

AN ATTEMPT TO STUDY SOME PREVAILING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN BEOWULF AND KAHAMBWA

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ABSTRACT: *Beowulf* and *Kahambwa* are two epics, respectively of European and African origins. The fact that these epics constitute an important element in literature has interested us in dealing with in doing a study whose aim is to disclose those similarities and differences. We have provided the plot of each of the two epics in order to make our study more effective. This plot helped us facilitate the understanding to anybody who's the epics in question are strange. From this, we have shown the salient elements by doing a comparison, since to compare is nothing else than to take into consideration two or more than two things, people or ideas etc. in order to show that these are similar or different. Although the present epics are not of the same origins, we have revealed along our study that they bear both elements of similitude and those of dissimilarity.

KEYWORDS: Attempt, study, similarity, difference, epic.

1 INTRODUCTION

To choose the topic under discussion, a number of reasons have motivated us. Firstly, most people seem not to be interested in dealing with epics of two different origins; and those who try to deal with them do not happen to furnish satisfactory significance of the epics in question. That is, they do not deal with things properly. Secondly, we decided to provide people with some pieces of information with regard to similarities and differences existing between *Beowulf* and *Kahambwa*. It is also a matter of recalling that *Beowulf* is an Anglo-Saxon epic while *Kahambwa* is a shi epic (*Bushi being one of the tribes of the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo*).

Although people interested in literature deal with epics, most of them still do not disclose the latter's prevailing points which constitute similarities and differences. Besides, many people do not know so far that Shi oral narratives embed some characteristics which bring about an important study.

What can actually reassure people that *Beowulf* and *Kahambwa* are comparable and that their similarities and differences can be displayed? How can one notice the similarities and the differences?

In trying to deal with "*An attempt to study some prevailing similarities and differences in Beowulf and Kahambwa*", we have based the work on some hypotheses namely:

- *Beowulf* and *Kahambwa* bear numerous features which are specific to them as epics.
- Some characteristics belong to either all of *Beowulf* and *Kahambwa* simultaneously or to only one of them and not to the other.

We have used many techniques to collect the data for this piece of work, namely, interview and documentation. First, concerning the interview, we consulted some Bashi who are supposed to know more about shi cultural narratives and put them questions about their belief; the interdicts in Bushi; the heirs functions in Bushi, etc. Second, we read some books related to our topic, especially when we collected the data about *Beowulf*. We had recourse to some approaches in order to

achieve the aim of our study. The first approach consisted of writing down the plot of each of the epics, **Beowulf** and **Kahambwa**. The second approach focused on comparing the two epics with regard to the similarities and differences.

The present study enables people to discover the different characteristics that shi epics embed in the same way as English epics. The same study also helps people discover the bridge existing between the Shi and the English narratives with the light of some characteristics. The study which is dealt with at present helps as well people avoid blind assumption, which is Shi and English epics are always matchless.

It is not possible to deal with two cultures in Toto. This is the reason why only some salient characteristics were taken into consideration in order to bring more light regarding the disclosure of similarities and differences.

In this research, our objective is to:

- Show that actually shi and English oral narratives include similar and dissimilar characteristics.
- Fully prove that, like shi epics, English epics also have cultural characteristics.

We came across difficulties in our research such as the lack of scientific documents on **Kahambwa**. This is why we limited ourselves to pieces of information fetched from the Bashi.

The present work is subdivided into three sections. The first section consists of the introduction. The second section deals with the plots of both epics. The third concerns the similarities and differences between the two epics.

2 PLOTS IN *BEOWULF* AND *KAHAMBWA*

2.1 PLOT IN *BEOWULF*

Beowulf is a heroic epic. It opens with an account of the funeral of scyld, the mythical founder of what is called Danish Royal House. Scyld's descendant, Hrothgar, built the great hall that he named Heorot. But a half-human monster called Grendel was angered by the sound of rejoicing in Heorot and attacked the hall by night, killing thirty people of the Danes. He repeated his exploits and continued to ravage Heorot for twelve years. Neither Hrothgar nor his men were able to put an end to this. Then, Beowulf, a nephew of Hygelac (Beowulf, the hero), King of the Geats learnt all those happenings. He decided to go to Hrothgar's assistance. With his fourteen combatants, they sailed to Denmark and were welcomed by Hrothgar in Heorot. After a banquet, Beowulf (the hero) and his Geats remained in the Hall to wait for Grendel. At night, the monster came to Heorot, busts the door in, killed and devoured one of the Geats. But when he held Beowulf, the latter seized him. Then, they started a terrible battle during which the hero wrenched the monster's arm. Grendel (the monster) was mortally wounded and escaped to his lair.

