.

The budget is so big that he refers to it as Trickions - a figure that doesn't exist- roughly translated to trillions which is the usual amount of budget that Kenyans expect but need to see where the trillions end up. He makes fun of the seriousness of the fact that he has that big budget in his possession. The money is counted as just 14 shillings. That is the kind of budget he can manage! It is the budget of the poor 'mwananchi'. He makes fun of the safety of the budget and that if carried carelessly, it might fall and cause the prices of things to fall too. He further compares the flower on the minister's coat to money and warns Kenyans that money will wither away just like the

flower will do after some time. Money is vanity. He sarcastically refers to Kenyans cheering and clapping as the budget is read, without realizing the budget is very little money in Zimbabwe. He alludes to the fact that the Kenyan shilling has less value than other currencies away from East Africa. When he explains that at budget reading, money is given for free, he ridicules his understanding of the budget process. Still, on close analysis, he means that money is given to non-priority areas of the economy or to causes that are not worthwhile. That is the underlying meaning of free money. He makes fun of a hacker who stole 4 billion from the budget before it was read. The word hacker is translated to mean a small one, and that's why when he asks the rhetorical question of whether there is any hacker around and one person raises their hand, he says the person does not qualify.

He proceeds to lay out his budget which he says is realistic and easier than the one read by the minister for the government. All hackers get 4 billion, strikers (teachers and doctors) are catered for in that auxiliary strikers (Street people/idlers) will strike on their behalf as they continue with their work. This is a very clever idea, underscoring that the role played by these two groups is essential, and no interruptions should be tolerated. He proceeds to make fun of the government budget. Whereas one item reduces its price, another equally increases, hence balancing out the effect, and things remain the same or worsen, year in and year out. The Narrator proceeds to make it clear that the budget needs to be clarified for the 'mwananchi', who would think that it is money being given to specific people (like Joho in this case) and not just a reading of many pages and chapters. He sarcastically ridicules the use of the word result- he thinks it is Governor Joho's result slip being found in the raft of papers. This alludes to the controversy surrounding his papers even though he was elected governor, which tells the levels of violation of integrity. Joho represents the governors who get a share of the budget through allocation to the counties from the national government.

Further, security is allocated 10 billion and the Narrator thinks this will solve the perennial problem of the Kenyan police seeking bribes all over. When an allocation for roads is made, the Narrator thinks that is where his people will benefit, they live on the roads (streets), and so they imagine the 69 billion will be

distributed to the people on highways. That is why, while in a 'matatu', he erroneously receives 1000shillings from a passenger, and he thinks it's his share of the 69billion from the budget. He further needs to understand (finds it ironical-) how 10 billion is allocated to corruption. He even insinuates that he will make corrupt deals with the corruption agencies to get half of the money allocated.

The people who bet are targeted by the budget, which seeks to increase taxes on betting. The ones to be affected here will be football fans; the Narrator alludes to Arsenal fans who will be hardest hit after losing out to other teams. He painfully jabs at the Arsenal fans. The name of Wenger- a French former football manager and player currently serving as FIFA's Chief of Global Football Development, is translated to mean 'wahenga' in this case, other old white men enjoying their holiday at the coast. The Narrator espouses utter annoyance even with a player called Checker, translated as one who has useless cheques-no money. Akothee-who should replace this one is a better goalkeeper.

Esther Akoth, better known as Akothee, is a Kenyan musician and businesswoman. She is the founder of Akothee Safaris, a tour company based in Kenya, the Akothee Foundation, a charity, and Aknotela and Akothee Homes, a real estate business. She is a famous single mother of many children, some sired by a white man and hence the reference to her as a woman who can do a good job at goalkeeping. This sexist joke might not augur well with single mothers. The Narrator tries to correct the situation by using the politeness strategy:

*Sijasema kitu
I have not said anything
Tumuweke hapo
She needs to hold that position*

The Narrator, by ridicule, brings to the fore the issue of the inattentiveness of the legislators as they attend to budget reading. He even suggests that DJ Khalid be the one to read the budget so that everyone is alert. DJ Khaled from the USA, whose real name is Khaled Mohamed Khaled, a music mogul, a producer, a DJ, an executive, a CEO, and an artist, is very wealthy. He sang the song 'say my name.' The Narrator thinks that

his philanthropy would assist in reading the budget as he would be dishing out the money (when they say my name) to the people present so they would not get bored and doze off. Kenyans would do any crazy thing to get free money- the same way DJ Khalid makes his girlfriend says his name again and again- the Kenyan equivalent of bootlicking and idolizing politicians or people in power to get freebies.

