

CONTRADICTIONS OF A SOCIETY IN TRANSITION: A LOOK AT HENRY MUSENGE'S NOVEL *CHANGING SHADOWS*

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to highlight the contradictions that characterise a society in transition in relation to cultural change. It focuses on Henry Musenge's novel *Changing Shadows*. The novel depicts a people in a dilemma with regard to the appropriate culture between the traditional ethnic culture and the new modern culture. Some members in this society wish to adhere to tradition and at the same time, attempt to demonise the new emerging culture. On the opposite extreme end, others regard the traditional culture as backward and outdated; one that should be disposed of completely, and eagerly wish to embrace the new modern culture. And still, others wish to embrace both cultures – or the hybrid of both cultures. The contradiction lies in the fact that, on one hand, there is a (national) call to uphold (selected) traditional values and practices as these are said to enforce national identity and national pride and on the other hand, there is a 'public' call for change and a call to embrace the new modern culture: Thus, 'tradition is good' versus 'tradition is bad, evil, retrogressive and outdated'. This bi-polar approach to culture happens in one society and consequently degenerates into internal divides in the same society. The challenge is that these two cultures in many respects tend to be mutually exclusive; the practices are conflicting. This calls for the need for society to revisit and be guided properly seeing that the ambivalent/dual-structured cultural disposition creates confusion and contradictions. This article is largely guided by the sociological approach which posits that literature should serve as a mirror of society as well as to provide solutions for society. However, it is also guided by theories surrounded cultural studies and multiculturalism.

Keywords: *Tradition, modern, mutual exclusivity, cultural change, contradiction, cultural equilibrium*

Introduction

Culture is dynamic (Kondala, 2020). This is a fact. No single culture is static, (Said, 1993 and 2003; Claude Levi-Strauss, 1949; Hall, 1997; and Bhabha, 1994). Many authors have documented this idea about the dynamism of culture. In this case, with time, a society adds more cultural practices, customs and beliefs to their culture, and at other times, they can abandon certain practices that they could have held in high esteem; while others can be radically modified. Culture is adaptive (Bodley, 2008). Many factors influence cultural change and these include social, political, religious, environmental, health, economic, and technological among others. In

short, period and context usually dictate cultural changes in line with the needs of a particular society.

Owing to cultural dynamism, one cannot assert that any culture can be permanent (Kondala, 2020). Certainly, that kind of assertion would be faulty. For, example, even the present Zambian culture is constantly changing. It is at this point that one realises that absolute declarations that assert people stick to their culture do not hold at all. Even if there could be fundamental or crucial practices that certain people hold on to for a prolonged period, still there are gradual changes that happen in other areas. It is in this way, that the culture of the successive centuries of the people are dramatically different, to say the least. This can be noticed in the changes in terms of rules and practices regarding marriage, agriculture, nutrition, or warfare, to mention but a few (Mkandawire *et al.*, 2023). For instance, decades ago, most of the people in pre-colonial Zambia and later, Northern Rhodesia used different foods such as cassava, millet, and sorghum meal to make their nutritional staple food – *nshima*. Today, very few people including those in rural areas consume these others for *nshima*. In contemporary Zambia, most people use maize meal to make staple food *nshima* (Shula, 2023). It is not surprising, therefore, that many people, especially youths in Zambia seem to understand *nshima* as being made exclusively from maize meal. Moreover, very few farmers, commercial or subsistence even grow alternative foods for a staple food, they concentrate on maize (*ibid*). All these trends only serve to emphasise the idea that culture is dynamic. As time passes, people tend to adopt new ways of doing things in line with the prevailing conditions including context.

This article aims at highlighting the contradictions that have characterised the Zambian society in transition in terms of cultural change focusing on Henry Musenge's novel *Changing Shadows*. Moreover, it does not focus on providing answers outrightly to the perceived problem at hand but it seeks to provoke discussions and to stimulate debate about the best approach to take when it comes to cultural change.