The following day, a great party was prepared in Heorot. This time Hrothgar and his queen Wealhtheow were to give gifts to Beowulf and his men.

Following the banquet, when the Danes were asleep, Grendel's mother carried off one of Hrothgar's best loved counselors. This mother was avenging her son's death. In the morning, the Danes and Geats tracked her to Lake in whose depth she lived. Beowulf plunged in and killed her after a dangerous duel at the bottom of the Lake. He cut the head from Grendel's corpse, which he found there, and brought it to Heorot. Thereafter, Hrothgar delivered a moralizing speech of advice to the hero during the banquet. Then, Beowulf went back home with his men having many gifts from Hrothgar.

Beowulf became King of the Geats because of the death of Hygelac and his son Heardred. Towards the end of his reign, his country was devastated by a Dragon. The old hero decided to fight the Dragon. He armed himself with an iron shield for protection against the flaming breath of Dragon. At this moment, Beowulf was with eleven followers and his relative Wiglaf.

Beowulf's sword broke in the fight with the Dragon. All his friends ran away except Wiglaf, who came to his rescue. Together they killed the Dragon but Beowulf had been mortally wounded and died in Wiglaf's arms.

2.2 PLOT IN *KAHAMBWA*

Kahambwa is a heroic epic in which the main character or the hero himself is called KAHAMBWA.

The father of the hero was a native of Burhinyi (*Mwenga, South Kivu, in the D.R. Congo*). He decided to get a property at Condo in Ngweshe (*Walungu, South Kivu, in the D.R.Congo*). He became a great farmer in Ngweshe. He had no son. Then he went to Nindja (*Kabare, South Kivu in D.R.Congo*) for the divination to get some pieces of information about the lack of a child of his preference. He met Bucheba who provided him with a charm called Maheso or Byorobyoro.

Note that Kahambwa's father was a great fighter. This pushed him to be in need of a fighting-charm. Bucheba predicted that a son would be born and that he would be as a combatant as his father. Afterwards, Bucheba told the man that his son would die in Burhinyi. The diviner, Bucheba, added that the birth of Kahambwa, the hero, would be preceded by some prodigies. He asked the hero's father to grow a banana-tree and that this banana-tree would yield ripe bananas the same day. Bucheba continued to tell the hero's father that he would sow sorghum grains that would yield cobs within less than a day. All those prodigious things were fulfilled. Then the wife of the man (the hero's mother) became pregnant. The man (hero's father) went to Burhinyi and challenged to a duel. There he killed a man called Nshamulwa, a subject of the Mwami (or King) Muganga of Burhinyi. For this reason, the hero's father had no longer gone to Burhinyi lest he be killed in his turn. He finally reached his old age and died from it after he had got a child, Kahambwa, the hero of the narrative. The mother of this young boy decided to go and find an oracle about his son. M'Nafunda, the mother forbade her son from going to Burhinyi, telling him that the Nshamulwas were plotting in order to avenge their father's death. Despite the piece of advice, Kahambwa went to Burhinyi because he was bewitched by Nakabembe, a witch-doctor from Nindja. He was requested by the children of Nshamulwa to do so.

Once in Burhinyi, Nshamulwa tried to defend himself during the duel to see whether he could come back home safe and sound, but he was pierced with a lance.

The injury of Kahambwa caused his death in his own compound. Before he died, he asked his family to avenge him. Curiously, almost all that he possessed was involved in the battle, namely, his mother, his bull, etc. hence the successive murders and vengeance. As for the date of birth of Kahambwa, we did not find much information. Nonetheless, quoting *Makelele (1993)*, Kahambwa was born in the epoch when Cibwine-ca-Mwanga and Lirangwe were respectively ruling Luhwindja (neighbouring area of Burhinyi) and Ngweshe. Thus, it is probable that Kahambwa was living by the 1900 s.

