"Of madness and sagacity"

An intercultural dialogue between masks in Luigi Pirandello's and Penina Muhando's plays (Part 1)

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This paper stems from the challenge of translating Pirandello's plays into Swahili and is aimed to open up a polylogue between Italian and Swahili literature. Therefore, in searching for connections between Luigi Pirandello's and Penina Muhando's plays, this paper will explore multiple masks engaged in a reciprocal dialogue among the following six selected plays: *Enrico IV* ('Henry IV,' Pirandello 1921); *Così è, Se vi pare* ('It is so, if you think so!' Pirandello 1917); *Il Berretto a Sonagli* ('Cap and bells,' Pirandello 1916); *Pambo* ('Decoration,' Muhando 1975); *Nguzo mama* ('The Mother Pillar,' Muhando 1982); and *Lina ubani* ('An Antidote to Rot,' Muhando 1984). In conclusion, this study will illustrate how different forms of sociohistorical alienation, which encircle the twentieth century, are stylistically represented in these plays through the characters who wear the masks of madness, or 'sage-madness.' To allow an in-depth analysis of the plays this study will be divided into two parts. Part one will examine *Enrico IV* ('Henry IV,' Pirandello 1921) and *Pambo* ('Decoration,' Muhando 1975). Part Two will examine *Così è, Se vi pare* ('It is so, if you think so!' Pirandello 1917); *Nguzo mama* ('The Mother Pillar,' Muhando 1982); *Il Berretto a Sonagli* ('Cap and bells,' Pirandello 1916); and *Lina ubani* ('An Antidote to Rot,' Muhando 1984).

Keywords: Swahili literature, theatre, comparative literature, comparative philosophy, translation studies, Luigi Pirandello, Penina Muhando, alienation, masks, madness, sage-madness.

1. Introduction[1]

This paper stems from a project that I started a few years ago,[2] when I translated some of Pirandello's pieces of theatre into Swahili. The rationale behind this project is that Italian theatrical culture is practically unknown in Tanzania compared to other foreign theatrical traditions. In particular,

[1] Part Two is scheduled for publication in *Kervan* 28 (2024).

[2] I was inspired to start translating Pirandello's plays after a period of research as an exchange student at the University of Dar es Salaam. This award was granted by the University of Naples "L' Orientale," in agreement with the University of Dar es Salaam (a.y. 2014/2015).

Shakespearian theatre is very popular, not only as a British colonial legacy in the country, but also because in post-independence Tanzania it continued to be widespread as a result of the prestigious translations into Swahili made by *Mwalimu* ('the Teacher') Julius K. Nyerere, the first Tanzanian president. Nyerere translated Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (as *Julius Kaizari* 1969) and *The Merchant of Venice* (as *Mabepari wa Venisi,* lit. 'the bourgeoises of Venice,' 1972) (Mazrui 1996). These translations were followed by Mushi's translations of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (as *Makbeth* 1968) and *The Tempest* (as *Tufani* 1969).

In post-independence Tanzania, the trend of literary translation represented a strategy of nation-building (Talento 2021; Nyerere 1972) as well as an expression of cultural nationalism in reaction to colonialism (Mazrui 1996). This was done by operating a "transtextualization" (Mazrui 1996: 73) aimed at re-"Africanizing" (Mazrui 1996: 6) the literary panorama of the new-born republic. Furthermore, post-independence Swahili theatre was influenced by Brechtian theatre, and some Tanzanian playwrights, such as Ebrahim Hussein, studied in the former East Germany. Hussein was the first author to introduce the trend of self-translation by translating his widely known play *Kinjeketile* (1969) into English (1970); it has been defined a "piece of epic theatre" (Fiebach 1997: 23) in which he experimented with Brechtian dramatic techniques. Moreover, he also quoted Pirandello's play *Six Characters in Search of an Author* as "*Wahusika Sita Wanaomtafuta Mwandishi*" (Hussein 2003: 200) to illustrate the strength of its characters, who overcome the creativity of their creator.

Nevertheless, a translation of Pirandello's works into Swahili has never been attempted; thus, I thought to introduce a diverse cross-cultural encounter.

In this paper, I will firstly lay a theoretical base in comparative literature and philosophy to frame the textual analysis of six selected plays, namely: *Enrico IV* ('Henry IV,' Pirandello, 1921); *Così è, Se vi pare* ('It is so, If you think so!' Pirandello 1917) – that I translated as *Hivyo ndivyo mambo yalivyo, ukipenda hivyo*; and *Il Berretto a Sonagli* ('Cap and bells,' Pirandello 1916) – that I rendered as *Kofia yenye kengele*. They will be analysed in dialogue with: *Pambo* ('Decoration,' Muhando 1975); *Nguzo mama* ('The Mother Pillar,' Muhando 1982); and *Lina ubani* ('An Antidote to Rot,' Muhando 1984).

The initial challenge, which triggered the comparative analysis, was the aforementioned work of translating from Italian to Swahili not only Pirandello's theories, but also his selected plays, some of which are written in the Sicilian dialect or in a Sicilian-like colloquial style. Particularly, I strove to preserve all the author's humour, while making the content accessible to Swahili speakers.

Since my first attempt to read Pirandello's and Muhando's plays in conjunction with one another, what immediately sparked my curiosity was a feeling of similarity or familiarity with certain thematic and aesthetic elements; this, pushed me to seek further for differences. Therefore, the comparative

endeavour sprouted, aimed at establishing a dialogue, while acknowledging cultural peculiarities, between two authors who are totally unrelated to each other.

This study will establish a polyphonic dialogue focused on alienation. The two authors' works encircle the twentieth century by delimiting it in its first decade (Pirandello) and towards its end (Muhando). The twentieth century was indeed a century characterised not only by socio-political transformations and territorial upheavals, which changed the world order and the hierarchy of powers, such as two world wars, the end of colonialism, and the cold war, but also by new discoveries, such as the modern study of psychoanalysis inaugurated by Freud and Jung. Pirandello's plays are set in the troubled historical context between the two world wars, whereas Muhando's plays are set in the period of disillusionment about the socialist ideology of *ujamaa* in post-independence Tanzania – a period that was followed by the implementation of neoliberal reforms and an increase in neo-colonial dependence on foreign aid (Lugalla 1995).

The Tanzanian socialist experiment founded on *ujamaa na kujitegemea* ('socialism and self-reliance,' Nyerere 1964; 1974; Blommaert 1997) was launched in 1967 through the Arusha Declaration (*Azimio la Arusha*), the manifesto of the political and philosophical ideology of *ujamaa* (lit. 'familyhood'), whose pillars are "the concept of togetherness, sharing and unity [among] African communities" (Topan 2006: 111). *Ujamaa* and its consequent development marked an influential historical period for Swahili writers, who wrote between "euphoria and pain" (Topan 2006).[3]

The twentieth century was also characterised by some challenges to insofar uncontested scientific positivism. Therefore, alienated persons, torn between their conscious and unconscious fears and desires, lost their certitudes as well as their established values and beliefs, which were exchanged for an awareness of both knowledge relativity and the lack of unique truth. The alienated individual, who adopts a pessimistic attitude toward life, is represented on stage as the character wearing the costume and the mask of 'sage-madness.' In other words, madness is not madness as such, but is the mask worn on the face of rationality and sagacity.

