

Literary Pedagogies and Teaching of Literatures Today

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Abstract

The primary purpose of sending persons to school is to equip the learners with skills of oracy and literacy as effective expression of issues. Literary studies have been more concerned with how to create and interpret a text, written or oral. As Ong (1977) points out it is strange that persons interested in writing and reading processes like structuralist and phenomenological analysts of textuality, have done little to enlarge understanding of these processes by contrasting writing and reading processes in depth with oral and oral-aural processes. The study, “Performance of Ateso Oral Narratives”, was carried out in some selected communities of Ateso speakers in Uganda and Kenya ethnographically and analysed qualitatively. Research has shown that the problem with much of pedagogical stylistics so far is that it has concentrated on spotting and interpreting textual patterns with little, if any, regard to the reader’s feelings (Oatley, 2004; Miall, 2006). The study recommended that paradigms of orality and writing should be integrated in the visualizing a bright future of communication for African communities.

Keywords: literacy, narrative empathy, oracy, pedagogical stylistics

1.0 Literary Pedagogies and Teaching of Literatures Today

The teaching of Literature and related disciplines of word analyses and critiquing of structure or literary linguistics is not an issue only for teachers of literature. Many readers want to similarly reduce a play, a film, an oration, a poem, story, or novel to some expression of the author's life experiences. At times they feel at ease in delving the meaning from a given work by alluding to biographical information that might "explain" it. That approach relegates literary pedagogy to literary criticism as a process of teaching and learning. Literary study used to be, in part, about instructing inexperienced or casual readers to overcome this habit, to substitute for it a way of reading that did more justice to works of literature by focusing on how they work. It was believed that it did more justice to the reader's own potential for reading adeptly by developing more informed reading strategies. Today, teachers and learners of Literature and related disciplines dogmatically fall prey to the textual dissection as a literary pedagogy.

The teachers, learners and readers of literary texts are often faced with a mirage of possible intended meanings from texts in the quagmire of a maze of hints to the message. This is particularly so with texts which are deliberately ambiguous in their meanings or those alluding to various tenets and facets of experiences. Confronted by a kaleidoscope of imagery and craftsmanship in diction, the readers find solace in referring to the biography of an author or take refuge in the 'informed opinions' of some critics or promoters of the author of a particular literary text being studied. Literary pedagogy requires more than that. In spite of the large role that teaching plays in the lives of most of our teachers and learners, not much attention has been paid to pedagogical issues spanning the entire discipline of teaching Literature. Pedagogy has contravened the traditional methods of text reading by reference to the biographies of neither the authors nor the 'opinions' of other learned friends of the text originator. In the study on Performance of Ateso Oral Narratives, the research saw the possible fusing of theories and strategies into a practical literary pedagogy for our institutions of learning.

Suzanne Keen says:

Narrative theorists, novel critics, and reading specialists have already singled out a small set of narrative techniques—such as the use of first person narration and the interior representation of characters' consciousness and emotional states—as devices supporting character identification, contributing to empathetic experiences, opening readers' minds to others, changing attitudes, and even predisposing readers to altruism. I point out the gaps in our knowledge of potentially empathetic narrative techniques.

(Keen Suzanne, 2006:213)

Narrative is, of course, as much social communication as linguistic assembly. It is an object, a string of sentences spliced together into paragraphs, paragraphs stuck together into scenes, scenes sewn together into episodes, episodes sutured together to form the narrative as a whole. It is a stitching-of-songs, a rhapsody whether in poetry or prose. But every song is a song because it is sung; every sentence is an act; so narrative is also a process. This dynamic aspect of discourse is acknowledged by referring to that object-in-action, the verbal statement, as a speech act or declaration. This is mainly because it is a less formal term and partly because, when it comes to narrative, more often than not we're dealing with written rather than verbal statements. In this paper the study employed simple terms for the units of narrative (sentences, paragraphs, scenes, episodes and narrative as a whole) as facets of articulation of a lesson. So, narrative is a type of articulation. As such, its purpose is more complex than either of the two views above allow for. This becomes clear if it is looked at it in terms of Roman Jakobson's model of the functions of language. Jakobson (1964: 134) proposes that every message, therefore, every articulation, involves six key features of sender, receiver, channel, code, message and medium of communication. Articulation takes on other paradigms: the emotive, conative, phatic, meta-linguistic, referential and poetic.

