

The Influence of African Philosophy in Building Knowledge Competence and Understanding Social Matters: A Case Study of Swahili Novels

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the contribution of African philosophy in building knowledge competence and understanding social issues, with reference to the Swahili novels *Nagona* (1990) and *Mzingile* (1991). A library research method was used to collect primary data through a close reading of the selected novels. Secondary data were gathered from books, theses, journal articles, and other publications to validate and strengthen the primary data. The study was guided by the African Philosophy theory, which emphasizes the importance of African culture, customs, beliefs, and lived experiences in understanding social life. The selected theory was applied in the discussion and critical analysis of the data obtained. The findings show that these novels significantly contribute to building knowledge about the challenges faced by African communities during periods of social, economic, and cultural change. They also highlight the roles of elders, religion, and indigenous knowledge as foundations for building morality, wisdom, and guidance for life in society. Moreover, they underline the importance of rethinking African life by returning to values such as humanity, social cohesion, and communal ethics. The study further demonstrates that African philosophy helps communities understand the importance of identity, respect elders, value customs and traditions, and seek solutions to social challenges using indigenous knowledge. The study recommends that researchers and literary critics continue applying African Philosophy theory to examine other Swahili literary works, so as to advance knowledge geared toward preserving African culture, morals, and the cohesion of African communities in the present era of globalization.

Keywords: Contribution, African Philosophy, Knowledge Competence, Swahili Novel, African Philosophy Theory

INTRODUCTION

African philosophy has long been an important foundation for explaining African life, culture, and the worldview through which Africans understand their society, from ancient times to the present. This philosophy is constructed through lived experience, customs, traditions, beliefs, proverbs, indigenous cosmology, and various social systems that carry knowledge and wisdom. In African contexts, philosophy appears as a discipline of deep thinking and as a way of life that guides people in making decisions, building relationships, and solving everyday problems (Hontondji, 1996). Through this philosophy, communities learn the importance of solidarity, respect for humanity, justice, cooperation, and mutual respect as essential pillars for social development. African philosophy also makes a strong contribution to understanding key social issues such as education and upbringing, morality, conflicts, poverty, leadership, and the place of human beings within society. In that context, Swahili literature has become a key tool for communicating African ideas, viewpoints, and philosophies through various literary works (Wiredu, 1980). Swahili literature presents societal challenges and strategies for addressing them by drawing on African foundations. Therefore, Swahili literature remains a “mirror” that reflects how African philosophy contributes to building understanding of social issues in African societies.

For a long time, Swahili literature has served as an essential instrument for educating society about morals, history, culture, and various challenges people face in their day-to-day lives. Through literary works, authors have highlighted important social issues such as corruption, lack of justice, family conflicts, the status of women, poverty, colonialism, globalization, and the erosion of traditional morals. In addressing such concerns, many authors rely on African Philosophy principles that emphasize human dignity, solidarity, mutual respect, and social responsibility (Oruka, 1990). African philosophy appears in the way characters resolve problems through reason, elders' wisdom, and communal ethics rather than through selfishness and unresolved conflict. Swahili literature also preserves indigenous knowledge through the use of proverbs, idioms, figurative language, oral narratives, and indigenous cosmology that carry valuable teachings for society. Through these works, communities gain space to reflect on their way of life and to make adjustments aimed at improving the welfare of society as a whole. Swahili literature helps build shared understanding of the importance of protecting African culture against the effects of globalization and social change that undermine traditional morals (Mbiti, 1969). It continues to be a key medium for developing African philosophy into a socially grounded system of knowledge, morals, and cohesion.

