

Comparative Analysis of Social Issues Facing Heroic Characters in the *Utendi Wa Mikidadi Na Mayasa* and *Utendi Wa Kalevala*

Jackson Ndung'u Mwangi
Laikipia University, Kenya
jigmwas@gmail.com

Abstract

Poetry as a genre in literature has been a very important aspect in the study and analysis of Swahili language, since it was among the first works to be put in writing. Presence of epics in African region has generated a lot of conflict from scholars in the western world despite their importance in growth of African languages and preservation of African cultures. Some academicians from Western World have claimed that there is no epic in Africa since what is referred to as epic is just a long narration that only praises individuals and its thematic concerns is based on witchcraft. Griots in epics play a fundamental role in the society they belong because their actions and deeds were highly cherished and envied in the society. Despite the fact that some heroic characters possess some supernatural attributes, they too encounter similar social problems like any other human being, so it is important to analyze this aspect. Also, in attempt to solve the conflict that has been there for a long time about presence of epics in Africa, a comparative study of the social problem affecting heroic characters from African and western world epic will try to shed the light about the matter. The research analyzed the social problems experienced by heroic characters in epics between African epics and those of the western world. The research will deal with two Swahili epics which are, *Utendi wa Mikidadi na Mayasa* from Africa and *The Kalevala* epic which was composed in Finland. The researcher chose these two epics because the writers used and incorporated vast use of different aspects of styles and they were written almost in the same period. The objective of the research is to investigate the concept of social problems faced by heroic characters between African and Western world epics. The research will be guided by The Archetypal Heroic Theory as propagated by Joseph Campbell (1904-1987). The theory will assist the researcher to collect and analyze data in response to the stated objectives. It will also help in setting the scope of the study. Data will be analyzed using qualitative methods in view of the research objectives and theoretical premises. It was noted that heroic characters in African and western world face similar challenges such as feeling hungry, isolation from the society, loneliness and marital problems. It is hoped that the study will be useful to students and researchers of Swahili literature on the concept of the roles of griots and the societal problems they face in the Swahili epic and will also help in preservation of Swahili epics.

Keywords: Heroic Characters, Griot, Social Issues, Epics Archetypal Heroic Theory