



## Insignias of Authority in David Mulwa's and Dennis Kyalo's Drama: *Inheritance & The Hunter is Back*



**Christine Namayi**  
*Department of Literature*  
*Kenyatta University*

**John Mugubi**  
*Department of Literature*  
*Kenyatta University*

Correspondence: [mugubi.john@ku.ac.ke](mailto:mugubi.john@ku.ac.ke) ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0450-4399>

### Abstract

This study attempts to unravel the manifestations of the metaphors of power in David Mulwa's and Dennis Kyalo's plays: *Inheritance* and *The Hunter is Back*. In our analysis, we treat issues that unfold in the play *Inheritance* within the situation context in which they occur. This concurs with Halliday (1985) who argues that a text is completely detached from the external world and creates a "context of situation" for itself through the special patterning of its lexis. In this regard, we engage an interpretative approach on the various contexts created in the play in our attempt to analyze the manifestations of power in line with the objectives of the study.



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## Introduction

This study stems from Michael Foucault's observations on the concept of power and society. Foucault (1990) in *The History of Sexuality* argues that power "pervades the entire social body" or is "omnipresent". Therefore, all social life comes to be network of power relations. He avers:

Power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relation immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization: as process which, through ceaseless struggle and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or even reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies" (1990, 92-93)

Foucault's observations resonate well with the operations of power in the contemporary Kenyan society. In any society, power cannot be isolated from those who practice it and from the subjects. Thus, the artists, in this case the playwrights, being members of the society, cannot escape the discourses of power in the very society that they live but find themselves sucked into the mix.

It therefore follows that they are either in support or in arms against the practice of power in the society. Artists in their works of art seek to demonstrate how power is manifested in their works of art. They show how the practice of power in society affects the general citizenry and how changes in the perceptions towards power by the citizens or members of the society result into changes in the normal practice of power in the society. For instance, playwrights dramatize the nature of power in their dramatic works of art. In this regard, the study sought to investigate how metaphors of power and change are dramatized in David Mulwa's *Inheritance* and in Dennis Kyalo's *The Hunter is Back*. Our reading of the selected texts for this study was guided by Foucault's conceptualization of power in the society. We sought to demonstrate how the metaphors of power and change in *Inheritance* and *The Hunter is Back* map the Kenyan situation at a particular time in history. From Foucault's multifaceted conception of power, we draw an important understanding in the reading of the plays as a reflection of the contemporary society in Kenya.

Michel Foucault is not alone in the contemporary theorizing of power in the Post - colony especially with regard to how best its mysteries can be unraveled. Achille Mbembe's "provisional notes on the post-colony" illustrates how power operates in Post-colonial Africa. Mbembe writes that the Post-colony is actually characterized by a plurality of sorts; thus, "identities are multiplied, transformed and put into circulation" (1978,3). He puts it more succinctly thus:

...we need to go beyond the binary categories used in standard interpretations of domination, such as resistance v. passivity; autonomy v.

subjection, state v. civil society, hegemony v. counter hegemony.....

These oppositions are not helpful, rather, they cloud our understanding of post-colonial relations (3)

However, Mbembe is not alone in the re-reading of power relations in Post-colonial Africa. Fabian (1990) has made important reference to the Congolese 346 idiom that “power is eaten whole” (1990, 16), which is an expression of the truth regarding the practice of power found in many parts of Africa. On his part, Francois Bayart invokes “the goat eats where it is tethered,” (ix), in reference to Paul Biya’s Cameroon; and “I chop you chop” (89) as happens in Nigeria. These are some instances that reflect on the metaphors of power in Post-colonial Africa. Our reading of the selected texts in this study was an investigation on how the metaphors of power are depicted in Kenyan drama. We examined how the two authors foreground metaphors of power and change in the society in their plays.