The textual analysis in this paper will centre on characters/personas and the narrative style of the plays, endeavouring an "inside-out" methodology that entails, firstly, to reveal and extrapolate the authors' emic theories, and then to apply those theories to analyse the plays.

[3] "Writers' pain" (Topan 2006) sprang from seeing all the principles of the Arusha Declaration ravaged at the banquet of the bourgeoisie (Kezilahabi 2008). Cf Kezilahabi's poem *Azimio* ('Declaration') in the collection of poetry *Karibu Ndani* ('Welcome Inside,' 1988).

2. Comparative literatures and philosophies: between cultural universals and particulars towards relativism

In this section, the theoretical framework will be built by reviewing literature in the field of comparative literature and philosophy. "Making a comparison" is a basilar instrument to conduct literary criticism, which is indeed both "an action and the outcome" (Brown 2013: 71). The best definition of comparative literature is considered to be Remak's description, which was provided at the 9th Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association (AILC/ICLA) in 1979:

> Comparative Literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country and the study of the relationships between literature on one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the (fine) arts, philosophy, history, the social sciences, the sciences, religion, etc. on the other. (Remak quoted in Domínguez *et al.* 2015: 5; Remak 1980)

Comparative literature is also a bridge to the larger horizon of world literature. In 1827, Goethe coined the term *Weltliteratur* to describe a "literary system without boundaries" that Damrosh (2003) afterwards explained as a "universal literary system" (Damrosch in Dominguez *et al.* 2015: 2). Indeed, Damrosch further defined world literature as "a mode of circulation and a reading" (Damrosch 2003: 5) of texts. Then, he provided his well-known threefold definition: "world literature" is "an elliptical refraction of national literatures;" "a writing that gains in translation;" and "it is not a set canon of texts but a mode of reading: a form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our own place and time" (Damrosch 2003:281). Since "a theoretical lens may distort as much as it reveals" (Damrosch 2020: 126), "epistemophilia" should be transformed into a positive quest for "an epistemic difference to come" (Spivak 2009: 625) or an epistemic shift aimed to include "subaltern" (Spivak 1993) voices and perspectives.

After the second world war, the discipline of comparative literature, as a reaction to totalitarianism, started requiring a close reading of original texts in order to open up a dialogue with non-hegemonic languages: "philosophical concepts cannot transcend idiomatic differences" (Derrida quoted in Spivak 2003: 18). Comparative literature must "cross the borders" and "communicate among the heterogeneity of subaltern cultures in the world" (Spivak 2003: 18). Furthermore, world literature teaches people how to "[recognise] themselves through the projection of otherness," "thinking beyond barriers and boundaries" and through "the articulation of cultural differences into a third space of engagement" (Bhabha 1994: 1-12). Particularly, African literatures, as an example of world literature, have the potential not only to highlight "cultural differences" engaging in a dialogue which

"articulates and contests different cultural meaning and values" (Julien 1995: 17-8), but also to cross "the significatory boundaries of cultural interaction" (Bhabha in Julien 1995: 18). Nevertheless, a proper textual analysis must be an intra-textual analysis, a close reading, and an effort of "calibrations" (Quayson 2005) of the text through "its specific textuality, its specific way of being a text" (Barber 2007: 3), so as to disclose its emic cultural context aimed to overcome objectification of literature as per Kezilahabi's "onto-criticism" (1985). Therefore, "the analogical method of comparison and translation" (Gaudioso 2017: 29; 2018) are privileged hermeneutical instruments to interpret and analyse literature (Gaudioso 2017: 21; 2018: 63). Indeed, not only is "consciousness" "an operation which operates by way of analogy" (Jaynes 2000: 65-66), but also "consciousness is embedded in language" (Jaynes 2000: 450). People need to create a familiar analogue to understand new and/or unfamiliar concepts: "the source of all representations is to make something unfamiliar familiar" (Moscovici 2000: 37). Consequently, both analogy and translation become epistemic instruments to gain new knowledge, for "translation is a process of comprehension and restitution of a text through the constitution of an analogue" (Gaudioso 2017: 3, 19; Aiello and Gaudioso 2017).

In conclusion, to compare implies creating analogies, crossing barriers, and connecting borders, by constructing links or epistemic tools – both linguistic and aesthetic - to generate new knowledge. Comparing implies being aware of cultural plurality, which articulates both universals and particulars through relativity. Comparison is an unavoidable process for understanding something new, and its effective instrument seems to be translation: "learning another tradition through the lens of one's own" (Connolly 2015: 33).

Furthermore, language is an important point of discussion not only in the field of world literature but also in "comparative philosophy," which means to engage in "comparison across culturally distinct philosophical traditions" (Connolly 2015: 24). Particularly, "global philosophy" aims at a "dynamic commingling and creative interactionism" in which parties constantly exchange "between convergence and divergence" and "engage constructively through cross-cultural traditions" to make philosophy progress (Connolly 2015: 198). Indeed, the philosopher Kwasi Wiredu (1997) maintains the actual existence of cultural universals, a sine qua non condition for intercultural and cross-cultural communication (Wiredu 1997: 3). On the one hand, persons are the products of culture, and "cultural particulars are tongue dependent" (Wiredu 1997: 5), which means they are "expressed by intrinsic self-reflexivity of natural languages" (Wiredu 1997: 3). On the other hand, culture is a relative concept; however, the "untranslatability of culture" does not mean "unintelligibility" (Wiredu 1997: 25). In fact, "human beings rely upon a combination of particular and universals" (Wiredu 1997: 25) through which different cultures of the world can communicate. Additionally, "each natural language is a unique and

complex theory of describing experience that conveys its own ontology" (Hallen and Sodipo 1997:16). Thus, experiments in cross cultural translation, which implies to create a theoretical equivalent in the language of translation and/or apply certain concepts in a radically different language system, generate alternative philosophies (Hallen and Sodipo 1997: 124) and new epistemological perspectives. To conclude, not only by "translating alien behaviour in foreign languages [are] new meanings created" (Hallen and Sodipo 1997: 37), but also an active engagement in cross cultural comparisons provides evidence of the relativity of meanings (Hallen and Sodipo 1997: 124).

3. Self-alienation camouflaged behind the mask of madness

This section introduces the core theme of this study, which is also the leitmotif of the plays: the socio-political and psychological alienation of the human person, who I understood to be in its totality both "existential and essential" (Mancini 2014). Alienation will be discussed in the case study further on this paper moving between universalism and particularism.

Alienation or self-alienation as a theme has been widely discussed in literature. Firstly, on the one hand, Marx in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* argues that the oppressive social condition induced by capitalism produces the effect of "material alienation."[4] According to Marxist theory[5], not only are laborers "estranged" from the process of their labour and its product, which is a commodity, but they are also alienated from their own being and from those of others. On the other hand, Levine wrote *Method or Madness: On the alienation of the professional* (1982), where he maintains that it is indeed the method for seeking knowledge that alienates the professional, meaning philosophers and physicians, from their objects of research.