In Jakobson's (1964) model one or other of these functions will be dominant in any articulation, though others may be present. To look at it from another angle, with any articulation a reader can ask what operations are taking place, whether directly or indirectly, in isolation or conjunction, in collaboration or conflict. In so far as narrative is articulation, those two viewpoints outlined above can be understood as essentialist assertions as to the function of narrative; in one view it is inherently referential and allusive, in the other intrinsically philosophical and poetic. The study saw that the functions were dominant in Ateso oral narratives. Theorists, such as Griemas, (Griemas, 2002: 114) describing a text's narrative structure refer to structural elements such as an introduction, in which the story's founding characters and circumstances are described; a chorus, which uses the voice of an onlooker to describe the events or indicate the proper emotional response to be happy or sad to what has just happened; or a coda, which falls at the end of a narrative and makes concluding remarks.

Narration, is defined as a function or a set of introduction techniques combining the narrative, proper speaking, dialogue, monologue and free indirect style which creates fiction, (Hamburger 1993: 68-71). Every audience and every performer faces a dual experience of consciousness. The audience reacts to content and form on one hand, and on the message and medium the performer uses to transmit that communication on the other hand. While the performer is pre-occupied with creating atmosphere conducive for

the narrative, the audience is sucked into events taking place in the tale and experiencing these events as form. The audience concentration is a function of expectations, personal experiences and orientations.

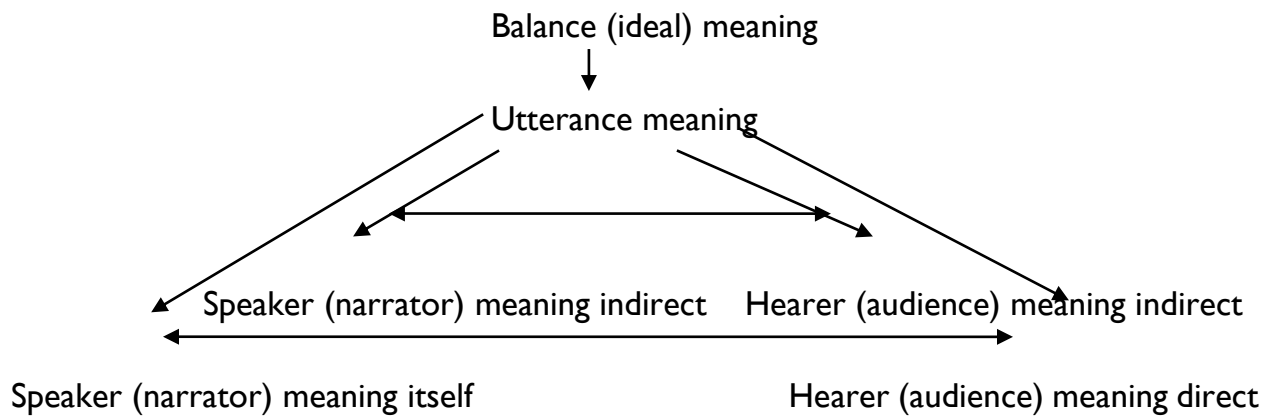
Even when there is a happy cultural correspondence between performance and audience and the roles on all sides are adhered to, there is no guarantee that a performer's meanings were understood as he or she had intended. Carlson (1989) talked of audiences 'reading' a performance and used Eco's semiotic perspective of reader (audience) response, which involved the ideas of 'model reader' and 'open' and 'closed' texts. The study was able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them. Closed performances were conducted with select audiences aimed at generating a precise response from a more or less precise group of audience, whereas open performances carried out in the village arenas gave fewer and fewer specific response indications and were increasingly open to varied reactions. Paradoxically, open performances where all listeners were invited free of charge were often less accessible than closed ones. It is in this generation and interpretation of meaning that the interplay of space and utterance was observed, and as Carlson stated: 'stage utterances can shape the way we perceive the context [space] of their occurrence. In its turn, context lends meaning or may modify meaning considerably' (Carlson, 1989:187). For example, in an Ateso tale of '*Epolon ka Aberuke*' ('The Old Man and his Wife'), the plight of the pumpkins-cum-sisters married given by divine providence to the barren couple, could be understood in the contexts of their speeches and gave their discourse a tragicomic flavour. The audience saw the connections in the parameters and researcher recalled the sophisticated contract between performer and audience as the generator of that meaning. There was effective use of space in relations to the semantics of the performance. When the audience frowned at the misadventures of the characters in the narrative, it stood as the agreed norm. When it appreciated the amusement with smiles and laughter, those aspects of response to performance defined the occasion. It was an audience's laughter which defined the joke, and at the same time, failure to laugh could determine the level of irony in the comic performance (Carlson, 1989: 47) or simply insensitivity to the comic aspects of Ateso oral narratives. In the analysis, such dynamics had to be commutative if a performance was to work out as a performance. In effect both organisational and cognitive principles had to be at work in the Teso cultural context as well as a conscious mutual interaction between the performer and his or her audience. Such facets of appreciation of texts could be tapped for enhancing literary pedagogies.