On the one hand, David Mulwa is a versatile playwright and actor who has acted and produced plays such as Wole Soyinka’s *Kongi’s Harvest* (Chris Wanjala, 205), Francis Imbuga’s *Aminata* and his own *Redemption*. He is renowned schools and colleges’s drama festivals adjudicator whose dramatic talent has also been exploited by the media. He has acted on

T.V programmms like KBC’s “Reflections” and in movies like “Dangerous Affairs” and “Behind closed doors”. In spite of the various criticisms that have been leveled against Mulwa both as a writer and actor, this study sought to examine how he depicts metaphors of power and change in his plays, particularly *Inheritance*. On the other hand, Dennis Kyalo is an upcoming playwright and *The Hunter is Back* is his first publication.

The study investigated how the two playwrights depict metaphors of power in their works as portrayed in the contemporary Kenyan society. The practice of power in the Kenya context has been critical to many such as political analysts, literary critics and writers as well. It is against this background that we chose to examine how the two playwrights portray metaphors of power and change in Kenyan drama. In this regard, the study sought to demonstrate how such metaphors are a reflection of the Kenyan society as manifested in works of art.

Oxford Advanced Dictionary defines power as a measure of an entity’s ability to control the immediate environment including behavior of other entities. An entity here refers to persons as well as available resources. At another level, power is viewed as a way an individual(s) exercise authority over others under his/her control. This points at how power is exercised in the contemporary society.

However, metaphors of power come into play when the very power entrusted in an individual(s) is not used as required. In other words, the

metaphors of power result from the misappropriation and/or abuse of power by the individuals who are assigned the duty to execute this power on behalf of others. Thus issues such as oppression, coercion, dictatorship, corruption, and coups constitute the metaphors of power that this chapter seeks to explore. But, before we could embark on the metaphors of power, here is the overview of the play.

## **INHERITANCE**

### **Plot Overview**

The play *Inheritance* revolves around power and leadership in Kutula republic. The play is set in an imagery African state. The action of the play begins in the pre-colonial period in the Kingdom of Kutula, ruled by a traditional ruler, King Kutula XV. The King commands a lot of loyalty from his subjects despite the style of his leadership. Despite the fact that the King rules Kutula republic as he wishes, he is recognized as the symbol of unity and harmony in the society. The more reason as to why there are clear guidelines on the smooth transfer of power from one King to the other. The people have a lot of regard to hereditary leadership for it ensures that there was no power vacuum in the leadership of their republic.

However, the King is resistant to the advent of colonization and whiteman's Domination in the land of Kutula—something that puts him at loggerheads with the British Empire. He clearly demonstrates his resistance to the Europeans in the way he leads his people in a rebellion against the whites and

their activities in the land. He is therefore seen as a threat to the British Empire. The Queen's representative, Governor Thorne MacKay, and Bishop Manninger are so concerned about King Kutula's leadership and therefore hatch up a plan to deal with him. The motive behind this sinister plan was to install a king who could easily be manipulated by the colonial administration in their zeal to achieve their vested interests in the land of Kutula.

Their plan to overthrow King Kutula XV succeeds through the use of the King's son—Lacuna Kasoo. Lacuna Kasoo kills his father and later on assumes the kingship of the land. After taking over the reins of power, the young King, Lacuna Kasoo becomes arrogant, gullible, and selfish. He rules with utmost highhandedness and in a total disregard of the rules of the land. Under Lacuna Kasoo's leadership, the country is plunged into the dark abyss of dictatorship, greed and materialism, misuse of power, violence and gross violation of human rights. King Lacuna Kasoo metamorphoses into a cruel leader and together with his cronies, they plunder the colony, they grab resources at the expense of development and welfare of the people. This situation led to disillusionment among the people for they felt betrayed by the government.

Neo-colonialism and the dependency syndrome in African states is also brought out in the play through the use of characters such as Daniel Goldstein, Robert Rollerstone and King Lacuna Kasoo. King Kasoo is turned into a puppet by the western countries, which give loans to the Kutula republic but end up being stashed in his bank accounts

while the people the loans are meant to help suffer and languish in abject poverty.

