

**GENDER DYNAMICS AND IMAGES OF MOTHERHOOD IN
SELECTED BUKUSU WORK, RITUAL AND INITIATION SONGS**

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Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the award of
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DECLARATION

I declare that GENDER DYNAMICS AND IMAGES OF MOTHERHOOD IN SELECTED BUKUSU WORK, RITUAL AND INITIATION SONGS is my original work prepared with no other than the indicated sources and support and has not been presented elsewhere for a degree or any other award.

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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology a thesis entitled:

**GENDER DYNAMICS AND IMAGES OF MOTHERHOOD IN
SELECTED BUKUSU WORK, RITUAL AND INITIATION SONGS**

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DEDICATION

To my Dad Mr. Gallicano Kasili and Mum Julian Nakhumicha Kasili; your inspiration to work hard did not go to waste.

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KASILI G. W

ABSTRACT

This study is an investigation of gender dynamics and different images revealed about motherhood in selected Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs. The study seeks to demonstrate how the rich language variety embodied in the performance of the songs is deployed in the construction of images of motherhood. Further, it analyzes the gender dynamics that accompany the performances and how they enhance the construction of images of motherhood. Employing ideas from feminism (African feminism), we seek to unravel the Bukusu construction of female identity (Motherhood). Motherhood in this study refers to the Bukusu understanding of the person of mother. The study examines gendered discourses that can be read in work, ritual and initiation songs, an area that has received little scholarly attention; this affords the study a lot of space within which to work. Both primary and secondary sources were consulted. Primary sources included books, journals, articles, seminar papers, among other sources. The study relied on fieldwork which involved active participation, participant observation, observation and recording and interviews. Purposive sampling and snow balling techniques were used in identifying informants. Among the respondents were men and women who had either participated in ritual, work or initiation songs. The study was carried out in Bungoma Central Sub-county of Bungoma County. A total of twenty five songs were collected for purposes of this study. Interpretation of the data involved analysis of form and structure, textual content analysis and analysis of performance. Findings of this study reveal that the Bukusu community uses elements of drama and their rich language variety to reveal images of Motherhood. The mother is constructed as the true parent, a complement of the father, a nurturer, and a proactive member of the Bukusu community. The findings are vital as they reveal gendered discourses embodied in the construction of images of motherhood. The study contributes to the existing stock of knowledge on Gender and women studies with particular emphasis on motherhood through an African Feminism prism. The study forms a source of reference for future researches in literature and opens up new vistas in the study of literature.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

- 1. I.CH-Chorus
- 2. LS- Lead singer or soloist
- 3. Trans-Translation
- 4. BRS-Bukusu ritual song
- 5. BWS-Bukusu work song
- 6. BIS-Bukusu initiation song

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Babukusu

These are one of the seventeen sub-nations that comprise the Baluhya cluster of interlacustrine Bantu nations of eastern Africa. They speak Lubukusu dialect, presently, majority are found in Bungoma County (Makila 30).

Termites

Small insects that live in large groups, a delicacy among the Babukusu. The songs sang during their tapping/harvesting have images associated with motherhood.

Termite harvesting/tapping songs

These are a type of work songs performed during the harvesting /tapping of termites.

Work songs

Songs performed to accompany activities such as wedding, harvesting and ploughing among the Babukusu. They include termite harvesting songs in the study.

Initiation songs

These are songs performed by the Babukusu during circumcision ceremonies; circumcision is the mark of initiation for boys in the community. They involve both men and women

Ritual songs

These are songs performed among the Babukusu to mark occasions such as the birth of twins. They involve both choral rendition and elements of drama.

Birth-of-twins songs

These are ritual songs performed by the Babukusu (mostly women) to mark the end of the seclusion period for a couple after the delivery of twins.

Gender dynamics

This refers to the interplay in the roles between men and women in the society. In the study it refers to the interdependence between Bukusu men and women in the construction of images of motherhood.

Motherhood

This will refer to the Babukusu understanding of the person of mother as encoded by the performers and decoded by the study.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This is a study of the images of motherhood among the Bukusu people of western Kenya, Bungoma County. Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs are studied to analyze their rich language varieties as forms of oral poetry and the gender dynamics that accompany their performance in order to reveal the different images of motherhood that they exhibit. Under work songs, the study analyzed termite harvesting songs which are a domain of women. Birth of twins songs were analyzed under ritual songs while circumcision songs were studied under initiation songs. Initiation is marked by circumcision among males in the Bukusu community hence the performance accompanying these songs is dominated by the male participants. The birth of twins songs are performed only after the delivery of twin children and are dominated by females though males are at liberty to join. The harvesting of termites in the community on the other hand is a domain of females but men and children are at liberty to join.

1.1 Background to the Study

Wanjiku Kabira in her PhD dissertation states that one needs to have knowledge of a community before studying it (30). She argues that it is misleading for critics to talk about literature without recognizing its social environment and even the historical period of its production. Further, she states that society and its experiences is the raw material from which literature is created, there is therefore a close relationship between literature and society (30). From wanjiku's argument then, it is in order that

we have background information not only about the Bukusu people but also on work, ritual and initiation songs in this community. Kabira's position is also echoed by Julia and Anneka who argue that all knowledge is a form of cultural production (64-5) and that the 'truth' of any knowledge is therefore integrally connected both to the institution that produces it and the particular historical moment in which it has been constructed. Bukenya and Nandwa posit that literature has a direct association with the society that composes it (8). They insist further that knowing the society from which the performance comes will help to understand the performance and we must be prepared to get background knowledge of the society that creates it.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o in *Homecoming* says that literature is not created from a vacuum but is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society (v). Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie further adds that we can read back from literature to perceive the outlines of the society which produced it (45). In addition, she insists that because different forms of literature can reveal the values of the society which produced them, they should be a source of data collection in our society and the woman within that society (46). It is therefore in order that we examine background information about the Babukusu.

The Babukusu are one of the seventeen tribes of the Luhya, Bantu people of East Africa. They are the largest group of the Luhya nation. Gunter Wagner argues that the Luhya people generally speak four dialects of which Lubukusu is one (26). Wagner identified the four as: Luwanga, (wanga) Lulogoli (maragoli), Lunyala (Banyala) and Lubukusu (Bukusu). Wasike Chris adds on Wagner's typology a fifth dialect (Lwisukha for Isukha) which is closely related to Lwidakho for the Idakho which is spoken around Kakamega District in western Kenya (10-11). The above typologies however fall short of taking care of the other different luhya language

varieties that are spoken in other regions occupied by the same community like Busia and Vihiga.

Wasike further insists that Lubukusu is quite distinct from the Lulogoli, Lwisukha, Lunyala and Luwanga which exhibit similarities. This is witnessed in the meanings associated with certain vocabularies such as 'Omutwi' which in Lulogoli means 'head' while in Lubukusu means 'Anus'(11). The same difference can be observed in Lunyala where the word 'Embolo' means 'Penis' while in Lubukusu refers to a state of 'rotteness'. Makila states that presently the Bukusu inhabit Bungoma, Uasin Gishu and Lugari counties. The majority are found in Bungoma County (30). Wasambo records that Bungoma County is bordered by Kakamega to the East, Mount Elgon to the west, Trans Nzoia to the North and Busia to the south. Despite Wasambo's claim that Bungoma County is bordered by Mount Elgon to the west, presently however, Mount Elgon is part of Bungoma County.

Wasambo adds that Babukusu is the largest single ethnic unit in Luhya land (1). The county is divided into nine sub-counties. According to the 2009 census Bungoma had a population of 1,630,934. Wasambo reiterates that the Bukusu practice a mixed agricultural economy: millet, sorghum, sweet potatoes, peas, a variety of nuts and bananas being the traditional principal crops. Sugarcane, he adds, is grown as a cash crop while Maize is both a staple food and a cash crop (2). Nasimiyu Ruth argues that the Bukusu constitute fifty percent of Bungoma in western Kenya (15). Wasike observes that Bukusu as a luhya sub-nation are traditionally divided into clan clusters that have clearly defined and emotive historical anecdotes, introductory praises and totems that are proudly acknowledged and regularly expressed to justify their identity (11). Wasike agrees with Makila's standpoint as he(Makila) states sample introductory praises of some Bukusu clan clusters. He for example demonstrates how

the ‘*Basakali*’ clan praises itself: ‘*Bamaeso, bamaboni, bamaundu, chililia, baamba omukeni wakananjala musimba*’ (103). This translates to: ‘they are resolute; they desperately held a visitor (a girl) in a bachelor’s hut without access to food for a whole night’.

In another example, Makila refers to the ‘*Baliuli*’ clan cluster that refers to themselves as: ‘*Nekoye, Nabwami, Nabulicho*’ (104). This translates to: ‘A muliuli came from a long string rope, he has latent political power’. Another clan cluster with such introductory praises is the ‘*Bakipemuli*’ who refer to themselves as: ‘*Basila ng’enda*’. This translates to: ‘They do not eat the meat of a tan striped cow’ (Makila 109). These introductory praises affirm one’s commitment to his/her clan and, by extension, to the Bukusu community.

Furthermore, Wasike posits that each clan’s origins are also vocalized as sources of self praise through pompous exposition of societal achievements which are orally documented in common language that is jealously claimed and flaunted by each clan member (11).

Makila contends that the Babukusu could have originated from Esibakole in northern Sudan under their ancestor known as Mundu who lived between 200 and 100 B.C (30). Mundu had two sons: Kundu and Masaba who migrated to Esirende where they practiced agriculture. Kundu later parted from his family and established a home around Lake Kioga. Masaba, however, left Esirende later and settled at Nabiswe around Lake Turkana. He later moved and settled at Embaye. He married and had two sons: Mwambe and Mbukusu. Quarrels between the sons resulted in Mbukusu proceeding to settle at the foot of Mt. Elgon. This group of people proceeded to call themselves Babukusu. In fond reference to their cultural pride and solidarity forged through circumcision, the Bukusu not only call themselves ‘*Lirango lie Enjofu*’ or

‘the thigh of the elephant’ but as ‘*bandu basani*’ meaning ‘a community of circumcised men’ (Wasike 13). Nangendo adds that the community is also famed for ‘*khukhina Bukhwana*’-dancing the twinship (36).