2.0 Elucidation of Performance

The explication of the oral presentation is what the audience expects as their right as they listen into and watch the narration. Heritage & Atkinson (1984: 242) says that talk is 'context-shaped' and 'context-renewing'. This can afford the audience a multidimensional platform for assessing the narrative. In analyzing the elucidation of performance in Ateso oral narratives, the study used the Dascal model of utterance interpretation cited by Allen and Brickman (1977). Allen and Brickman (1977) were discussing the question of deciphering meaning that is, converting audio-visual codes into interpretable meanings. They said that it was not simply a question of manipulating the structural forms but that the narrators also needed to create humorous meanings, where there would exist a pragmatic distance between utterance meaning and speaker meaning. Sometimes the distance is exaggerated for comic purposes.

For Allen and Brickman, Dascal's model evoked two observations. The first was an alternative view of joke resolution and the second involved an expansion of the model to cater for the problem of disputed meanings. The study used the diagrammatical representation the scholars had of Dascal's views in making more meaning out of the Ateso narrations.

Fig.1 Diagrammatic representation of Dascal's model of utterance interpretation (slightly adapted).



Available:

http://www.pragmaticshumour.net/makingsenseofhumour/6.1pragmatic_approach.htm.

The Dascal model of utterance complements the theory of Narrative Empathy in analysing the performer-audience reciprocal interaction. Questions had kept on popping up in the research. Did it matter whether or not the audience was following in the performance? What efforts did performers make in order to try to reach their often diverse audiences? It was imperative that the stakeholders at performances were at an understanding or agreed upon point of view at some stage of the activity and experience.

The composition of the audiences kept on changing from one place to another. In the Ngora performances in Uganda, there were many children (about 30 on the average) and women (about 20 on the average) but relatively fewer men, (between five and ten) those who were around were mainly elderly. In Kagwara and Pingire, in eastern region of Uganda, in the communities located near the fishing sites, there were more young men during the performances (between 20 and 30), some had returned straight from their fishing errands to join the audience that they found engrossed in the narrations. So, an audience type was dependent on their local setting, the socio-cultural occupations of the folk and the proximity to the performance arena. In Ngora, the times of the performance coincided with the young men's timetable of getting to their drinking clusters. They were more than those in Serere and Pingire. One could imagine that this served well for the performer who would have to develop different elucidation tactics for the two types of audience. It was easier dealing with the few drunks and a more ready audience when it came to explaining some mysteries in the tales. Audiences are subject to being persuaded into the views held by the performers at one stage or the other. Depending on the composition and disposition, they engage in the themes and value issues being portrayed in the oral narrative. Eventually, the audience and auxiliary performers become a cultural unit digesting their value systems together with the performer taking the role of a facilitator. This mutuality seals their commonality.

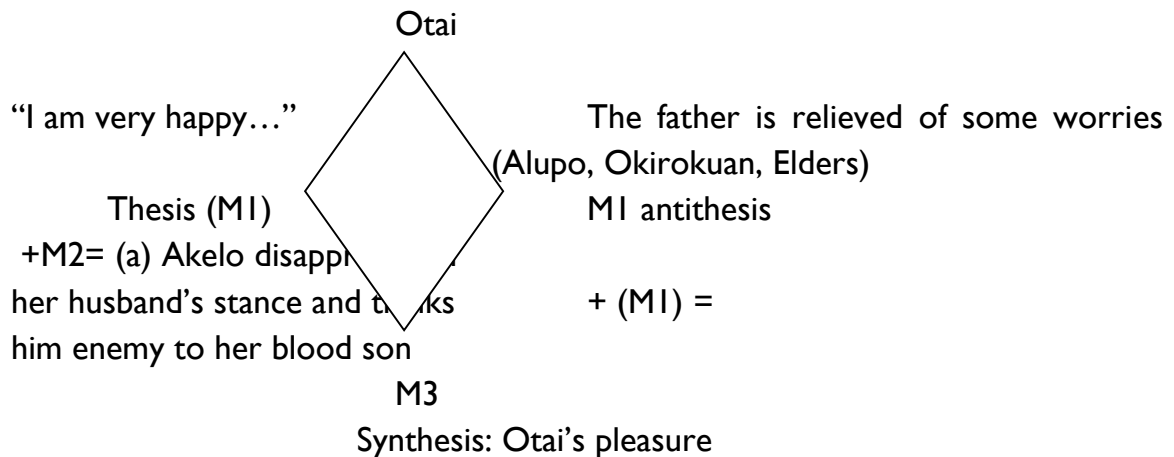
In line with Suzanne Keen's theory of Narrative Empathy, the study noted that the audience dynamics and the performers' attempts to articulate their messages could be seen at an empathetic stance. When one got into the positions of storyteller and audience, it could be noticed that audiences got in the positions of the characters being depicted in the narratives in order to appreciate or assess the performance. The fishermen easily identified themselves with images of their fishing errands like the experiences with hippo and crocodiles mentioned earlier, in this theory, empathy were experienced in the imagination by sharing feelings or actions of other people and characters in the tales. Such shared emotions were often provoked by seeing, hearing and getting intricately entwined in another's conditions. Considering what a person might be expected to feel in that situation, empathy is a precursor to sympathy. Personal distress differs from empathy in that it focuses on the self and leads not to sympathy but to distancing one's self from a character. Empathy that leads to sympathy is helpful in assessing the articulation.