At the end, like what he did to his predecessor, King Kasoo is finally deposed by a people's revolution which was devoid of bloodletting and violence. This play ends with the colony turning a new leaf as a new popular leader is endorsed by the people. The new leader, princess Sangoi vows to get back the country on the right track.

The play clearly brings to light the true picture of the situation in most of the African states in the post-colonial era. With the dawn of independence, scores of Africans were full of hope and inspiration in their African leaders only to be disillusioned as the leaders turn out to be dictators, self-seekers, indolent and only concerned with amassing a lot of wealth and power for their own selfish benefits.

### **Interplay of the Metaphors of Power**

In the Mulwa's play *Inheritance*, the interplay of power revolves around the people of the republic of Kutula, the three Kings of Kutula and the style of leadership as well as the foreign powers. The different faces of power that Kutula assumes make the country experience economic strain, disillusionment and despondence from the masses. This is realized in that in the three faces of power that Kutula undergoes, such as the white leadership, King Kutula XV, and King Lacuna Kasoo. This changing faces of power and the associated changes of power constitute the metaphors of power in the play.

### **The People's Power**

In the prologue of the play, we are exposed to the way King Kutula XV wielded power over his subject. His

power is seen as referent power as he is able to attract his subjects and build a strong loyalty base. He is a charismatic leader who is obeyed at will by his people because he supported meaningful development for all the citizens and valued social compactness of the land of Kutula. His power is geared towards the good of everyone in the country. That is why he was opposed to the Whiteman's domination in the land as he was hell bent to loot the country and benefit his motherland in the West.

At one point governor Macay wonders how the people can be so loyal to their leader despite his style of leadership. He says " I don't know whether I'll ever understand them and their infernal allegiance to their leaders....why is it that we civilized leaders can't command such loyalty? Why?" (Mulwa 2004, 6). King Kutula's power is revealed in the way he is able to lead the people in the rebellion against the whites in the land. The governor calls him in the palace in a bid to convince him to put an end to the violence visited upon the whites but the king vows not to. The governor and reverend Menninger are fully aware of the king's power to the extent that they had to hatch up a plan to bring him down through his power hungry son, Lacuna Kasoo. King Kutula therefore dies – at the hands of his son – because of vowing to protect his country and her citizens. He is a patriotic leader who was revered by the masses. Menninger says of Kutula XV " This rogue zebra may yet lead the pack out into the fields and render sleeping lions powerless. Yes he has a bold, searching and dangerous mind" (Mulwa 2004, 15).

### Exploitative and Oppressive Power

The power of the British Empire on Kutula colony is exhibited in the way they, conduct their activities in the land. They claim to have brought civilization to the Africans, built schools, hospitals, roads, churches and employment but in the real sense they are the ones who benefit their countries as they repatriate the profits made back to the West.

Exploitative power relies on the influence and manipulation for its success. This implies that the British use their influence to exploit the resources of Kutula republic for their own benefits back at home. First, it uses its influence to get rid of those who stand on its way. For instance, the British government uses the influence of power to instigate the death of King Kutula and the coming into power of his son, Lacuna Kasoo. This is carried out solely because the Britons can be able to easily manipulate the power-hungry Kasoo to play to their tune and support their agenda in Kutula.

Oppression is another key aspect of exploitative power. The oppression of the

Africans by the Europeans is also a hallmark of the power in the land. The oppression is seen in the way they treat Africans. Thorne claims that, "Africans cannot be controlled

without a whip" (Mulwa 2004, 3). He does not see Africans as human beings to be treated kindly and in a humane manner. He says, "How the devil does the colonial government office expect me to effect overseas development with the whip under my bed?" (Mulwa 2004, 3). He disregards the benevolent leader of

Kutula, King Kutula and sees him as backwards and primitive.