Conversely, Lacan, in his *Seminar XI* (1964), maintains that alienation is a fundamental step towards building up human subjectivity. The process is divided into two phases. The first is the famous "mirror phase," which occurs during "Ego formation." The self is disconnected and disjointed between, on the one hand, the child's visual perception of themselves as a whole through the "integral" image reflected in the mirror, and on the other hand, their "fragmented" inner experience of the self. The

[4] See also: The Political Significance of Marx's Theory of Alienation - Logos Journal; Definition: Alienation (purdue.edu).

[5] The Marxist epistemology, as a literary criticism theory, is particularly applicable to analysing Swahili literary works produced during the *ujamaa* period and the "transition to socialism" of Tanzanian society (Philipson 1989; Wafula and Mue 2021).

Cf. Kezilahabi's play "*Kaptula la Marx*" ('Marx's Shorts,' 1978), which is a satire about the first symptoms of collapse of the *ujamaa* pillars (Bulcaen 1997; Wamitila 2000).

image of wholeness jars with the inner experience of a fragmented self; thus, children are alienated from themselves. The second phase occurs during "the symbolic order," when the unconscious and sociosexual relations develop, and thus the subject is split between consciousness and repressed desires. To sum up, the subjective identity develops through "separation" from the mother/care giver and the "subjective alienation" of the self (Lacan quoted in Malherbe 2021: 4-5).

Furthermore, Frantz Fanon in 1952 psychoanalysed the damage wrought by capitalism in Africa and explored what he called "the psychopathology of the negro:" an identity crisis developed during colonial times, which generates a distorted representation of blackness as "phobogenic" (Fanon 2017: 151). People are estranged from themselves and alienated, so they identify themselves with white people and wear "white masks on their black skins" (Fanon 2017). This "colonial cultural alienation" (Fanon 2017; Mbembe 2001) not only results in the displacement and dispersion of a person's identity between the dialectics of self/other-black/white, but it also causes an unconscious psychoanalytical ambivalence between the imposed white supremacy, invented myths (Mudimbe 1988), and "the process of identification in the colonial subject" (Fanon in Bhabha 1994: 44). Therefore, a black person can suffer from an alienated image of the self: "the otherness of self" and a "metonymic illusion of presence" (Fanon quoted in Bhabha 1994: 40-65), because they do not recognise that "identification with the other is a negation to one own identity caused by an ambivalent and antagonistic desire of the other" (Bhabha 1994: 40-65). Mignolo, subsequently, theorised the concepts of "decolonial epistemic de-linking" and "epistemic disobedience" (Mignolo 2009). Likewise, Malherbe (2021) claims for a "de-alienating epistemology" that "locates the truth of collective resistance in self-reflection and consciousness-raising" (Malherbe 2021: 15) as well as in "reflexivity (reflexive knowledge), emotionality (emotional knowledge), and unconscious knowledge" (Malherbe 2021: 16). To conclude, "epistemologies of the South" (Santos 2014) include all those forms of knowledge which, systematically submitted to the test of science (Cooper and Morrel 2014) and subjected to "epistemicide" (Santos 2014), mobilise against "cognitive injustice" (Santos 2014).

At this point in the discussion, methodologically speaking, alienation, as performed in theatre, will be analysed not only as a theme, but also as a narratological and stylistic feature.

Certainly, Freud's theory deeply affected the literary panorama of the 1900s' with his tripartition of the mind into "Ego, Id and Superego" (*The Ego and the Id* 1923) that explains the dual tension between the rational and the irrational mind: the id is the instinct and innate unconscious desires; the superego is the critical moral consciousness; and both of them are mediated by the ego. Previously, Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) had reunited the two opposing strengths: when Dionysian chaos and emotions clash with Apollonian harmony and logic, the greatest features of the tragic representation

are finally achieved (Styan 1981). Theatre is indeed "symbolic" (Styan 1981), yet it is more an intense experience of reality – its "double" (Artaud 2017). Especially, "cruelty" in the practice of theatre occurs to shock the audience and awaken unconscious passions as well as violent emotions: "theatre will evoke in us heart and nerves" (Artaud 2017: 75).

The function of theatre in this case study can be analogically described as the *stultifera navis* "the ship of fools," which navigates the madmen in the quest for their reason or "reason-madness" (Foucault 2001: 5). In literature, the character of the fool and/or madman has been popular since the Middle Ages as a form of veiled criticism, as Erasmus Roterodamus explained in his *Praise of Folly* (1509): because "madness reminds each man of his truth. The deception of deception" (Foucault 2001: 11). The follies are "the guardians of truth," who are closer to reason than reason itself (Foucault 2001: 11-12). Madness is also an epistemology that conducts people of reason and wisdom towards the perception of fragmentation, the absurdity of knowledge, and the nothingness of existence (Foucault 2001: 19). According to Foucault (2001: 273-274), "madness in a work of art opens a void, a moment of silence, a question without an answer, provokes a breach without reconciliation where the world is forced to question itself:" an alienation effect. Precisely, the "alienation effect" occurs when "the audience is hindered from simply identifying itself with the characters in the play;" thus, the audience is obliged to accept or reject the play on a conscious basis (Brecht 1992: 91). For instance, the "A-effect" (Brecht 1992) appears as an annoying external voice that interrupts the flow of the performance or the main dialogues all of a sudden. As can be noticed in the following examples from Muhando's plays:

Sauti: "Wema! Wema! Wema!" (Muhando 1975: 21)	Voice: Wema! Wema! Wema! [An external unknown voice calling for Wema]
Sauti: Mama! Mama! Mama! Mama mtoto analia. (Muhando 2010: 43)	Voice: Ma'am! Ma'am! Ma'am! Ma'am the child is crying

Or when a crazy character cries out complete nonsense, interrupting the central dialogue abruptly and surprising the spectators through the "A-effect," such as in Pirandello's *Henry IV*:

Original	*Translations*
Belcredi: (al dottore, vedendolo andare) Si guardi i piedi, si guardi i piedi, dottore! I piedi! (Pirandello 1973: 86)	*Belcredi: (kwa Daktari akimwona anapondoka) Uangalie miguu yako, uangalie miguu yako, Daktari! Miguu!*

> Belcredi: [to the Doctor as he sees
> him going over]: Watch your feet,
> be careful of your feet, Doctor!
> Your feet! (Pirandello 1995: 81)

The audience, estranged from the event, reflect, and ask themselves questions that they would have not asked, if something odd had not called for their attention (Mutembei 2012). The "A-effect" is a self-contained incident that happens on stage, surprising the audience, and serving as an instrument of social criticism (Brecht 1992: 91).

Particularly in Tanzania during Nyerere's *ujamaa* period, Bertolt Brecht was a major author studied at the University of Dar es Salaam. Brecht's concept of popular drama, as expressed in the essay *The Popular and the Realistic* (1938), was introduced and reinterpreted (Brecht 1992; Etherton 1992: 324-25). "Popular" as a concept means that African people are "the makers of their own revolutionary drama" in conscious opposition to the bourgeoisie (Etherton 1992: 324). "Popular" implies not only the artwork crafted to oppose bourgeois art by representing the truth about society, but also work "by/about/for the oppressed" (Etherton 1992: 325). Theatre raises consciousness so as to free people from oppression (Boal 2008) and avoid unconscious objectification with the oppressor (Fanon 2017). In fact, "drama more than other literary arts deals with the contradictions of social existence" (Jeyifo 1985: 7), attempting a resolution of conflicts, and thus it reveals the "truthfulness of the artifice" in face of "the lie in the truth" (Jeyifo 1985: 7).