Before we go on to prevailing similarities and differences, it is worth defining some key-words.

An attempt is « an act of trying to do something, especially something difficult » (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 1995: 70*).

To study is « to watch and examine something carefully over a period of time in order to find out more about it » (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 1995:1431*).

An epic is « a long poem that tells the story of what gods or important people did in ancient times » (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 1995:455*).

3 PREVAILING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

3.1 PREVAILING SIMILARITIES

To start with a similarity is to be defined as « a way in which things or people are similar » (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 1995:1333*).

However, we find that both **Kahambwa** and **Beowulf** are produced by the societies in which the existence of supernatural power is believed. In other words, Bushi and England respectively owners of **Kahambwa** and **Beowulf** are religious societies. In so saying we agree that God or the gods play crucial roles in the respective societies.

The Bushi recognize that they live together with the gods and the spirits of the ancestors. This is the reasons why the gods are always associated with the Bashi's activities. **Kahambwa** involves the divinity from the beginning up to the end. As Shi people, Kahambwa's mother, Kahambwa's youngest wife and Kahambwa himself have recourse to gods throughout their activities.

Wright (1957:9), a commentator on **Beowulf** testifies that it would be a mistake to suppose that Anglo-Saxon society of the eight century was not a Christian and organized civilization. In the same way *Thorn (1961:63)* says that King Etheiread of Anglo-Saxon society swore on oath in the Name of the Holy Trinity. From this he promised his people that they should keep true peace; he forbade robbery and all injustice; he promised justice and mercy in all judgment so as to let the church spiritually alive. It is not therefore a surprise when we find that in **Beowulf** every action is associated with Heavenly forces. It is shown that Heavenly forces are fighting with Hellish forces. This is an expression of religion.

In **kahambwa**, we are told that Kahambwa has a small hut in which his charm is kept. There are spirits living in this hut in general and in his charm in particular. He lets the spirits be aware of everything he does.

In **Beowulf**, Grendel has got a charm and a troop of devils living in his dwelling place. During his fight with Beowulf, he tries by all means to escape so as to reach his band of devils, but this time, it is no longer possible.

Moreover, the Divinity in **Kahambwa** and **Beowulf** is a cultural characteristic. We said earlier that divinity refers to God or the gods. For the Bashi, however, it is almost impossible to talk of gods without referring to diviners or to different objects, plants, or animals, etc. that facilitate the right contact between people and the gods, in question. This is the reason why we can find people having recourse to diviners, to charms and to animals (for example, the bull) to sacrifices and to places which are thought to be filled with spirits in **Kahambwa**.

As well, in **Beowulf**, the divinity is disclosed as a cultural characteristic. Habitually, the corpse of a given Geat is burnt, especially, a hero's corpse is burnt in order to check whether the hero is welcomed by the heaven or not. In **Beowulf**, therefore, when **Beowulf** dies, the funeral-fire is lit and the corpse is put into it. The smoke has gone straight to heaven, and then the Geats started shouting with joy that **Beowulf** has just reached God.

Also, in **Kahambwa**, while the Nshumulwas are looking for the way to avenge their father's death, they decide to go to Nindja for assistance. In the end, Nshumulwa and his people succeed in finding Nakabembe, the witch-doctor.

As for **Beowulf**, while the Danes are in search of the way through which they can avenge their relatives, they start offering sacrifices to the heathens.

Heroism is seen in **Kahambwa** and **Beowulf**. It means, the two epics are heroic. The great deeds of **Kahambwa**, the Hero, are praised fully by the Bashi. **Kahambwa** involves magic and religious actions. In **Kahambwa** we find people fighting with extreme bravery. They have thrown fear away. Sometimes we notice the duel in which the people are involved in the market. Most of time, the courage manifests itself through murders; and very often magic power and the gods are of great importance in **Kahambwa**. **Kahambwa**, as a hero is involved in all those things.

As for **Beowulf**, its hero realizes himself through great deeds. It is an extreme courage that pushes **Beowulf** to try a war with monsters. Grendel has got a rabble of devils in his dwelling place. Those devils enable him to win the duel. Theoretically, a war between a human being and monsters would not exist, but the fact that heroism is always seen through courage, **Beowulf** takes heart and manages to kill the monsters, including the Dragon.