### Misuse of Power

King Lacuna Kasoo heavily relies on coercion and dictatorship as his style of leadership. He oppresses the people in order to achieve his own selfish interests. He uses his powers to enrich himself and his cronies. He could grab whatever came on his way; land, money—stashed in foreign banks—and excessive affluence. As well, his leadership was characterized by arbitrary detention and propagated the killing of those that stood in his way in order to still remain in power. He was also a moral reprobate, seen in the way he used his power to seek self fantasy.

Further, king Lacuna's misuse of power is seen in the way he builds the dam at the Bukelenge valley. The dam was built despite people's opposition to it. All the streams that led to the valley were diverted into the dam making the valley dry. Many people suffered as they travelled for a long distance to fetch water from the dam, which was the only source. The valley that used to supply water to the people efficiently was rendered dry. This project was tailor-made to show king Kasoo's commitment to "practical development" even if the people suffered. Tamina reveals of their desperate situation due to lack of easy access to water (Mulwa 2004, 20). This whole thing shows the extent to which Kasoo could go to exercise his coercive power on people in order to attain what he wanted. The project was used to build his public image at the expense of the scores of people who suffered greatly.

Ruthlessness characterizes King Lacuna

Kasoo's leadership. King Kasoo deals with the dissidents in his government ruthlessly. He does not stomach any kind of criticisms on his style of leadership. This clearly depicts the true picture of African leaders who took over from the colonialists in the post-colonial era in Africa, and adopted their style and manner of leadership. They became dictators and could subject those who tore their line to severe torture. This is clearly evident in the way King Kasoo treats Romanus Bengo. Bengo, the activist, was thrown to dungeon for challenging the dictatorial tendencies of King Kasoo because he could speak against the way Kasoo was plundering the public coffers by stashing away money in foreign banks. Judah Zen Melo was also sacked from government, beaten senselessly and denied him all privileges including his property—land, cars, coffee farms—just because he refused to collude with the king to “silence” his brother Romanus Bengo. Through his power he made sure that his crony councilor Chipande was the only one with a license to farm coffee and make people like Tamina to work for him because he could not “compete with peasants”.

On the day of the coronation, the people grumbled that they were crowning the wrong king after King Kutula XV died. Princess Sangoi admits that many people disappeared on that day just because Lacuna Kasoo stamped his authority to those who opposed his leadership in the land of Kutula (Mulwa 2004, 41). The family of Judah Zen Melo is plunged into abject poverty because of what the King ordered to be done to them. To compound on the problems that

the king subjects Tamina's family to, Lulu, their daughter, is even sent away from school due to lack of fees.

Immediately he took over power, Kasoo ordered everyone to attend the ceremony to commemorate the death of King Kutula XV. He appoints Princess Sangoi as the minister of Reclamation and Remedies and orders her to criss-cross the country and commands everyone to attend the ceremony. Princess Sangoi says “My brother rules by springing surprises on unsuspecting citizens...” (Mulwa 2004, 41).

In the same vein, Lulu, the leader of the children dance group, is ordered to attend the ceremony and after she was to entertain the king ‘privately’. The customs demanded that a virgin girl should hand over the crown to the king and entertain him the whole night long. Lacuna Kasoo attempts to use his powers to molest the girl all in the name of tradition. He even has the guts to say that, “customs must bow to national emergencies...I must sit, both buttocks, on the sit of power...” (Mulwa 2004, 57). The girl is detained in the palace for refusing to entertain the king and opting to dance with a foreigner,

Robert Rollerstone, during the ceremony.

Further, the manifestation of the King's power is also seen in the way his cronies treat people. They are arrogant, boastful and cruel to the people. Additionally, they amass a lot of wealth from the government and live in affluence at the expense of the populace.

For instance, councilor Chipande and councilor Malipoa represent the king's inner circle, which help him

in exerting excessive power to the people. They collude in mistreating the people, seen in the way councilor Chipande orders the attendants. He says, "That's how we treat them. Summary statements keep them in place. Then you get production." (Mulwa 2004, 61).