According to the responses analyzed from the formal and informal probes for reactions after performances, the researcher noted that there was, variedly, marked collaboration between the performers and their audiences. The mirth meter also varied from one member of a specific audience to another. In Tororo, at Morukatipe, Okibel told a narrative 'Okirokuan', literary meaning 'Troubled Life'. In the tale a malevolent step

mother had done all she could in attempt to eliminate the step son, whom she feared would usurp her legitimate son’s inheritance. All her evil designs were transformed into benevolent events ending with the hero’s marrying her daughter and settling in the virgin forest among his wild friends. The title has varied interpretations in Ateso. The bearer of the name could be the trouble causer or a victim of malice. Let’s consider the following diagrammatical representation of meaning interpretation that occurred in Morukatipe, Tororo. A similar tale was related at Akobwait village in Busia District, Kenya by Okodoi Samuel varying in subplots but maintaining the main plot.

In the story of ‘Okirokuan’, the step son, much loved by the foster father and having survived in the evil forest full of wild animals, was being rewarded. Otai, the step-father announced before a gathered clan meeting that he would reward Okirokuan with a wife. “Okirokuan, I am very happy. I am going to reward you with a wife!” (“Okirokuan, *epol eong ailel. Alosi kwana eong airop ijo kaberu!*”) The hero was in love with the step-sister, Alupo, to the disapproval of Akelo the evil step-mother who did not want her daughter to get married to an ‘opportunist’. When the proclamation was made, the audience had varied interpretations. The young members approved of the luck and design of fate, the elderly saw it as indirect incest. The mother took it as a knife piercing her heart!

Fig.2a. Dialectical declaration resolution: the Strong Trace Model. (Willis 1992: 21, adapted).



See:

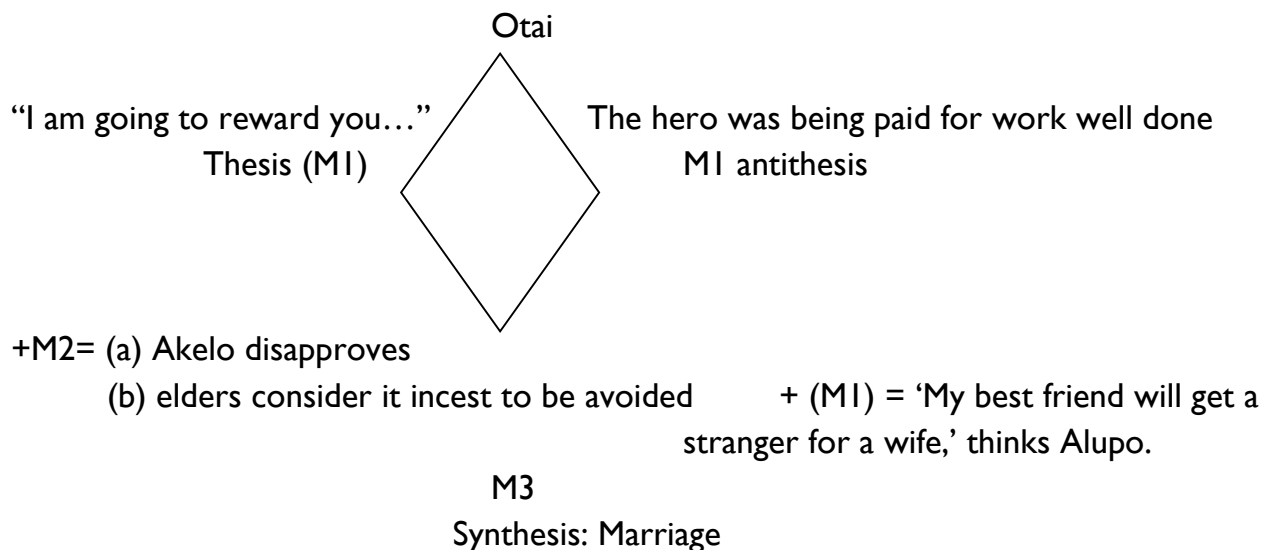
http://www.pragmaticshumour.net/makingsenseofhumour/6.1pragmatic_approach.htm.