Heroism mostly concerns family elders in Shi culture. Those elders may be a father of a family, a Mwami, a given traditional chief, a hunter or farmer. A hero must own men, wide fields, many flocks and more than one wife. In short, in Bushi, a hero is often a rich person.

It is not at random that we find heroes who are polygamists once we come across Shi epics. For a Mushi, for example, polygamy is not only an expression of riches and bravery but also an expression of the search of fame. That is people assume that when somebody is a polygamist, he may bear many children. From that, it should be borne in mind that somebody who owns a large family is often powerful in warlike matters. He is able to prevent his family from being harmed by a probable enemy. In this way, a hero often deserves praises.

In **Kahambwa**, however, we realize the hero's riches and people, etc. that bring about a great fame to the hero in question.

Likewise, in **Beowulf**, the Hero owns wise men among whom we find advisers. He also has a troop of warriors among whom fourteen adventurers are selected when he goes to Hrothgar's assistance. All the time he is successful in the war, huge presents are given to him. **Beowulf** is a rich person. He is always victorious and becomes a famous warrior in the end thanks to the great deeds that he performs.

The heroes are boastful in both **Kahambwa** and **Beowulf**. For the hero in **Kahambwa**, all pieces of advice given to him are nonsense. He neglects the presence of the wagtail, the presence of the partridges, the word of the charm, etc. He tells for example the wagtail that it is a bird and that therefore, it has nothing to give him as piece of advice; to the charm he says that the latter is uniquely a charm and he, himself, is a human being that therefore, it has no right to prevent him from going to Burhinyi.

While **Beowulf** is getting ready for the battle with Grendel, he declares that his people let him go to Hrothgar's assistance because they knew earlier how much his strength would perform great deeds; he also recalls his previous wonders so as to show how much he is a special person. No matter who **Beowulf's** opponent is, **Beowulf** is ready to ignore the opponent's strength. For example, talking of the dragon, **Beowulf** says that the former is less powerful than the monsters that he had already killed.

We should also take notice that in Bushi, a responsible of a given land could deliberately decide to challenge a chief of a neighboring chief's field so as to show how much he is rich enough. The Bashi, especially those belonging to high social classes always pretended to be the most important persons. This fact used to involve excessive boastfulness. Another example is that when somebody recognized that he had a lot of cows, he could do his best to find a pasture where less cows

than his owns are being fed. Once it is found, he mixes all the cows, i.e. his own cows together with the other cows he meets. Afterwards, he brings all of them to his house in the evening when he comes back home.

From what it is mentioned above, we can realize that it is not a surprise when in Kahambwa, the hero utters some boasting words.

As for **Beowulf**, it is easy to notice that there has been among the Geats a well-known group of powerful people. These people had the privilege to provide boasting words. Beowulf and the fourteen adventures belonged to that group. These powerful people could hurt no one from their boastfulness. Beowulf confirms himself that the wise men allowed him to go to Hrothgar's assistance because they knew how much he always performed good deeds.

Self-confidence appears in both **Kahambwa** and **Beowulf**. Kahambwa considers his problem as being too easy. He thinks that all solutions are in his hands. This way of thinking pushes him to rebel once forbidden by his mother, or his charm, etc. to go on journey. Kahambwa is sure that nothing worse can happen to him. He trusts a lot in himself. Beowulf on his side knows he cannot be disappointed by himself in warlike situations when he takes into consideration his great might. Mostly he fights even unarmed. He is too confident in heart. He says, however, that before fighting with Grendel he will forgo all his weapons.

Insisting on self-confidence, we let people know that the Bashi have always been self-confident if we refer to their history. We know that the Bashi are farmers; they have flocks. By dint of staying in pastures with their flocks all day, they find the opportunity to get skills in battle matters. They can be found in the pasture with sticks, swords, machetes, bows and arrows, spears, and fire. They are always ready to use those weapons for self-defense in case they are threatened. In this way, the Bashi find themselves involved into self-confidence. Besides, in Kahambwa we find that the first thing that the hero does while he is getting ready for the trip is to ask his subject to bring him the spears. This shows that in Shi culture, a Mushi seldom walks without any weapon such as, sword, spears, etc. Kahambwa, the hero is insulting whoever or whatever that he thinks can be obstacle to his trip. After getting a mortal strike on his neck he happens to tell Lwahirirha that all his opponents have disappeared because they knew how dangerous he is.