In order to fulfill some of the conditions laid down by the foreign financiers on the loans they gave, the King uses his powers to drive people away from the Bukelenge valley in order to create space for land to be given to the financiers. The valley dwellers are to be forcefully evicted to Samuka plains in two weeks time. The king vows to carry on with the plan despite the advice of the opinion of the leaders of the valley. The people are forced to bare the brunt yet the loans that were advanced to the country never benefited them, they went to the pockets of the few. The forceful eviction triggers a revolution as they rebelled to retain their land in Bukelenge Valley. Lacuna Kasoo goes to the extent of ordering his commander of armed forces, Meshak, to kill those who are opposed the project. Judah Zen Melo is killed by a machine he was operating after the decree of maximum speed of quadruple production was put in place. The order was one of the conditions put forward by the foreign financiers. The king, through his powers, ordered that the directive be effected immediately in order to spur production that would enable him settle the debts he owed the financiers.

### **Economic Power**

Economic power is also brought out in

the play through the foreign influence represented by the foreign financiers, Daniel Goldstein and Robert Rollerstone. The western countries give out loans to African states but these loans usually have strings attached on them. The country that receives such loans must play to the whims of the loaners. They lay out conditions that must accompany the loans and failure to implement them, stringent measures were taken. For instance, on failing to pay the financiers, King Lacuna Kasoo is compelled to adhere to the conditions they give out because of their power. For fear of economic sanctions, the King goes ahead to implement some of the conditions which include driving out people from Bukelenge valley and leaving the land for the financiers; cutting down on expenditure; quadruple production speed; decrease in wages; and more hours of work among others.

Such conditions are akin to the popular Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) that were imposed by International Monetary Fund (IMF) on African countries that saw many lose their jobs and cost of living go up tremendously. These foreign countries impose these sanctions on African states because of the economic power they wield. This has led to the problem of impoverishment of nations due to debts settlement. Other African countries which have been able to cooperate have suffered heavily from the so called dependency syndrome from the west. However, the play goes full cycle when the people's power is seen at the end of the play. The populace is able to engage in civil revolution devoid of bloodshed in order to overthrow the dictator, King



Lacuna Kasoo, together with his government. They are arrested and supposed to face the law for crimes they have committed. A people's leader, Princess Sangoi is installed on the throne and promises a better future for the people of Kutula.

### **THE HUNTER IS BACK**

#### **Plot Overview**

*The Hunter is Back* is a play whose events span for a period of two decades. The play is set in an imagery community in Africa. It opens with two women; Naomi and Maneno on stage, expressing their displeasure on their families' lifestyles. The two women are lamenting on the life they lead since the life is unsatisfying, oppressive, miserable and retrogressive. It is a life that is characterized by male chauvinism, patriarchy and gender imbalance. The women folk are portrayed as disadvantaged in this setup. They are shown as weak subjects, oppressed by their male counterparts and the patriarchal structure, and are subject to various sorts of manipulation by the male gender. This is clearly evident through the tribulations that Rita, the antagonist in the play, undergoes in the hands of Mzee Tumbo, the chief and Ngumi. Taaabu, another female character in the play, is used by the playwright to highlight the challenges that women are subjected to in this society. Due to poverty, Taabu leads a loose life to make ends meet. Eventually, she ends up contracting a strange disease that the villagers call a curse but Jeremy, the doctor, diagnose as HIV and AIDS; condemning her to suffering forever. Midway into the play, chief Sivu or just

the chief is also introduced. This marks the anticlimax of the play since the actions that ensues signal a turnabout in the lives of many characters in the play. The chief comes into the fore when Rita and Ngumi are involved in a serious conflict. On the one hand, Ngumi wants to marry off Rita to Mzee Tumbo so that he can get money to execute his plans. On the other hand, Rita is opposed to the marriage on the basis of age and how Mzee Tumbo treats his wives. Rita sees Ngumi's actions as mere fantasy.

Rita goes to the chief for help. However, instead of listening to Rita, the chief throws her out of his house. We get to realize that he does this because he has been bribed by Mzee Tumbo. Through this, the chief's character is exposed to us as a hypocrite, cruel, arrogant and corrupt as is further evident from the way we see him handle different people like Rita, Kito and Mzee Tumbo. However, Rita manages to escape from the marriage through a scholarship which she secures for further studies.