The theme of alienation is stylistically represented in theatre not only through aesthetic features such as Brechtian alienation effect and meta-theatrical devices, *e.g.* plays-within-plays or a story inside the story (Styan 1981; Shepherd-Barr 2016), but also through a narrative style, that features characters who are crazies and mad persons. The case study will illustrate how the character of the mad person sometimes overlaps with the narrative agent, the narrator. The narrator is "that agent which utters the linguistic signs which constitute the text" and differs from the author of the narrative (Bal 1997: 18). The narrator who never refers to itself as a character and does not act nor figure in the fabula is an external narrator (EN). The narrator who can be identified with a character in the fabula and performs actions in the story is a character-bound narrator (CN) (Bal 1997). For instance, in Muhando's plays, we will see how the "mad" character overlaps with both the external and internal narrators, whereas Pirandello's style prefers internal bound characters.

To sum up, the feelings both of sociohistorical alienation and self-alienation experienced by the individual, performed on stage through the mask of madness and acted by characters who play the role of mad persons will be the key aspects of the analysis conducted in the case study.

4. Two dramatists who frame the twentieth century: Luigi Pirandello and Penina Muhando

This section briefly introduces the two playwrights who frame the twentieth century cross-culturally between Italy and Tanzania, and their core theories, to whom this paper is dedicated.

Luigi Pirandello wrote his plays at the beginning of the century. He was born in 1867 in Agrigento, Sicily, and died in Rome in 1936. He is the author of 7 novels, 40 plays and 232 short stories and novellas, and won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1934 (Poma and Riccardi 1998a; Styan 1981; Macchia 1986; De Monticelli 1973).

Pirandello was not only a writer, but also a philosopher (Poma and Riccardi 1998a: 354). According to Pirandello the positivist epistemology fails to reach deep knowledge, and actual understanding of human nature, because it is illusory and escapes the limits of science. Therefore, in his view, scientific positivism destroyed metaphysics and faith, pushing humanity to recognise that life no longer had a meaning: "*un'enorme pupazzata, [...] senza spiegazione*"[6] ('a huge puppet-show [...] without an explanation'); in Swahili: *mchezo mkuu wa karagosi bila ufafanuzi*[7]. Life is small in the shadow of death, according to his "Lanterninosofia" ('Lanterninosophia') (Poma and Riccardi 1998a: 374). Furthermore, Pirandello's critique of positivism led him to claim a philosophy of "gnoseological relativism," which means that there is no objective reality: each individual has their own. Knowledge is a plural and multifaceted concept which implies subjective interpretations by individuals. These subjective interpretations can be projected both inwards: how an individual sees her/himself (including the plural interpretations of the Self), and outwards: how others see the individual (Poma and Riccardi 1998a: 395). As per Pirandello's theory of relativity (*nadharia ya uhusiano wa kulinganisha),*[8] knowledge can be described as a multifaceted prism; indeed, it subjectively depends on which face of the prism is observed. Likewise, truth can be interpreted as transitory, chameleonic and plural.

Pirandello was a pioneer of meta theatre and the creator of "the grotesque theatre" (Styan 1981: 78) established through his "theory of puppets" (*nadharia ya kikaragosi mtu*). People are not free to express themselves but are trapped behind masks designed according to influences from the social

[6] Pirandello's letter to his sister Lina (1886), quoted in Poma and Riccardi (1998a: 355).

[7] All Swahili translations in this paper are mine, if not otherwise indicated. All emphasis mine.

[8] All the Swahili translations of Pirandello's theories quoted in brackets in this paragraph are drawn from: Nicolini, Cristina. 2016. "*Mkabala Linganishi: Dhamira ya Wazimu na Kichaa katika Tamthilia za Luigi Pirandello na Tamhilia za Penina Muhando*" (Comparative perspective: leitmotif of madness and insanity in Luigi Pirandello and Penina Muhando's dramas). Paper presented at the "29th Swahili Colloquium," Bayreuth.

environment and its rules. Those masks are staged in theatre that is the double of life. Pirandello's statement on the grotesque theatre is enclosed in his long essay *L'Umorismo* ('On Humour,' 1908) (Styan 1981). In this essay, Pirandello explains that humour (*dhana ya ucheshi*) works through the *avvertimento del contrario* "perception of the opposite" (*hisia ya kinyume*): when you perceive that something is odd and does not conform to social norms, it makes you smile at first; however, it is not supposed to amuse people, but to make them reflect. In fact, after the initial laughter comes bitterness through the *sentimento del contrario* "feeling of the opposite" (*mihemko ya kinyume*) that makes you understand the drama of human existence (Styan 1981; Poma and Riccardi 1998a).

Reflection, like a demon behind the mirror, reveals the contrary of what appears to be reality: reality is as fragmented as human identity. Especially, people are alienated in modern societies, absorbed as they are with worshipping "factisches" (Latour 2010: 11). Pirandello focuses his criticism on the false morality of the bourgeoisie, who search for the "ideal truth" no matter what, by repressing whatever is different. This leads to a fragmentation of the self, which splits in plural identities: "one (how you see yourself), one hundred thousand (how you are seen from the others' perspectives), and no one (the fragmented self, bewildered and confused, became no one)" (Poma and Riccardi 1998a). The splitting of identity into "one, no one, and one hundred thousand (*mmoja, hakuna mtu na laki moja*)" (Pirandello 1914) is bound to Pirandello's theory of masks (*vinyago*). Pirandello explains that life is like a stage, where people wear thousands of different masks to fit social conventions: "in life you see a lot of masks but few faces" (Pirandello 2014).

Pirandello maintains that the truth is an abstract concept that lies beyond human capabilities. Indeed, in the play *Cosi è (se vi pare)* (1917), he describes metaphorically the "relative truth" appearing behind a thick black veil, and revealing itself as each one of us desires it to be. In other words, relative truth is how each person interprets differently the world as seen through an impenetrable thick black veil (Musa 1995).

Therefore, the concepts of both reality and identity fragment. This fragmentation induces a state of self-alienation in the individual. The mad men are the only ones who can be so brave as to take off their masks and shout out loudly a crude and sharp 'reality' liberating themselves from appearances. In fact, the simplest way to appear crazy is just to shout out loudly what we acknowledge as the truth without caring about how we should 'appear' ('*kwa kujionyesha kama kichaa inatosha tu kwamba mtu alie ukweli kwa sauti kubwa hadharani*') - this is what Pirandello (1916) suggests.

Pirandello's linguistic code is rooted in the literary tradition of Italian Verismo,[9] and thus it is a non-elitist language without adornments: either the Sicilian dialect or a lively spoken Italian (Trovato 2008: 44). However, Pirandello distanced himself from the Verismo tradition, maintaining the impossibility of representing an objective reality which is multifaceted, and he employed a highly expressive language which is characteristic of his poetic of humour (Poma and Riccardi 1998a: 357).

