

# AN INVESTIGATION INTO SATIRICAL DEPICTIONS OF MATERIALISM IN JOHN RUGANDA'S PLAYS; *THE BURDENS* (1972), *BLACK MAMBA* (1973), *THE FLOODS* (1980) AND *SHREDS OF TENDERNESS* (2001).

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## Abstract

### Background:

This paper investigates satirical depictions of materialism in John Ruganda's plays; *The Burdens* (1972), *Black Mamba* (1973), *The Floods* (1980), and *Shreds of Tenderness* (2001). Although materialism as a theme and satire as a technique is dominant in John Ruganda's plays, no detailed study has been conducted on these two aspects. The study is based on the Russian Formalism Theory whose basic principles are defamiliarisation, form, and literariness. During the study, various critical works on Ruganda's plays have been reviewed and these observe that Ruganda has a particular interest in social issues which he successfully addresses using different types of satire more humorously and sarcastically.

### Methodology:

The study used a descriptive research design where a qualitative approach to data collection was used. It was library-based and information was collected by reading closely and analyzing the four selected texts.

### Results:

The study revealed that Ruganda employs Horatian, Juvenalian, and Menipean satires in his plays as he addresses the social, economic, and political problems of society.

### Conclusion:

The conclusion is that what unifies each type of satire is a tendency to use irony, sarcasm, humor, and ridicule to allow a writer to achieve their goals.

### Recommendations:

Were that let there be an investigation into the influence of materialism and its impact on society, analyze the depictions of gender stereotypes, and also to carry out a stylistic study of Ruganda's four selected plays.

*Keywords:* Defamiliarization, literariness, Horatian, Juvenalian, Menipean, Submitted: 2022-10-18

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## 1. Introduction

John Mary Ruganda (30 May 1941 to 8 December 2007) was Uganda's most-known playwright and dramatist. Beyond his work as a

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playwright, he was also a Professor of Literature at Makerere University (1966), the University of Nairobi (1973), and the University of the North in South Africa (1989). Ruganda's plays reflect the reality of the East African social and political situations after independence. Ruganda was considered a shaping force of East African theatre and his works include; *The Burdens* (1972), *Black Mamba* (1973), *Covenant with Death* (1973), *Music without Tears* (1983), *Echoes of Silence* (1986), *The Floods* (1980), and *Shreds of Tenderness* (2010). "Since the early 1970s, Ruganda had featured prominently on the East African theatre scene not only as a playwright but also as a director, actor, and teacher of drama and theatre artist at various institutions of higher learning."<sup>1</sup> Other scholars state that "Ruganda has a particular interest in social issues which he addresses through the use of symbols, irony, similes, sarcasm, proverbs, and exaggerations."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the four books under investigation focus on the themes of social relationships, moral and ethical values, politics, materialism, prostitution, violence, and human suffering among others.

## 2. Background of the Study

Satire, as defined by Abrams (1999) is the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking its attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation. It can also be a technique or style of writing employed by writers to expose and criticize the foolishness and corruption of an individual or society using humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule (Abrams, 1999). According to the Literature Glossary, a satirist humorously depicts a current state of affairs and hopes that by doing so, he might improve it. It ridicules problems of society, government, business, and individuals to bring attention to certain follies, vices, and abuses to improve behavior and effect political and social change. Irony, sarcasm, humor, and exaggeration are the major devices a satirist employs.

Materialism which is the tendency to believe that consumer goods and services provide the

greatest source of life satisfaction (Belk, 1985), could also explain some of the cultural differences in happiness. He continues to state that research on materialism and happiness has consistently shown that materialistic people are less happy.

Though Materialism as a theme and satire as a technique is dominant in John Ruganda's plays, no detailed study has been conducted on those two aspects. Most notable are his four plays; *Black Mamba*, *The Burdens*, *The Floods*, and *Shreds of Tenderness* which have common real-life themes. Scholars such as Imbuga (1991), Sambai (2007), Ndawula (2010), and Muia Jerry Mutinda (2013) have focused on Ruganda's style, gender, and characterization. While many of Ruganda's plays address abuse of power, illegal sex, and murder, there remains a gap in our understanding of John Ruganda's works that needed to be filled. This paper, therefore, provides a detailed analysis of how Ruganda uses the different types of satire to develop the theme of materialism in the four selected plays.

