

Book Review

ALAIN Ricard, 2000.

EBRAHIM HUSSEIN: SWAHILI THEATRE AND INDIVIDUALISM.

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Alain Ricard's essay echoes the Swahili idiom *dawa ya saba-ganga*, meaning 'an efficacious remedy for seven or more ailments'. At the core of the essay's etiological intent, lies the psychoanalytical thrust¹, situating writer's mental attitude as symptomatic of his writings – indeed essential to an enigmatic writer like Hussein whose *persona* impinges upon his texts. The suggestion is: to understand obscured work(s) of a writer like Hussein, one needs to delve, in a great part, into the author's history, biography and psychology – though not exactly in Freudian's 'accounting for the presence of sexuality' in the text. It is a means by which Ricard provokes different kinds of reading of Hussein's works based on different perspectives and not necessarily the commonplace reading hinged upon a sociological parameter.

Next – Ricard, just in passing, comments in a tangent manner, Zanzibar troubled history and Tanzania's political 'fad' in general – past and present, always touching discreetly Hussein's *subdued political convictions* if not *clear commitment* suppressed in muteness and rejection – and these, it seems, always precipitating in his works in a symbolic and obscured personal view or 'private' style "... [I]n 1984 I obtained a passage to Zanzibar by a lucky combination of circumstances. The island was opening up to the outside world, twenty years after a violent revolution, followed by the massacre and exodus of a part of its population.... The hidden face of the United Republic of Tanzania thus showed itself to me: a little, silent, corrupt police-state, crowned by a magnificent museum and the former Sultan's palace, renamed the House of Remembrance and, closed to visitors...." (ix).

Then there follows an exposé of Hussein's affiliations, his disquiet, liking and dislikes, confines and movement, frustration and suppressed anger, his historical, social, cultural and religious backgrounds, his smouldering inflictions and inner surges thereof, his political outlook – all affecting his attitude towards life and how he regards the state, creative writing, theatricality and performance. Thus, Ricard, provides on the one hand, a discussion of Hussein 'a person', 'a playwright', 'a theatre historian', 'a teacher', 'a disgruntled scholar' – and on the

¹ Not of the magnitude of Freudian, Jungian, Kleinian or Lecanian clinical psychoanalysis.

other, an evaluation of the works of Hussein from Ricard's own point of view vis-à-vis other critical remarks that are seemingly lacking in their assertions. Ricard puts forward this 'lacking' rather diplomatically, avoiding the bluntness that makes these criticisms themselves wanting. Let us delineate one facet of Ricard's essay after another.

There is certainly something about Zanzibar's history and politics that deeply touches Hussein's psychology to warrant a mention in the first pages of Ricard's introductory chapter. Neither Ricard nor any critic so far, has been able to overtly tell us the reason behind this. However, the 'symptomatic' reading of Hussein's works and Ricard's elucidation, 'do' offer some hints – just fuzzy inklings so to say. Can it be what Ricard (79) calls Hussein's 'political voluntarism' at a seemingly fervent stage of Zanzibar revolution that made him seen by his critics as non-committal, the result of which is the widening gap between the critics and the writer? Was it Hussein's nostalgia and compelling sentiments of *essentialist identity* that made him stronger than the bubbling of socialist hot spring and hence prophesising the impending danger associated with the fractured identity? In the words of Ricard (84) "... [c]an a native from Kilwa whose patronymic name evokes prophet, and whose grandfather was a respected leader of a brotherhood easily, settle his account with history, and distance himself that much from the former suzerainty, Zanzibar? Is it not this predicament of unstable identity that made him undergo a radical questioning of vested power in the new leadership" (79) and made him assert in *Ngao ya Jadi* (46) that "... [A]kafahamu ... Tena akafahamu ... Sheria ngumu ... Hasa kwa moyo uliokuwa huria ... Kwamba ... Kwamba kila mpiganaji idhilali ... Yeye pia lazima huwa mdhili...." (He understood ... indeed he understood ... a compelling rule ... especially to the heart that is free ... that ... that every fighter of oppression ... must himself also be an oppressor... [our translation]). Or, can it be just what Fiebach (1997: 11) calls "... [p]ainful side of lived 'multiculturalism' ... the problematic that may arise from adopting traits of an actual or seemingly colonising, foreign cultural canon to try to signify and thus to deal with brutal conflicts and difference within one's own general cultural and societal fabric"? In other words, Hussein sees and points in his works, the spectre of a new form of oppression lurking in history "... [I]t is not only the invaders from overseas who are the murderers, the enemies of emancipation-ruling strata from nearby, from within the African realm – are perhaps, as formidable oppressive forces as Germans...." (12) .