Penina Muhando wrote her plays towards the end of the twentieth century. Professor Penina Oniviel Muhando Mlama (1948) not only is Emeritus Professor of Creative Arts at the University of Dar es Salaam, but she is also an activist for gender equality and development rights through the performing arts. From 1998 to 2010 she cooperated with the pan-African NGO, "Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)," which promotes girls' education in Africa; she was also co-founder of TUSEME, "Girls' Empowerment for Gender Equality model" that is an example of Theatre for Development (TfD) in Tanzania.[10]

Muhando is a well-known playwright and a pioneer of "the experimental drama or new-traditional African drama" (*tamthilia za majaribio*), which connects the influences of the European model with a revitalization of traditional East African performing arts, and which was launched after independence. Academics from the Dar es Salaam Arts College, as well as dramatists and playwrights of international fame, including Farouk Topan, Ebrahim Hussein, Magabyuso Mulokozi, Emmanuel Mbogo, Amandina Lihamba and May Balisidya (Mlama 2003a,b; Wafula 1999; Method 2013) were the creators of "modern Swahili theatre" (Bertoncini *et al.* 2009; Lihamba 2004). Mlama in particular is a strong supporter of African traditional performing arts (*sanaa za maonyesho za jadi,* Mlama 1981), as she explained to me during our interview (12-11-2018[11]). I had the privilege to obtain formal interview with Prof. Penina Muhando to talk about her artistic engagement and productions. For instance, she explained to me that since colonialism had suffocated the African traditional arts, she was committed to reviving Tanzanian traditional theatre, taking on the responsibility to demonstrate that Africa has a long history of performing arts. In fact, she reintroduced in her plays all the traditional stylistic and

[9] The literary movement of Verismo was created at the end of the 1800s by the theorists Luigi Capuano and Giovanni Verga as a technique to tell the humble life unvarnished as it is through a raw language. Another characteristic of the movement was support for the Sicilian language.

See also Poma and Riccardi (1998b: 138-139).

[10] https://www.britannica.com/biography/Penina-O-Muhando; https://gateproject.net/prof-penina-mlama-3/; https://www.udsm.ac.tz/web/index.php/alumni/name/10

[11] Penina Muhando Mlama, whom I acknowledge, was interviewed by the author on November 12, 2018, at the University of Dar es Salaam.

narrative features, such as *ngoma*, dances; *hadithi* storytelling; and dialogic interactions between narrators and spectators. I argue that Muhando was capable of both retrieving traditional culture after colonialism and expressing full awareness of cultural development dynamics and political consciousness, especially in her later works.

In addition to this, she is a pioneering exponent of the Tanzanian variant of Theatre for Development (*sanaa kwa maendeleo*), as well as a scholar and practitioner of the "African Popular Theatre" approach, "which emerged as a conscious effort to assert the culture of the dominated classes" (Mlama 1991a: 67) with the objective of "decolonising theatre with endogenous structures" (Kerr 1995: 105; Thiong'o 1986). Especially, Mlama, Lihamba along with their colleagues Chambulozoki and Balisidya, brought into being the effective project of "Malya Popular Theatre for Social Development in Tanzania" in 1982-1983 (Lihamba 2004; Mlama 1991a), as well as the *Mkambalani* workshop in 1986, a form of popular theatre which produced a "communication for development" for women in Tanzania (Mlama 1991b).

Not only is Mlama the author of academic articles and books, but also the author, by "creating in the mother-tongue" (Mlama, 1990), of the following plays: *Haitia* ('Guilt,' 1972); *Tambueni haki zetu* ('You recognise our rights!' 1973); *Heshima yangu* ('My dignity'1974); *Pambo* ('Decoration,' 1975); *Harakati za ukombozi* ('Liberation struggle'1982); *Nguzo mama* ('The mother-pillar,' 1982); *Abjadi yetu* ('Our alphabeth,' 1983); and *Lina ubani* ('An Antidote to Rot,' 1984).

I argue that Muhando's characters can be framed in the context of "sage philosophy," *i.e.* "expressed thoughts of wise men and women in any given community; those thoughts are a way of representing and explaining the world that fluctuates between popular wisdom and didactic wisdom" (Oruka 1990: 28). According to Oruka (1990), the masters of popular wisdom (conformist thoughts) are the folk-sages, while the philosophic sages are the experts in didactic wisdom, who at times are critical of the communal set-up as well as of popular wisdom (Oruka 1990: 28). A central objective in Muhando's plays is to oppose the "epistemic marginalization of women:" "all measures spoken, written or gestured by men which seek to convey the impression that women are incapable of intellectual rigour or cognitive enterprises" (Chimakonam 2018a: 11; Mosima 2018).

Secondly, in Muhando's plays appear all the seven types of choruses detected by Mutembei (2012: 27-68). They are as follows: a peculiar event which describes traditional habits and customs such as life cycle rituals and symbolises the ethical pillars of African society; songs and music performances that expressed in the form of refrains repeat core concepts; a structure that is commonly dialogic, and a style characterised by a story within a story, or multi-layered narrations usually rich in flashbacks; choral characters who give advice, opinions, raise questions and propose answers to those queries.

Choral characters also unify the plot, lead both the audience and other characters, and teach the reasons underpinning the purpose of the drama; the purpose of the play itself has a choral function; finally, the presence of silence (*ukimya*) not only as absence of voices, but also in the form of understood cultural implications of actions, metaphors, and proverbs. For instance, the title of Muhando's play *Lina ubani* was inspired by the proverb "*la kuvunda halina ubani*" ('when something is rotten there is no incense strong enough to cover the bad smell') (Mutembei 2012: 62).

Finally, there also appear characters who fit in the category of what I baptise as "choral sages" (Nicolini 2022: 93; 74): traditional African figures endowed with wisdom, who are connected to both the world of ritual and the performance. These personas, endowed with knowledge and common-sense, perform the role of both "Orukian sages" and "choral characters" by wearing the costume and the mask that I call of 'sage-madness.' Sagacious reasoning is conveyed by mad characters' words and actions. As Mlama explained (12-11-2018): "*katika ukichaa wahusika wana uhuru wa kusema wanachotaka na wana uhuru wa kusema vitu 'havisemeki'*" ('the characters in their madness have the freedom to say whatever they want and to say things that cannot be said'). Many times, the mad character states the actual truth that all people know, but cannot dare to say; however, since those characters are considered unreliable fools, who cannot be taken seriously, they are simply free to utter whatever they want, without facing any consequences.

The case study in the following sections is strategically arranged so as to put the six selected plays in dialogue with each other two at a time: *Enrico IV* ('Henry IV,' Pirandello 1921) in dialogue with: *Pambo* ('Decoration,' Muhando 1975); *Così è, Se vi pare* ('It is so, If you think so!' Pirandello 1917) in dialogue with *Nguzo mama* ('The Mother Pillar,' Muhando 1982); and *Il Berretto a Sonagli* ('Cap and bells,' Pirandello 1916) in dialogue with *Lina ubani* ('An Antidote to Rot,' Muhando 1984).

