

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF HUMOUR AS AN ASPECT OF SATIRE IN SELECTED SONGS OF OKOT P'BITEK: SONG OF MALAYA, SONG OF LAWINO AND SONG OF OCOL

OCHIENG JARED

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN LITERATURE OF MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY

&

Dr. Peter Muhoro Mwangi

Department of Languages and Humanities School of Social Sciences Mount Kenya University

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56293/IJMSSSR.2022.4522>

IJMSSSR 2022

VOLUME 4

ISSUE 6 NOVEMBER – DECEMBER

ISSN: 2582 - 0265

Abstract: Humour is essentially part of our daily lives. There seems to be life and liveliness whenever we incorporate humour even to a small extent. Based on this concept, this study sought to explore the use of humour and how it leads to successful satirizing of situations in OkotP'Bitek's three selected texts - Song of Malaya, Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol. It aimed at giving different definitions of humour and then going ahead to show that humour is subjective, that is, what one considers as humour may differ from another person's interpretation within the same context of use. Successful use of satire relies on effective use of humour and this is important to both writers and the readers in that whereas the writer will comfortably relay issues of concern, the readers will not get offended even when the issues being relayed touch on their personal lives. This study had three objectives: to identify humour in satirical contexts in S. O. M, S. O. O and S. O. L, to show that humour is arbitrary in the selected songs, and finally to demonstrate that use of humour leads to successful relay of negative themes in the three songs. The aim of the study was to show that satire cannot be successfully used without incorporating humour. Therefore, satire and humour are integral. Various contexts were considered in the three songs in order to find out contexts that contain humour. In particular, the songs were studied in contexts of politics, religion and culture so as to provide a more organized in-depth analysis. Study population was limited to the three songs and only samples of data were picked to achieve the study objectives. One theory of reference which was heavily relied on in this study was Reader Response theory by Stanley Fish. The study design was qualitative in nature. Cresswell (1998) observes that a study design aims at exploring in depth, insight and the wealthy ideas of a phenomenon. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources and were particularly based on a library research. Primary data was data which was collected afresh for the first time. On the other hand, secondary data was data that had already been collected in order to be used again. After obtaining data, analysis was done on the content. It was textual analysis. Towards the end there were conclusions and recommendations that would give summaries and future actions respectively.

Keywords: Reader Response theory, textual Analysis

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One theory was of relevance in this study and this is the Reader-response theory. It is a school of thought of literary theory that focuses on the reader and their experience of a literary work. Its proponents include: Stanly Fish, David Bleich, Wolfgang Iser, Peter Robinowitz, Elizabeth Freund, Louise Rosenblatt and Hans Robert Jauss. Meaning of a text is not something that is just sitting there inside a literary text. It is the reader who has to actively construct a text as they read through it. Importance of the reader is equivalent to that of the author because each reader remakes a text through his interpretation. These readers then bring their experiences to this encounter. The responses are constructed by each reader of the same text. So, in essence the tenets of reader response theory are

that the theory allows for inferences and insights by the reader and two, the theory accepts that a reader's background knowledge and experiences impact his or her interpretation of a text. Meaning of a text is derived from the reader through the reading process.

METHODOLOGY

Textual analysis was the study design used by the researcher. It did not require collection of data from people. Basically, it dealt with study of information which had been recorded in texts, media or physical items.

FINDINGS

As already critically analyzed in the Findings section, humour evidently features as an aspect of satire in the three selected songs of study: Song of Malaya, Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol. It can also be argued as seen from the findings that to some extent the choice of words by persona may elicit humour depending on reader's interpretation. Humour which featured in the three selected songs of study also proved that negative situations can be satirized on light note.

CONCLUSION

The study findings affirmed all the three objectives of study. Situations are depicted from a different angle using the power of humour so that issues are addressed openly no matter how shameful. Arbitrariness of humour therefore implied that even though some readers would interpret contexts as lacking humour, there is a good number that would still find humour in those particular contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends a number of reviews to be made in the current curriculum. First, from a very young age, children should be highly subjected to both intensive and critical reading. This will broaden their minds so as to look into issues from a wider perspective. Secondly, it is recommended that computers and internet be availed in all learning institutions to aide extensive reading into available literature online. Learners will be able to read and acquire more knowledge on specific issues affecting the society. Finally, the ministry of education should introduce awards for top creative writers per sub-county right from basic to tertiary levels of education.

REFERENCES

1. Barry, A. (1995), *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory.* Manchester University Press.
2. Okot p' B. (1966), *Song of Lawino.* East African Publishing House.
3. Okot p' B. (1966), *Song of Ocol.* East African Publishing House.
4. OkotP' B. (1971), *Song of Malaya.* East African Publishing House.
5. Crystal, D. (1912), *Introducing Linguistics.* Penguin Books Ltd.
6. Finnegan, R. (1970), *Oral Literature in Africa.* Clarendon Press.
7. Mill's, S. (1950), *Feminist Stylistics.* Routledge.
8. Ngara, E. (1990), *Ideology and Form in African Poetry Studies in African Literature series.* Heinemann.
9. Ngara, E. (1982), *Stylistic Criticism of the African Novel.* Heinemann.
10. Ochieng, W. (24th Feb. 1980:16), *Why does Local Intellectual genius go unrecognized?* Sunday Nation.
11. Roscoe, A. (1977), *Mother is Gold: A Study in West African Literature.* Cambridge University Press.
12. Thiong'o, N. (1972), *Homecoming.* Heinemann.
13. Warren and Welleck (1986), *Theory of Literature.* Penguin.
14. Williams, K. (1968), *Profiles in Literature: Jonathan Swift.* Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.