This origin of the Babukusu is corroborated by Wotsuna Khamalwa in his *Imbalu initiation among the Bamasaba in Uganda* (20). He asserts that the Bamasaba are close cousins of the Bukusu. He writes:

One day, the Elgon Maasai attacked and raided the Bukusu.

Mwamba single handedly pursued the raiders and caught up with them. Being warriors themselves, they marveled at his bravery and surrendered all his cattle to him. They also gave him a bull known in Maasai language as Ingisu as a token of their respect for his bravery. By the time his kinsmen decided to pursue the Maasai, they met him driving back not only their cows but an additional bull; when he recounted the episode, his kinsmen gave him the nickname Mugisu in reference to Maasai Ingisu.

Makila narrates the same story (122). Makila demonstrates the closeness between Babukusu and Bamasaba due to sharing of ‘same blood’. He insists that Bamasaba of Uganda in most respects are more closely related to the Babukusu than other Luhyas in Kenya. The Two tribes share a corporate past: “they have similar codes of conduct, similar marriage customs and circumcision tradition” (Makila 123).

The Bukusu society is entirely patrilineal: women are present as child bearers and also as an indication of masculine status. In the community a man who had more than one wife was considered as a man of means hence the status. Among the Bukusu, gender roles are specified, for instance, household chores and some agrarian duties are performed by women, this includes the harvesting of termites. Ogundipe-

Leslie confirms this when she posits that in the traditional society, there was division of labour based on sex (112). Stanlie furthers this argument when she argues that women were expected to marry and produce children for survival of the lineage, and as wives and mothers, they were responsible for the physical and emotional nurturance of children and maintaining the household (46).

Parenting is a phenomenon appreciated in the community, apart from songs, it is also captured in proverbs and riddles. In one proverbial statement for example, the need to have a grandchild is echoed in the statement: '*Engoso ya nandakhaola ekhoyela omwichukhulu*' which translates to; 'an irritating sore requires the presence of a grandchild'. The proverb uses the irritating sore to underscore the importance of parenting in the community and therefore the posterity of the community. Grand children are important in terms offering help to their grandparents; they assisted in looking after cattle among other responsibilities however their presence was a sure fact that the community will not be extinct soon. The stand on grandchildren corroborates Mbiti's when he says that a person who has no descendants in effect quenches the fire of life and becomes forever dead since his line of physical continuation is blocked if he does not get married and bear children (133).

Children in the community are part of the wealth a man can count. Kabaji affirms this when he states that among the symbols a man could count apart from material things were children (37). Stanlie and Abena posit that in the traditional African world- view, as in the world views of indigenous people around the globe, a very high value is placed on reproduction (45). Mbiti John further argues that reproduction is equated with the life force itself and hence mothering is highly regarded as it incorporates the symbolism of creativity and continuity and therefore forms an integral aspect of women's identity (133). The Babukusu have a unique

way of regarding their mother, for example, in the event of a battle, a man would swear in the mother's name as final vow for readiness. (*Nakhubea Ne maayi!* which translates to if am lying, I can as well go with my mother). This swearing is meant to alert whoever is being addressed that the one talking is serious and is ready to take on the consequences of the action he will take. Mothers are a respected group of people in the community; they occupy a very sacred position in one's conception, eventual birth, and whole being. This is why they are held in very high esteem. In the same vein, the community metaphorically reflects the quintessential role/importance of the mother by referring to an agricultural tool. In case of a still born or premature delivery leading to the death of the baby, the Bukusu will console themselves through the phrase: '*Kufunikha kwalekha embako*'. This translates to: 'the handle of a hoe can break but leave the hoe intact'. The 'handle' in this instance is the baby while the 'hoe' is the mother, the baby can die at birth, but if the mother is okay, she will deliver another baby just as the handle in the hoe can be replaced. Motherhood therefore in the community occupies some space. It is with this perceived relationship with motherhood that the study sought to bring out the images that the female individual is associated with in the community, as revealed through work, ritual and initiation songs.

In the Bukusu community, song and dance are part and parcel of many activities. Marriage, initiation and work songs are for example common, however, there exist performance codes that stipulate the role to be played by men and women. Harvesting of termites and the birth of twins songs are domains of women though men are free to join, while initiation ceremonies though dominated by males, females are at liberty to join but to play roles assigned to them as per their gender. Wanyama notes that unlike Tiriki or Xhosa circumcision rituals, the Bukusu circumcision

rituals are public functions that are not a preserve of a few male members of the society. Women and children, he adds, are allowed to accompany the initiate in all stages of the ritual. However, they are not given leading roles especially as song leaders and on the circumcision day, they are not allowed to walk ahead of the procession, or be close to the initiate, they are not circumcised hence men take a central role because of the indelible effect and affect circumcision has on their personhood (4-12).

Ife Amadiume argues that women have always monopolized singing and dancing during most ceremonies (69). Khaoya, quoting Ogutu, says that the exercise of harvesting termites was though dominated by women and girls, boys and men used to join (29).The harvesting of termites therefore is entirely a feminine affair among the Babukusu.

The birth of twins ritual and initiation ceremonies are important stages and occasions in a person's life among the Bukusu. Steady Filomina singles out menarche, pregnancy and menopause as life-cycle events that are important rites of passage for females with significant and positive consequences for their sense of self and feminine identity (94).Whereas the birth of twins ritual allows the couple to thereafter freely interact with members of the society, initiation is a transition from childhood to adulthood.

Vansina notes that the location of the performance is appropriate with its use and purpose, they do not occur haphazardly, they appear at appropriate moments during institutionalized social action and their genres as well as their content are related to the occasion (95).The birth of twins ritual is significant for both new born babies and parents as it allows them to freely join the rest of the society while initiation marks transformation into adulthood. Just like initiation and birth of twins ritual are

governed by seasons, harvesting of termites is also seasonal endeavor that can be read as an occasion and stage in the life of Babukusu women to perform an agrarian role assigned to them hence significant in its own right.

Wabende asserts that in traditional theatre, theatrical spaces are both natural places and cultural places; thus ceremonial centres as different communities assign significance to certain spaces or locate performance within cultural calendars (25). While initiation and birth of twins ritual performances are located within cultural calendars, harvesting of termites is located within natural spaces. This is because initiation among the Bukusu is culturally carried out during even years only, while the birth of twins ritual can only be performed after delivery of twins and not any other time. Harvesting of termites being a natural dictate is determined by geographical seasons.

Na'allah reminds us that an understanding of oral works depends upon an appreciation of the totality of their historical essence (125). Fortes on his part states that from whichever angle music is viewed, it is embedded in the matrix of the culture and thus shapes the general trends which the general cultural development follows (89). It is therefore imperative to briefly describe harvesting of termites, birth of twins ritual and initiation among the Bukusu for these are the areas the study focused on in the analysis of the construction process.

Harvesting of termites can start either early morning or late afternoon depending on the kind of termites one wants to harvest; this is because, not all types of termites are edible, and not all require the tapping procedure. There are different types of termites: *Chimome*, *Chisisi*, *Kamabuli*, *Chindawa*, *Chinunda*, and *Kamaresi*. Once a termite mound is spotted, the particular spot will be cleared to expose the openings on the ground (*Kameso*) that enable termites to come out. Women will thereafter

assemble at the spot. Ogutu confirms that harvesting of termites is ideally a women's affair when he states that though boys and men used to gather termites, it was dominated by women (qtd in Khaoya 29). They will have with them special sticks cut to the size of a broomstick which they hit against one main stick lain on the ground, this will be accompanied by singing and the sticks offer a percussive effect for the singer (check DVD clip). This will be the trend until the termites begin coming out to be received with ululations. Depending on the topography of the spot where the mound is formed, a repository hole is dug where the termites will be trapped and harvested. Ogutu argues that 'Tswa' (termites) live underground on plains especially and in highlands. He further states that they make anthills, though not all types. Each has a particular season and the time of the day when they appear and are gathered. They were got by either collecting each white ant coming out of the hole or by constructing temporal shelter of about one foot high around the spot seen and drilling a hole facing the sun direction .The shelter is covered by clothes, blankets, sacks, leaves etc, escaping ants following the light fall into the hole to be collected later by the gatherer (qtd in Khaoya 29).

Plate one showing Children watching over the termite mound covered with blankets awaiting the harvest. Plate taken by Researcher.



The songs sung during the harvesting reveal a lot on the female individual in the community especially in reference to the person of mother. Talking to Anastancia

Nafula, one of the key informants, she explained that Bukusu women observed that termites would always come out after rains. They therefore came to associate rainfall with termites. She asserts that the first attempts to harvest termites began with the women imitating the fall of rain drops by hitting the broom like sticks to the main one laid on the ground. The sounds made by this process were imitative of the fall of rain drops. Eventually; it bore fruit when the termites came out. Singing came in as a sign of happiness –announcing a successful tapping process. Singing about mothers became automatic then as women were the majority in this event. Anastancia’s claim of imitation can be read back into the days of Aristotle. In his poetics, Aristotle (translation by Wordman J.L Philosophy of Aristotle 1903), one of the greatest thinkers, lauded imitation as the basis of education and also attributed the genesis of drama to it. He says in his poetics: ‘Imitation is natural to Man from childhood’ (416). Therefore the Babukusu women were keen enough to associate nature with an agrarian practice leading to imitation. Wasambo referring to imitation by hunters of animals they wanted to kill and the success that came with it concludes that: ‘this type of magic had a simple practical purpose: to control nature as man tried to imitate the unconscious rhythm of the animal’ (53) .The Babukusu women had eventually been able to control nature by fitting into the rhythm of termites. Termite harvesting songs can be classed into what Miruka regards as women songs because they are performed by women (95).