What is Zambian culture? It should be asserted that the concept of Zambian culture is quite elusive owing to the cultural diversity that has characterised the nation. This is because there is a diversity of cultures/ethnicities in Zambia; which includes the culture emanating from the colonial experience. Thus, Zambia is a multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural country. Some of these cultures are very similar to each other while others are remarkably different.

Notwithstanding the above, most Zambian cultures are part of the Bantu cultures, which tend to possess many striking similarities. Suffice it to say that some ethnic groups in Zambia are patrilineal while others are matrilineal (Chondoka, 1988). It should be indicated that the term Zambian culture in this article is used loosely not strictly, to refer to the cultural characteristics, both indigenous and modern, that are common among the Zambian people. Therefore, Zambian culture in other words will be synonymous to Zambian identity.

The impact of colonialism on cultural change in Zambia cannot be overemphasised. In pre-colonial times, most of these distinct ethnic groups lived autonomously and in close adherence to their respective traditional practices. Of course, there were occasional skirmishes and raids among these indigenous ethnic groups. However, their cultures were relatively pure save for the Arab influence in some parts of the country prior to European influence.

It is extensively documented that the beginning of European colonisation was a major influence. Suffice it to state that the European impact significantly altered the cultures of the various ethnic groups in Southern Africa both positively and negatively, (Simons *et al.*, 1976: 3). All of Southern Africa was colonised. Colonisation led to the bundling of various distinct ethnic groups into nation/ protectorates under the leadership of Europeans of various nationalities following the partitioning of Africa at the Berlin Conference, in 1884. One can allude to Nietzsche's dictum here: 'might is right' to comment on the manner in which the African continent was partitioned.

Indigenous Africans were not consulted in the partitioning. As a consequence, traditional ethnic borders that existed at the time were not considered during the conference and this resulted in the subdivision of people of the same ethnic group to belong to different countries as determined by Europeans. For example, the Chewa-speaking people were scattered into different new countries namely, Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique; Lozi-speaking people in Zambia, Angola, and Namibia; Lunda-speaking people in Zambia, Congo DR, and Angola, among others. Conversely, different ethnic groups were bundled together (intentionally or unintentionally) to make sovereign nations including those that were foes or foreign to each other prior to colonialism. In short, even ethnic groups that were hostile to each other were grouped together as long as they were under the domination of the same colonial power; be it British, French, German or Portuguese.

The colonial powers came with new social, economic and political organisation. This led to a new way of life. Instead of supporting subsistence farming and other traditional vocations, the colonial powers were interested in having indigenous people work as labourers, especially in the mines and other industries. This compelled people to leave their vocations in order to provide wage labour through the tax system that was introduced, (Simons *et al.*, 1976: 6). To search for work, many indigenous people started migrating to urban and industrial centers. As a result, many indigenous people of different ethnicities eventually started interacting and working together especially in industrial areas such as the Copperbelt and Lusaka as opposed to the earlier practice where different ethnic groups maintained certain cultural aloofness, independence, and autonomy in terms of interactions with other people from other ethnic groups. The colonial experience dismantled this kind of cultural autonomy and ignited the beginning of the multicultural society through its political and socio-economic policies.

Through the policy of indirect rule that was adopted in Northern Rhodesia, a system whereby the British were ruling through the already established indigenous

chiefs and kings, there were major policies that radically influenced the people's culture to their disadvantage. For example, the introduction of poll and hut tax adversely influenced people's occupations and vocations. These taxes could only be paid in cash, not in kind. Failure to pay this tax led to incarceration. As a result, many indigenous people were forced to migrate to urban or industrial areas and seek wage employment.

Moreover, the introduction of native reserves also forced people out of rural areas and away from their respective cultures. Native reserves were portions of land that were reserved for indigenous people and were usually relatively small and infertile and not conducive for human habitation. The settlers chose suitable and fertile lands for themselves and their commercial farmers. The challenge was that most fertile and habitable land in most cases, was already being used by the indigenous people.