Fast forward, the play moves to half a decade later. Rita has completed her further studies, self is actualized and now she is back to Chamaland. She embarks on initiating various development projects in the community and campaigns against the abuse of basic human rights. Rita manages to bring light to Chamaland using her knowledge and experience abroad. She not only gains respect and admiration from the people but she was also able to restore their hope in life and better their living standards through the projects she initiated.

However, not many acknowledged

and lauded her efforts. For instance, the chief felt threatened by her actions and thought that she was poking fingers into his leadership. Toward the end of the play, the chief's conspiracies against Rita are exposed.

As the play ends, the chief is exposed and Rita crowned as the chief of Chamaland as a reward of her efforts and development record.

### **Subverting the Traditional Order**

As the playwright depicts, the traditional order pervades the system of governance in Chamaland. This system of power is characterized by the oppression and subjugation of women in the society. For instance, in the beginning of the play, we see Naomi and Maneno alluding to the oppressions they are facing due the power vested on their husbands as a result of tradition. In this regard, the women are supposed not to oppose anything that their husbands ordered them to. They were to submit fully to the wishes of their husbands without question. Thus, the traditional order weakened the women in the society as it privileged the place of men.

Further, the traditional order vested a lot of power on the chieftom. The chief's powers were also not contested in this society. Thus, the chief's decisions were considered final in the community. Because of this, Mzee Tumbo bribes him to overlook Rita's plea not to marry him, which he does with ease. This shows the amount of power this traditional chief was accorded in Chamaland. As seen in the play, the chief's rule is not negotiable hence Rita has no choice but to abide by the decision made by the elders, in this case, as proclaimed by the chief, to marry

Mzee Tumbo - a man supposed to be his grandfather. Therefore, after the chief's decision, Rita is grabbed and the wedding ceremony prepared of her hurried.

The traditional order recognizes the woman as a source of wealth. The woman is seen as a commodity to be sold. This is evident in act 2 scene 1 where Ngumi fantasizes on how he will become a wealth man once he marries off Rita to Mzee Tumbo. Hence, he is out in a mission to ensure that Rita gets married be it by force. To ensure that the marriage goes through, without any hitch, Mzee Tumbo bribes the chief and Ngumi. He bribes the chief with ten thousand shillings so that he will not listen to Rita's plea. On receiving the bribe, the chief uses his power to shut Rita up and ensure that the wedding ceremony goes on.

However, this traditional order is subverted when the various female characters in the play subvert the traditional order through rebellion. For instance, Rita is seen as being in the forefront to contest the traditional forms of marriage. She refuses to get married to Mzee Tumbo and goes to the chief to seek help in order to avert her impending marriage. Unfortunately, the chief takes a bribe and therefore turns a deaf ear on her plea. But Rita was able to pull through and avoid a marriage to Mzee Tumbo through a scholarship.

Rita was not yet done in contesting the traditional order. She not only openly opposed Ngumi's, her benefactor, decisions over her but after the completion of her studies, she returns back to the village where she wages war against the traditional order. The chief,

the embodiment and custodian of the traditional order, felt threatened and is later overthrown from power by the people. In his place, Rita takes over, making the end of the traditional order.

Besides Rita, Naomy, Ngumi's wife, is also against the traditional order. She does not support her husband's decision to marry Rita off. Naomy is reportedly said not to be comfortable with her husband's dealings with Mzee Tumbo. For instance, she also openly condemns Ngumi's decision to marry off to Tumbo and even tells (Ngumi) to stop rejoicing for the wealth she will get from Rita's marriage. Naomy tells Ngumi to count her out of such a practice. She even plays a pivotal role in helping Rita to escape from the ceremony after getting a scholarship. Her actions bring to an end the traditional marriage order.