5. Madness as an escape from injustice

5.1. *Enrico IV* ('Henry IV,' 1921)

Enrico IV is a tragedy in three acts, which employs the technique of theatre in the theatre. It deals with differences and alternations between objective and subjective knowledge; in this play, madness debunks the illusion of the existence of an external objective shape of reality and knowledge (Poma and Riccardi 1998a).

The plot narrates the vicissitudes of a group of country lords, who celebrate Carnival by a masquerade in a solitary villa in the Italian region of Umbria. The protagonist, Enrico IV, has no real name, for he is completely identified with the character he performs: the German emperor of the eleventh century. However, during the masquerade, Enrico IV falls from his horse, hits his head, and

suddenly becomes crazy; he starts believing he is the authentic Enrico IV. After 20 years, his friends, especially the Marchesa Matilde Spina (who during the first Carnival masquerade performed as Matilde di Toscana), reunite together with a doctor to replicate the masquerade so as to cure Enrico IV of his madness. During the play within the play, Enrico IV confesses that he had been genuinely mad for 12 years only; then he just pretended to be crazy so as to set himself free. In the end, he revenges the treason endured 20 years previously, when Belcredi made him fall off his horse deliberately in order to steal Enrico's betrothed, the Marquise Matilda Spina, by killing Belcredi with his sword.

In the following paragraphs, core scenes of the play, which are performed by the characters who wear the mask of madness, will be illustrated alongside my Swahili translations[12]. In this play, madness is a character in its own right: Follia or *Wazimu*:

Original	*Translations*
Donna Matilde: Non dimenticherò mai quella scena, di tutte le nostre facce mascherate, sguajate e stravolte, davanti a quella terribile maschera di lui, che non era più una maschera, ma la Follìa! (Pirandello 1973: 95)	*Bibi Matilde: Sitasahau kabisa onyesho hilo la nyuso zetu zenye vinyago, chafu na zenye maumivu, mbele ya kile kinyago chake cha kutisha, ambacho hakikuwa kinyago tena, bali Wazimu mtupu!*
	Lady Matilda: I shall never forget that scene: all of our faces masked, gross and distorted, there in front of that terrifying mask of his face that now was no longer a mask but rather madness itself! (Pirandello 1995: 89)

Nevertheless, the fool is not so foolish, he explains that each one of us is playing a part and wearing a costume imposed by society through the theory of masks/*vinyago*:

Enrico IV: [...] Ci siamo fissati tutti in buona fede in un bel concetto di noi stessi [...] seguitiamo a tenerci stretti	*Enriko IV: [...] Kwa nia njema, tunaendelea kukazia fikra zetu juu ya dhana nzuri kuhusu sisi wenyewe [...]*

[12] All the translation of Pirandello's plays from Italian to Swahili in this paper are mine.

al nostro concetto, così come chi invecchia si ritinge i capelli. [...] Ma vi assicuro che per quanto sul serio, siete mascherata anche Voi, Madonna; [...] per codesto ricordo che volete fissare in voi artificialmente del vostro color biondo [...]; l'immagine che viene meno della vostra gioventù. (Pirandello 1973: 109)

tunaendelea kushikilia ile dhana yetu, kana kwamba mtu aliyezeeka anapaka rangi nywele zake. [...] Lakini nakuhakikisha kwamba, kwa kweli, hata wewe Bibi unavaa kinyago; [...] kwa kumbukumbu hiyo ya rangi ya blond unayopenda kuurekebisha ndani yako [...]; sura ya ujana wako inayofifia.

Henry IV: [...] But all of us, none the less, continue to hold tightly to the concept we have of ourselves, just the way someone growing old will colour his hair. [...] But I assure you that no matter how seriously you take it, you, too, are masquerading, my Lady; [...] I am speaking only about that memory of yours which you desire to fix artificially in yourself of your blonde colour which on a certain day you found pleasing [...] the fading image of your youth! (Pirandello 1995: 99)

Enrico IV: Ma guai a chi non sa portare la sua maschera, sia da Re, sia da Papa. (Pirandello 1973: 111)

Enriko IV: Lakini ole wao wasioweza kuvaa kinyago chake cha Mfalme, ama cha Baba mtakatifu (Pope).

Henry IV: But Heaven helps the one who does not know how to wear his mask, be he king or Pope! (Pirandello 1995: 101)

Each person must obey the rules imposed by the mask they choose, so they become prisoners of their own masks; the witch crafted punishment imposed on them by their masks is to be excluded from the play of life:

Enrico IV: La mia vera condanna è questa - [...] di non potermi più distaccare da quest'opera di magia! –

Enriko IV: Adhabu yangu halisi ni hii – [...] ya kutoweza kujitengana na mchezo huu wa uchawi! – [...]

[...] Di staccarmi di là [...] e farmela vivere tutta, questa mia povera vita, da cui sono escluso... (Pirandello 1973: 112)

kujitengana nao [...] na kuishi maisha yangu yote maskini, Maisha ambayo nimetengwa nayo...

Henry IV: my true condemnation is this – or that- never to be able to detach myself from this work of magic! [...] to release me from that, there and allow me to live wholly this poor life of mine from which I am excluded (Pirandello 1995: 102)

Madness is like an act of witchcraft, which enacted by a spell, becomes a privileged observation space from which the reality that surrounds us can be observed:

Dottore: Si può essere anche sicuri che un pazzo nota, può notare benissimo un travestimento davanti a lui; e assumerlo come tale; e sissignori, tuttavia, crederci; proprio come fanno i bambini, per cui è insieme giuoco e realtà. (Pirandello 1973: 116)

Daktari: Inawezekana kuwa na uhakika kwamba mwenda wazimu anaweza kutambua [kujificha ndani ya] umbo la uwongo mbele yake, na anaukubali; na ndio mabwana, kuuamini; kama wanavyofanya watoto kwa hiyo ni uongo na uhalisia pamoja.

Doctor: you see – that they notice things, that they can easily detect someone who is wearing a disguise; and he can recognize it as such; and yes, ladies and gentlemen, at the same time he can believe in it, the way children do, for whom it amounts to a mixture of play and reality. (Pirandello 1995: 104)

Enrico IV: Buffoni! Buffoni! Buffoni! [...], buffoni spaventati! E si spaventano solo di questo, oh: che stracci loro addosso la maschera

Enriko IV: Wachekeshaji! Wachekeshaji! Wachekeshaji! [...], wachekeshaji wanaoogopa! Na wanaogopa mi nirarue kinyago chao

buffa e li scopra travestiti; come se non li avessi costretti io stesso a mascherarsi, per questo mio gusto qua, di fare il pazzo! [...] -E avevano l'aria di prestarsi per compassione, per non far infuriare un poverino già fuori dal mondo, fuori dal tempo, fuori dalla vita! (Pirandello 1973: 131-132)

cha kuchekesha na nigundue wamejificha; kana kwamba singalikuwa mimi mwenyewe kuwalazimisha wavae vinyago kwa furaha yangu ya kuwa mwenda wazimu [...] – Na walionekana wafanye hivyo kwa sababu ya huruma, wasije wakamkasirisha maskini mmoja aliyekwisha kuwapo nje ya dunia, nje ya wakati, na nje ya maisha!