The birth of twins ritual is performed only after the delivery of twins. The singing and dance performed for twins is unique because other children do not have an elaborate occasion enshrined in the Bukusu child birth customs. Twins are special children hence accorded special status. After they are born, the parents remain in seclusion till the ritual is performed before they are free to mix with other members

of the society. The ritual is a domain of females but males have the latitude to join. The ritual can be read as an initiation ceremony of the twin children into the full life of the Bukusu community because without it none of them will be free to intermingle with the rest of the society. Their names also are an indicator of their special status. These names can never be given to any other child who is not a twin child. They are: *Mukhwana*, *Mulongo*, *Khisa*, *Khamala*, *Khonokha* and *Nabangi*. Each of these names has a meaning. Whereas *Mulongo* and *Mukhwana* are the twins, *Khisa* means discovering twins, *Khamala* means cleansing of twins, *Khonokha* means strengthening of twins and *Nabangi* means the closing (end) of twins. Once *Nabangi* is born, any other twin children born will be named from *Mukhwana* and *Mulongo* in the order given above again till another *Nabangi* is born. Such names that have meanings are confirmed by Mbiti when he posits that nearly all African names have a meaning (118). Wanyama asserts that twins are considered to be very delicate, special and respected children; they are treated differently when it comes to their circumcision (24). The special and delicate nature of the twins is witnessed in time of sickness. If one of them falls sick, all have to be 'treated' or risk losing all of them to death since they shared one birth cord (*Engobi*). Khaoya posits that twins are not allowed to be near the 'chiswa' harvesting ground. If one has to participate in the harvest, then before joining the others, he/she has to scoop some soil in the hand and throw to the ground before (99). We would like to suggest here that it is possible the birth of twins' seclusion period for the couple and the eventual ritual that involves the two parents is in agreement with Badejo Diedre who argues that Africa feminism recognizes the inherent multiple roles of men and women in reproduction and responsibility of sustaining human life (93). Essentially then, the twin ritual is a suggestion for complementarity and interdependence between men and women. The

issue of complementarity of African women and men in the struggle for gender equity is also espoused by Filomina Steady (9). Steady further affirms her position that African feminism ideology is founded on principles of African values that view gender roles as complementary, parallel, asymmetrical and autonomously linked in the continuity of human life (9). The study sought to demonstrate how men and women complement each other in the construction of images of motherhood.

Initiation among the Bukusu is marked by circumcision among boys. The ceremony is a domain of males but females are allowed to join. It marks the end of childhood in moral behavior and responsibility as well as exposing the child to traditional education. Makila writes:

Such symbolic maturity is preceded, accompanied and followed by a lot of tuition in all areas of life including sex education. Boys who delayed getting circumcised were jeered and ridiculed by the public especially by their own age mates who were circumcised as well as by girls who would readily snub their proposal for courtship (122).

Mbiti explains that what affects the initiate affects corporately the parents, the relatives, the neighbours and the living dead (122). Further, Mbiti contends that initiation rites have greater educational purpose and the occasion marks the beginning of acquiring knowledge which otherwise would not be accessible to those who have not been initiated (122). Mellitus Wanyama contend that Bukusu circumcision music is deeply rooted in myths, taboos and beliefs that form the basic philosophical foundations of the Bukusu cultural fabric and hence its contextual specific utilitarian nature (6-1). He further asserts that Bukusu circumcision rite is not just mere cutting of the foreskin of the initiate's penis: rather it entails seeking for divine wisdom and blessings from the spirits and ancestors (4-21). As a way of

invoking the masculine pride in the initiation rite, traditional Bukusu men swear by the circumciser's knife thus ; '*Nakhubea Bakheba khabili*' which translates to: if am lying, let me be circumcised twice (Wasike 13). Makila argues that in traditional Bukusu knowledge systems, when a man swears by his circumciser's knife it is construed not just as a sign of unquestionable commitment and loyalty but irreproachable honesty (48). The foregoing behavior of Babukusu men is in agreement with Speer's position that: 'there are indeed male ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations, practices; men deliberately set out to use specific cultural contexts to look, talk and act in order to be men (qtd in Wasike 1).

Circumcision involves the cutting of the foreskin among males. It is also accompanied by singing, dancing and other theatrical performances all night especially on the day preceding the function. Wanyama argues that the eve of circumcision is characterized by feasting, drinking beer, singing, dancing and mocking the initiate and his parents. In a few cases, the participants and the initiate go to sleep after midnight (11). The fathers to candidates and the male members of the family are directly responsible in ensuring the ceremony is performed successfully while the mothers to the candidates and other women folk too have their share of responsibilities purposively to enable the ceremony be successful. We were interested to establish how the songs performed on this occasion that integrates women and men construct images of motherhood.

The practice of male circumcision is voluntary. Once the boy informs his father that he wants to be circumcised, a date is set for the function. He will then be commissioned to go around informing relatives and friends about it while playing the metallophones (*chinyimba*) and dancing to the various circumcision songs being

sung. Wasambo notes that to reinforce the candidate's resolve during the time of initiation, everything is done to humiliate him like dressing him clumsily and jeering him through with songs (13). On the night preceding the event, a lot of singing is done into the night and the boy will be taken to the river (*Esitosi*) for mudding early in the morning of the following day. The operation is performed at his father's courtyard (*khuluya*). It involves removal of the foreskin by a traditional surgeon (*Omukhebi*). Some of the songs sang during the period of informing relatives and on the night preceding the initiation reveal different images of motherhood; in addition, the drama that accompanies the singing on the occasion encodes different images of motherhood.

This study analyses the structure and language of the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs. We examined and analyzed the language variety of the songs as a form of oral poetry among the Bukusu in relation to construction of images of motherhood. Ardrener argues that the arena of public discourse tended to be characteristically male dominated and women may be at disadvantage when wishing to express matters of concern to them, however, women's ideas may find a way of expression in forms other than direct expository speech, possibly through symbolism, art, myth, ritual and special registers (197). Amadiume referring to Nnobi women says that they are not tongue tied and their mouths open at random or pops like the oil bean tree (69). Pamela and Gayle quoting Dorothy Smith further argue that dominant ideas in any society are mediated through language; in written texts and in verbal communication and these are created by those in positions of power. They still posit that as these positions of power are occupied by men, women have been excluded from making of knowledge and culture (123). Kaplan and Rose too note that

marginalized voices need to be heard (545). Leslie further insists that there is need therefore to ‘de-masculinize’ the language of discourse and find androgynous and generic terms (104). We interrogated the language variety of the songs performed by women to establish whether it offers them space to articulate their ideas and possibly attempt a construction of images of motherhood in the community. This is in agreement with Kabaji’s recommendation about the need to direct inquiry into ways through which the dominated class contests the dominant ideology (168). It was of interest to us to establish the various tropes employed in conveying views, perspectives and assumptions of motherhood. Amadiume posits that traditional songs used in lifecycle ceremonies express orally transmitted beliefs and customs of a community; the people’s own traditional gender ideas should be apparent in them (69). We analyzed the songs to reveal gendered discourses that define motherhood in the community.

We also analyzed the gender dynamics in performances and performance spaces of the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs in relation to construction of images of motherhood. This is because the meaning of a text can be best established through imaginative penetration into the context of the texts’ creation. Furthermore, the deep meaning of oral texts can be determined through knowledge of the inner lives of the authors and the contexts in which they create (Kabaji 33). Afolabi argues that it is the responsibility of the oral artist to teach the norms and values of the society to the younger generation and remind the older generation about its social and political responsibilities. He further argues that the oral artist through oral narratives, for example, teaches traditional morals and values warning against vices (25). What Afolabi is advancing is the fact that oral literature is didactic; we were interested to establish through performance of the selected songs if there are norms and values

about motherhood or rather norms and values that define motherhood. Kabaji regards the Maragoli folktale as a site for contesting patriarchal social structures, relationships and ideology (05). Kabaji considers the performers (women) as agents who struggle for space in patriarchal society (05). It was of interest to the study to establish whether the performers are talking back to the centre (patriarchy) as a way of (re) constructing or (de) constructing the various images of motherhood that have been established by patriarchy. We analyzed through the performances how the performers order their own space, affairs and project their own interests in the construction of images of motherhood.

The study therefore analyzes the images of motherhood revealed in Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs. In analyzing the images, we examined the structure and language of the selected songs in relation to the construction of images of motherhood; finally we analyze the gender dynamics in performances and performance spaces that enhanced the construction of the images of motherhood.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the study therefore, we investigate the gender dynamics and images of motherhood revealed in Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs. Motherhood as a gender discourse warrants further interrogation especially from a comparative angle and through the use of African feminism prism. Through such approaches, the gender dynamics that come into play in the construction of images of motherhood can be given further scholarly attention. There are also contrasting arguments in scholarship about the position of women in general; while Mbiti argues that within the indigenous African context, mothering is highly regarded and forms an integral aspect of women identity (133), Ogundipe-Leslie confirms that women have

occupied the subordinate position in both patrilineal and matrilineal societies (112-113). In the community however, in the event of the biological mother dying during delivery or thereafter due to other complications, a foster mother was appointed to breast feed the baby to maturity. This is what Stanlie calls other mothering (45). The study therefore, seeks to interrogate motherhood further in the community and also offer a ground to fill the gap in the contrasting stands in scholarship about the female individual in society in general thereby contributing to the existing knowledge about women studies. To facilitate filling this gap, the following objectives guided the study:

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate how gender dynamics in performance of Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs enhance construction of images of motherhood.
2. To analyze the images of motherhood revealed in Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs
3. To examine the structure and language of the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs and how they reinforce the construction of images of motherhood. The following study questions guided the study:

1.4 Study Questions

1. How do the gender dynamics in the performance of Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs enhance the construction of images of motherhood?
2. What images are constructed for motherhood among the Babukusu through work, ritual and initiation songs?
3. How does the structure and language of the songs enhance the construction of images of motherhood?