The culmination of this 'thesis' is reached in Hussein's *Mashetani* (The Devils) where Tanzanian society is shown to be ridden with conflicts generated by two opposing forces; one ascending the social ladder and the other descending it. We are told in *Mashetani* that the egalitarianism and national integration is impossible because "... [M]panda ngazi na mshuka ngazi hawawezi kushikana mikono ... Wewe unaishi leo. Mimi ninaishi jana. Tutakuwaje marafiki? Na kila leo yako ni kidato cha kesho yako. Mimi, kila leo yangu ni kidato cha jana zangu. Na kila nikienda huko, nikirudi ninarudi na hadithi ... hadithi za mashetani ..." (*Mashetani* 56). (One who climbs the stairs and one who comes down cannot hold

hands ... You are living today. I am living yesterday. How can we be friends? While every today of yours is a rung of your tomorrow. As for me, every today of mine is a rung of my yesterdays. And every time I go there, when I come back, I come back with stories ... stories of the devils – [our translation]). This, of course, revealing the fact that Kitaru's parents stand for the *nouveaux riches* who can buy cars easily (*Mashetani* 45), the Tanzanian élite that gets rich capitalising on the still prevailing market forces watering down much of the Arusha policy of Ujamaa-socialism. Juma's family, and thus Juma's socio-cultural attitude, stands for those who seem to lose out after independence (Fiebach 1997: 13).

Hussein's silent dissidence infuses more than being averse to the imposition from 'the political establishment' and non-committal to official policies rejecting any idea of succumbing to the absolute power mitigated in 'political humanism' – and this obviously so when he sensed that part of this power was being used to fracture a particular identity. We however, learn more of his silent dissidence as Ricard unfolds 'the person' behind 'the persona'.

What comes out underneath the facade is Hussein's deviation from the commonly accepted paradigm and political consensus – the idea of him standing not in opposition but aloof in a positive way, by refraining to use a language which was adapted and made to impose strange constraints on the writer's work. Hussein – according to Ricard (xi) – tries to avoid this in order to protect the singularity of his voice. Referring to one of the thematic motifs of Hussein *Ngao ya Jadi*, Ricard characterises the imposed language like this:

Writing becomes entirely socialised and reduced to the aims of society, not in pursuit of a truth, which would come forth from its own movement. The voice has to be in harmony with party ideology, its official speeches and political cant. But writing is green and not dried out. I like the image of Zanzibar's jujube tree – forever green until a creeper chokes it and turns into dead wood. A living voice, the perpetually new rhythm of abrasive writing in search of truth, embarked upon a spiritual quest not directly inscribed in the instituted religions, but not scornful of them either (xi).

Then there follows Ricard's chapter entitled 'A Heaven of Peace' (1–13) in which he combines relevant pieces of information: 'scenery' (*for the detachment of Kariakoo where Hussein lives, the popular Swahili neighbourhood from the 'city centre' which is the European part and Indian market area*), 'linguistics' (*to show Hussein speaks Swahili, English, German and French – hence enrichment of 'multiculturalism' that both Fiebach and Ricard, in one way or another, recognise as preoccupying Hussein's mental attitude*), 'history' (*for moulding not only 'the person' Hussein, but the society in which he is absorbed and from which he draws themes, motifs and tropes*), 'politics' (*for showing global interest of the land Tanzania, hence diversity of occupation and (re)occupation by world powers, the act of which creates contradictions – i.e. opposing but relational dichotomies as European/African, German East Africa/British Empire, The*

Reich/Sultan, Independence/Colonialism [implied]), religion (as part of contending ideologies affecting variedly all the people here as the influences are represented in varying icons such as the Catholic and Lutheran churches, mosque of the Manyema, Ismaili Mosque, enormous mosque criss-crossed with minarates with strange, onion-shaped domes of the duodecimal Shiites, of the faith of Imam Khomeni, Swami Temple ...), 'commerce' (for providing convenience and connecting this part of the world with capitalism), 'contemporary biographical notes' (to perceive Hussein's response from his physical, social, historical and religious environment in the hope that it may open some outlets to let loose his inner thoughts and emotions that may be tickling in his texts) – all meticulously described as background information that may help to uncover some of the enigmas evolving from his works.