The theme of materialism using satire is predominant in John Ruganda's plays yet nobody has carried out a study on this. Scholars such as Imbuga (1991), Sambai (2007), Ndawula (2010), and Muia Jerry Mutinda (2013) have focused on Ruganda's style, gender, and characterization. This is a gap in our understanding of John Ruganda's works that needed to be filled. The paper provides critical, well-researched information about how John Ruganda depicts materialism using satire. The paper will also help readers, scholars, and other literary critics to get a deeper understanding of John Ruganda's plays using devices of satire.

## 3. Methodology

This paper used a descriptive research design where a qualitative approach to data collection was used. This was dictated by the fact that the expected information collected was in form of facts and ideas about the selected texts. Data were obtained from primary sources and secondary sources. Four plays of Ruganda

namely; Black Mamba, The Burdens, The Floods, and The Shreds of Tenderness were studied. The secondary sources consisted of critical works on Ruganda, internet sources, unpublished dissertations, articles, etc. This was library based and the information was collected by reading closely the four selected plays by Ruganda through textual analysis from August – November 2022. Data related to this study was also organized and guided by the textual checklist which contained the different types of satire and the satirical depictions of materialism used in Ruganda's plays; Black Mamba, The Burdens, The Floods, and The Shreds of Tenderness.

This instrument was designed and applied to the data that is presented. The paper further analyzed the different types of satire employed in the selected plays and the different satirical depictions of materialism in the selected plays. Textual analysis of data was descriptive using a qualitative approach, and the researcher employed the Russian Formalism literary theory in analyzing the selected plays. The study critically investigated the different types of satire employed to depict materialism in Ruganda's selected plays and better study I was biased in selecting only four of his many texts for better analysis.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. *Different types of satire employed in Ruganda's four selected plays.*

This paper investigated the different types of satire employed in John Ruganda's four selected plays; The Burdens, Black Mamba, The Floods, and Shreds of Tenderness which include Horatian, Juvenalian, and Menippean satire. A writer of satire uses fictional characters, objects, and situations that stand for real people, to expose and express disapproval of their follies. Ruganda, throughout his four selected plays, uses a lot of figurative language like the use of sarcasm, irony, humor, and exaggeration to communicate his concerns to society in a way that seems to be unfamiliar to the reader as advocated by the Russian Formalism theorists.

Besides the use of literary language, the form or plot of these plays provide a complete and coherent meaning to the reader of what the playwright intends to portray whereby the first wave for example in The Floods or one part of the play like in Black Mamba leads to another to provide the cause and effect of events. Ruganda's selected plays are written under waves and parts which provide a proper flow of events or actions connected from the beginning to the end of the plays. However, in the pages that follow, I examine the different types of satire Ruganda uses in his plays.

### 4.2. *Horatian satire*

According to Kurt Vonnegut (2016), Horatian satire criticizes an aspect of society, but in a gentle, lighthearted way; it relies on witnesses rather than accusations and harsh language. It does not attack individuals or specific institutions – instead it mocks humanity in broad terms. To put it another way; when you laugh at characters in any literary text, you are also laughing at yourself-recognizing the ridiculousness of your behavior as well as that of others.

Kurt continues to say that Horatian satire is far more cheerful and comedic than other forms and is a gentler and typically comic form of satire in which the author or narrator takes aim at the common flaws in human beings, with the primary goal of entertaining readers and offering them useful insights into their behavior. It is not generally written to bring about social change.