Henry IV: Clowns! Clowns! Clowns! [...], frightened clowns! And one thing only frightens them, oh: that I tear off their ridiculous masks and reveal the disguise, as if it were not my very self who forced them into masquerading to satisfy my own pleasure of playing the madman! [...] and with the nerve to pretend they were doing it out of pity, so as not to infuriate a poor wretch already out of the world, out of time, out of life! (Pirandello 1995: 118-119)

People are trapped behind their masks, and they are scared to death to take them off; only the mad man, who fears nothing, eludes the rules of the ruling class, and rebels against oppressive obligations by tearing off his mask.

Enrico IV: pretendono che gli altri siano come li vogliono loro: ma non è mica una sopraffazione, questa! [...], vi fanno subire e accettare il loro, per modo che voi sentiate e vediate come loro! (Pirandello 1973: 132)

Enriko IV: wanadai wengine wawe kama wanavyotaka wao: si ndio udhalimu huu! [...] wanakulazimisha mkubaliana na njia yao, ili msikie na mkaone kama wao!

Henry IV: And those others take advantage of this, they put you down and make accept their way,

to make you feel and see as they do! (Pirandello 1995: 119)

The laugh of alienation is a feature typical of madmen characters, who obtain relief from unease and frustration by bursting into laughter:

Enrico IV: "Pazzo" "pazzo"! [...] - Sono o non sono? – Eh, via, si, sono pazzo! (Pirandello 1973: 133)

Enriko IV: "Kichaa" "kichaa"! [...] - Mimi ni kichaa au la? – Basi, ndio, mimi ni kichaa!

Henry IV: 'crazy,' 'crazy'! [...] Am I or am I not? Eh, why not? Yes, of course, I am crazy! (Pirandello 1995: 119)

Enrico IV: [...] Facciamoci tra noi una bella, lunga, grande risata... (E ride) (Pirandello 1973: 135)

Enriko IV: [...] Hebu jamani sote pamoja tucheke kicheko kizuri, kirefu, tena kikubwa... (Anacheka)

Henry IV: [...] let's have a good, long laugh over it... (and he laughs) (Pirandello 1995: 121)

Crazy people, who wear the mask of 'sage-madness,' are living authentic experience in contrast with the falsity of those who are wearing social masks, pretending to live, while they are performing a play, according to the rules of appearance imposed by the conventions of society.

Enrico IV: [...] Conviene a tutti far credere pazzi certuni, per avere la scusa di tenerli chiusi. [...] -Non si può mica credere a quel che dicono i pazzi! - [...] trovarsi davanti a un pazzo significa trovarsi davanti a uno che vi scrolla dalle fondamenta tutto quanto avete costruito in voi, attorno a voi, la logica, la logica di tutte le vostre costruzioni! - Eh! Che volete? Costruiscono senza logica, beati loro, i pazzi! (Pirandello 1973: 136-137)

Enriko IV: [...] Inafaa kila mtu kwamba wengine wanafikiriwa ni wendawazimu ili apate kisingizio kwa kuwafunga. [...] -Haiwezekani kuamini maneno ya wenda wazimu!- [...] Kuwa mbele ya mwenda wazimu inamaanisha kukaa mbele ya mtu anayeangusha chini kila kitu mlichokijenga moyoni mwenu, kandokando yenu, mantiki, yaani mantiki ya ujenzi wote wa mambo yenu ya ndani! – Enhee! Mnataka nini? Vichaa,

wanabahatika kweli enhee, wao wanajenga bila mantiki na utaratibu!

Henry IV: [...] it's convenient for everybody to make others think that certain people are crazy in order to have an excuse to keep them shut away. [...] you cannot possibly believe what crazy people say! [...] To find yourself face to face with a person who shakes the foundations of everything you have built up in and around you: that logic, the logic of all your constructions! Eh! What do you expect! Crazy people, bless them, construct without logic! (Pirandello 1995: 121-122)

Enrico IV: Dico che siete sciocchi! Dovevate sapervelo fare per voi stessi, l'inganno; non per rappresentarlo davanti a me (Pirandello 1973: 141)

Enriko IV: Ninakuambieni kwamba mu wapumbavu! Mlipaswa kuigiza hila hii kwa ajili yenu; sio kwa ajili yangu mimi

Henry IV: I say that you are fools! You should have known how to stage it for yourselves, this deception of yours; not to act it out in front of me (Pirandello 1995: 124)

However, crazies are also excluded from the small pleasures of life. The choice to be crazy has no way out, and the mad person is thus condemned to a different punishment:

Enrico IV: [...] e che sarei arrivato con una fame da lupo a un banchetto già bell'e sparecchiato. (Pirandello 1973: 151)

Enriko IV: [...] Na ningaliwasili nikiwa na njaa kubwa kama ya mbweha kwenye dhifa ambayo imeshapakuliwa

	Henry IV: [...] I realized that I had arrived hungry as a bear to a banquet that was already over (Pirandello 1995: 132)
Enrico IV: [...] siamo i pagliacci involontari quando senza saperlo ci mascheriamo di ciò che ci par d'essere - (Pirandello 1973: 153)	*Enriko IV: [...] sisi ni wacheshi wapumbavu wakati ambapo bila kujua tunavaa vinyago vyetu ili tuwe kama tunavyodhani* Henry IV: [...] we are involuntary clowns when, without knowing it, we masquerade ourselves with what we think we are (Pirandello 1995: 133)
Enrico IV: Sono guarito, signori: perché so perfettamente di fare il pazzo, qua; e lo faccio quieto! - Il guajo è per voi che la vivete agitatamente, senza saperla e senza vederla la vostra pazzia. (Pirandello 1973: 154)	*Enriko IV: Nimepona, jamani! Kwa sababu ninatambua kwamba ninajifanya kichaa, hapa; na ninajifanya kwa utulivu! - Shida ni kwenu mnaoishi kwa msisiko, bila kujua, na bila kuona wazimu wenu.* Henry IV: Ladies and gentlemen, I'm cured because I know how to play the part of a madmen to perfection, right here; and I do it quietly. The trouble with you is that you live in your own madness with such agitation that you do not even know or see it! (Pirandello 1995: 134)
Enrico IV: La mia vita è questa! Non è la vostra! La vostra in cui siete invecchiati io non l'ho vissuta! [...] Fisso in questa eternità di maschera! (Pirandello 1973: 155)	*Enriko IV: Haya ndiyo maisha yangu! Sio yenu! Maishani kwenu mlikozeeka, mimi maisha yale sikuyaishi kabisa! Nasimama tu katika huo umilele wa kinyago!* Henry IV: This is what my life is! It is not your life! Yours, in which you

have grown old, I did not live! [...]
fixed in this eternal masquerade.
(Pirandello 1995: 135)

In the end, *huku akicheka kama kichaa – "ridendo come un pazzo"* ('laughing like a madman,' Pirandello 1973: 156), Enrico IV avenges himself by inflicting a mortal wound[13] on Belcredi, while Donna Matilda defends him by declaring that he is crazy!

Donna Matilde: è pazzo! È pazzo!