Beowulf is one of the epics which show that self-confidence is inevitable, especially on the part of heroes. Mostly, heroes are strong. This fact of being strong allows them to be more and more self-confident. For example, Beowulf utters that he has been killing monsters without weapons more than once. He reiterates his words saying that he is still able to slaughter Grendel without any weapon.

The heroes in both **Kahambwa** and **Beowulf** are decisive. Kahambwa, the hero, is determined to go to Burhinyi. No matter the obstacles, he has taken a decision to leave for his target place. He mostly replies to his talk-partners that he has to go to Burhinyi.

Also, Beowulf is seriously determined to free his people. He does not fear death. From that, he confirms his decision with some words such as "it is better for a man to avenge his friend than much mourn". As well wiglaf is determined to help Beowulf and thus he finds better to throw himself in fire for the help than to be unfaithful towards his promise to the chief-warrior in question.

Talking about decisiveness, we find that any hero is characterized by decisiveness. This is the reason why heroes are usually found seeking at all costs what they wish to get. Briefly, in all epics, decisiveness appears on the part of the hero. After checking as well the epic of our study, we have realized that even Kahambwa and Beowulf are decisive, taking into account their reactions.

Vengeance prevails in **Kahambwa** and in **Beowulf**. Nshamulwa, the main antagonist goes to look for somebody to help him avenge his father's death. After finding a witch-doctor, he comes home with him and then, Kahambwa, bewitched comes to Burhinyi. The duel for the avenge starts and in the end Nshamulwa succeeds in hurting Kahambwa dangerously. During the duel, Kahambwa kills the father and the uncle of a little boy, but his boy manages to avenge his relative's death by piercing him mortally with a spear. Kahambwa's charm becomes spiteful towards its master's death. In avenging Kahambwa's death, the charm gives to M'Nafunda some procedures to follow in order to be successful. To avenge Kahambwa's death, the two women, i.e. M'Nafunda and her daughter-in-law go to Burhinyi and do their best to disguise themselves as kind persons. They succeed in the end in avenging Kahambwa's death by killing Nshamulwa and his son. Finally, the bull and the river avenge Kahambwa's death respectively by killing people and bulls in Burhinyi after the two women, M'Nafunda and her daughter-in-law. As for Beowulf, when the hero, Beowulf hears that Grendel is coming to murder the Danes, he becomes extremely upset and comes to avenge their death. Of course, he manages to kill Grendel, the devastating monster. Grendel's death brings about new vengeance. In this way, Grendel's mother shows up in order to avenge her son's death. She comes to attack Beowulf but this one is sleeping in the bed-chamber. She suddenly kills Aeschere, a beloved of Hrothgar. When Beowulf is awake he avenges Aeschere's death by killing Grendel's mother and cutting the head of Grendel's corpse in their

own lair. Moreover, the Dragon avenges his treasure which is taken away. From this, the dragon makes a disaster into the Geats. This situation creates a great hatred in Beowulf, thus, fights with the dragon. Sorrowful because of the dragon's deeds, wiglaf avenges Beowulf's suffering. He starts then fighting on the side of Beowulf. Furthermore, in **Kahambwa**, the hero being seriously hurt, dies in his mother's hands. Similarly, in **Beowulf**, the hero being seriously wounded dies in Wiglaf's hands.

In addition, we are to recall that in both **Kahambwa** and **Beowulf**, the heroes kill people's parents. That is, in **Kahambwa**, the hero kills the father and the uncle of little boy whereas in **Beowulf**, the hero kills Grendel's mother.

Besides, **kahambwa** and **Beowulf** disclose all an action of great courage, which is cutting off heads. In **Kahambwa**, the youngest wife cuts the head of Nshamulwa and hangs up it upon the fire-place.

In **Beowulf**, Beowulf cuts off the head of Grendel and brings it to Heorot in order to hang up it.