### Contesting Oppression and Dictatorship

Oppression is keenly depicted in the play. For instance, we vividly see how the rich such as Mzee Tumbo oppress the poor and the helpless. Also the chief is a rich man yet we see him oppressing his servants like Kito. First, his oppression is clearly seen in the manner in which he handles Kito. Under no circumstance do we hear him appreciating anything that he does but rather complains and quarrels him over now and again. When Kito asks for his pay, which he has not received for months now, the chief yells back at him claiming that he is the one who should know when to pay him and does not need to be reminded.

Rita faces oppression due to her poor circumstances. She is to be married off to Mzee Tumbo whose wealth influences all and sundry including

Ngumi. Ngumi, for instance can't wait for the opportunity to amass more wealth. On the other hand Rita has no voice in the situation not even in the presence of the chief, who has been bribed by Mzee Tumbo. The power of wealth rules over the chief's integrity as he falls for Tumbo at the expense of Rita's rights.

Mzee Tumbo just marries anyhow and divorces anyhow just because he is rich and can use his wealth to get whatever he wants. All this happens because nobody would be bold enough to question him just because he is a tycoon. Poor village girls end up getting married to him because their parents cannot match Tumbo's wealth or are eager to get a share of his wealth.

Besides oppression, dictatorship is rife in this society. Dictatorship is the form of government in which absolute power is exercised by a dictator or can also be viewed as absolute imperious or overbearing power. The chief is a good example of a dictator in the play. For example, when Rita complains that as government, he is supposed to protect the rights of every member in the society, he gets angry and wonders which government is talking about because he is the government. Further, his dictatorship is clearly depicted on how he handles his servants. Kito, chief's servant has no opinion in whatever the chief thinks, says or commands. The way he talks to him show how a dictator he his, "do you know who I am? Can you stand my wrath? Every tom dick and harry calls me the chief of Chama. My tentacles spin far and wide forming an intricate web that you are unlikely to survive"

Men in the play are also portrayed as dictators in the manner in which they handle their families. Their family members do not question or point a finger to their decisions. This is clearly evident from the frost relationship between Naomi and Ngumi. Naomi is never at ease in the presence of Ngumi. She fears him and never questions his decisions. Further, she cannot confront him but would gossip with her sister Maneno.

However, characters in the play contest all the forms of dictatorship and oppression. For instance, Kito runs away from the chief's palace because he cannot take it anymore. Rita narrowly escapes from getting married to Mzee Tumbo. When the people feel that they are fed up with the chief's dictatorial leadership, they unite together and stage a bloodless coup. They thus bring an end to his dictatorial and oppressive leadership by appointing Rita in her place. In this way, they are able to restore fair, just and democratic leadership in their society. Their hopes and aspirations are restored.

### **Celebrating Women's Redemptive Roles**

Redemption occurs after a successful struggle or a quest to bring to an end something that affects that which is a norm in life. It is manifested normally when there is a situation where there is oppression and undermining of rights of a particular group. In a political setting, redemption would come after the people get a leader who does away with the misuse of power, dictatorship, corruption and oppression which affect the common citizen. Redemption usually occurs

when a figure rises up from among the people as their savior and hence against fights against the injustices in the society.

In the play, Rita stands out as the people's savior. Rita who had gone overseas for further studies had acquired adequate knowledge and therefore comes back to the community with a difference. She comes back enlightened and with a mission to fulfill. Immediately she arrives in the village, a job is well cut out: To transform the community. Her vision is seemingly clear from the word go: initiate various projects and champion the campaign for human rights, since in this way, she hopes to open the eyes of the society. In this regard, she comes up with several projects such as the water project. This project becomes very successful and saves the lives of many people especially women who had to go for miles in search for water. Additionally, she is able to secure funding from other development which heavily boasts the implementation of various developmental projects she has in mind for the people.