Power dictated that the indigenous people had to be pushed and placed in other lands (Native reserves). Thus, indigenous villages had to be moved to other areas (Fraser, 1945). Needless to say, most native reserves were characteristic of overcrowding and extreme poverty. As a result, those villagers who needed a better life had to leave the villages and migrate to urban centres. These migrations of the people to other areas adversely influenced their social cohesiveness and thus, detached them from their cultural roots, to say the least.

After independence in the interest of national unity and modern civilisation that had been initiated by the British Administration, the Zambian Government led by Kenneth Kaunda as president embraced the nation as it had been partitioned together with its accompanying cultural practices and did not temper with the political borders. Northern Rhodesia/Zambia led by the Bantu administration inherited the British method of administration and by extension the British culture.

Thus, contemporary Zambian culture is a result of the interactions with Europeans, colonial experience, inter-ethnic interactions among the indigenous people, and interactions with other groups including Asians, among others. The British cultural practices including modern Christian belief were infiltrated into the various indigenous people's cultures. Although there had been some opposition from some traditional conservatists in their bid to safeguard and promote traditional culture and to stop what they termed as 'bad, unacceptable' foreign culture, ethnocentrically these attempts did not succeed, especially bearing in mind that culture is indeed dynamic.

Subsequently, Zambia was a new nation with a relatively new adopted culture. Despite this, the issue of national identity and national pride was not cast out. Zambia did not want to lose its indigenous cultural roots. The motivation for Zambia's stance towards preserving traditions and customs is best expressed in the African proverb: 'If you want freedom, cut your chains. If you want to die, cut your roots' (Lumbwe, 2017: XI). Certain fundamental cultural practices had to be reinforced into the citizenry, and certain cultural heritage had to be preserved. To this effect, the new government established the Ministry of Tradition and Culture.

In the recent past, an equivalent of this ministry was called the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs whose mission was 'To administer and promote Chief's Affairs, Traditional Governance Systems and preserve Zambia's heritage, culture and Arts for sustainable development and national pride,' (www.mocta.gov.zm/index.php/about-mcta). Clearly, this indicates that indigenous traditions and cultures are paramount in promoting national identity and national pride. They are significant to national identity and national pride.

Presently, it is not only the influence of the British culture on the Zambian culture but also other cultural practices of other people coming from different parts of the world including the Chinese and their culture. Moreover, the instrumentality of the internet has also improved communication among people from different parts of the world. Similarly, technological advances in transportation have also enhanced interactions among people of different continents. Thus, the world is a global village and multiculturalism is a norm.

To this end, it has become important to exercise cultural relativism which involves a cross-cultural understanding of other people (Bodley, 2009). This requires one's ability to acknowledge and tolerate the cultural practices of other members of the world while at the same time adhering to one's particular national identity and national culture in general. Moreover, there is also a tendency to learn and adopt some progressive cultural practices of other people from other continents and add to the nation's cultural menu.

Furthermore, the freedom of a citizen is acknowledged which includes the freedom of speech and action as long as that is not illegal before the law of the land. Nevertheless, the preservation, conservation and promotion of Zambian heritage have been/are still encouraged as these are designed to enforce national identity and national pride. Suffice it to say, the importance of national identity and national pride in fostering development at many levels be it social, economic, technological, or political cannot be over-emphasised. It is in this line that various traditional ceremonies, cultural exhibitions, cultural sites, and national heritage institutions are embraced. This includes the promotion of intangible cultural heritage, which is recognised and promoted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

The crucial challenge is that Zambia as realistically depicted in the novel *Changing Shadows* has become a 'contradictory' society (the one that prioritises national unity primarily and embraces cultural change, and less on ethnic inclinations but not completely discarding them) but one that still claims to promote and uphold traditional values and cultural heritage. This position has led to different interpretations by different people. It has caused a conflict between tradition and modernity. Kashoki (2015: 4) refers to this conflict as cultural adaptation versus cultural alienation. Cultural adaptation involves adopting foreign cultural practices sometimes, uncritically while cultural alienation is a tendency to look down on one's indigenous cultural practices consciously or unconsciously.