In answering the above questions, we were able to come up with different images of motherhood in the Bukusu community.

To enable the study go on successfully, the following assumptions were used:

1.5 Assumptions of the Study

1. Gender dynamics in the performance of the selected songs reveal different images of motherhood
2. Work, ritual and initiation songs among the Bukusu contain many images of motherhood
3. The Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs as a form of oral poetry have a rich language variety embodied in the construction of images of motherhood.

1.6 Justification of the Study

Mutia argues that literature in indigenous African languages abounds in oral and written form and is easily associated with and recognized among the more popular and well known codified African Languages like Swahili, Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa (387). To this end then, the Lubukusu dialect among the Bukusu remains uncoded, however, as affirmed above by Mutia, oral literature abounds in the dialect. In his recommendations for further research, Kabaji argues that very little research in Africa is directed towards traditional cultural discourses yet they hold the key to our understanding of a people's philosophy of life. He further argues that findings from such research are critical in helping solve problems of power relations at the family and societal level. Kabaji insists further that the folktale has received considerable attention; other genres are yet to be given critical attention (168). Our study therefore grounded itself in such arguments which in fact validate our attention in the song

genre as form of oral poetry.

Most researchers, however, have dwelt much on other types of songs like those of marriage, death and lullabies (Miruka 95, Lo Liyong 119, Lusweti 59). The idea of harvesting of termites can be classed as done in the present study under work songs be as it may, songs dealt with in other works concerning work songs though mention these songs; they have not been exposed to scholarly attention with regard to motherhood which is at the heart of this study.

This comparative approach in juxtaposing female performances with those of males is echoed in the argument of Wodak who insists that the construction of identity is a process of differentiation, a description of one's own group and simultaneously a separation from 'others' (126). Birth of twins songs are classed under ritual songs in this study, however, no work has however deliberately analyzed them with regard to construction of images of motherhood. Initiation songs among the Bukusu have received significant attention, Simiyu studied the social-cultural significance of the songs (20). He grounds his argument in a compromised position between the structure functional theory and the system theory to delineate the different functions of the songs. Simiyu's study in addition looks at the songs from the angle of ethnomusicology. He however, does not deal with images of motherhood which is at centre of the present study. The study though focused on the path of gender discourse, takes on a new angle, and it examines the gendered discourses that can be read in Work, ritual and initiation songs. Moreover, the two sub- genres in this study (birth of twins songs and termite harvesting songs) have not been extensively researched on and therefore afforded the study a lot of space within which to work. Wasambo studied Edurama in which he investigated the Bukusu initiation rite as a process of learning and drama (127). Whereas he analyzed initiation songs, he falls

short of highlighting through the drama the images Bukusu mothers are associated with on the occasion. The present study goes ahead to use drama witnessed during initiation to understand how the Bukusu construct the person of mother. Wasike, in justification of his work posits that the range of issues that have been analyzed by oral literature scholars has been endless (14). He further asserts that gender is one issue which for a long time has attracted a lot of scholarly attention from literary critics (15). Evan Mwangi rightly concurs with him when he posits that gender has been at the centre of African metafiction and orature for many years (51). This study intends to build on similar ideas and unravel the Bukusu understanding of the person of mother.

Being an area that has received little attention therefore, the study will definitely add up to the already existing (stock of) knowledge on gender studies. The comparative approach in juxtaposing an agrarian activity (harvesting of termites), a ritual and initiation occasions afforded the study a chance to analyze the community's understanding of motherhood. This is because the three occasions allowed an intra-comparison to establish how the community understands motherhood.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

The scope included three different sub genres of songs from Bungoma central, part of the larger Bungoma County. The songs are classed into work, ritual and initiation songs; however, we only focused on songs performed during the birth of twins' ritual, harvesting of termites and initiation ceremonies. The songs deal with various images of motherhood among the Babukusu that may be biological, cultural and social. The whole song genre could not have been studied as the issue at centre of the present study may not be the concern of all songs. It is hoped however, that the

chosen songs will be representative enough to reveal images of motherhood. We would also not study the whole of Bungoma County because it is vast; we focused on Bungoma central which comprises of thirteen- Sub locations: Mukuyuni, *Kuywa*, *Kibichori*, *Sichei*, *Chwele*, *Sikulu*, *Kabuchai*, *Mukhweya*, North Nalondo, *Bwake*, *Luuya*, *Kisiwa* and West *Nalondo*. Alembi supports our choice of Bungoma central when he argues for a case of a number of micro level studies concerning or covering a geographical location; communities and themes for this will help avoid generalizations (179). In addition, an attempt to study the whole Babukusu community may be cumbersome and the study schedule may also not allow.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study employed the feminist theory in the interpretation of issues that emerged. Bressler argues that the theory was developed in the 1960s and has a broad and varied history (171). Generally, feminism champions for equality of sexes and addresses difficult issues such as discrimination, stereotyping, sexual objectification, oppression, patriarchy, and marginality. The feminist theory aims to understand the nature of gender inequalities by examining women's social roles and lived experiences.

Feminism as a literary theory has undergone an evolution. Seely Megan analyses the 'waves' that feminism has gone through. She argues that feminism has gone through three waves. To her, the first wave of feminism occurred in the 1800's to early 1900's. During this period women campaigned for and achieved the right to vote. It is during this wave that women made an achievement when August 26 was declared women's Equality day. This wave was associated with Sojourner Truth, Elisabeth Cady and Susan Anthony.

Seely suggests that the second wave of feminism championed for issues impacting

on women's lives such as the right to be safe from violence at work, streets and homes among other issues. This wave resulted in the birth of consciousness-raising groups, speak-outs....demonstrations, feminist publishing houses and publication (42).

Zack Naomi argues that the second wave of feminism collapsed in the 1980's paving way for creation of other feminisms grounded in race, sexual preference or intellectual productivity (4).The creation of other feminisms was accounted for by the fact that second wave feminism was a white women's movement where non-white women especially black women were denied voice and presence (4).Therefore black women protested exclusion from feminism by stating that they had played a major role in the history of the struggle for women's rights as well as racial equality (5).

Chidi Maduka argues that the female author/intellectual has doggedly fought to Africanize the term 'feminism' as used in the west (2). Njoku Teresa supports the above idea when she posits that men use the ideology of patriarchy that emphasizes male importance, dominance and superiority to enslave women and make them second class citizens (195). Chidi further asserts that male critics are accused of imposing male values on literary conventions and specific texts (4).

A number of critics therefore have tried to demonstrate how mainstream feminism is limited in relation to black women. bell hooks argues for a feminist movement that ends sexist oppression and one that directs black women's attention to systems of domination and interrelatedness of sex,race and class therefore compelling us to centralize the experiences and social predicaments of women...(33). She advances further that in terms of the relationship between men and women, the feminist movement has a place for men who actively struggle against sexism and they

consider them as comrades (60). Chidi Maduka notes that Anglophone authors like Aidoo, Alkali, Ezeigbo, Nwapa, Emecheta and Head and their Francophone counterparts like Sow Fall, Lopes, have in their different works voiced out their hostility to the term (feminism) and disclaimed any association with it (8).

Arguing for African feminism, Julie Agbasiere tells us that Aminata Sow Fall belongs to the school of thought which opines that radicalism in feminist assertions is un-African, that Africa has dignified and powerful women who do not owe their empowerment to feminist ideologies (94).

This study employs the African feminism strand of the broader feminism. One of the challenges however as Chidi Maduka argues is developing an alternative term to 'feminism' and working out a methodology for handling the issues related to the rights of women and studying literary texts focusing on them (8). Critics like Ogun-dipe-Leslie, Onguyemi, Adebayo, Opara, Chukwuma, and Acholonu among others have developed terms for it: African feminism, negative and positive feminism, femalism, womanism, Stiwanism, etc.

Although the above scholars theorize about different aspects of African feminism, they all have one thing in common; advocacy for the rights of African women. Steady Filomina puts it aptly on the concerns of African feminism in her posit that:

African feminism combines racial, sexual, class and cultural dimensions of oppression to produce a more inclusive brand of feminism through which women are viewed first as human, rather than sexual beings. It can be defined as that ideology which encompasses freedom from oppression based on political, economic, social and cultural manifestations and class bias (4).

This study employed three tenets of African feminism: 'STIWANISM' as espoused by Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie, 'Complementarity' espoused by Steady Filomina and 'Negofeminism' as advocated by Nnaemeka Obioma. Ogundipe-Leslie argues that 'stiwa' is an acronym for social transformation including women in Africa (229). She argues that she uses stiwanism purposively to deflect energies from constantly having to respond to charges of imitating western feminism (229). Through stiwanism, women are able to participate in the social and political transformation of Africa as co-partners (230). This suits our study of images of motherhood in Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs as we interrogate how women co-partner with men in creation of the images of motherhood. Co-partnering is assessed in terms of how women performers and men performers utilize the space given to each of them in the performance of the selected texts to create the images of motherhood. Ogundipe-Leslie further argues that more research is required to discover what African women themselves think about themselves, what ideology they possess and what agenda they have for themselves daily and historically (223). This suits our study as we seek to understand how the Bukusu mothers construct themselves hence projecting their ideologies.

Ogundipe-Leslie goes ahead to posit that some of the theories that hold on the fact that feminism is relevant to the African context argue that motherhood is idealized and claimed as a strength by African women and seen as having a special manifestation in Africa (225). Our study therefore is a follow up measure to demonstrate how motherhood is manifested in Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs.