Beyond preserving culture and morality, African philosophy through Swahili literature has also contributed significantly to building understanding of the role of human beings in society and their responsibilities toward others. In many African communities, a person's life is viewed as part of the entire community, emphasizing the importance of cooperation, helping one another, and living with regard to collective interests (Irele, 2001). This view emerges in many Swahili literary works where authors demonstrate that social progress cannot be achieved without solidarity and shared responsibility. African philosophy emphasizes good morals such as respect for parents and elders, appreciation of work, tolerance, justice, and respect for human dignity. Through literary characters, society is shown the outcomes of good and bad actions in order to shape people into having better morals. Swahili literature is also used as a platform for criticizing harmful practices that destroy society, such as greed, selfishness, corruption, and abuse of power. In doing so, authors apply African Philosophy wisdom to motivate society to return to values that promote unity and development. Swahili works also create space for discussing new challenges brought by modernity while stressing the importance of preserving African identity (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986). Thus, African philosophy through Swahili literature continues to be a strong foundation for building broad understanding of social issues and communal ethics.

In the current era of globalization and technological development, African philosophy through Swahili literature remains a vital tool for encouraging society to reflect on the changes occurring in their lives. The growth of technology, shifts in economic conditions, and cultural interaction have brought numerous challenges related to the erosion of morals, declining social cohesion, and increasing individualism (Momoh, 1989). Through Swahili literature, authors show how African communities can use their philosophical foundations to respond to such challenges. Many literary works stress the importance of protecting humanity, cooperation, and traditional ethics as ways of safeguarding society against negative impacts of modern change. Swahili literature also provides education on the importance of justice, gender equality, accountability of leaders, and the role of youth in social development (Mulokozi, 2017). Through the debates presented in these works, society gains the opportunity to understand its problems and search for solutions that match its social and cultural environment. Swahili literature likewise reminds society of the importance of preserving the Kiswahili language as part of African identity and as a tool for developing social knowledge. Therefore, African philosophy remains a central pillar used by Swahili literature to build understanding of various issues affecting present-day society.

Despite the significant contribution of African philosophy to building understanding of social issues through Swahili literature, a considerable knowledge gap remains in existing studies regarding how this philosophy continues to manifest in contemporary contexts. Many studies focus more on analyzing social, political, and economic themes in Swahili literature without examining, in depth, the contribution of African philosophy to society's understanding of contemporary challenges. Some studies focus mainly on well-known authors while neglecting other works that offer new perspectives on morals, culture, and social development. There is also a shortage of studies examining how Swahili literature can be used to promote African philosophy in the current era of globalization and technological progress. Based on this situation, further research is needed to investigate the relationship between African philosophy and Swahili literature in building understanding of

important social issues. Consequently, this article examines the contribution of African philosophy in building understanding of key social issues by referring to the selected novels *Nagona* (1990) and *Mzingile* (1991).

Research Methods

This article examined the contribution of African philosophy in building understanding of key social issues, with reference to the selected novels *Nagona* (1990) and *Mzingile* (1991), both by E. Kezilahabi. A library research method was used to obtain a substantial amount of primary data. This method involved carefully reading and analyzing the selected novels in order to identify how African philosophy contributes to understanding key social issues such as morals, leadership, humanity, and social cohesion. Close textual analysis enabled the researcher to identify philosophical elements rooted in African foundations, such as the relationship between community and environment, the place of human beings, and the importance of wisdom and reason in decision-making. Through this approach, primary data were obtained directly from the text of the selected novels without introducing the views of interviewees. This helped the study obtain deep and directly grounded understanding of the intended messages carried by the works.

In addition to textual reading, the library research method included a thematic analysis approach to identify philosophical elements of African philosophy in the selected novels. The researcher selected important excerpts from the novels and analyzed them in relation to social issues such as the role of elders as sources of morals, wisdom, and guidance; the contribution of indigenous knowledge in strengthening and preserving history; and the role of indigenous religious beliefs and faith systems in building shared understanding. This approach made it possible to compare and relate the ideas found in the two novels, in order to identify how African philosophy manifests through different literary styles. Through this process, the primary data were processed carefully to ensure that they accurately reflect the message intended by the authors. Library research also enabled the researcher to obtain secondary data used to explain the contribution of African philosophy to Swahili literature through *Nagona* and *Mzingile*. Therefore, the library research method proved essential for obtaining and using reliable secondary data to support the study's objectives.