Black Mamba is one of Ruganda's plays where Horatian satire is employed. Ruganda (1973) describes Black Mamba as a biting but amusing satire about an intimate, yet intriguing relationship involving a university professor Coarx and his mistress, in a plot schemed by professor Coarx's houseboy Berewa. The play exposes the private life of professor Coarx and, in a dramatic finale, the curtain drops on the shocked professor Coarx upon the revelation of the true identity of his mistress. Black Mamba is a play portraying hypocrisy among the protagonists; Berewa, Namuddu, and Professor Coarx. Berewa is corrupt and hypocritical, Namuddu goes ahead to sleep with Professor Coarx without revealing her true identity, and

Professor Coarx, who is a professor in the department of Sociology and who would be exemplary, instead he is propagating the vice and he is the first to involve himself in immoral practices like the Colonel and Constable put it:

Colonel: It is a real shame that a man of your profession should engage himself in immoral practices yet you are the people who ought to help us eradicate prostitution from our society.

Professor: Colonel. At least you can detect what is and what is not. This woman is married and that's that. (*Black Mamba*, pp. 65)

The words by Professor Coarx, "At least you can detect what is and what is not" really show how Professor Coarx is a hypocrite because he says Namuddu is a married woman but instead he goes ahead to sleep with her.

The fact is that Professor Coarx does not know the true identity of Namuddu and denies the case unknowingly. As professor Coarx does this, he is at the same time ridiculing himself because with Horatian satire, as you ridicule and laugh at people, you are laughing at yourself.

Horace (c 35 – 34 BC) argues that most people complain about their lot yet do not want to change it. Our limitless greed for material wealth is just as silly. The true basic human needs; food and water, are easily satisfied. In *Black Mamba*, Ruganda shows this through Berewa's dialogue with Namuddu:

Namuddu: Here we are, dear husband, a hundred shillings for us. I couldn't believe my eyes when he gave it to me.

Berewa: Good God! That wasn't as bad as you thought, was it? Going to bed with the Professor and earning your first treat. I knew you'd make it.

Why the devil didn't I think of this before? Why? A hundred shillings! I

must bank it straight away. (p.7)

Through the above dialogue, Ruganda portrays men as materialistic and ambitious to the extent of doing certain things that seem not to be good in society for instance men pimping their wives and sacrificing their children to acquire wealth and these characters reflect what happens in our society because people who are materialistic and

opportunistic do whatever it takes to ensure that they acquire money to build good houses, buy expensive cars and also have good life and prosperity.

*Shreds of Tenderness* which was first published as *Music without Tears* in 1982, contends with two stepbrothers, Odie and Wak who have led different lives in the past, occasioned by political instability in their country which forces Wak to flee to exile for their dear life and ends up compelled to join the liberation war of his motherland. Odie remains at home with his sister Stella and works as a spy for the despicable regime that brutalizes his people. Wak the refugee returns home expecting a warm welcome from his brother Odie and his sister Stella does not know that Odie had been praying for his death to the extent of announcing in the local newspapers Wak's death to inherit their father's estate to which Wak was assigned as heir

Imbuga, (1991) on *Shreds of Tenderness*, he writes:

Thus, the unity and stability which were once the pinnacle and dynamism of traditional African society are virtually non-existent, as is the case in *Music Without Tears* where family members now fight and are ready to kill each other over property. (Breitinger, pp. 255)

The words "unity" and "stability" are core values of families in Africa but the above quotation by Imbuga shows that people fight for property regardless of their relationship and family ties so long as one gets money and other material wealth and this has greatly affected the African society.

Ruganda in *Black Mamba* portrays another social vice of adultery through Professor Coarx who goes on sleeping with married women like Namuddu to satisfy his sexual desires yet he is also married. Horace's satire also deals with adultery and other bad behavior in sex-related matters. The satirist claims that there is also a natural meaning with regard to sex. Our basic sexual urges are easily satisfied (any partner will do), so it seems silly to run after married noblewomen instead. This is related to Odiambo who states:

Odiambo: You are one of the few good ones, Berewa. And that's why we want your help. It

is suspected that our teachers here are engaged in a very dangerous kind of prostitution – wife swapping.

Berewa: But Professor is a married man.

