

ABSTRACT

MALAWIAN STAGE DRAMA AND POST 1994 DEMOCRACY: FROM DU CHISIZA'S "DEMOCRACY BOULEVARD" TO NADZIKAMBE'S "ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF DEMOCRACY"

Dr Mufunanji Magalasi

Senior Lecturer in Drama & Development Media, University of Malawi

Kamuzu Banda claimed the presence of democracy in Malawi and dubbed multi-party democracy as "confusion". His critics however saw through his claims and labelled him an autocrat. Come 1994, the Kamuzu the autocrat is unseated and Malawi enters 'multi-party democracy'. Observing the evolving theories of the postcolony through Frantz Fanon, Achille Mbembe, and Fracois Bayart, who saw the African postcolonial leader like Kamuzu Banda as the 'philosopher king' who demands to be listened to or else, the new post-1994 Malawi brings along many voices as trendy in "democratic practices". However, "things start to happen" and the very people who cried for multi-party stop short in their applause of the new state of affairs, and stage drama socially comments on the occurrences. Du Chisiza opens the stage by lambasting the autocrat in Democracy Boulevard and within a short space of time, Twaya Sanudi derogatorily dismisses the new status quo as "Black Democracy", while Gertrude Kamkwatira asks: "Who is fooling who?" leaving Nadzikambe to boldly conclude in the "Accidental Death of Democracy". The mixed feelings that the dramatists express in their commentary is a wonder on whether the so-called "democracy" can work in Malawi or whether Malawi misunderstands the approach, as in practice, hidden autocracies and political manipulations become the order of the governance day.