Belcredi: Non è pazzo! Non è pazzo!
(Pirandello 1973: 156)

Bibi Matilde: Kichaa! Kichaa!

Belcredi: Sio kichaa! Sio kichaa!

Lady Matilda: he is crazy! He is mad!

Belcredi: he is not crazy! He is not crazy! (Pirandello 1995: 136)

5.2. *Pambo* ('Decoration,' 1975)

Pambo is a play in three acts that deals with the disillusionment of young people facing the government false promises. Pambo is a newly graduated young person, who even after all the challenges endured to achieve his university degree, cannot find a proper job and get married, disappointing both his fiancée and his parents. Therefore, one day, while he is looking at his degree certificate and his graduation gown, which represent all his unachieved goals and expectations, he loses his mind and starts singing an exasperated yet liberating song:

Original	*Translations*
Pambo Pambo mkubwa mie	Pambo, I am Pambo the big one
Hakuna anayenizidi	There is no one who can beat me

[13] Cf. Ebrahim Hussein's play *Mashetani* ('Daemons' 1971): *Binadamu anatumbukiza kisu katika mbavu. Shetani anacheka. Kila pigo la kisu linasababisha kicheko zaidi. Kicheko kinajaa nyumba nzima [...] Shetani anaanguka lakini kicheko kinaendelea* (Hussein 1971: 8) ('The human being stabs a knife into the devil's rib cage. The devil laughs. Each stab causes a louder laugh. Laughter fills the entire house. [...] The devil falls down, but the laughter goes on').

In this scene, *Binadamu* (lit. the son of Adam) dances in a trance-like state a lethal waltz with the Devil, and a dreadful laugh characterises the event. This laugh can be explained as a post-hypnotic suggestion (Dargenio and Nicolini 2017; Nicolini 2021a), which not only brings to the surface unconscious emotions and desires, but also re-establishes contact with reality for both characters and spectators.

Wa wa wa ewaa	*Wa wa waa! Ewaa!*
Kisomo kikubwa ee	I studied at high levels
Madarasa tele tele	A lot of classes
Wa wa wa ewaa	*Wa wa waa! Ewaa!*
Digrii kupata mie	I obtained a degree
Cheti na joho juu	With a certificate and the ceremonial gown.
Wa wa wa ewaa	*Wa wa waa! Ewaa!*[14]
(Muhando 1975: 5-6)	
	Io sono Pambo il grande
	Nessuno mi può superare
	Wa wa wa ewaa
	Ho studiato ad alti livelli
	Moltissime materie
	Wa wa wa ewaa
	Mi sono laureato
	Con tanto di certificato e toga
	Wa wa wa ewaa[15]

The song, which is an expression of chorus (Mutembei 2012), is sung as a refrain throughout the whole play, alongside the alienation effect of an external choral voice which explains Pambo's state of mind:

> *Sauti: Kichaa! ... kichaa! ... kichaa! ... lakini sio kichaa cha kutumia nguvu na kufanya madhara, bali zaidi ni kichaa cha mawazo*
>
> (Muhando 1975: 34)
>
> Voice: Crazy! ...Crazy!... Crazy! but not the harmful violent madness, he has only a troubled mind

[14] All the translations from Swahili in this paper are mine if not otherwise indicated. I acknowledge William Mkufya, Swahili and English bilingual writer and translator, for the proofreading of my translations from Swahili to English of Muhando's plays.

[15] The Italian translations of Muhando's plays added in this paper are mine. The Italian version has been added to create a parallel between the two works of translation, *i.e.* in Pirandello's case from Italian to Swahili and in Muhando's case from Swahili into Italian and English.

Thus, Pambo's personality is split in three parts: the empty shell of himself, lost in disillusion; *Raha*, 'happiness/self-realisation;' and *Pesa,* 'economic remuneration and stability.' Pambo, who is psychologically wrecked, escapes into the forest with his new imaginary friends, *Raha na Pesa*, into a fantastic world where he hopes to rediscover himself. Subsequently, the play is characterised by a communal event "*msako wa vichaa,*" the hunt of fools, which is also a choral event (Mutembei 2012). The whole community is involved in the hunt, which is led by a traditional healer:

Mganga: Wananchi tusaidiane. Tushirikiane. Jamii nzima haina budi kuwaokoa watoto hawa kwa maana ni wetu sote. Kuwaokoa wao ni kuokoa jamii nzima. (Muhando 1975: 46)	The healer: Fellow citizens let's help one another. Let's work together. The whole community has the duty to save these youths because they are our children. To save them means to save the entire community. *Il guaritore: Cittadini aiutiamoci a vicenda. Cooperiamo. È dovere di tutta la comunità salvare questi nostri ragazzi. Salvarli significa salvare tutta la comunità.*

If, on the one hand, the European symbols of the gown and the certificate brought Pambo to the edge of insanity, the traditional African healer, *mganga wa jadi,* is the one who speak the language of madness: *katika kumponyesha mwenye kichaa ni lazima umwongeleshe kwa lugha anayoielewa yeye mwenyewe* ('in the effort to cure a person with a troubled mind, you have to speak the language he can understand,' Muhando 1975: 45), and who is an example of a "folk-sage" (Oruka 1990). Indeed, philosophical sagacity is "the thought of rigorous indigenous thinkers (sages) who have not had the benefit of modern education, but they are nonetheless critical independent thinkers" (Oruka 1990: 234). The healer, by staging a play within the play, performs an apotropaic counter performance that looks like a reverse imitation game to Pambo's delirium:

Kikundi A (Pambo): Pambo Pambo mkubwa mie	Group A (*Pambo*): Pambo? I am Pambo the big one
Hakuna anayenizidi	There is no one that can beat me
Hakuna!	No one
Wa wa wa ewaa	*Wa wa wa ewaa*

Kikundi B (mganga): Pambo Pambo gani mie	Group B (the healer): Pambo what kind of 'decoration' am I?
Pambo nampamba nani	Pambo, who am I decorating?
Pambo gani!	What decoration is that?
Wa wa wa ewaa	*Wa wa wa ewaa*
(Muhando 1975: 49)	
	Gruppo A (Pambo): Pambo Pambo il grande
	Nessuno mi può superare
	Nessuno!
	Wa wa wa ewaa
	Gruppo B (Il Guaritore): Pambo che 'decorazione' sono io
	Chi sto decorando
	Che decorazione è questa
	Wa wa wa ewaa

In the end, the healer could heal Pambo's ripped personality, bring him back from the *stultifera navis* (Brant quoted in Foucault 2001) and support him to regain some hope for the future.

Comparing the two plays, the technique of theatre in the theatre is used in both *Enrico IV* and *Pambo*. Pirandello's characters, after 20 years, decided to perform again the Carnival masquerade, together with the support of a doctor, to heal Enrico IV from his madness; whereas in *Pambo,* the traditional healer performs a counter song to Pambo's delirious refrain so as to bring him back from madness and reunite his threshold split personality, which both illuded and deluded had been unable to reconcile desires/expectations and factual reality. To sum up, both Enrico IV and Pambo, deluded by and disillusioned from the play of life, exclude themselves from that stage to shelter in the world of madness.

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