For the foster father, his happiness is derived from the triumphant return of this good mannered boy from the forest of wild beasts where his wife had forced him to stay for months in the guise of looking after her peas. The spirits of the hero were awake and had spared him his life. His evil wife had failed in her malice to have the boy killed by wild animals. The M3 Synthesis is that all parties are agreed that Otai is happy with the return of his step-son. However, they hold varied interpretations about that happiness in relation

to the reward proposed. The diagram shows that the single utterance by the character Otai received varied responses. In the first sentence, where he declares his happiness, his wife is dismayed. Her husband is going to give the inheritance to this boy they adopted instead of the son from her womb! The members of the audience took sides. Most men and lovers in the audience supported the benevolent turn of events. It was only fair that the brave character was going to be rewarded. The less benevolent section of the audience sympathised with the step-mother. This reflected the empathy established by the various sections of the audience.

Otai's next declaration, below, evoked bilateral as well as opposite meanings. It was understood by the young members that Okirokuan was getting divine payment. This is implicitly understood. The mother did not want her daughter to marry a boy she has failed to eliminate. The elders want incest to be avoided: even if the two (Okirokuan and Alupo) were not biologically sister and brother, having been brought up in the same household rendered them kin. All parties knew that the boy would get a reward to crown the story. The hero and members of the clan knew that it was the duty of the foster father to marry his son a wife when he came of age. Little did they know that there would be no need for dowry because he was marrying Alupo, the step-sister. Alupo, the character, had mixed feelings when her father had declared that he was marrying a wife for Otai. She knew that she would not have him as close as they had grown up to like one another. She knew he would marry a stranger for a wife. To her surprise, when asked for a spouse, Otai pointed to Alupo to be the choice of his heart. (Most Iteso clans do not permit marriage between siblings, cousins or any person as long as a blood relationship could be traced. It was odd for the 'brother' and 'sister' to be officially joined together.)

Fig.2b Dialectical declaration resolution: the Strong Trace Model. (Willis 1992: 21, adapted)



See:

http://www.pragmaticshumour.net/makingsenseofhumour/6.1pragmatic_approach.htm.

This model is similar to the one used by Dascal for analysing the hypothetical statement: 'The miser took all his money out of the bank for a holiday. When he thought it had had enough of a rest he put it back.' M1 is the interpretation that he was going to spend the money. M2 is given in the second sentence implying that he did not spend it. This gives rise to M3, the Synthesis of a new meaning on an informed paradigm, that he did not trust the system at a certain time. The same is true in most utterances by oral narrative performers in Ateso folktales and other stories.

The task of illustrating meaning was found to be difficult with respect to oral narratives in Ateso folktales. The study observed that performers seemed to leave many mysteries unanswered. The prime assignment of the study was to analyse literal interpretation of accounts being performed. Since there were often several versions of the same text, and as the performer was not the prime author of it, he or she was actually reflecting on and/or retelling what he or she had heard from others, the audience was more often than not, equipped with prior knowledge about the tale being acted. That aspect tended to interrupt the narrative at most awkward points of the performance. This was because it was expected that there was a homogeneous cultural mutual interface between performer and audience, and the roles of both parties were adhered to, it did not guarantee that the intended meanings of the performer were understood as intended. Keen's theory of Narrative Empathy throws some light in trying to understand the various readings of utterances and performance. In a similar stance, Carlson (1989:84) talked of audiences 'reading' a performance and using a semiotic perspective of reader response, the 'open' and 'closed' text interpretations.