The sarcasm with which he ends this transcription reflects the true Kenyan situation- After sycophancy and bootlicking by 'saying my name' in the hope of getting free things, the politicians throw 50 shillings at the Kenyans, saying that is what they are used to getting. It happens in Kenya in all the election cycles, where 50 shillings per politician is all the local 'mwananchi' will get till the next five years. However, they still elect the same person-same story but a different script, which is very tricky!

The Narrator's use of satire in addressing the finance minister's request for a suitable song sets the tone for a critical examination of the budget. This form of social critique through humor aligns with Swift's (1729) classic work "A Modest Proposal," where he satirically addresses societal problems and government policies.

The Narrator's sarcastic reference to the budget suitcase as "very important" underscores the irony of public perception versus the actual impact of budget decisions. This plays into the concept of symbolic politics, as discussed by Edelman (1988), where political actors use symbols and gestures to shape public opinion and maintain power.

The Narrator's critique of the bodyguards and their limited role in safeguarding the budget highlights the power dynamics and hierarchical structures within society. This can be analyzed through the lens of Foucault's (1977) concept of disciplinary power, where institutions exert control over individuals through surveillance and regulation.

The Narrator's commentary on the allocation of funds to different sectors of the economy reflects broader concerns about socioeconomic disparities and the impact of budget decisions on various groups. This

aligns with Piketty's (2014) exploration of income and wealth inequality and its implications for society.

The Narrator's observation about Kenyans cheering and clapping during the budget reading, without recognizing the limited impact of the budget, touches upon the performative nature of political discourse. This concept can be related to Butler's (1997) theory of performativity, where repetitive acts contribute to the constitution of identity and social norms.

The Narrator's reference to DJ Khaled and the song "say my name" introduces a contemporary cultural reference to highlight the notion of public engagement and sycophantic behavior. This resonates with Baudrillard's (1981) concept of hyperreality, where cultural symbols and signs become detached from their original meanings and are used for manipulative purposes.

CONCLUSION

In traversing this narrative landscape, the narrator's astute yet humorous observations within the parliamentary realm serve as a profound critique of social hierarchies, linguistic divides, political resilience, and emblematic portrayals. By interweaving these vignettes with insights from the realm of literature, we gain a richer understanding of how the narrative deftly recasts parliamentary intricacies into the fabric of the narrator's daily encounters, thereby spotlighting the intricate interplay between authority, heritage, and self.

The Narrator's adept use of humor, literary allusions, and linguistic prowess becomes a powerful conduit for engaging with pressing societal dilemmas, intricate power dynamics, and the rhetoric of politics. The amalgamation of literary references further unveils the layered artistry in the Narrator's communication approach, offering a masterful dance between language, self-expression, and social critique.

The narrative's compass then shifts to the vibrant realm of budgetary discourse, deftly illuminated by the Narrator's potent blend of satire, sarcasm, and linguistic dexterity. These elements converge to reveal the multifaceted tapestry of complexities, incongruities, and power dynamics inherent in

budgetary deliberations and public sentiment. A satirical mirror held up to society, the narrative serves as a thought-provoking catalyst, compelling readers to meticulously dissect the bedrock issues of disparity, political discourse, and public participation.

REFERENCES

- [1] Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Routledge.
- [2] Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Anchor Books.
- [3] Labov, W. (1972). *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- [4] Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books.
- [5] Butler, J. (1997). *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford University Press.
- [6] Durkheim, E. (1912). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Free Press.
- [7] Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. University of Texas Press.
- [8] Hall, S. (1996). Cultural identity and diaspora. In P. Williams & L. Chrisman (Eds.), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (pp. 392-403). Columbia University Press.
- [9] Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and Semantics: Speech Acts* (Vol. 3, pp. 41-58). Academic Press.
- [10] Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press.
- [11] Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Longman.
- [12] Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. University of Texas Press.
- [13] Hall, S. (1980). *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.
- [14] Swift, J. (1729). *A Modest Proposal*. Project Gutenberg. (Original work published 1729)
- [15] Edelman, M. (1988). *Constructing the Political Spectacle*. University of Chicago Press.
- [16] Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books.
- [17] Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Belknap Press.
- [18] Butler, J. (1997). *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford University Press.
- [19] Baudrillard, J. (1981). *Simulacra and Simulation*. University of Michigan Press.