Steady Filomina advocates for complementarity between men and women. She believes that African feminism has the potential of emphasizing the totality of human

experience. Further, she insists that men cannot be left out in the discussions by African feminists (5). This being a comparative study, the tenet suits as well as we compare how men construct the mother in initiation songs where they play a leading role assisted by women and how women construct motherhood in birth-of-twins songs and termite harvesting songs where they play a leading role but give room to men to join them. By doing this we are able to demonstrate how the two groups complement each other in the construction of images of motherhood.

Obioma Nnaemeka's Negofeminism demonstrates the existence of feminism of negotiation and compromise. It further advances for the fact that it is the language of African feminism that is suffused with compromise. This tenet is suitable to our study as we interrogate the language variety of the selected songs as forms of oral poetry in order to decode the images of motherhood. The study does not analyze form per se but as witnessed in construction of images of motherhood.

In a nutshell, therefore, African feminism suits the current study as we analyze the structure and language of the oral texts demonstrated in the various performative spaces to allow for construction of images of motherhood. This was achieved through the concepts of Negofeminism, complementarity and Stiwanism. Alembi supports our choice of African feminism to analyze images when he says that whatever approach one uses, it must be one that will put into consideration the African psychology and aesthetics. He further states that they should therefore be grounded in a cultural specificity since both theory and criticism are material practices that are ideologically motivated and historically positioned (32).

In sum therefore, analysis of the images of motherhood in the selected songs was based on the following tenets of African feminism:

1. Advocacy for complementarity of African men and women in the struggle for

gender equity (Steady,9)

2. Recognition of the inherent multiple roles of women and men in reproduction and responsibility for sustaining human life (Deidre 93)
3. The idea that African feminism is suffused with the language of compromise, collaboration and negotiation (African Feminism Online Encyclopedia)
4. Participation of women as equal partners in the social transformation of Africa hence empowerment of women and society. (Ogundipe-Leslie 229).

1.9 The Structure of Thesis

The Thesis is structured in five chapters:

a) Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter involves a look at: Introduction and background to the study, statement of the problem, Study questions, Objectives of the study, assumptions of the study, Justification, scope and limitations, Theoretical framework and structure of thesis.

b) Chapter Two: Literature review and Methodology.

c) Chapter Three: Gender dynamics in performances and performance spaces of Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs. The Performative aspects discussed in the chapter include: Abstinence from conjugal responsibilities and the mother's role during initiation performance, the centrality/role of the age fold (*Bakoki*) in the initiation performances, the ululation performed by the mother in the performance of initiation songs, the '*namachengeche*' concept and motherhood, the sitting arrangement by the female folk on the day of

initiation performances, the nature and context of birth of twins ritual drama and its significance, the sharing of termites after tapping and the performance spaces.

d) Chapter Four: Images of motherhood in Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs. The images are classified into: Biological, cultural and social.

e) Chapter Five: Structure and Language in Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs. This involves analysis of the language variety of the collected songs as oral poetry. This involves Rhetoric allegory, antiphonal form, Drumming, Symbolism, Euphemism, taboo words, metaphors, Similes, Rhythm, Repetition, Alliteration, Assonance, structure and chanted form.

f) Chapter Six: Conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

2.0 Introduction

In the foregoing chapter, background information about the Bukusu community was reviewed. In addition, background information on Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs was also reviewed. In this section, we review works that have handled issues of gender or rather studies that have dealt with issues dealing with women in general. This is an effort to demonstrate that though studies have been carried out on gender issues, there is still room for further research. This study set out to investigate the different images associated with the mother in bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs read through the prism of African feminism. It was the study's aim to reveal how the language variety and the performance of the selected songs enhance the construction process. In this section therefore, we review literature about the feminism theory but with a bias towards African feminism. The chapter is structured into: contestation over the term 'feminism', the advent of African feminism, strands of feminism used in the study, and review of literature about performance of different songs, the evident language variety and the images of women in the songs not only among the Bukusu but also in other communities where songs are present. We also focus on the methodology of the study. This will deal with the preparation, the research design, and all the fieldwork experience(s) by the researcher.

2.1 Literature Review

Chidi Maduka argues that one of the challenges facing African female authors and critics is developing an appropriate alternative term to feminism (8). Maduka insists that critics like Ogun-dipe-Leslie, Ogunyemi, Adebayo, Opara, Chukwuma, Acholonu

and Agbasiere have developed a plethora of terms for it: African feminism, positive feminism, femalism, womanism, stiwanism, negative feminism and Gynism. Negative and Positive feminisms are advanced by Acholonu Rose who posits that negative feminism stands for radical and militant transformation of the patriarchal institutions in society while positive feminism fosters the philosophy of gender complementarity and accommodation in human relationships (8). Opara argues that Femalism rejects feminist's nihilism of the institution of marriage and attendant motherhood (4). Chidi Maduka asserts further Gynism stresses the equality of man and woman from the divine perspective of gender complementarity of two sexes (11).

Chidi Maduka asserts that African feminism takes into account the African philosophy of life which stresses marriage as a social institution (8). Further, it advances the view of the complementarity between a man and woman by stressing the male-female principle in the creative order. This strand of feminism developed because western feminism did not take care of the needs of the African society. There was need therefore for African approaches to deal with issues of women in Africa based on economic, family and cultural conditions of the concerned society. African feminism advocates for the position of women to be respected as a mother.

Obioma Nnaemeka's Negofeminism (feminism of negotiation and 'no ego' feminism) captures negotiation, give and take, and collaboration. This tenet further states that African feminism is suffused with the language of compromise, collaboration and negotiation inviting men as equal partners in social change. (African Feminism Online Encyclopedia) This tenet was useful in analyzing the language variety (structure and language) of the selected songs. We sought to establish through the various stylistic devices employed in the songs to identify

elements of compromise, collaboration and negotiation between the performers (men and women) as equal partners in negotiating social change, possibly to reconstruct images of motherhood among the Bukusu. We interrogated the space given to men in tapping of termites and the ritual for twins, and the same space given to women in initiation songs as way of inviting men and women respectively as equal partners in social change but with regard to construction of images of motherhood.

Steady Filomina advocates for complementarity of African women and men in the struggle for gender equity (09). This argument is further supported by Acholomu who argues that African feminism is heterosexual and pro-natal and grants a pivotal place to the distinctively supportive roles of the African as opposed to western women (110). Hellen Chukwuma supports this African feminism approach while discussing Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*, Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter*, Nuriddin Farah's *From a Crooked Rib*, and Flora Nwapa's *One is Enough*. She asserts that African feminism accommodates men and considers them central to their lives and so their continuous presence is assured (224). Though the harvesting of termites and the birth of twins ritual are feminine activities, men are given the allowance to join, this is also true of initiation where men dominate but women are given room to join. By using this tenet, we interrogated how women and men utilize space given to them in the selected songs to construct images of motherhood. We were interested to establish how women and men performers negotiate for gender equality through the performance. The idea of complementarity is also shared by Badejo who argues that African feminism recognizes the inherent multiple roles of women and men in reproduction and responsibility for sustaining human life. This feminist perspective is underscored by traditional mythical beliefs and religious practices found in African oral literary traditions and festivals that place women at

the centre of social order as custodians of the earth, fire and water and uphold men as the guardians of women custodial rights(93). Badejo ideally argues for interdependence between women and men.

Ogundipe-Leslie posits that African feminism aims at empowerment of women and society. Leslie, using the concept of Stiwanism (acronym for social transformation including women in Africa), insists on the participation of women as equal partners in the social transformation of Africa (229). To her African feminism denotes a world view in which women are given the opportunity to play an active part in its transformation. As quoted by Adebayo, she argues that the transformation of African society is the responsibility of both men and women and it is in their interest (1). This tenet was useful in analyzing the performance of the Babukusu work, ritual and initiation songs. We investigated and analyzed the various roles assigned to both men and women in the performances. Through this analysis, we were able to assess the issue of societal empowerment as espoused by Ogundipe-Leslie (104).

Koskei Margaret Chepkorir demonstrated the appropriateness of African feminism in analyzing female characters in written literature. She analyses representation of female African experience in the west by referring to Chimamanda Ngozi's *Americanah*. Though she uses a written text, she aptly captures how the female immigrant deals with the challenges she encounters and how the male counterpart deals with the same situation. What is striking is that she is able to deploy African feminism to capture the African woman's experience. Despite looking at the female characters, she however does not analyze her as a mother therefore fails to address the issue at the centre of the present study. We shift from written literature to oral literature and expose Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs to the same theoretical tenets and assess their veracity in decoding images of motherhood in the same songs.

We now review aspects of images of either women or mothers in other works. Mutia argues that literature in indigenous African languages abounds in oral and written form and is easily associated with and recognized among the more popular and well known codified African languages like Swahili, Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa or Kikuyu. Quite arguably, Mutia posits, the forms of oral literature in codified African languages has widely been examined and explored by scholars of African oral-literature in these languages, however, the vast majority of African languages still remain uncoded (387). Mutia furthers the argument when he asserts that scholars and researches in the domain of this literature will attest that they have not even began scratching the surface of the enormous complexity and intricacy of both the form and content of the broad spectrum of the oral-literature in the uncoded languages. From this argument, we can conclude that the Babukusu dialect of the Babukusu in which the study is set then is uncoded, however, oral literature in this dialect abounds as Mutia underscores. The present study analyses the construction of images of motherhood among the Babukusu through the study of work, ritual and initiation songs in the community.

Different scholars have studied women in both oral and written literature. Ciarunji Chesaina researching on Kalenjin and Maasai oral literature identifies the negative images of women widespread in oral narratives, poems and proverbs (19). While studying the Kikuyu narratives, Kabira contends that in the narratives, 'wives are generally portrayed negatively for instance as unreliable, disloyal, gullible among other traits' (80). The above two studies are informative though their conclusions are majorly based on the narrative genre of oral literature, the present study narrowed down to three sub genres of the song genre among the Babukusu to identify the various images constructed of motherhood.