Research Theory

The African Philosophy theory was used in this article to examine African philosophy in building understanding of social issues through the selected Swahili novels by *Nagona* and *Mzingile*. In this study, the African Philosophy theory draws on the foundational ideas of various African philosophers and scholars who reflected on the meaning of philosophy in African contexts, including Kwasi Wiredu (1970s, Ghana) and Paulin Hountondji (1970s, Benin). These scholars emphasized the importance of philosophy arising from African society's lived experiences rather than simply adopting Western perspectives. The main basis of this theory is that African philosophy is built through customs, traditions, proverbs, indigenous cosmology, beliefs, and lived social experience that show how Africans understand their own lives. The theory argues that knowledge, wisdom, and communal morals are found not only in academic writings but also in the everyday life of people (Ramose, 1999; Coetzee and Roux, 2003). In literary criticism, this theory is used to examine how literary works reflect African viewpoints on social issues such as leadership, humanity, solidarity, and morals. It also analyzes how characters and events in literary works express African philosophy of life. In this article, the theory served as a guiding framework for studying the selected novels and identifying how they reflect African philosophy in explaining social issues.

According to this theory, African literature is seen as a "mirror" of society that reflects lived realities and the people's worldview. African Philosophy emphasizes that communal knowledge comes from shared experience transmitted through language, art, and social narratives (Masolo, 1994; Serequeberhan, 1994; Imbo, 1998). In literary criticism, the theory is used to explore meanings hidden within literary works and how they reflect African morals, beliefs, and worldviews about life. It also helps to reveal how literature functions as a medium for education, moral formation, and moral mobilization in society. In the novels *Nagona* and *Mzingile*, this theory helped analyze how authors use philosophical language, imagery, and symbols to communicate messages about the relationship between human beings and society. It also supported the explanation of how social conflicts are resolved through African reason and wisdom.

In this article, the theory was used as an analytical tool to identify how the selected novels contribute to building understanding of social issues. The researcher examined how ideas of humanity, solidarity, leadership, morals, and social challenges appear in these works. The theory helped interpret uses of philosophical language, imagery, and symbols that carry social meaning within the literary texts. Through this approach, it became clear that the authors of the selected novels use literary techniques to communicate African ideas about life and society as a whole. The theory also demonstrated that Swahili literature is both entertainment and an educational tool for moral building in society. Overall, the theory provided a strong framework for understanding how African philosophy builds understanding of social issues through Swahili literature.

Therefore, applying African Philosophy theory in this study enabled a deeper understanding of the contribution of *Nagona* and *Mzingile* to reflecting and advancing African perspectives on social life. The theory showed that literature is an important medium for communicating wisdom, knowledge, and morals that arise from African communities' lived experiences. It also indicated that understanding social issues such as wisdom, reason, history, principles of leadership, and morals can be better clarified through African philosophical perspectives than through foreign views alone. Through the analysis of the selected novels, it appeared that the authors use African philosophy to educate society on the importance of solidarity, humanity, and accountability. Hence, this theory was vital in providing analytical insights that contributed to building understanding of social issues through the selected Swahili novels by E. Kezilahabi.

The Influence of African Philosophy in Building Knowledge Competence and Understanding Social Matters Referring to Swahili Novels

African Philosophy plays a significant role in building knowledge, competence and understanding of social issues in the Swahili literature novel. Through proverbs, beliefs, communal values and indigenous wisdom, Swahili novels educate society on morality, leadership, justice, culture and human relationships, thereby promoting critical thinking and social awareness among society. The influence of African philosophy in building knowledge competence and understanding social matters referring to Swahili novels has presented below.