Generally, elderly people tend to complain that the youth have lost their indigenous traditions and customs and as a result, they strongly advise that it is

important to stick to them. Many youths, on the other hand, have perceived Zambia to be a modern society and some view many, if not all, traditional practices as backward, outdated, barbaric, and retrogressive. While others have tended to be eclectic and contextual; they blend the practices from these two cultures or they adopt one culture at one time and later, adopt another depending on context (One is traditional one second, and then modern the next and vice versa). For example, one is traditional at home and modern at work; or traditional today and modern tomorrow.

This has led to what can be termed in this article as an ambivalent culture or dual-structured culture, that is, modern culture with some traces of traditional culture/traditional culture with some traces of modern culture. As mentioned above, this has led to mainly two distinct factions among the citizenry, namely those that promote traditionalism and stress the need to limit modern/western Europe's influences (ethnocentrists); and secondly, those that attempt to embrace the Western culture fully and at the same time, discard indigenous traditions and their respective 'retrogressive' practices (full-time cultural-adaptation advocates). In terms of polarisation on the continuum, some people have adopted an extreme 'Westernised' version of Zambian culture while others have still adhered to an extreme 'traditional' version. Of course, some lie somewhere in the middle of the continuum.

The challenge is that the boundaries are vague or/and ambiguous. Moreover, lack of consistency poses another additional problem – whereby one embraces traditional culture one minute and then Western culture another minute in a contradictory manner. The transpositions of these two versions of 'Zambian culture' seem to emerge as a serious contradiction, especially in terms of public conduct, family interactions, home, kitchen parties, funeral procedures, marriage practices (e.g wife kneeling for the husband or children kneeling – curtsy position; house chores, the headship of the household, who pays rent, who marries who, personal address, eye contact, respect – leaving seats for elders etc). Henry Musenge in his novel *Changing Shadows* has accurately depicted these conflicts and contradictions.

Scope

This article highlights the contradictions of an ambivalent culture or a dual-structured culture that characterise a society in transition in terms of cultural change. Although the impact of colonialism on culture with its subsequent psychological, economic, political, social, and cultural influences on the lives of Zambians are crucial, the article focuses on the contradictions and divisions that arise in society with close reference to Musenge's *Changing Shadows*. As mentioned earlier, Musenge is a sociological writer. His work has adequately mirrored many actual incidents that have been happening in Zambia since it gained its independence in 1964 with regard to cultural change.

However, the discussion of traditional culture and modern culture is strictly based on how they have been portrayed in the novel and not as they are generally understood in society.

Theoretical Perspective

This article is informed by two theories. First, it is largely guided by the sociological approach which posits that literature should serve as a mirror of society as well as to provide solutions for the society (Dipio 1998, and Guerin 2005). The writer in this way attempts to address and/or resolve certain conflicts that are prevalent in society. The sociological perspective posits that a good work of art, in other words, is one that correctly represents the actual events that happen in the society.

Secondly, the article is informed by theories surrounding 'cultural studies'. Suffice it to say that cultural studies is a combination of many different theories from many disciplines. Guerin *et al.* (2005: 276) explain that 'Arising from the social turmoil of the 1960s, cultural studies is composed of elements of Marxism, post-structuralism and post-modernism, feminism and gender studies, anthropology, sociology, race and ethnic studies, public policy, popular culture studies, and postcolonial studies: **those fields that concentrate on social and cultural forces that either create community or cause division and alienation.**' (Emphasis mine). The multicultural literary studies are included in cultural studies.

Contradictions

The novel *Changing Shadows* was published in 2014 and is authored by Henry Musenge, a Zambian writer. Musenge has written another novel called *Flames of Gondola*. Although its temporal setting is that of a period shortly before Zambia's independence, the issues that it raises about cultural change are some that are still prevalent in present times.