It is worth mentioning that at a certain level, the vengeance is due to motherly love in both **kahambwa** and **Beowulf**. For instance, in **kahambwa**, M'Nafunda avenges her son **kahambwa** in Burhinyi. In **Beowulf**, Grendel is avenged by his mother in Heorot.

We can as well talk of some praisable action done in both epics by some characters sometime after the heroes' death. That is, the fetish's actions and those of wiglaf. In **kahambwa**, the fetish which is Kahambwa's helper provides all suitable procedures to M'Nafunda in order to fulfill the vengeance of Kahambwa's death.

Concerning **Beowulf**, wiglaf as a helper of Beowulf, takes care of his corpse after he had washed his wounds. We can also mention the presence of innumerable people in both **kahambwa** and **Beowulf**. This is to mean that the people who are in the side of Nshamulwa are met in the market during the duel in Burhinyi, a strange land for the hero. In the same way, the people who are in the side of Beowulf are met in Heorot during the attack by Grendel and Grendel's mother, Heorot being a hall built in a strange land for the hero himself.

Another point is that **Kahambwa** and **Beowulf** are primary epics. This is to say that both **kahambwa** and **Beowulf** are oral, being transmitted from generation to generation by grand-parents. All of those epics are anonymous and thus have no known originator.

It is also important to say that **kahambwa** and **Beowulf** are both historical and mythical because, firstly, each of them is a mixture of real and imaginary characters, and secondly, the supernatural or the magic powers are greatly involved in all of them.

In addition, **Kahambwa** and **Beowulf** share some episodes. Like **Beowulf**, **kahambwa** starts with obsequies and ends with them. Here, we notice that the funeral of Kahambwa's father foreshadows that of **kahambwa**, the hero. As for **Beowulf**, the funeral of Scyld Scefing, with which the poem opens, foreshadows **Beowulf's** obsequies at the end. Moreover, all of the heroes in **kahambwa** and **Beowulf** feel the necessity to go outside their dwelling lands. In **kahambwa**, the hero finds better to go to Burhinyi, where he fights in dangerous conditions. In **Beowulf**, the hero finds better to go to the Danes' land, where he fights in dangerous conditions.

As well, Kahambwa's deadly wounds by the little boy, leads him to death; **Beowulf's** deadly wounds by the dragon, leads him to death too.

3.2 PREVAILING DIFFERENCES

Difference is defined as "something that makes one thing or persons different from another thing or person" (**Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 1995:378**).

In comparison with **Beowulf**, **kahambwa** is a recent epic. **Kahambwa** is supposed to have appeared by the 1900s whereas **Beowulf** appeared in the 700s. **Kahambwa** and **Beowulf** are respectively Shi and English epics. They are therefore, different in terms of space and time. These facts have brought about many differences between the two epics in question.

We mentioned before that both **kahambwa** and **Beowulf** are oral epics. Although **kahambwa** is being written nowadays, this was not the case in former times. As well we have to take notice that **kahambwa** still keeps the functions of an oral epic, such as, the fact of being recited by a "griot" to the audience; the direct transmission to the listeners, etc. This is to mean that **kahambwa** is mostly dealt with as an oral epic.

As for **Beowulf**, it is an oral epic because it has been first anonymous, sung to people transmitted from generation to generation by old parents. In the end, it happened to become a secondary epic since it was codified, i.e. written in books and

then intended for reading. It has somehow lost its original functions. **Beowulf** is mostly dealt with as written poem. This point above leads us to the deduction that **kahambwa** tends to be only oral whereas **Beowulf** is both oral and written.

It is important to recall that the antagonists in **kahambwa** are human beings, but none of the antagonists in **Beowulf** is a human being. In **kahambwa** for instance, there are Nshamulwa, the little boy, etc. whereas in **Beowulf**, there are Grendel (a monster), Grendel's mother (a monster) and the dragon.

It is important to say that unlike **Beowulf**, **kahambwa** is a straight forward narrative, i.e. there is cohesion among the different episodes of **kahambwa**; and thus, there is one main protagonist and only one main antagonist in the narrative.