The study saw such variations exhibited in Ateso oral narratives. However, in many performances of oral narratives in Ateso the artist moved quite freely between ordinary speech, emotive speech, a rhyme, a chant, and a song, so freely sometimes that the style kept on mutating naturally from one form to another. The performers of Ateso oral narratives were at liberty to use the various linguistic devices at their disposal. For the purposes of elucidation, the animals, humans and inanimate characters were made to think, talk, and behave like human beings. A skilled performer was inclined to be as elaborate and realistic as possible by representing each character in as peculiar a manner as possible by giving them to act in a language that portrayed various social attributes and attitudes such as valour, cowardice, fear, disillusionment, love, jealousy, hate, and ambition which would be peculiar to human beings. These human characteristics were produced so that it was easier for the audience to comprehend them and in getting entertained and

yet elicited messages relevant to them in their time. It was generally agreed between the audience and performers that there was no conflict when the human, and non-human, the animate and inanimate characters interacted in the stories.

3.0 Disparity of language in performances

Barthes (1977) citing Griemas in *A Grammar of Narrativity* say that the importance of these studies appears still greater if we keep in mind present-day meanings of the word 'text'. Just as logic does not deal with sentences but with propositions, text grammars operate on the semantic plane. According to Barthes (1997), a text is a semantically coherent whole which may be presented as a surface structure either in natural language (as was the case with the traditional notion), or in any of the sign systems used by mankind. In an oral performance, there is a semiotic polyphony of linguistics and para-linguistics, of kinesics and strong verbal attacks or controversial debates or the use of icons or any representative symbols of emotive outbursts. The many sounds or voices of meaning are conceived at producer-receiver poles differently. The performer and audience conceive many sounds and voices of meaning variedly. This is because there evolves a disparity in language used in performances. The discrepancy in meaning between the intended and the actualized goes at various planes. The planes are dictated by the background and orientation of the parties involved. The aesthetic, socio-cultural and economic foregroundings of the parties are usually concerned.

The researcher observed that another facet of the dilemma between the audience and performer in contemporary narration was the lack of correspondence in meaning between producer and consumer of the performance. Traditionally, the oral performers employed classical register of the language of the people. In view of the visual and motile images being created in the Ateso audience about the desecration of the water of life in the Ateso tale by Ibalasa 'How Death came to Earth', the two meanings generated different reactions. The former eliminated any hope of any section of the pool remaining tolerably drinkable, while the latter gave the listening audience, many of whom were herdsmen with animal watering experiences, that some section could be endured as drink. (During the times of scarcity of water, men water their animals from the same water source from which women collect water for domestic use.) So, for the ardent grammarians of Ateso, Ibalasa, in the tale *Eipone lo Abunio Atwanare* the performer had modified the story to sound modern. Could she be consciously taking care of the youth in her listening audience? She had maintained the traditional view that the hare outwitted hyena. After all, greed should always lose in battles against wit.

In attempts to minimize the disparity in comprehension, the study noted that each performance group that the study engaged possessed three elements. First was the

structure of interaction where the relational paradigms were set out between the performer and audience. Each party had been encouraged to stick to its roles. Roles had been identified and each had to play his or her part in the overall experience. Second was the cultural code of conduct which entailed the traditionally passed on systems of the dos and don'ts. There was a range of accepted etiquette like the sitting arrangement which had to safeguard the vulnerable sections of the audience, like the children and adolescent girls, as some performances went on to the late hours of the night. The third element was the system of social values and aspirations. The members of the audience had joined in the performance with the permission of their superiors and colleagues but with a target of giving them the rare opportunity to listen to and participate in the oral literature tradition that was dying out in the region. They would not only be entertained but also educated in one form or other and become better equipped. They would develop strategies for solving various social and personal problems in life. The three elements were interdependent, supported and enhanced the impact on each other. The trinity of these elements existed in one wholeness of the performance.

The performer, the place of performance, the time of actions and the reactions of the audience were mutually intertwined. The research analysed the structural and socio-psychological mutuality between performer and audience within the performance experience. The study observed that these aspects made some performers succeed where others had used a carrot and stick approach to enlist audience positive responses to the performance. A performer had to choose the climate he or she created and had to make it conducive to the overall success of the action to follow. The audience, on the other hand, had to conform to the social and cultural traditions of the people in order to enjoy and learn from the performance. The system of values resulted from the enculturation of these participants and determined why the performer narrated the way he or she did and used the sayings and songs which elicited favourable responses from the audience. The study examined some concepts of public and private performance situations.