Odiambo: I know that. A married man may have the passions of a python and instincts of a bachelor. . . . . (*Black Mamba*, pp.18)

The writer shows us that married people do not get satisfied with sex and go on sleeping with other people's women and Odiambo uses the words "wife swapping" to mean prostitution that was going on to the extent that even their teachers were victims for example Professor Coarx a University lecturer who uses his house boy Berewa to get for him native women in the absence of his wife. Apart from Horatian satire, Ruganda also uses Juvenalian satire in his four selected plays and it is the one I now turn.

#### 4.3. *Juvenalian satire*

According to the editors of Encyclopedia Britannica (1998), Juvenalian satire is any bitter and ironic criticism of contemporary persons, public officials, and government institutions that is filled with personal abuse, angry moral indignation, and pessimism. Gilbert Highet (1950) observes that Juvenalian satire attacks two main themes: the corruption of society and the follies and brutalities of mankind.

Highet continues to observe that Juvenal declares that vice, crime, and the misuse of wealth have reached such a peak that it is impossible not to write satire, but continues to say that since it is dangerous to attack powerful men, men in their lifetime, he takes his examples from the dead. Ruganda employs the same style in his plays to portray his concerns and expose a lot of crimes committed by people in power upon the poor, corruption, follies, and brutalities of mankind in the post-colonial governments through drama.

Ruganda (1988) says that *The Floods* is the study of the abuse of power by the military dictatorship in contemporary Africa, and of the dehumanizing effect that this has on both the power-drunk agents of the state and those of the oppressed who escape total liquidation at the hands of the former. He continues to state that the play

also examines the inhibitory effects of class and privilege on personal relationships. And, most appropriately, the setting is for this contemporary classic imaginary island in Lake Victoria, Uganda. *The Floods* is a story of Bwogo and Nankya, the two protagonists who have grown up together in the same home but lived in different sections and come from different backgrounds. Nankya is a daughter of a domestic servant working for the Bwogos where she partly spent her childhood in a house where her mother was raped by a gang of rogue soldiers.

Silence, where the citizens seem to have resigned themselves to silent suffering. As is evident in *The Floods* and *Shreds of Tenderness*, the blatant violation of human rights has become the rule rather than the exception. Thus, the only way to get rid of the hundreds of victims of the ruling regimes has been to throw their bodies into Lake Victoria and get some cleansing help from crocodiles. (Breitinger, p.255)

Ruganda in *The Floods* continues to expose us to human follies for example dehumanization through Kyeyune's flashback showing the way people were killed by the ruling government and their bodies were thrown in Lake Victoria and many went to exile. This is portrayed through Kyeyune's flashback. He says he no longer eats fish because one day caught a dead man in his net and also found a human finger while eating fish:

Kyeyune: Once upon a time, young fellow, I used to catch "*empuuta*" twice

your size and a half easily as I have just demonstrated.

Headman: Are you or are you not moving to the boat?

Kyeyune: (*He ignores the question*) Then all of a sudden the net on my right became heavy. I knew it was a big catch. Do you know what it was, son? A man. Military man Dead. Three nails in his head, (*The Floods*, pp.9)

The author satirizes the killing of people through Kyeyune's as he explains why he no longer eats fish showing us how many people were being killed by the ruling government and their bodies thrown into Lake Victoria for the

crocodiles and to avoid the stinking and led to many people to go to exile for fear to be killed.

In *Shreds of Tenderness*, Ruganda portrays corruption and other crimes through the characters of Odie and Wak in a play where a tyrant took over the reins of government and unleashed terror throughout the motherland which forces Wak to go into exile. Odie remains at home where he works as a spy for the despicable regime that brutalizes his people. He also prays for the death of his stepbrother Wak as he announces his death in the local newspaper so that he can inherit their father's estates (*Shreds of Tenderness*, pp. 17).

Juvenal's satire also exposes and criticizes persons who are filled with personal invective, angry moral indignation, and pessimism. Ruganda illustrates this through the insults that Nankya endures on the rare occasion when Bwogo patron invites her to dinner and Ruganda uses the same satire to describe Bwogo's plans and imaginary floods to get Nankya and her mother killed on a boat: "No remorse. No self-recrimination because bodies of a mother and her daughter are untraceable." (*The Floods*, pp. 67).