The story is about cultural change. It gives an account of a young Bemba lady named Mwila who from a rural area migrates to the urban area and embraces the urban/modern culture without any restraint after peer influence in the city, in terms of dress code and human and sexual relations. This was after she was expelled from a mission school on allegations of being in a relationship with a boy at the next school. As a novice to city life, she gets trapped in some pitfalls and subsequently becomes pregnant, then aborts the pregnancy after her lover's insistence. She is later abandoned by her lover and she subsequently becomes destitute for a while. After that, she gets into another relationship with a married man named Kangwa, gets pregnant by him and becomes his second wife.

Kangwa dies a few months after his traditional polygamous marriage to Mwila. She becomes stranded once again seeing that he had not included her in his will. Mwila eventually manages to get her life back on track when she starts working and later, upgrades her educational qualifications in the United Kingdom, which solidify her career as a newscaster at a local broadcasting company. While she was studying there, she met her would-be husband Haamaundu. The story ends with Mwila as a married woman with a full-time job. She is married to a Tonga man, Haamaundu; the marriage took place after the couple had convinced some of the traditional conservatives that inter-ethnic marriage was practical in a situation where love reigned.

The table below shows the areas of conflict that come as a result of cultural orientation as depicted in the novel. The first column contains traditional practices while the second column contains modern culture or city life practices as depicted by the characters in the novel.

| Changing Shadows | |
|---|---|
| Traditional | City Life (Modern) |
| Respect to parents and older people: address forms: Father/ uncle referring to the daughter/ niece as ‘mother’. (Respect: deference and distance is maintained between elderly men and young women). | Respect to parents is of a different kind. In terms of distance, it is not emphasised. No particular respect (distance) to older people. Young ladies can freely have sexual relations with elderly – sugar daddies. Male adults mingle freely with mature female youngsters. |
| Obedience: a child should obey their parents (even if they have disagreed). For example, in the case of arranged marriage, the child should not refuse the spouse that his/her parents have approved. | A child has freedom including the freedom to disobey his/he parents when need arises. |
| Promotes arranged marriage/the family must approve of the partner. The parents of the suitor as well as the village where he/she comes from should be known. Marriage proposals happen between familiar people. | No arranged marriage but leaves the choice of the suitor to the individual. Does not care about the family’s approval. No emphasis on the region where the suitor comes from nor about his/her parents. |
| Encourages the marriage of individuals of the same ethnic group or a culturally compatible ethnic group. | Does not care about ethnicity. Anyone can marry anybody including strangers or people from exotic cultures as long as the two love each other. |
| Tolerates polygamy. | Does not tolerate polygamy. But men tend to maintain concubines secretly. E.g Kangwa and Musonda’s ex-sugar daddy. |
| Promotes herbal medicines and traditional medicines including divination. | Promotes modern hospitals (western medicine). |
| Emphasis on chastity and virginity before marriage. If a woman has lost her virginity then ‘she is walking empty’ and she should only marry divorcees and widowers. | No emphasis on the woman’s virginity. |

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|--|--|
| Emphasis on ethnic identity and fidelity thereof. | No emphasis. |
| Dress code (to cover a lot of skin especially for women). | Freedom to wear what one desires. Miniskirts are fine. |
| Does not stress on literacy. | Encourages literacy. |
| Emphasis on traditional education: insaka. | Encourages formal education. |
| Superstitious – belief in omens, taboos and witchcraft e.g. Kasongo's madness and the expulsion of Mwila from school are believed to have been caused by witchcraft. | Promotes scientific explanation of phenomena and disregards superstitions. |
| Village life is restrictive – very moralistic. | City life – sociable and fast. |

It should be noted further that the contradiction that characterise the same society is aptly captured in the blurb of the book. The quotation of the blurb of the book will be useful here as it will demonstrate the said contradiction. The blurb reads:

Changing Shadows is a story about cultural change. From a typical Zambian school environment, a few years before the country's independence, in a rural setting, the story swiftly unfolds to an urban setting, depicting social and cultural pressures and discords to human relations. As Western-induced cultural change begins to take root, affected communities are polarised, revealing the dilemmas of people caught in the middle. Regarded as a heroine by progressives for spearheading change, Mwila clashes with out-dated (sic) and retrogressive traditions and practices, annoying several conservatives in the process. Although her humbling experiences leave indelible marks on her character, her stint in London strengthens her resolve. She returns home more confident, and culturally different; annoying the conservatives and traditionalists. The climax is the inevitable confrontation between the two opposing factions.