Egara Kabaji considers the Maragoli folktale as a site for contesting patriarchal social structures, relationships, identities and ideology. He considers the performers, women (mostly) as active agents who struggle for space in a patriarchal society. Kabaji, drawing on the discourse of 'mothering', argues that the conditions of otherness enables the African women to stand back and criticize the norms, values and practices that patriarchy imposes on everyone including those who live in the periphery (05). The conclusions drawn from this study are based on a single category (the folktale) of the various forms of oral literature, the present study shifted from the folktale to look at the song genre and attempted an understanding of how women among the Babukusu construct images for themselves in termite harvesting songs, the birth-of-twins songs and how the males construct the same images in initiation songs.

Kassam Margret argues that African women contest their oppressions and confinement in limited space by creating and recreating popular culture/song suitable for both public and private consumption (113). Kassam's study reveals that there has been oppression of the African woman. Whereas Kassam handles contestation of confinement and oppression; she does not bring to light if the contesting women end up constructing any new image(s) for themselves.

Woylie looked at the representation of women in sample proverbs from Ethiopia, Sudan and Kenya. Some of the images constructed of the women in the work are: women are incapably fragile, mindless, weak, powerless and dependent on men (105). The study bases these conclusions on sexist proverbs from the three countries. Woylie's study fronts a general approach of analysis on representation of women in the proverbs. The present study focuses on the song genre and endeavors to highlight the various images of mothers in the Bukusu community. From above studies on

images of women, no study has deliberately handled the issue of motherhood which is at the core of the present study.

Other scholars have studied on the form and content of different songs. Mote investigated symbolism in oral narratives of the Samburu of Baawa location (35). Mote reveals the different layers at which symbolism can be read in oral narratives; he does this through the deconstructive approach. Though symbolism forms part of the present study, it is analyzed with regard to how it enhances the construction process of creating images of motherhood. The study shifts from the oral narrative to look at the song genre.

Khaoya investigated the form and content of 'Chiswa' harvesting songs in the Babukusu community (95). His work analyses the different themes in the songs among them bravery, political maturity, survival of the fittest, condemnation of greed among others. Khaoya's work is quite informative; however, he does not address the issue of the present study: motherhood. Furthermore, the study is based on a single sub-genre of the song category while the present study uses a comparative approach and juxtaposes three sub-genres in analyzing the construction of images of motherhood.

Khaoya identified the different aspects of style found in *Chiswa* harvesting songs. Among them he identified: refrain, rhythm, symbolism (107-122). Whereas the present study looks at structure and language, it goes a notch higher to demonstrate how the form enhances the construction of images of motherhood something that Khaoya's work does not address.

Wanyama Mellitus investigated the form and content of African music with reference to Bukusu circumcision. He analyses the creative and compositional thought of Bukusu music and its song text. Wanyama's work however is an ethno

musicological analyses. It does not offer much in terms of form if the songs are regarded as a form of oral poetry. Further, he does not bring to light motherhood as an issue though he looks at content of the songs (5-46, 5-56). This study, therefore, comes in handy as a follow up activity to demonstrate the rich language variety embodied in the construction of images of motherhood in Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs, where initiation songs are subsumed.

Felix Orina studied symbolism in the traditional and in the contemporary context among the Abagusii. His discussion on symbolism is scholarly satisfying as he demonstrates how symbols transit in meaning as the Abagusii society also changes (37-64). His study has a bearing to the present one as we both deal with symbolism in different contexts; however, the present study intends to show how symbolism as a device of oral poetry assists in the construction of different images of motherhood among the Babukusu.

Some other scholars have studied performative aspects in oral literature. Wasambo studied Edurama and sought to investigate how Imbalu –Bukusu initiation rite, can be considered as a process of learning as well as being drama (127). Whereas he analyses the songs sang on this occasion, he does not handle the issue at the centre of the current study. In as much as Wasambo's study and the present study analyze songs sang on the same occasion, (Bukusu initiation), the present study is informed by African feminism while Wasambo's is grounded in sociological theory. Furthermore, both studies highlight some of the drama that is witnessed during the Bukusu initiation ceremony; however, Wasambo treats it as a form of education for the initiates. The present study interrogates the drama witnessed in order to reveal the different images of the mother on the occasion.

Khaoya in his analysis of chiswa harvesting songs shows how the oral texts are

performed on that occasion. He argues that an artist of chiswa harvesting songs performs his/her piece while dancing and the dancing is in tandem with the rhythm created by 'kimianjo' and the message carried (120). He mentions solo performance, dialogue style and the antiphonal format as performative aspects. This is a good meeting point between the present study and Khaoya's as we both highlight performative aspects, however, in our analysis of work, ritual and initiation songs, we stretch performance further and demonstrate how it works as an avenue for creating images of motherhood.

Wabende investigated the oral narrative in order to trace the guiding principles and discern the essential nature of narrative performances by relying on fusion of traditional sources and contemporary mainstream narrative performers (230). He did this by relying on performance theory and semiotics. His study is quite informative in terms of the performance of the narrative overtime. The present study shifts from the narrative to look at the song genre, studying it through the prism of African feminism to decode the different images of motherhood.

Simiyu, while interrogating performance of Babukusu music, argues that the performance involves male and female participants, circumcision music is mainly vocal with instrumental accompaniments provided by 'chinyimba' that enrich the songs by giving the regulated beats (108). He states further that the performances are embellished by whistle blowing and sporadic ululations. The texts, he insists, are delivered through call and response. The performance of circumcision songs entail playing of chinyimba, vocalization and drama (114). From Simiyu's position above, one can conclude that Bukusu circumcision music as a form oral poetry then has elements of rhythm and drama. He however falls short of analyzing the dramatic aspects evident in the songs and on the occasion of performance. His study therefore

gives us scholarly room to interrogate the drama evident in the performance of the songs and on the occasion of initiation to show how the male and female performers co-join to encode the different images of motherhood in the Bukusu community.

Nangendo argues that the Bukusu participate in harvest dances which seem to be seasons of rejoicing while gathering the grain (finger millet and sorghum). He posits that they work in the day time and dance by the light of the moon at night. Men, women and children dance about a central orchestra of drums and shields which are beaten in unison. Women and men who participated in these dances were naked; however, it was taboo for any male to have an erection (36). He goes ahead to state that some sexual songs and dances were and are still reproduced and enacted during the birth of twins. People engage in what is called '*khukhina bukhwana*' (dancing the twinship). Simiyu notes that when twins are born, a special dance (*bukhwana*) is performed taking the name from the kind of children born (23). Simiyu adds that there are songs performed by women during '*biselelo*' (marriage) and songs accompanying rituals that are concerned with women such as '*lulwibulo*' (child bearing), he further argues that texts in such songs make reference to duties and expectations of motherhood (24). Nangendo's and Simiyu's posts mention an aspect that is at the centre of this study—the birth of twins ritual, however, they only mention the occasion of performance, those involved and partly the concern of the songs on the occasion. The present study links the ritual for twins to the concept of motherhood which Simiyu mentions in passing. It further analyses the language variety of the songs used on the occasion and demonstrates how the language variety as a creation of the performers is used to construct different images of the mother. Wanyama in his analysis of the context of Bukusu circumcision music looks at the different roles of different parents and close relatives. He also delineates the different

stages of the Bukusu circumcision ceremony (4-1, 4-5) In essence; he analyses at the performative aspects of Bukusu circumcision music. The study has a bearing to the present one as we analyze the performative elements of Bukusu initiation songs. Despite this meeting point, the study by Wanyama does not link the drama witnessed in the songs to how motherhood is constructed in the same. We therefore fill this gap by interrogating the drama in the Bukusu initiation songs and how it allows the performers, both male and female, to construct images of the person of mother in the community.

Other studies in oral literature are general ethnographic constructs. Miruka in his classification of oral poetry enlists birth/cradle songs, work songs and circumcision songs (95). The work, however, falls short of analyzing what these songs are all about. He mainly focuses on the occasion of performance and falls short of analyzing the content of the stated songs. We narrowed down and came to terms with the concept of motherhood in work, ritual and initiation songs.

Taban lo Liyong only mentions the types of songs including childhood songs like those of naming, lullabies (119-145). Though enriching, the work does not provide insightful analysis and therefore does not offer much in the understanding of the songs. It focuses on the occasion and the purpose the item serves. The present study focuses on the performance of the selected texts, their language, structure, and the construction of female identities in the texts.

Lusweti lists the following as forms of lyrical poetry: Lullabies, love songs, songs to accompany dancing and drinking, political and topical songs, war songs and initiation songs among others (58-59). From these, very little is mentioned concerning the subgenres the study looked at. Though he mentions initiation songs, Lusweti, does not deal with the issue at hand; Motherhood.

Nandwa and Bukenya argue that song and dance pervade the whole spectrum of African traditional life (85). Further, they argue that in most societies there are songs for every stage and occasion of a person's life. This is of course true. However, in their giving examples of the texts, they do not mention anything about songs performed during harvesting of termites and in the twin ritual occasion. The purpose of this research involved collection of the selected songs and provision of a scholarly analysis to bring to light the community's definition of the concept of motherhood.

From the studies of oral literature reviewed above (Wanyama, Wasambo, Wabende, Khaoya, Orina, Mote, Simiyu, Woylie), none of them has employed the African feminism strand of the feminism theory of criticism. This then gives us a gap in theory, in using African feminism, we fill this gap. We also, by extension, prove the appropriacy of African feminism in understanding not only oral literature but also issues of African women.

From the foregoing studies, it is clear that the studies have failed to problematize the concept of motherhood in the subgenres we analyzed, more so from the African feminism perspective. The study therefore reveals images of motherhood in Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs.