Elders as the Source and Custodian of Culture, Knowledge, Wisdom, and History

Elders hold a central place in society as a source of knowledge, wisdom, and morals that guide communities in everyday life. Through years of lived experience, elders develop broad understanding of community customs, traditions, history, and social procedures (Sengo, 2009). Their knowledge helps young people learn how to live with respect, discipline, and responsibility. In many African communities, elders are identified as traditional teachers who pass on good morals through proverbs, stories, songs, and other narratives that carry important teachings. Young people learn the importance of respecting others, valuing family solidarity, and avoiding actions that can lead to conflicts in society. Elders are also regarded as sources of wisdom because they give advice grounded in life experience accumulated over a long time (Asante, 1990). They often serve as advisors in marriage, child upbringing, and the resolution of family and community conflicts. Their wisdom provides guidance that helps maintain peace and harmony among people. In addition, elders help preserve community culture by ensuring that customs and traditions are not lost due to changes in the modern world. Therefore, elders function as an important repository of knowledge and morals that contribute to social welfare and the development of future generations.

Beyond guarding culture, elders are also a source of indigenous knowledge and wisdom that helps communities face different challenges of life. In many African settings, elders have knowledge of natural medicine, farming, livestock management, environmental conservation, and methods of living independently. This knowledge is passed on to the youth to ensure that society continues to benefit from the experiences of previous generations (Mbiti, 1991). Elders often serve as role models because they display perseverance, patience, and wisdom in dealing with issues that arise in society. Through their teachings, young people learn the importance of hard work, valuing unity, and respecting other people's rights. In family and community gatherings, elders may function as mediators who restore harmony using their wisdom and experience (p'Bitek, 1986). This strengthens social cohesion and makes the community more stable. Elders also help young people understand their history and social identity so that they do not lose direction under the influence

of globalization and technological change. Elders thus enable society to preserve knowledge, wisdom, and morals for the benefit of both the present and future generations.

In *Nagona*, the author shows the importance of elders in building and strengthening the moral foundations of African philosophy to develop philosophical and ideological principles grounded in real social life. In this novel, we see a character such as Nguli and, at different points, how he receives guidance and advice from elders during his journey to search for a roof. The author also portrays Nguli's grandfather as knowledgeable and as a person whose wisdom guides Nguli toward searching for a roof. The novel states:

My grandfather was well known in the village. Many elders came to seek counsel about their conflicts. Some came simply to listen to his wise sayings and his stories of the past. Often, they gathered around him listening to his conversations, even when there was no place for me. You would hear him say to me in the middle of the discussion: 'Young master! I want you to listen to me carefully. I want you to be a true witness. When the sign appears, follow it all the way to the center of the circle (p. 9).

These excerpts demonstrate how an elder is respected as a person of knowledge and wisdom. This idea is further confirmed by the proverb "living long makes one see many things." Because the elder has lived for a long time, he has accumulated experience that enables him to see, hear, and learn different aspects of life. Long life makes someone encounter diverse situations such as achievements, challenges, upheavals, and social changes thus building wisdom and a broader understanding of the world. Experience is an important teacher, often more valuable than theoretical foundations grounded in specialized academic fields (Asante & Abarry, 1996). An elder who has lived long can provide good guidance to young people based on matters he has passed through. That is why elders are often respected in society: their lived history and the lessons they learned make them trustworthy. These explanations also stress the importance of patience and endurance in life. However, not every person who has lived long is necessarily wise; wisdom depends on careful learning from the events one encounters. Therefore, old age functions as a treasure of the community's customs, traditions, and moral formation.

Religion as a Source of Knowledge, Wisdom and Morals Guiding Life

Religion plays a significant role in society as a source of knowledge, wisdom, and morals that guide people's lives in different spheres. Through religion, communities learn the foundations of good and evil, justice and responsibility, and how to live in peace and love. Sacred books and teachings from religious leaders provide people with knowledge that helps build good character traits such as honesty, patience, compassion, and respect for the dignity of other people (Idowu, 1973). Religion teaches the importance of mutual support, forgiveness, and maintaining social cohesion. Through these teachings, people gain guidance on how to respond to the challenges of life with reason and hope. Religion also supports the upbringing of children and youth by building a foundation of good morals from an early age. Religious institutions offer spiritual and social education that helps young people avoid harmful practices such as theft, drug abuse, and violence (Mbiti, 1975). Religion also connects people of different groups through worship, teachings, and social activities that emphasize unity and cooperation. As a result, religion holds a vital position in building a community with good morals, peace, and mutual respect.