From page 5–13, begin Ricard's diary notes, centred on his consecutive meetings with Hussein, or more precisely, Hussein's ensuing story and biography inevitably connected with his works and his comments about other authors (e.g. Behrangi, Salman Rushdie, Ngugi, Nabhany ...) and their works. These diary notes are punctuated with Ricard's comments as information about Hussein's and Ricard's encounter with other prominent people (mainly religious leader and literary figures) is also brought to interplay. The meetings, diary notes and encounters with important people help to throw light to an array of events that are directly or indirectly connected with Hussein, his life and his works.

For example, first – we are shown in the essay that Islam is not just Hussein religion but family business since the family has been at the centre of its leadership and agendas. For example, the family is believed to have introduced the brotherhood of *Shadhliya* to the continent (6). His paternal grandfather was a great Imam (Islamic leader) who did not support nationalists. However, though Hussein goes to pray at the mosque he is not a militant Muslim (8). Actually he is a defender of secularism (9).

Second – though we are now generally shown a Hussein who is shunning official line of the politics of his country, this it seems, 'only' after disillusionment since he was in his youth, a TANU militant (10). Now that Hussein has discovered that the people from the coast should be treated better than they are and one should avoid rejecting them he reveals what he thinks of Mwalimu Nyerere "... [T]he Mwalimu has two bedside books: the Bible and the Arusha Declaration ..." (9–10).

Third, we learn of Hussein's nostalgia, especially of Berlin – not for the sake of it, but as a place where under the guidance of his professor Fiebach, he was made a playwright, a theorist, a dramatist, and a poet of outstanding merit, where he met and associated with important people from the drama world of the famous Berliner Ensemble, where he reflected on Hamlet and Shakespeare, where he learnt more about Brecht's theory and theatrical method, Brecht who remains greatly admired by Hussein.

Fourth – his profound devotion to art especially theatrical performance, made him withdraw from active indulgence when he felt that the society is not

interested in it – so much so that Ricard was led to ask “... [W]hy in all the French and English writings on Tanzania, is there so little interest in literature in general, and in Hussein’s work in particular?” (xii). Hussein’s subsequent resignation is revealed in his response to Ricard’s question as to why he isolates himself? Hussein answers “... [I] am driven to the corner; there is no room for me. There are art schools and institutes everywhere, but people don’t care a damn about art, they don’t know what it means. And yet I write, I carry on, people don’t believe it. And when someone from outside world comes, I give him a text to show him that I am still working, to know what he thinks of it (9) ...” It is not surprising that Hussein trusts only scholars from outside for the interest and knowledge of art (literature), one can feel there is a complete decline now of art and culture in Tanzania compared with how the situation was in the 70s and 80s. It is evident in the dwindling role of publishing and reading culture. Perhaps, by implication, Hussein’s reaction has meant that what has mattered most in Tanzania is ‘partisan’ politics and nowadays money and petty business:

Ebrahim (Hussein) writes at home; he tells me that there are no teachers, no critics, no publishers and no readers. When one has seen something of the office of the Tanzania Publishing House, one understands what Ebrahim (Hussein) means by saying that there are no real publishers... (9)

In the same vein, Hussein considers industry a threat to art/literature or live performance, especially the impact of video with its ability to reproduce mimetic works of fiction, causing the death of cinema and to certain extent the theatre (11). And what comes out of most recently established state, private and transnational television channels, the fear is on domination of foreign cultural influences.

Fifth, Hussein’s great interest and fascination in Brecht’s theory and theoretical method which is put cautiously as Ricard shows that Hussein’s eagerness to provide himself with appropriate tools to connect with culture, is only realised by avoiding turning this method of analysis into the basis for a new religion. The distrust of the world of politics is so great to Hussein – especially after a Kenyan incident that had turned out badly – that made him not wanting to have anything to do with his former university colleagues or to travel outside his country, even to Kenya to collect his royalties or to respond to official invitations. He has sentenced himself to a sort of internal exile where his intellectualism is relegated to selling of salt from Kilwa his hometown. All this aberration is derived from his radical pessimism which makes him ask Ricard “... [W]hat have we done to deserve separation, lack of love ... The result is a tragic conception of existence, an acute sense of dignity, of values, of their derisive nature. But also their importance, a radical pessimism concerning this society where every thing is corrupt: politics, education, values. He no longer has any desire to teach in the kingdom of Miss Tanzania; there is no more room for him. The only faith he has left is in his art ...” (13). In this connection, Ricard discusses with Hussein the *plebeijisch* as the dialectic richness of point of view of those that are dominated.