2.2 Research Methodology

2.2.1 Introduction

Data for this research was collected from both primary and secondary sources. In this section, we explain the methodology of the study. Frankfort-Nachmias and David Nachmias define methodology as a system of explicit rules and procedure upon which research is based (13). To Clough and Nutbrown, the process of arriving at decisions and justifying them is what defines methodology (17). Kothari argues that what constitutes methodology is the systematic process of solving the research

problem and the logic behind the procedure (10). For this study, methodology encompasses every fieldwork experience(s) during data collection. The data was collected in Bungoma Central Sub County of the larger Bungoma County; we could not study the whole of Bungoma County due to its immensity. We singled out and focused on thirteen sub-locations of Bungoma central. Singleton R.A recommends that the most suitable place for research is where the researcher can reach easily and fast (qtd in Khaoya 9). This is one of the reasons that drove me to research in Bungoma Central because of my familiarity with it and my ability to speak fluently the Lubukusu dialect of the area. Abel Mugo Mote in his choice of research location avoided Kisima Location, a shopping centre he had lived in on assumption that familiarity with it would interfere with the research, and he however discovered later it was an advantage to him at some point (17). My familiarity with Bungoma Central was advantageous because it allowed some informants who I was already familiar with to organize performances for me.

The study was basically qualitative and hence data collected could not have been statistical. It relied on ethnographic methods of research and data collection. Brewer emphasizes the role of ethnography as a method of social inquiry by positing that it facilitates:

The study of people in naturally occurring settings or fields by means of methods which capture their social meaning and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities in order to collect data in a systematic manner without meaning being imposed on them externally (10).

This permitted the researcher to access the ritual mounted for twins, initiation and

termite tapping sessions through close association and familiarity with the social setting of their performances.

Purposive sampling and snow balling methods were used in selecting informants. This was based on age, experience and knowledgeability of the work, ritual and initiation songs. An open structured interview was used for data collection. This was supported by observation, participant observation techniques, recording both on paper and video. Still photographs were also taken. During the interviews, I had to book appointments with interviewees though at times I would be referred to some by the key informants whom I then interviewed.

Plate two: The researcher arrives with Steve at Judith Machuma's home for the performance. Plate taken by Masinde Simon.



The data

collected was exposed to qualitative analysis. This was for both data from documentary sources and fieldwork performances. This was strictly done with the theoretical frame work in mind. I assured interviewees that their information was for purely academic purposes and that findings of this study will be in form of a thesis for future reference.

2.2.2 Research Design

This research was basically qualitative therefore it dictated the nature of the data to be collected; more of words than numerical values. Mugenda and Mugenda agree that more often data in qualitative research are in the form of words rather than numbers and these words are grouped into categories. They in addition argue that human behavior is best explained using qualitative research. More so, they observe that research on human phenomenon that cannot be investigated by direct observation such as attitudes and emotions are best studied using qualitative methods (155). Mugenda and Mugenda observe that experts have argued for qualitative research in Africa because communities in Africa have traditionally communicated information by word of mouth rather than written form (202). In addition, the older members of the community are considered to have wisdom and it is their obligation to pass this wisdom to the young. They further insist that folklore for instance has an effective framework of communicating information on issues related to sex and family life, religious beliefs, taboos, sickness, social mythology among other aspects. Arguing for qualitative research, Mugenda and Mugenda, posit that because of the tendency of African communities to pass information orally, there is a strong argument that the most appropriate method in Africa is the qualitative approach as it employs oral communication and gives respondents a chance to state their problems by the way they perceive them and participate in seeking solutions to these problems as well as effecting such solutions (202). Gilham argues that qualitative methods are essentially descriptive and inferential in character hence are often seen as ‘soft’. Hence the significant statistical result you have must be described and interpreted for facts do not speak for themselves; someone has to speak for them (10). It was therefore essential for me to field questions about the area of research and having

been brought up in Bungoma Central enabled me to easily contextualize the oral texts in an effort to achieve set objectives.

To this end, the above arguments by Mugenda and Mugenda and Gilham justify our qualitative approach in studying images of motherhood as revealed in work, ritual and initiation songs. I therefore adopted qualitative methods in both data collection and appreciation.

2.2.3 Strategies of the study

I occupied two distinct positions during field work. I would form part of the audience at most times, but I was too compelled to lead in some performances. Through the performances, I was able to put myself in the shoes of the performers to enable me have a firsthand feel of the data. I was therefore able to understand why and how the performers feel as a group and their understanding of the context of performance. This suited the study because of its focus on the performative aspects that enhanced the construction process.

**Plate three: The researcher leads an initiation song during circumcision
(researcher in red top pointing out using his left hand)**



Plate taken by Masinde Simon

The researcher booked interviews with Ben Lusweti and Anastancia Nafula; the key informants. Anastancia is a midwife with lots of experience and therefore having time for me was hived off from her busy schedule, she would refer me to some other informant if she had a busy schedule of deliveries. When the schedule allowed, she performed but insisted that I should not enter her 'Maternity wing'. She stood by the door to await any calls for help from her patients, if any, she paused the performance and resumed after attending to her. She is called Nasitanje, a corruption of the proper Noun Anastancia and famously nicknamed 'Omukunga' from Kiswahili 'Mkunga'.



Plate four: Ananstancia Nafula at her door step as she performs. Behind her is her 'Maternity' wing in which none was allowed to enter as she would occasionally attend to her customers (mothers in labour).Plate taken by Researcher.

Another key informant, Ben Lusweti is a herbalist with a retinue of customers either

to pick herbal medicine or have it delivered at their door steps. I was compelled to have him suspend some deliveries in order to answer some questions and have discussions. His dramatic pauses and interjections were important in enabling me interpret the performances

Plate five; Ben Meshack Lusweti demonstrates the predominant dance pattern in the twin dance; the waist wiggle. Plate by Researcher.

2.2.4 Sampling procedures

The research employed two sampling techniques: purposive and simple random sampling methods. Like any other study in oral literature, the study could not predict exactly the number of oral texts that could be representative enough to reveal images of motherhood among the Bukusu. It was also challenging on how to

come up with the number of interviewees that could facilitate the analysis of the construction process. This ambivalence is reflected in Merriam's contestation of what constitutes an adequate sample of the music of a community, tribe or larger grouping because to him creativity is a never ending process under whatever culture rules (54). It is the ease with which the interviewees worked with me that the methods were terminally productive.



2.2.4.1 Purposive sampling

Mugenda and Mugenda define purposive sampling as a sampling technique that allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of his/her study. Therefore the subjects are handpicked because they are informative or they possess the required characteristics (50).

I used this method to select informants for the birth-of twins' songs and termite tapping songs. This is because I needed to interview members of the selected community who have ever participated in the birth-of-twins ritual or termite tapping. The method enabled me to select those reputed in the community to have knowledge in the areas of the twins' ritual, tapping of termites or have given birth to twins. It is through this technique that I was able to meet, interview and have Ben Lusweti and Anastancia Nafula perform. I then made them my key informants.

What made purposive sampling useful was the kind of dance steps involved in the birth-of-twins ritual and the vulgar nature of the vocabulary hence candidness was essential to have the songs performed. For example, when I requested Judith Machuma to perform a twin ritual song, she remarked bluntly: '*Bembanga bubu busa*' which can translate to: 'they sing awkwardly' which meant it involved obscenities. She however eventually performed aptly to an amused audience then dashed off to her house. I was also able to meet, interview and have the following informants perform: Khisa Marauni, Innocent Wamalwa, Margaret Wanyonyi, Felistus Nasike, Henry Khisa, Donysious Masinde, Pius Mulongo, Erastus Nalobile and Kennedy Mulongo. When some songs that had no relation with the research objectives were performed, I guided them on the kind of songs I wanted and the performance went on. I met Kennedy Mulongo at a beer party and when I approached him for a song, he exclaimed strongly and looked agitated and wondered

how I knew that he sings, upon explaining my research work to him, he got to serious performance that attracted a number of people who later assisted in the discussions about the song.

2.2.4.2 Snow ball sampling

Mugenda and Mugenda argue that in this method, initial subjects with the desired characteristics are identified using purposive sampling technique. The few identified subjects name others that they know have the required characteristics until the researcher gets the number of cases he or she requires (51). Ben Lusweti and Ananstancia were my initial subjects but who enabled me access other informants. It is Ben who then referred me to Metrine (his wife), Wanjala Lumbasi, Immaculate Sitawa, and Jane Juma. Anastancia Nafula referred me to Judith Machuma, her daughter -in- law. All these informants have given birth to twins, participated in the twin ritual, and/or participated in harvesting of termites.

2.2.5 Methods of Data Collection

In this study, I took part in performing work, ritual and initiation songs. However, sometimes I had to take time off to observe and record the performances. This enabled me to take notes, observe paralinguistic features and the drama that accompanied the performances. Alembi posits that there is need for new approaches in the study of research on African heritage or African forms. Those interested in these studies should develop an empathetic approach that allows the phenomenon of study to reveal and speak for itself, therefore, they have to become ‘the students of the people’ (178). Wanyama further adds that participant observation is purposed to develop an insider’s view of the setting and persons under study (3-10). In addition, Patton, as quoted by Wanyama advocates for the combination of observation and

participation because it gives the researcher the possibility of understanding the activity as an insider while describing the same for outsiders. This helps avoid gaps associated with participatory approaches alone (3-10). The above arguments by Mellitus, Alembi and Patton agree with my use of active participation and observation as methods of data collection.

Kothari argues that in a way we all observe things around us, but the observation in oral literature is not a scientific observation. Observation becomes a tool and a method of data collection for the researcher when it serves a formulated research purpose, is systematically planned and is subjected to checks and controls on validity and reliability (118). Binnetts agrees with Kothari when he observes that: 'Observation is used as a research technique when data on actual practices are required; observation generates factual information rather than explanation' (97).

This is why observation was very important as it was channeled towards set objectives. Mwana Kombo posits that through observation of performances, a researcher has the allowance to understand the constraints and opportunities for resource use at cultural level and highlight intra communal relations by comparing the performance of women and men (20). This method helped me to gain insight into matters that arise because of the specific circumstances of the respondent. This allowed the researcher to understand aspects such as creativity on the spur of the moment as witnessed in the creation of images of motherhood.