Religion is also an important source of wisdom and knowledge that helps society make correct decisions in everyday life. Religious teachings encourage people to value patience, commitment, self-discipline, and responsibility in family life and society at large. Wisdom derived from religion helps people understand the value of life and the importance of living according to justice, equality, and love (Gyekye, 1996). Religious leaders are often used as advisers and mediators in resolving family and community conflicts through wise counsel and spiritual guidance. This promotes peace, calm, and social solidarity. In addition, religion contributes to education by establishing schools, colleges, and training centers that provide both academic and moral knowledge to people of different age groups. Through these institutions, society produces educated people with discipline and good morals who can contribute to national development (Dickson, 1984). Religion motivates people to support people with special needs through social services such as providing food aid, medical support, and child care for orphans. In short, religion is a pillar that helps society obtain knowledge, wisdom, and morals that enable people to live peacefully, cohesively, and in a sustainable way day by day.

In *Nagona*, the issue of religion reflects moral foundations of African philosophy through religious practice. Nguli in this novel looks at a corpse in which, in one hand, a Bible is placed and, in the other hand, the Quran is placed (p. 2). In this novel, the author focuses more on religious leaders. For example, the author portrays a priest as a drunk person who cannot have clear vision or direction. The priest is also depicted as unable to provide answers to important life questions (p. 4). Despite this criticism, the novel also acknowledges the value of religion in guiding human beings in their search for the essence and meaning of life. In the novel, confession is presented as an important element in building humanity. This is especially clear in the discussion of the importance of confessing all sins by the human being (p. 8). Confession is necessary because it helps a person admit wrongdoing and seek forgiveness from God and from society (Magesa, 1997). It encourages true repentance and changes in behavior. It also removes guilt feelings and emotional burden, bringing inner peace. Further, it strengthens relationships with others and enables people to live with integrity and responsibility in society.

The place of traditional religions, Christianity, and Islam worldwide is significant in shaping morals, culture, and social cohesion. Together, these religions guide people spiritually, socially, and morally by emphasizing love, peace, and justice. They also contribute greatly to education, health, and social development through their institutions (Wiredu, 1996). In traditional religions, customs and ancestral practices are preserved in order to protect community identity. Christianity has contributed significantly to the spread of education and social services through churches and related organizations. Islam encourages integrity, charity, and social solidarity among its followers. Overall, these religions have become important pillars of peace and development across the world. They continue to bring unity among nations and people of different cultures by encouraging tolerance and mutual respect (Magesa, 2004). They also provide moral guidance that helps reduce conflicts and improve sustained development in diverse societies. Therefore, their contributions remain crucial for building a peaceful, respectful, and collectively developing world for both current and future generations.

Faith and Reason as Sources of Education, Existence and Guidance

Faith and reason are highly significant in society as key sources of knowledge, wisdom, existence, and morals that guide human life. Faith helps a person understand their presence in the world by believing in spiritual power, religion, or certain principles that provide hope and direction in life (Menkiti, 1984). Through faith, people obtain values that guide them to do good, respect others, help one another, and live in peace and solidarity. Faith builds patience, hope, and courage for facing different life challenges. Reason enables human beings to use intelligence and the ability to think deeply in order to analyse situations carefully and make correct decisions (Wiredu, 1996). Through reason, society gains knowledge derived from investigation, arguments, and lived experience. Reason helps people distinguish between truth and falsehood, justice and oppression, and good and evil. Similarly, faith and reason together build wisdom that enables people to use knowledge in ways beneficial to society. In daily life, people use faith for spiritual direction and reason to resolve problems they encounter. Therefore, faith and reason are essential pillars that enable human beings to understand the meaning of existence, build good morals, and develop life characterized by peace, wisdom, and social cohesion. In *Mzingile*, we observe how faith and reason serve as literary reflections of African philosophical moral foundations. This appears in the conversation between an elder and Nguli. The elder says:

Every time you mix your existence with mine, your reality merges with mine, and your identity turns it into mine. It is not only that. I have heard you many times mixing the identity of your father with mine. And if it is not your father's identity, then you go back to your grandfather and your grandfather until you reach me! When shall we resolve this so that each of us becomes like they are and has full freedom? (p. 57).

Wamitila (1991) notes that these words echo the view of Søren Kierkegaard that God created a situation in which He remains unknown, and that it is humanness or humanity (as a way of being) that recognizes, understands, and becomes familiar with God through faith. However, the novel goes further by showing the danger of relying on faith as the only means of solving human problems. The impact of depending solely on faith can be both positive and negative (Pobee, 1979). On the one hand, faith brings comfort and hope during hardship, helps people endure difficult situations, and strengthens patience. On the other hand, it can lead to laziness in taking practical action. As a result, development may be delayed and science may be ignored. Therefore, it is important to combine faith with practical effort. Together, they provide a better solution to

social problems and lead to sustainable development and general well-being in daily life. This means that people should use their minds while still having faith when solving their challenges.

Religion contributes greatly to strengthening morals, peace, and social cohesion. It guides people spiritually and morally by teaching love, honesty, patience, and respect. Through its institutions, religion supports education, health, and social services, thus stimulating social development. It also provides comfort and hope during challenges, helping people remain resilient and keep moving forward (Hellen, 2002). However, if religious teachings are misinterpreted or applied improperly, they can create conflicts and divisions within society. Therefore, society must ensure that religion is taught and practiced correctly in order to promote unity and peace. Religious leaders should encourage tolerance and respect for differences in faith (Wiredu, 1980). Moral education should also be strengthened so that people understand religion as a tool for development rather than as a source of conflict. Government and social institutions should work with religious organizations in building a cohesive society and promoting sustainable development.

Indigenous Cosmology as a Source of Historical Memory, Tradition, Customs and Knowledge

Indigenous cosmology contributes significantly to society because it provides a key source of history, knowledge, wisdom, and morals that strengthen people's lives across generations. Communities gain opportunities to understand their origins, traditions, customs, and important events from earlier times. Indigenous stories preserve the memory of heroes, leaders, and people who contributed greatly to the development of particular communities. Indigenous cosmology also helps transmit practical indigenous knowledge about daily life, such as farming, hunting, livestock keeping, cooperation, and ways of dealing with daily challenges. In many African communities, elders use indigenous stories as a way of teaching children and youth good morals through examples from characters that demonstrate either good or bad behavior (Finnegan, 2012). Through such stories, young people learn the importance of respect, obedience, honesty, patience, and social solidarity. Indigenous cosmology is also used to warn against undesirable behaviors such as greed, selfishness, laziness, and hatred that can lead to conflicts. These stories help develop critical thinking and reflection, because their teachings are often hidden in metaphorical language, proverbs, and symbols (Mulokozi, 2017). Therefore, indigenous cosmology remains a vital repository that preserves history, strengthens knowledge, and builds good morals for present and future generations.

In addition to preserving history and knowledge, indigenous cosmology plays a major role in promoting wisdom and strengthening social cohesion through lessons embedded within the narratives. In stories, characters encounter different challenges that require wisdom, patience, and cooperation in order to achieve success. Through those examples, community members learn the importance of using wisdom to make correct decisions and to resolve life problems peacefully. Indigenous cosmology reinforces values of mutual help, valuing work, respecting parents, and living with love and respect for others within society. In many African settings, indigenous stories are told in the evenings when children, youth, and adults gather to listen to stories from elders. This gathering strengthens communication and solidarity across generations, while also enabling the transfer of knowledge and wisdom in a simple and engaging way (Okpewho, 1992). Indigenous cosmology also helps preserve community language through proverbs, idioms, and sayings that carry cultural identity. In summary, indigenous cosmology remains an important tool for preserving history, strengthening morals, promoting wisdom, and developing community culture for the benefit of both the current and future generations.