Chapter 2 of Ricard’s essay is devoted to theoretical issues, especially

Hussein's pursued theor(ies), theatrical and dramatist method(s). It is historically inclined, showing Hussein move from the outset of his career to his zenith, in terms of his theatrical and dramatist influences, his schooling and training, his reading scope and discover(ies), his experience, his stepping into new domains, probing, adopting and ushering his own style(s). His doctoral thesis bears most of his later influences as he reveals that during colonial era there was no Swahili theatre to talk of. The theatre that existed was a foreign one performed in schools or in theatre halls for Europeans and Indians – like *The Little Theatre* in Oyster Bay. Soon scholars, including Hussein realised that 'Africans' too did have something to offer for theatre. Then the whole conglomeration of culture through performing art was drawn into the conception of theatre and popular tradition: drama performances delivered in foreign languages enacted by foreigners, school dramatic societies based on ethnicity and race, the tom-tom on parade, a percussion brass band, *Maulid Barazanji* performance celebrating the birth of the prophet Muhammad, *dhikir* and *Maulid ya Houm*, ritual performance(s) derived from Sufi tradition, *Taarab*, *Kichekesho* a theatrical interludes provided in the performance of *Taarab*, *Nataki*, a form of Indian dance, oral narratives, the staging of these recitals, the oral heroic poetic tradition of the *Bahima* and the *Bahaya* or the *Bukerebe* of the Great Lakes, the political theatre or the *playlet* that was developed later as a kind of theatre for development and ideology. All these diverse theatrical sources that were discussed by Hussein were potentials for the development of drama. Naturally, some of these might have found their way into Hussein's works as well as in the works of other writers.

The only problem however, was how to bring to work the whole palette of entertainment whose entities were quite disparate. An art theory was needed to use popular forms for socio-cultural and political liberation. Hussein was introduced to the befitting theory by professor of drama J. Fiebach. This was to be Brecht's theory – a theory that has drawn attention and interest to young African artists of those years, including Wole Soyinka. The interest in the method, however, was not wholly in its affinity with liberation but also a concern on artistry, on appealing to the spectator's or listener's reflection (29). Hence the method was not used without exchange of polemics between ideological camps represented by Soyinka, Fiebach, Hussein, Ngugi, Bakary Traoré and others. As usual in African literary criticism or in any criticism – such a debate is centred on the balance between form and content. Ricard rightly discusses this in passing, as he focuses on Hussein a person, his theatrical methods, his theory, his works and polemics ensued from them. But he cannot help taking sides, thereby demonstrating the problem of another model of literary criticism, which seems 'wanting' in Swahili literary scholarship. Thus, Ricard comes out quite assertive in defence of literary immortality of Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest* (30):

The Nigerian plays on political denunciation dating from the sixties have been forgotten, but *Kongi Harvest* remains one of the figures of power in Africa, a figure against which it is necessary to defend itself today. Wole Soyinka play is still topical today, and that is certainly an original way,

true to art, to change the world, by imposing on the world its own terms of reference, for example, Ubu or Kongi.

The analogy based on Ruganda, Ngugi and Hussein methods and styles of writing drama is used to show Hussein at the crossroads as a question lingers on: Which of these methods and style would influence his direction? Hussein ultimately finds his own way, but not without the influence of the works of his compatriots whose works he regards as being most important "... [H]e felt solidarity with Ngugi confronted with authoritarian power, but could not accept the aesthetic and political solution of his Kenyan colleagues ..." (36). He was aware of what Ricard calls 'cant' or in the case of Ngugi's blunt linguistic articulation of oppression, humiliation and dire poverty of Kenyan workers and peasant, but in his last play *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thiem*, he uses Ruganda's world and drama technique, of mixing incursions into the subconscious with realistic dialogue. In other of his oeuvre, Hussein goes beyond Ngugi's Marxist theory by delving deeper into poetic vein at the risk of being obscure. It was the opacity of his style that made the debate about what should constitutes literature for liberation sharp and violent.