Although the blurb could not have been written by the author, the sentiments expressed in the blurb, particularly the one talking about 'outdated and retrogressive traditions and practices' is crucial. First of all, it makes a faulty generalisation that all traditions and practices are outdated and retrogressive. It also seems to directly oppose and disapprove of the motivations and goals of the Ministry of Tradition and Culture. This ministry is generally concerned with the promotion and preservation of indigenous traditions and cultures. The mere establishment of the Ministry of Tradition and Culture is self-evident of its intended goals.

In the story, the climax of the contradictions can be seen in the following quotations below. These quotations are extracted from the novel *Changing Shadows* and they epitomise the nature of the contradictions that exist in society and also the factions that have been created as a result of these contradictions among the citizens. Here, the arguments of the traditionalists are presented first then the counter arguments for the change advocates are presented later.

On page 227, the traditionalists' concerns have been presented as:

'Thousands of placard-carrying women marched to the office of the Minister of Tradition and Culture, urging the government to ban all foreign cultures. The women, all wearing long traditional chitenge costumes, were particularly vocal about the wearing of miniskirts, which they considered as foreign. Some of the placards read:

1. We urge the government to ban miniskirts in Zambia.
2. Our culture has been swamped by imported foreign ideologies.
3. The masses are totally behind the Party and its government to fight against foreign pollution.

On the other hand, on page 228, the counter demonstration staged by the modern progressives is presented as:

'... a counter demonstration staged by a group of seemingly young girls. The girls were all wearing miniskirts, hot-pants, wigs, and thick red lipstick. They demanded freedom of choice and chanted slogans such as "Taste in clothes is a personal affair."

Leave the mini alone;
Our bodies are beautiful;
We don't mind showing off;
Keep with fashion and remain beautiful'

'There were scuffles when the two demonstrators confronted each other outside the Minister's office. About ten people were injured, and the police made several arrests.... To end the news ...Thousands of placard-carrying women demonstrated against the adoption of foreign cultures. They called on the government to ban all foreign ...'

The above quotations demonstrate the divide in society as a result of cultural change. The two factions are polarised. Here one sees the discord between the old and the young; women versus 'young girls'. Elderly people in society want to maintain cultural purity while the young people want to embrace cultural adaptation – they want modern culture. The arguments of the two factions as presented in the placards are different. The women insist on avoiding foreign culture in general which included banning miniskirts while the 'group of seemingly young girls' is

oversimplifying and reduces all three concerns raised by women to one, namely miniskirts. It is clear that women's concerns are presented in a more mature way than that of the 'group of seemingly young girls' – probably because since they are young, they do not know much.

This presentation of the two factions can indirectly indicate the position of the author that he supports the concerns of women. Furthermore, the authorial position is also manifest in the repetition of the newscaster's report that 'To end the news Thousands of placard-carrying women demonstrated against the adoption of foreign cultures. They called on the government to ban all foreign ...' p. 228. The fact that the main points in the news end with the position of women is crucial. Moreover, the phrasing of the whole statement is quite balanced and objective and does not make reference to miniskirts but implies broader and more pertinent foreign influences.