A public and private dichotomy was taken as a referral point of departure to delve more on the mutual interaction between performer and audience in the traditional rituals and processes. This was extended to explain the data and the pneumatic activities of the performance bearing in mind the values held by the Teso communities regarding folktales and oral traditions. For some narrations like the one by Otwal, the researcher had requested for a private setting at first, which included a few members of his family and friends of less than ten people. This was done in the confines of the performer's courtyard. On another occasion, we opened up the performance to the public by taking it to the village arena attended by about fifty people. A distinction had to be made between the folklore performances in private and those in public. The public performance in a public

setting involved intimate contact between Otwal and the audience that volunteered to be present. There was intimacy at individual and communal levels. They knew they were engaged in a cultural nourishing activity with the performer-audience group dynamics in order to reassure them of their cultural values and pride. A public performance of oral narratives in a private setting like someone's library or amphitheatre would not have entailed the immediacy of participant personal act of exercising the will to choose and portray a belonging to an establishment. In private or selected audience performance, there was a distance between the performer and the audience who considered themselves as guests of the patron or matron in whose premises that performance took place. It was uncommon to get any member of the audience displaying open criticism about the actions of the performer as had been the cases in public performances. The classical and choice of words and images was determined by the nature of the audience, the environment and the context of art.

4.0 Origination

The inauguration of a folktale was a deliberate creative activity by the performer who radiated the tale like the sun illuminating the earth and dispelling darkness. In Literary Pedagogy, a leaf could be borrowed from the deliberate creative activity exhibited by the narrators in folk tales. According to Griemas (2002), any narrative is merely a manifestation of such deep structures: "narrative forms are no more than particular organizations of the semiotic form of the content for which the theory of narration attempts to account," (Griemas, 2002: 114) As a result, he claims that his structural principles apply both to the most complex narratives consisting of thousands of pages [of a written text] and to the most minimalist of narrative units. Even a single word entails limited panoply (or a complete or impressive collection or display of a story) of related terms that could potentially be strung out across a narrative: "Thus, to take a familiar example, the figure *sun* organizes around itself a figural field that includes *rays, light, heat, air, transparency, opacity, clouds, etc.*" (Griemas, 2002: 114). In a similar way the performer ought to reflect and be reflexive of accompanying meanings in the plot he or she originates. In ogre stories, for example, *Obibi* or *Opukoi* had to be created radiating terror and awe in the audience. The mention of the ogre character would send chills down some spines. Some sections of the audience could be seen moving closer to their friends and looking suspiciously at the curtain of the dark night that enveloped their arena.

In action, the performer was conscious of the scrutiny of the audience and had to constantly employ a good deal of creativity. During the narrative of 'Hare and Hyena', the study noted that whereas the traditional narratives did not describe the animal skins, that had been laid on Hyena's path as bait to deter him from reaching the anthill while white

ants still flew, the performer, Ojangole, had said that they had been beddings. The skins had been used by Hare's children as beddings and were soaking with urine. Some members of the audience interviewed at the after performance focused group discussion agreed that the twist was innovation on the part of the artist. The performer kept on alluding to other cultural practices like of the Baganda of Uganda and the catching of the famous edible grasshoppers, *nseene*. In fact, some members of the audience were excited to remember their experiences in Buganda region.

In telling the story of the white ants (a delicacy among plain Nilotics) catching, the narrator had kept on pausing to make the crisis have impact on the audience. Ojangole narrated thus:

<p><i>Abu Ebu lo akukurana, kwape elosio awaragat wok, kolot kosodi aireg atitipu kosalakinite Opoo lo akalanyana aipetet ajo bala mam apodokinit. Ajeni ngesi ebe ikware abuni ngesi aipoun acoa na ainyam ikong ngun. Awuta ngesi ailik aimul keomoom ajijim naka ikong. Kipouni ngesi acoa na Kewar akwap, abu Apoo ipouni acoa, mam nesi abuni atwaniar ainyam ikong lu ejijim eipone ngol. Abu koling alosit awanyanar atitip nu eregi ebu. Konye ajeni nesi eisinye loka. Ebu kacut kanu akiring Abu kitabau imukulen Kosodi alokikin orot lo lu eperiotor idwe ke abuni Ebu aitor elosi aikam ikong</i></p> <p>(Pregnant pause from the narrator. An easy exchange of gestures in the audience)</p>	<p>The hard-working Hyena, as our story goes, went and cleared the anthill while the lazy but cheeky Hare slumbered as if unconcerned. At night there would be the way in which Hare could collect white ants. He always had a good appetite for that delicacy. So, he had thought of a trick. When it became dusk, Hyena thought of a plan. He was determined not to miss the delicacy of white ants although he hated to work for it. He knew how greedy Hyena was especially for meaty items. Hare socked animal skins which his children had been using as beddings. Then he strategically placed them on the route Hyena would use to go to collect the white ants.</p> <p><i>(Pregnant pause from the narrator. An easy exchange of gestures in the audience)</i></p>
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(Source: Primary Data Ojangole, 'Hare and Hyena')