Chapter 3 of Ricard's essay (Readings, History) situates a 'dissent' of ideologies and polemics regarding literary criticism and 'dissection' of Hussein's oeuvre. Ricard is on the non-Marxist side, especially when it comes to the analysis of Hussein works. According to him an approach like Marxist that is political and theoretical, too often misses the oeuvre's dramatic and lyrical movement, neglecting to consider it in its literary context or locate within Tanzanian society of the mid-seventies and eighties, and the movement away from radical discourse and practice "... [K]iswahili students and lecturers who know Ebrahim Hussein's work well, quite often their reading froze the oeuvre: reifying it as a product of literary discussion, a goldmine of examination subjects, but in a way a living work, read in its entirety ..." (39).

For whatever deficiencies Marxist criticism may be portraying, Ricard ought to distinguish Marxist criticism and Swahili criticism, which means not all Swahili criticism is Marxist. Some of the so-called Swahili criticism may not be literary criticism at all the way literary criticism is taken to be outside Tanzania. No wonder Hussein is quite uneasy about its validity and intentions. For example, referring to Sengo and Balisidiya criticism on *Wakati Ukuta*, Ricard writes "... [T]he writer is read like a teacher of ethics ..." (46). And says of Sengo analysing *Alikiona* "... [S]engo lacks a sense of nuance and his criticism of vaudeville is a violent charge against the position of women in the new Tanzanian society, notably in their freedom of movement ... Sengo is conscious of the excess of his words, since he concludes his article with a Sura from the Koran, which precisely opens the way to pardon ..." (48). Perhaps the bluntest of Ricard's reaction to 'such' Swahili criticism is directed to Kitsao "... [W]e have trouble following this rather specious reasoning, which smacks of a settling of scores between colleagues. But, it makes up the greater part of the first detailed criticism of *Kinjiketile*, illustrating one of the most regrettable aspects of the small number of

critics working on Swahili literature during the seventies: a confusion between genres, a mixture of scientific arguments and clan quarrel ..." (56).

Let us now follow the build up of Ricard's 'criticism' and his 'criticism on criticism'. From here, Ricard revisits Hussein's first four plays which are often examination material, most published, best known and widely reviewed, namely *Wakati Ukuta* (Time is a Brickwall), *Alikiona* (A Cause for Repent) *Kinjeketile* (Hero's name) and *Mashetani* (The Devils). Ricard approaches these plays from a point of view of their merits and demerits established by Swahili critics, an approach that is broadly enriching and insightful in clarifying positions and going beyond what is claimed to be proper or improper. The chapter deals with the summaries of the plays first, brings in the most striking statements about Hussein's work by Swahili critics and then Ricard's own response to critics' pronouncements and his response to the works.

In this, we see Hussein the playwright shifting from one parameter to another in terms of picking up themes (social, psychological, historical, political, cultural, etc.) and in finding the right theatrical expression for each context as he moves up and down the *theatrical continuum*. In *Wakati Ukuta* and *Alikiona* he experiments with Victorian dramatic art with all the conventions of the nineteenth century 'bourgeois' theatre: picture-frame setting, linear construction, characters representing social types. In *Kinjeketile*, Brecht's method on epic dramaturgy is at work. In *Mashetani* Hussein resort to psychodrama and dreams though a sense of lack of linearity is also at large. These methods are expected to have different impacts on the audience as Ricard himself shows "... [I]n *Mashetani*, Hussein shows that he has made a lot of progress. *Wakati Ukuta*, or *Alikiona* are plays that can be read by the whole of society. *Kinjeketile* reduced the number of his readers, *Mashetani* reduced them even more (and there are a few); and even amongst readers on a high level some cannot read and understand him the first time. That is why political conscience is generally underscored at the expense of other themes within it – say, *Ohly's mystical dimension ...*" (65–66)

In *Jogoo Kijijini* (The Cock in the Village) and *Ngao ya Jadi* (The Shield of Tradition) – a collection of two dramatic monologues, Hussein experiments on a total different method altogether. He operates on oral tradition (orature) by seeking its continuity in modern Swahili drama. In these two dramatic monologues he uses techniques of *kitendawili* (riddles/enigma) *ngano* (tale/oral narrative) and *ushairi-huru* (free-verse style) – all derived from orature. The result was a text that is so opaque and obscured that its analysis and criticism is scarcely forthcoming. In *Arusi* (The Wedding) Hussein produces a synthesis of some of the preceding dramatic expression: the picture-frame setting, the poetic effusion of the young idealists like those of *Jogoo Kijijini*, dreams and imagination and reality – a mixture which makes it hard for the reader to penetrate the text.