As mentioned above, the protesters on both sides are female. Apparently, traditionalists are middle-aged and older women while the ones advocating for change and the promotion of miniskirts are 'seemingly young girls'. It is not directly stated in the novel whether they are girls or young women probably because the delineation of these groups is blurred and fuzzy. Moreover, men are not part of the protesters. Notwithstanding the above, it can be asserted that men are also divided on this issue of cultural change. This can be evidenced in the novel in various incidents whereby on one hand, there are male traditional conservatives like Mwila's maternal uncle Chibale and some relatives of Haamaundu who disapprove of the choice of one's spouse in their attempts to adhere to traditional practices and on the other hand, there are liberals like Mwila's father Chansa and her brother Kasongo who tolerated and embraced modernity.

It should be mentioned that even if Musenge only presents the clash of the females, that is women versus 'seemingly young girls', the divide can be extended to men in tandem with their respective age groups. It is safe to argue here that the women demonstrating against modernity are indirectly representing their respective traditional husbands supposedly and similarly, the 'seemingly young girls' are representing the views of 'seemingly young boys' or young people in general; thus old versus young; and experience versus innocence.

The crucial point that can be made here is that this society is undergoing cultural change and conflict is inevitable. It has not yet found the general centre or balance. It has not yet attained what can be referred to as 'cultural equilibrium'. On one end of the continuum, traditionalists do not want to tolerate 'cultural pollution' and thereby insist on cultural purity; they believe that the Ministry of Tradition and Culture supports their cause. On the other hand, the progressive/change advocates wish to re/claim their freedom and rights as citizens to dress according to their tastes. The two factions of the same society, same people clash leading to many injuries. The book ends with these unresolved clashes and this rightly signifies that the author is not in a position to provide the answer. One can add here that the clashes depicted in the novel are still prevalent even today.

Owing to these ambivalent messages regarding tradition and modernity, different people are getting different meanings they desire and subsequently attempt to impose their choice on others. Apparently, the government through the Ministry of Tradition and Culture has not intervened yet to guide the people about the approach to take in this instance apart from the arrests the police made. Clearly, it can be seen that police arrests will not put an end to this problem because this problem is one that borders on ideology and culture. Every member of each faction is self-righteous – they believe that what they are doing is right and that their actions are justified. Sadly, there is no guarantee regarding the recurrence of this tragic incident, which concerns police arrests and injury of people and by extension death.

This contradiction extends to family and marriage, although major developments can be noticed in this case. Traditionalists are overcome and convinced about the need for change. For example, in the case of Haamaundu, certain Tonga traditionalists who could not approve that their son marries a Bemba woman eventually gave way to an aspect of modern practice. About Mwila's wedding, "In the national papers the following day, their wedding was hailed as a unifying bridge, cutting sharply across the otherwise conservative and rigid tribal barriers. Mwila and Haamaundu were jubilant that they, in a small way, contributed towards national unity." Here the concept of 'One Zambia One Nation' (OZON) is upheld. Given the context of the newly independent state that depends on national unity in order to achieve development, the sentiment is enormously justified.

At the family level, there are some contradictions with regard to the elements of tradition/modern culture to perpetuate and those to ignore. Without effective communication, interrogation as well as navigation regarding the position to assume, this could lead to serious conflicts.

Notwithstanding the above, the author leaves us with two cliff-hangers. The first one is about the future of inter-tribal marriages in the midst of the society which is largely traditional. Is this marriage going to work? Is it going to be supported by the respective families some of whom are traditionalists and are strongly against these types of marriages? Is the couple going to follow a modern culture consistently or is it going to mix some traditional menu in it as regards social practices and etiquette?

The second cliff-hanger is about the prescription that the government is going to make. What is the Ministry of Tradition and Culture going to do? In order to avoid violent protests, conflicts, and clashes between the two factions, what direction is the government going to take? It should be borne in mind that the main function of the Ministry of Tradition and Culture is to promote tradition and the preservation of culture. How is it possible to effect this duty without infringing on the freedoms of other citizens? How possible is it to preserve the culture but at the same time embrace change? The challenge is that it is not clearly outlined as to the parameters. Where does the preservation of culture start and end and where does the tolerance towards new culture start and end?

These are the two important questions that Musenge poses to the reader for serious reflection.