The author through Nankya shows how people were being insulted, murdered, and killed massively through planned arrangements for example creating imaginary floods so that all people on the island are killed on the same boat.

Juvenalian satire also depicted the poverty and wretchedness of the Roman intellectuals who could not find decent rewards for their labors. Throughout Ruganda's plays, the economic status of people in his country is depicted through his characters and these cannot find better life given the prevailing vices in their countries and many people develop various ambitions – wealth, power, glory, long life, and personal beauty. *The Burdens* according to Imbuga is a play that deals with the economic plight of the family of Wamala, an erstwhile cabinet minister of a country in post-independence Africa, who was detained for plotting with foreigners to overthrow the very government in which he was serving as minister. After his release, he fails to reconcile himself with the life of abject poverty and the burdens of the nagging family and the Wamala's struggle to live

against the heavy odds.

Given the stigma of his political activities, Wamala finds it impossible to earn a living to support his family and his frustration and disillusionment lead him to drunkenness this makes Tinka his wife take full responsibility and the burden of maintaining the family by selling liquor and home-made mats to raise some money to support her family. The play ends tragically when Tinka kills Wamala during one of their numerous violent disagreements, leaving their children Kaija a fourteen-year-old son, and Nyakake his young sister fatherless. (Breitinger, pp.252)

Imbuga, further states that national insecurity and tensions have in turn created and multiplied domestic tensions, dividing families and alienating the family unit from its traditional role of creating stability for all its members. Thus characters like Wamala in *The Burdens* are forced to look for deceptive, alternative stability and happiness in immoral acts. In *Shreds of Tenderness*, family members; Odie and Wak, now fight and are ready to kill each other over the property (Breitinger, pp.255). In the same regard, Austin Bukenya (1986) observes that one of the erstwhile people from exile is Wak, upon his return, his sister Stella and his step-brother Odie react with sharply contrasting attitudes. While Stella is genuinely glad to welcome Wak back home, Odie is bitter and hostile.

#### 4.4. *Menippean satire*

Luke (2017) states that instead of focusing on societal norms, Menippean satire tends to satirize an individual characters flaw and or a particular personality trait, such as mental attitude and it can be thought of as a slightly pricklier version of Horatian satire, whereby it attacks a specific human fault instead of a direct observable misled. This means that almost all of Ruganda's plays employ some aspects of Menippean satire as he tries to communicate to his audience. Menippean satire criticizes and often ridicules single-minded people, such as bigots, misers, braggarts, and so on.

In *Shreds of Tenderness*, Ruganda presents Odie, Bwogo in *The Floods*, and Tinka in *The*

Burdens as bigots who in the plays treat other members of their groups with hatred. Odie has a lot of hatred and intolerance for his stepbrother Wak whose father chose to be the heir who by law inherits the property. Odie cannot tolerate this, so he wishes and announces Wak's death in the local newspapers so that he can change the land titles. Bwogo, on the other hand, having accumulated a lot of property through corrupt ways and brutalizing people using his position, develops a hatred for Nankya and her mother. Bwogo fears that Nankya his girlfriend would expose him so he plans the emergency floods, and orders all people to go on the boat thinking Nankya and her mother would be among the victims so that they die by the time of the massacre and Tinka kills her husband Wamala resorts to drinking instead of providing his family with basic and essential needs.

Another aspect of Menippean satire is that it ridicules people who are misers. A miser according to Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary is a person who loves money and hates spending it as portrayed by Berewa:

Another aspect of Menippean satire is that it ridicules people who are misers. A miser according to *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary* is a person who loves money and hates spending it as portrayed by Berewa:

Namuddu: But I need a new dress, Berewa. For once I will have a beautiful dress for Christmas.