The following chapters of the essay, Chapter 5 (*Being Swahili*), Chapter 6 (*Sheikh Ebrahim [Hussein], actor and martyr*) and Chapter 7 (*Between the Sea and the Walls*) are used to stress the underlying ideas of Hussein work's in general, which is also a way of unravelling his enigmatic persona. Chapter 5

(Being Swahili) recuperates what Ricard calls Hussein's *political voluntarism*, which is a sense of detachment from the main outlook of the ruling class and those who succumb to it. The result is a return to the 'roots' with emphasis on 'self' and being *Mswahili* making him assume a critical stance on issues of power and marginality. And this all in relation to Hussein's works, especially in *Kinjeketile*, *Mashetani*, *Arusi* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thiem*. Chapter 6, (Sheikh Ebrahim [Hussein]), Actor and Martyr) furthers Hussein's eccentricity and his alienation. An analogue from similar 'alienation' is brought in to accentuate Hussein case which is compared with T.E. Lawrence's remark that "... [W]ithin the group he is the other and the man through whom the group will know itself as another ..." (103). This enigma is sharpened in his dramatic monologues *Jogoo Kijijini na Ngao ya Jadi* where identity, power and marginalisation are main thematic motifs and in this case, not just through literary production but his stage enactment of the dramatic monologues.

In his last chapter – Chapter 7 – (Between the Sea and the Wall) we are shown Hussein being still productive. He often writes unpublished poems. One of the poem is about an idea as vast as sea/ocean – which, whether one swims or flies, idea cannot be seen where it ends. And this is something positive compared to a narrow thought that dries up our mind as humanism is kept in an inferior place. This refers to both his experience from home and abroad – since, in the words of Ricard, "... [B]etween the ocean of ideas in which Samaki Mdogo Mweusi (*The Little Black Fish*) throws itself and the wall – including those of Berlin – which enclosed him his own life, his own poetry is that of a human being with a passion for freedom, who invents a new way of being a Swahili in Kiswahili ..." (131)

Another poem *Ngoma na Vailini* discussed here, is Hussein's poem published in 1968 in *Mulika* (Journal of the Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar-es-salaam). Expressing African fractured identity by being caught up between two cultures Western/Christian and Arab/Islam, the poem was among the first to experiment on free verse in Swahili poetry, which, for century, has been written in strict prosodic tradition.

The last poem *Ukuta wa Berlin* (Berlin Wall) is the most explicit of Hussein's work. Perhaps he wanted it to be so to stress his repulsive feeling towards walls, a symbol that stands for the problematic in *Wakati Ukuta* and in *Naipenda Fikra* (I like an Idea). The idea of being surrounded by walls relates very well with his predicament of an individual's quest for freedom of expression, human respect and dignity (*uungwana and muruwa in Ukuta wa Berlin*).

To conclude, we would say that judging from the title: *Ebrahim Hussein: Swahili Theatre and Individualism*, Ricard's essay is not meant to holistically (de)construct Hussein's work and lay bear the thematic and formal features. In a new (at least in Swahili literary criticism) and interesting method, it seeks, first and foremost, to establish reasons why, his works, with exception of few, are written in an obscured style. Then Ricard sets out to explicate their meaning(s) that are reflected by the circumstances that surround the author – politically,

socially, culturally, religiously, psychologically and in terms of adopting existing theories and methods which ultimately push the author to explore new grounds if these become inappropriate or used up. Hussein is never an author bound permanently by any single theory, method, group style or ideology. His tendency to be flexible in his theoretical and practical orientation, bespeaks of his conviction that every one of his works has its own constraints hence requires a special attention and treatment, which goes to say, a new theory and method. In this sense both indigenisation and multiculturalism are amenable.

Thus Ricard's essay calls the attention of not only students, teachers and critics of Swahili literature, but anyone who is interested in finding out how literature relates to the society in general and to those who create it, those who read it and those who give judgements in particular. It is a rare specimen in Swahili literary scholarship if not in African literature in general.

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