In *Nagona* (1990) and Mzingile (1991), the philosophical ideas combine African symbols and indigenous cosmology such as the Mbuyu plant, characters, drums, and related elements. The complexity in understanding and explaining these philosophical ideas stems from the way they are written: the entire philosophy is expressed using metaphorical language as "indigenous philosophy" and it is influenced by thinkers such as Plato (427–347 BC), Nietzsche (1844–1900), and others (Wamitila, 1991). For example, the image of the circle draws on indigenous African philosophy as a metaphor for life and the movement of time, but it also draws from Nietzsche's concept of *Ewiger Wiederkehr* (the idea of eternal return). Eternal return in Nietzsche's philosophy is a return that helps a person become complete and continually "bear" again. A new person can accept and live according to the eternal return; this represents a new generation of humanity or moral personhood.

The symbols of the circle and reproduction carry additional symbolic meanings connected to the drum. In these works, the drum functions as a “topos” and also appears in Nietzsche’s writing. Both authors use the drum as a tool that can open a door to “a path toward the center of new knowledge and new craftsmanship, the beginning of a new generation,” as explained in reference to related texts and also in the poem *Kisima*. While the drum is used as a symbolic act that opens a path toward reproduction, it also shows that the greatest act of reproduction takes place during a moment of silence. In our society, indigenous cosmology plays an important role in bringing good morals by explaining the value of indigenous knowledge, recognizing and appreciating cultural heritage, and protecting community values. In the theory of African philosophy, indigenous cosmology explains that human life, experiences, and events recur repeatedly in an endless cycle. From an African perspective, this can be understood as an indigenous symbol expressed in African cultures, traditions, and worldviews about life and the universe. Many African communities believe that the history, actions, and morals of ancestors continue to reappear in new generations through traditions, proverbs, and social inheritance (Njogu & Chimerah, 1999).

In African indigenous cosmology, life is seen as a cycle involving birth, living, death, and the return of the spirit or the continuing effects of the ancestors within society. This aligns with Nietzsche’s thoughts about the recurrence of life and events. For example, social conflicts, bad leadership, or good morals can reappear in different periods of African history. Likewise, cultural festivals and traditional rituals indicate the return of ancestral memory and help sustain community identity. Thus, indigenous cosmology is a symbol that emphasizes continuity of life, ancestral heritage, and the importance for society to learn from its history in order to build a better future.

CONCLUSION

In general, African philosophy has demonstrated a significant contribution to building understanding of key social issues through Swahili literature. Swahili literature has been an important tool for communicating the morals, customs, traditions, and worldviews of African communities about life and social development. Through the selected novels, elders appear as key pillars in society because they are guardians of wisdom, culture, and community history. The selected novels show that elders have the responsibility to provide guidance, resolve conflicts, and transmit knowledge to future generations. This reflects African philosophical principles that stress respect for elders’ experience and wisdom in building strong communities. Likewise, indigenous cosmology is used to express social lessons, the origins of life and the consequences of human actions. Through indigenous cosmology, society learns the importance of good morals, solidarity, respecting the environment, and valuing community traditions. Religion contributes to promoting morals, respect, and peace in society. Swahili literature shows how both religious and traditional beliefs can support the building of a community with unity and harmony. So, African philosophy remains an essential foundation for understanding and strengthening social life through Swahili literature. The article recommends that society and educational institutions continue encouraging the use of African philosophy and Swahili literature to preserve morals and culture and to build a society characterized by cohesion, humanity, and sustainable development.

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