Berewa: (*shaking his head in protest*) Ah, ah! That's not the way we are going to use this money. (*Black Mamba*, pp. 7)

Berewa's statement in the above dialogue shows that he is a miser because he is reluctant to spend the money that Namuddu gets after sleeping with Professor Coarx, he even sometimes foregoes basic comforts and some necessities to hoards (accumulate money or valued objects and hide or store away).

Ruganda portrays the same as it happens in our society where many people want to hoard so that they have enough for their future and Ruganda communicates this through Berewa in *Black Mamba* who is portrayed as a miser who schemes to accumulate money by leading his wife

to Professor Coarx but he is stingy to spend on buying clothes for his wife Namuddu.

Furthermore, Dayanath (1999) states that the underlying theme of Menippean satire is that the world is replete of men and women with questionable values. Delusion, as well as illusion, is rampant, in other words, nothing is what it seems to be and appearances seem to have triumphed over reality for example Professor Coarx:

Colonel: Go on intimating with everybody, Mr. Professor. It's a real shame that a man of your profession should engage himself in immoral practices.

Constable: Especially when he is a married man, Colonel. But instead you undermine our very efforts in order to satisfy your lust. (*Black Mamba*, p. 65)

The above dialogue shows us that many people in our society have questionable values, behavior, and conduct which is not fit in the society in which they live. Professor Coarx, a man of his status goes on sleeping with prostitutes yet he is married as says the Colonel. "Go on intimating with everybody, Mr. Professor." Therefore, Professor Coarx, who is to be respected, conduct demoralizes him in the society he lives. Ruganda also portrays Menippean satire in his play *Black Mamba* where he reveals to us that many people in society are exposed for their anti-social behavior yet they would be the first to prevent it and this is portrayed through Professor Coarx as stated by the Colonel and Constable who come to rid the black mamba from him.

Dayanath further observes that Menippean satire often offers a solution, though it is never an attempt to be "didactic" in its purpose, but a solution, indirect as it may be, namely, that the simple natural, ordinary common life is the best and finally, the only solution. Menippean satires are frequently dialogues that occur freely in the ordinary situation and sometimes in "extraordinary" situations. The characters in this type of satire are often few, sometimes just one or two, who dominate the dialogue, and other characters function just as asides in the plays (Dayanath de Silva, pp. 16).

For instance, in all Ruganda's plays, few

characters dominate like Wamala and Tinka in *The Burdens*, Berewa, Namuddu and Professor Coarx in *Black Mamba*, Bwogo, Nankya and Kyeyune in *The Floods* and Odie, Stella, and Wak in *Shreds of Tenderness*.

Also, Ruganda through Kyeyune continues to portray several incidents in *The Floods* which are unusual and strange as addressed by Menippean satire:

Then all of a sudden the net on my right became heavy. It weighed down the right side of my boat. I knew it was a big catch. Do you know what it was, son? A man. A military man. Dead. (*The Floods*, p.9)

Given the massive killings of mankind during Idi Amin's regime, Ruganda through Kyeyune's flashback shows us all the strange and unusual things that used to happen during the dictatorial government where criminals were not buried in graves and to avoid the stinking of dead bodies, the government resorted to dumping dead bodies into Lake Victoria and Ruganda satirizes this by Kyeyune telling us that one day he fished out a dead man with three nails in the head instead of catching "empuuta" and this was too strange.

Furthermore, *Shreds of Tenderness* is another play by Ruganda which has strange and unusual happenings. Imbuga explains that the play deals with the problem of returning refugees after the overthrow of the repressive regime that made them flee from their motherland. Wak, one of the returning refugees arrives home hoping for a warm welcome from his brother Odie and his sister Stella. Strangely, Wak doesn't know that Odie had been praying for his death, and had even anticipated it by announcing in the local newspapers that Wak had died. This is strange according to our society but Ruganda satirizes it through the character of Odie who represents family members who fight and kill each other to inherit property. (Breitinger, p.253)

Lastly, Ruganda brings to light strange and unusual incidents in *The Burdens*. We see Wamala detained for plotting to overthrow the very government in which he was a minister and after his release, Imbuga states Wamala is frustrated, he cannot support his family and ends up a drunk-

ard so Tinka has to support the family. The play ends tragically when Tinka kills Wamala during their numerous violent disagreements. (Breitinger, pp.252)