Further, she does not only concentrate on the development projects alone but only in condemning the abuse of human rights by those in power. She constantly confronts the chief and his sycophants such as Ngumi and Tumbo on the issue of abuse of power. For instance, she tells the chief that since he is government, he should be in the forefront in the protection of people's rights at all times. He should not be the one suffocating the people. Her constant attack on the chief's system of governance creates tension between her and the chief to an extent that he (the Chief) incites the youth against her. However, his actions do not redeem his tainted image in the

eyes of the people.

Rita's role and leadership style in society is worth celebrating. The playwright portrays her not only as a savior but also development minded. She actually charts the way for the people and leads them to success unlike the male counterparts. She brings change to the people through the development projects and her campaign for human rights. The people are able to see, feel and live her vision. Through her, the writer shows that women are capable of bringing the much needed change in the society. Further, the author shows that women are better managers and are not blinded by power as well as leadership responsibilities. With these, he has given the woman a greater and/or superior position than that of man.

Through Rita, the author depicts that women, given opportunities, can perform better than men. Unlike the men who would want to use their positions in power to enrich themselves and for their own selfish interests like what the chief does, the women are more concerned with the well-being of the community in terms of development. They could also seek to use their leadership positions to address the challenges facing the community as Rita does. Therefore, through Rita's success, the playwright deconstructs the traditional wisdom that women are only meant for domestic chores.

The author foregrounds Rita's leadership style. Rita as a leader is depicted one who is sensitive to the needs, hopes and aspirations of the people. She is very democratic and now and again we see her consulting with the people. Besides, her judgments are

logical, fair and in tune with the wishes of the people. Her leadership style is characterized by checks and balances hence open and fair. In this way she brings a new dawn to Chamaland. Important to note is that this same power system is fair to the extent of not segregating by sex but view all as equal to any tasks at whichever time in history. It breaks the barrier of discrimination and impunity by any person in authority. With this regime the corrupt and senseless leaders are convicted and charged by the law which must be upheld at all times.

Rita exposes her conceptualization of power in the society. For instance, in one of her confrontations with the chief, she tells him that it is his duty as deemed by the government to protect the rights of every citizen. To her, being in power implies being a servant of the people. In this way, her knowledge of power is grounded on the need to protect the rights of the citizens unlike the traditional system which is tied to the protection of the customs and beliefs of a people. She believes that it's time to do away with the age old traditions which are detrimental to the development of an individual person. Rita actually leads by example by shattering and destroying the wayward traditional customs that hinder society's growth.

Other than enlightening the community on their various human rights, Rita also employs the knowledge she acquired to interpret various phenomena and natural calamities like diseases. For instance, she uses scientific methods to explain the occurrence of diseases. She, for example, explains to the people that what Taabu is suffering

from is not a curse as a punishment from the gods as many in the village. She expounded to them that Taabu is suffering from HIV and AIDs, a disease which is sexually transmitted. Rita also tried to explain to the people other natural issues like global warming as arising from the careless of the industries and also the aspect of of deforestation. Through Rita's activities and enlightenment roles, the playwright foregrounds the idea that educating a woman is bringing light in the society.

### Conclusion

The focus of this study was to establish the metaphors of power in the plays *Inheritance* and *The Hunter is Back*. We have established that Mulwa depicts the interplay of the metaphors that come as a result of power such as exploitation, oppression, dictatorship, arrogance, pride and self-centredness. These metaphors come to be as the reigning leaders seek to acquire new wealth thus embark on exploiting the masses, dubious means of attaining economic power and as well as become dictators in the quest to maintain their grip in power. We have further established that the attendant metaphors of power identified are contested in the play *The Hunter is Back*. We have demonstrated that "the hunter" comes "back" to contest the existing power structure in the society. As much as there are other hunters in the play, Rita stands out as the main hunter. Initially, Rita is the hunted since she likes of Mzee Tumbo, Ngumi and the chief are on her neck to get married so as the involved parties can benefit from that marriage. However, that was never to be as she escapes after obtaining a scholarship.

After completing her education, she returns back to Chamaland for the oppressors in the society. Thus, it is through Rita that the metaphors of power are contested.

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