

Konagamano la Ishirini na Tano la Kiswhaili - Iwalewa-House, Bayreuth, 17th -20th May 2012

The subjectivity of Maimuna: authority, self-definition and narrative autonomy of Said Ahmed Mohamed's female characters.

Irene Brunotti

This paper is a study of literary contents, exploring whether female characters in Said Ahmed Mohamed's novel Utengano are portrayed not in relation to their male counterparts, rather as "singing out" figures, transcending a one-dimensional representation which describes them as "victims" or "vamps". It is tentative to apply an Africana womanist literary perspective to the reading of this novel, which raises some questions: is the Africana womanist approach a proper literary perspective in the analysis of male authors' female characters? As long as African womanist writers are concerned with both global womanhood and their culture and identity, does the female aesthetic apply to male writers introducing autonomous, authorial and self-defined female characters? How meaningful is it to refer to a male author as an Africana womanist?