## 5. Discussions

The study established the different types of satire that Ruganda employs in his plays. It was discovered that in Ruganda's selected plays, a lot of Horatian and Juvenalian satires are employed to a large extent and Menippean satire to a small extent. It was discovered that Horatian satire criticizes an aspect of society, but in a gentle, lighthearted way; it relies on witnesses rather than accusations and harsh language. It does not attack individuals or specific institutions – instead it mocks humanity in broad terms. It also reflects and recognizes the ridiculousness of your behavior as well as that of others.

Another type of satire which the playwright employs was Juvenalian satire which is any bitter and ironic criticism of contemporary persons, public officials, and government institutions that is filled with personal invective, angry moral indignation, and pessimism. It was also revealed that Juvenalian satire attacks two main themes; the corruption of society and the follies and brutalities of mankind. These two themes are very common in the selected texts and it is through satire that Ruganda ably presents his concerns to society through attacking those in power.

Like in his first satire, Juvenal declared that vice, crime, and the misuse of wealth had reached such a peak that it was impossible not to write satire, but continued to say that since it was dangerous to attack powerful men, men in their lifetime, he took his examples from the dead. Ruganda also borrows a leaf from Juvenal as he uses abstract situations but reflects real people in their lifetime.

Further, still under satire, the research presented another type of satire called Menippean satire. However, Ruganda's plays employ to a less extent some aspects of Menippean satire as he tries to communicate to his audience. Menippean satire criticizes mental attitudes rather than

societal norms or specific individuals and often ridicules single-minded people, such as bigots, misers, and braggarts.

## 6. Conclusion

What unifies each type of satire is a tendency to use irony, sarcasm, humor, and ridicule to allow a writer to achieve his or her goals. Perhaps this is why each type of satire seems to have merged and overlapped with one another over time – after all the techniques are the same.

This paper has investigated the different types of satire that Ruganda employs in his four selected plays; *The Burdens*, *Black Mamba*, *The Floods*, and *Shreds of Tenderness*.

The paper focused on Horatian, Juvenalian, and Menippean satires as portrayed in the plays through the different characters as Ruganda communicates his concerns more ridiculously and humorously through the use of figurative language. For instance, in the four texts studied, characters were portrayed as being ironic, humorous, and sarcastic and also used exaggerations in their pursuit of material wealth by being hypocritical in their utterances and actions, doing the opposite of what is expected of them and what they mean or say. However, this paper provides critical well-researched information about how John Ruganda depicts materialism using different types of satire whereby readers, scholars, and other critics will have a deeper understanding of John Ruganda's plays.

## 7. Recommendations

The paper wishes to recommend the following;

1. To investigate the influence of materialism and its impact on society in Ruganda's plays.
2. Analyze the depictions of gender stereotypes in Ruganda's plays.
3. Carry out a stylistic study of Ruganda's four selected plays.

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## Author biography

**Paul Mulumbi** was born on 25 August 1976 in Mbale. His father was a tailor at Mbale Regional Hospital and his mother was a churchwarden. In 1996, Paul Mulumbi entered a teacher training college and later joined Kyambogo University in 2000 where he pursued his Diploma in Primary Education. In 2007, he entered Kumi University and took a Bachelor of Education degree where he read English and Literature. Between 2013 and 2020, Paul Mulumbi was appointed an acting Primary head teacher serving in Kamuli district local government where he headed two schools within eight years. In 2013, he got a part-time lecturer at Kampala University teaching English and Literature. Currently, he lectures at Kampala University and Team University.

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In 2018 Paul Mulumbi entered Uganda Christian University, Mukono, where he pursued a Master of Arts in Literature and graduated in record time in 2020. In 2021, he presented two abstracts (papers) at Makerere University National Humanities Conference entitled; The Writer as a Teacher; John Ruganda's Castigation of Materialism in his play Black Mamba and Influence of Materialism and its Impact on Society.

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