5.0 Imaginative expression and communicative recitation

Earlier in this paper, I referred to Dascal and Willis' models (see http://www.pragmaticshumour.net/makingsenseofhumour/6.1pragmatic_approach.htm.) to examine the levels of communication and reception. The study observed that at some stages of the experience it was not clear whether an oral narrative performance was an imaginative expression or simply a communicative recitation. This was the dilemma analysed in the speech-act theory and of the speech activity. The tone adopted by one of the narrators in her performance of the death myth had been stylized form of speech activity where she had blended entertainment into the didactic roles of her oral performance. Had they been separated, perhaps it would have necessitated a split of the listenership: one section that yearned for aesthetic cultural originality and accuracy in the riddles and proverbs on one hand and the younger listeners who would be happy with elucidation of the mystic statements and formulae. The fewer the proverbial sayings used, the easier for them to grasp the gist of the narrative. For the latter section of the listeners, these were relics of the past cultural Heritage. Whenever a proverb or riddle was used in the narrative, language of performance drew the attention of the audience to the performer and the context; it carried with it cultural signposts. In criticising performance, the study had been jolted to a crossroads: to decide whether to go for the formal circumstances of the experience or to analyse the functional aspects per se. This entailed going through some probes such as trying to establish the authenticity and accuracy of the riddles, proverbs and tongue twisters used. The study constantly evaluates the comprehension by the audience and where there is antagonism evaluating its impact on the performance. When considering the poetic function of words in Ateso as a language, the study observed that there was interplay in the intensities of utterances: the expressions used work at both connotative and denotative levels. These levels had been internalized by the audience in varying degrees hence causing the unpleasant interruptions in the performance. That was why some sections were excited by the usage of highly charged language while others had been rather uncomfortable. It was not uncommon to hear one section of the audience laughing loud many minutes long after the general laughter had been emitted. It meant that the meaning and the ironical humour dawned on this section much later than it had on the previous part of the audience; that is assuming they had now grasped the intended meaning and not simply laughing because others had done so and they would not like to be considered hard of comprehension.

6.0 The three layers of Ateso oral narrative

In the study the researcher concluded that in Ateso oral narrative contexts, there are three layers of performance experience. *First*, there is the communicative utterance and

recitations where the performer is interested in referring to a set piece of narrative. *Second*, there is deliberate use of charged language, poesy and verbal dexterity. The age of the performer seems not to matter because, young or old, they employ this device severally. This high level language is used to augment narrative. There is interplay and innovation in the use of words, proverbial statements, idioms and riddles. The performer uses them for linguistic and comic effect if not for didactic ones. As they are uttered, the performer is on the lookout for reciprocal reaction. When this is not forthcoming, disappointment is duly registered. Then the audience is taken to be rude and ungrateful. *Third*, the performance, in spite of all the odds and discomforts in the experience, is sanctified by the tripartite arrangement. The performer, audience and performance interface is acknowledged and owned as a cultural experience which remains socially valuable to all stakeholders. This could be seen in the ensuing deliberations and debates that inevitably followed the closure of narratives. For example, after the fable/myth of 'How Death came into the world', the audience had extended the debate about the plot and characterisation of the fable/myth. In later focused group discussions held with the selected members, a consensus was reached about certain social issues. The members were in agreement about the hopeful conclusion given: that not all hope was lost. There was the rainbow as a signal for possible rescue. Examination of these layers help in appreciation of a performance text and context. The literary pedagogy appraisal could be enhanced better through the layering of meaning and experiences.

So, just as a performer of oral narrative the examined had the consolation of having the mutual interaction and co-ownership of the performance to begin with, a teacher of a literary text could be comfortable with allowing the readership to dissect the mutual interaction of the learner/reader and the text. This will help learners to give collaborative and constructive criticism emanating from their life experiences. Texts will afford readers mutual interactions and exposure to a variety of horizons. The value of examining literariness in the light of empirical studies of oral performance reading is argued, calling into question assumptions about the vagueness of interpretation, and the precedence of conventions in shaping reading. Demonstrations of research methods portray several outcomes of interest to literary pedagogy. The value of empirical study is complementary to studies of the history of reading and this should make the teaching and learning of Literature more meaningful.

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