Beowulf lacks cohesion for there appear two quite different tales, one about the Danes in Heorot worried by Grendel and his mother, and the other concerning the Geat and the Dragon. The two tales are linked together by the fact of having the same hero. And thus, there is one main protagonist (Beowulf) and there are two main antagonists (Grendel and the Dragon) in **Beowulf**.

We can also note that all along **kahambwa**, the hero's youth works from the beginning of the narrative up to the end; nonetheless in **Beowulf** the first part, which tells of the hero's youth, is in contrast with the second, which deals with his old age. In other words, Beowulf is still young when he fights with Grendel and his mother, but he has become old when he fights the Dragon.

The war is disclosed differently in both **kahambwa** and **Beowulf**. **Kahambwa** shows off a traditional warfare when it appeals only to terrestrial war. Apart from that, the weapons and the means that the fighters use in **kahambwa** are not varied. This is to mean that they are only using three kinds of arms, which are: the swords, the spears and the machetes. It is important to tell that Shi traditional fighters did not use to utilize various weapons. They were limited regarding varieties of arms.

Unlike **kahambwa**, **Beowulf** appeals to two kinds of war: an underwater war, i.e. submarine war and terrestrial war.

Concerning the submarine war, Beowulf plunged under water after he had worn his warrior's dress, his helmet's crown having a head-protection, his mail-shirt, etc. so as to avoid both water's danger and other human beings' enemies living in the sea such as the nine sea monsters and Grendel's mother.

As of the terrestrial war, we notice that contrary to **kahambwa**, in **Beowulf**, the weapons and means for the battle are varied, namely, horse, warrior's dresses, war-shirts shields, helmets, even poisonous swords are available, for instance Hrunding (the Beowulf 's poisonous swords), etc.

From what is just mentioned above, we imply that, like modern warriors, Beowulf appeals to modern warfare through the unlimited varieties of arms and means as far as warlike business is concerned.

Once again, **kahambwa** and **Beowulf** differ if we take into consideration traditional or modern things as referred to in the epics in question. In fact, in **kahambwa**, the meeting often takes place at a small hut, a very small folk house called "Ngombe", built with small branches of trees and log herbs. At the same place, people often drink folk beer called "Kasigisi" in a wooden bowl whose name is "Kabehe".

People, moreover, often praise their charm, evoke their ancestors, spirits, offer sacrifices to their gods at that traditional temple.

In **Beowulf**, the meeting often takes place at Heorot, a nice hall built with iron and adorned with gold. People are often served bright drinks in Heorot. The same drinks are served in embellished cups which are also adorned with gold like the hall itself. People in addition, often praise the Lord God, their creator in the Heorot. All important meetings are to be held in the same hall so as for example to remind God's wonder to his people.

Contrary to **Beowulf**, there are deviations in **kahambwa**. **Kahambwa** ignores the mission for which he went to Burhinyi while the mission in question is to seek a beautiful wife called Nyakabogo. Nonetheless, once in Burhinyi, **kahambwa** says nothing related to his objective. Apart from beer and warlike business, he says or does nothing else.

As for Beowulf, the hero does not deviate from his mission. His only objective is to rescue the oppressed, particularly, the Danes first, and then the Geats.

As far as vengeance is concerned, after **kahambwa** had died, his people avenged his death. Yet in **Beowulf**, after the hero had died, no one avenged his death.

4 CONCLUSION

This paper was entirely about an attempt to study some prevailing similarities and differences in **Beowulf** and **Kahambwa**. These two epics are respectively English and Shi. In dealing with the present topic, we provided the plots of the two epics. Then we pointed out heroism, divinity, supernatural, and vengeance since they are cultural characteristics for epics. Through these elements, it has been noticed other effective aspects such as boastfulness, self-confidence, decisiveness, deviation, myth etc. which are also linked to cultures. Thanks to all these points above, we have disclosed similarities and differences existing in **Beowulf** and **Kahambwa**. We have found the characteristics belonging to both the two epics even though these do not share the same culture. As for the differences, we have realized that some characteristics, though they exist in the two epics do not work alike in both of them.

Given all these points talked about, we have happened to deduce that **Beowulf** and **Kahambwa** are two comparable narratives despite slight differences which may exist between them. This implies that Shi oral narratives embed universal characteristics and may be compared with other cultures' narratives.

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