Tim May argues that reflexivity, biography and theory lie at the heart of research practice in general and ethnography in particular. This emphasis recognizes that we are part of the world we study; that we bring to any setting our own experiences (171). He further states that participant observation demands that researchers spend time with relatively small groups of people in order to understand fully the social

milieu which they inhabit. Spending time with my informants, especially the key informants (Lusweti and Anastancia), enabled me understand how their biographical experiences informed their performances. Lusweti is nostalgic about his first set of twins and the dance that was mounted in honor of them by the women folk and how he was teased into joining the waist wiggle dance which he then considered immoral but which he now participates in without demur. Gillian supports the idea of biography in research when she says that it is necessary to enable respondents to define themselves, their own identity and their own life situation (107). This is why Ben Lusweti's experience with the first set of twins influences his present apt performances. Liz Stanley further adumbrates the idea of biography when she states that all knowledge is autobiographically located in particular social context of experiencing and knowing (210).

I also employed the interview method which was guided by an interview schedule (Check DVD clip). The interview was an open structured one. However, before I set out to collect data, piloting of the interview schedule was done. It was served to three of the selected informants. Assessment of the effectiveness of the schedule revealed elements of deficiency in achieving set objectives; hence the researcher had to formulate supplementary questions to enable the study become successful. I thereafter inducted research assistants on conducting the interviews, holding discussions and summarizing the data after the discussions. I worked without interpreters to avoid unnecessary bias in interpretation of the data. By using this method, most of the interviewees were more willing to answer the questions because they came from a single source. In fact, anybody in the audience who tried to pose an extra question or interject in a question being answered was rebuffed and told "you are not the one answering the question". When I eventually gave consent on either

occasion, then the interview would go on. I asked questions and sometimes infused comments to guide the respondents to give data to meet the objectives of the study. Gillian supports the use of interviews when she argues that the joy of learning is in asking questions (107). She proceeds to posit that fieldwork, like any other activity of everyday life, evokes a whole range of feelings associated with everyday life (115). This argument augured well for the study especially when carrying out key informant interviews which were meant for those informants considered important and relevant to the study especially those who have harvested termites and participated in the birth-of-twins ritual. I was able to interview Ben Lusweti and Anastancia Nafula who were the key informants.

Open ended questions were put to good use with the objectives in mind. Through the interview, a lot of data were collected especially when carrying out discussions between the interviewer and interviewees. We encountered difficulties especially on the birth-of-twins songs due to the vulgarity of their diction. On one occasion Lusweti admonished me for laughing during the performance of birth-of-twins song. He authoritatively instructed me to stop the laughter or the performance ends on that note. I obliged and we went on. I also adopted what Brannen regards as conversational approach to gather information (40). It is a way of gathering information on what can be regarded as sensitive topics. However, I can conclusively remark that the interviews were a great success. To crown the usefulness of interviews, Herbert argues: 'Interviewing was a classic way of gathering data' (95). This was in reference to her successful study on the perception of adolescent girls on unwanted sexual attention.

2.2.6 Data Analysis

All data collected were subjected to qualitative analysis. Among the documentary sources we studied for analytical purposes included books, journals and theses. The manifest aspects that were subjected to analysis included the meaning of different oral texts, ideas, dance patterns, dramatic features and various images revealed.

Triangulation was key in data analysis. Comparison was done between data collected from interviews, observation of performances, my first hand experience through performance and written sources. This was in line with the theoretical framework within which the study was working; deliberately to achieve the set objectives of the study. At the same time, comparison was done between data collected from male and female informants so as be able to understand how each of them through their performances reveals images of motherhood. This triangulation of data between different sexes is echoed by Sue Scott who points out that the whole process of interviewing and therefore the data themselves are colored by gender considerations (170). I was therefore able to identify images of motherhood as constructed by men and women; respectively. Triangulation too was done at the level of age. This was to gauge how the different ages have been initiated into understanding the person of mother in the community.

The songs collected were analyzed in terms of the drama that enhanced the revelation of the images, structure and language and the images revealed. As Kabaji puts it, any interpretation represents a reduction process of the richness of meaning in the cultural activity of storytelling (25). Our interpretation of the songs therefore could be one of the many that scholars of oral literature may unravel. The verbal texts are coded for purposes of analysis. A summary of all the recordings on paper, video and the interviews was done after coding. All the analysis was guided by the African

feminism strand of the larger feminist theory; this was of course in line with the set objectives, study questions and assumptions.

2.2.7 Validation of the Data

Being a native speaker of lubukusu dialect, I did not need interpreters. To reduce my own biased approach to analysis, and possibly treat the data as valid, I held discussions with the audience on different styles, dramatics and images revealed at the end of every performance. I also allowed discussions among the members of the audience as I took notes. I too allowed the audience to hold discussions with the performers. Allen supports the use of discussions in interpretations of texts when she posits that meaning and with ideology arises from representation not in the authoritative moment of its first construction, but on all the many occasions when it is read or looked at afterwards, and on each occasion a different meaning can arise (39). This approach of combining data from interviews, performances, observations and discussions contributed a lot to validation of the data.

In addition, being a resident of Bungoma Central worked to my advantage; interviewees were more than willing to give information to one of their own for academic pursuit; some were even surprised that the concepts at the centre of the research were academic hence their willingness to give the data to me.

2.3 Challenges and their mitigation during the Fieldwork

Whereas fieldwork was quite interesting, I encountered several challenges. One outstanding challenge was the prevalent association of the area of research with waste of time. One informant openly wondered whether the topic(s) of research had any scholarly dividends. She singled out the ritual for twins and bluntly asked: “*Yaani Bantu basikhinanga bukhwana? Ese naruramo!*” which translates to: “you mean people are still performing twin dances? As for me am done with it!” Despite

such protests, I spent a good amount of time to explain why it was necessary that such aspects of folklore should be studied because it forms an integral part of Bukusu community and plays a very important role in the socialization of individuals in the community. We eventually came to a point of agreement to have the performances go on for recording and future references.

Another problem was the requests for payment by some informants. It was assumed that the researcher would make a lot of money by writing a book which would sell. I was able to convince them that the terminal benefits of the project would go back to them because their children who may never have chance to watch such performances would access the same information by reading the findings of the study.

The findings of the study are presented in six chapters. This enabled us present a cohesive argument for construction of images of motherhood. The study focused on the Bukusu of Bungoma Central sub-county in the larger Bungoma County. As already noted in the scope and limitations, the whole of Bungoma County is vast and an attempt to study the whole of it could be cumbersome, this may also be coupled with the time schedule for the study which could not allow. It is hoped however, the songs collected are representative enough.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter was an overview of literature and the methodology employed in the study. The chapter examined briefly the development of feminism as a theory and the emergence of different strands of it, among them African feminism, which sought to address issues of African women from an African approach. The study used three tenets of African feminism: STIWANISM, Complementarity and Negofeminism as espoused by Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie, Filomina Steady and Obioma Nnaemeka, respectively. The study too reviewed different works that have dealt with gender

studies, especially with regard to women. All the studies reviewed demonstrate the existence of a gap in theory and the fact that none of the studies was able to problematize the concept of motherhood which is at the centre of this study. It also handled research design, sampling procedures, strategies of the study, methods of data collection, data analysis and validation and challenges of fieldwork

CHAPTER THREE

**GENDER DYNAMICS IN PERFORMANCES AND
PERFORMANCE SPACES IN BUKUSU WORK, RITUAL AND
INITIATION SONGS**

3.0 Introduction

Bukenya and Nandwa regard performance as the interaction between a performer and an audience, to them, then, performance involves the narrator's use of language, body movement, facial expression, song and dance (19). Foley posits that to appreciate the work on its own terms, one must attend the event in the proper arena, the same place (with the same limits) in which it has always been performed and received; in other words, one must engage the work of verbal art in the context in which both tradition and the individuals involved have located it, only then can metonym modulate into meaning, only then will the cognitive categories come to play (48-49). Foley further underscores the importance of arena of performance by positing that outside this forum of exchange, the signals will lack their implied content and will necessarily 'read' according to a code other than that employed by the performer in generating them (49). Okpewho states that music is an integral part of a performance especially in oral poetry when done in front of the audience; this is because specific tones are used by performers as introductory tunes to a song as well as indicate the end (83). He further states that this gives a performance structure and context and aid in discovery of meaning from the community's perspective during performance. Derrida posits that meaning cannot be determined out of context and in oral literature this context includes performer, audience and physical environment in which performance takes place (81). He further insists that the analysis of context is

never conclusive as no context permits saturation. Finnegan on her part insists that oral literature is by definition dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion-there is no other way in which it can be realized as a literary product (2). Gender dynamics and Performance in this work is examined in the light of African Feminism tenet espoused by Ogundipe-Leslie arguing for participation of women as equal partners in social transformation of Africa (229). Through interrogation of the space allocated to both men and women in work, ritual and initiation songs, we were able to demonstrate social transformation through empowerment of women in the construction of images of motherhood. Gender dynamics and Performance in the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs for purposes of this study has been split into different sections: abstinence from conjugal responsibilities, the age grade fold, the ululation performed by the mother, the *Namachengeche* concept, the sitting arrangement by female folk on the day of initiation, the twin dance, the sharing of white ants and performance spaces.

3.1 GENDER DYNAMICS IN PERFORMANCES

Wanjiku Kabira and Karega Mutahi identify the cultural context as the point of departure in understanding performance. They posit that:

Oral literature can only be fully appreciated within its cultural context and performance. It is the cultural context that gives the audience the total picture of the implications of the literature itself. In performance, the extra linguistic features enhance the message contained in the language used (6).

Stone further adds that:

African performance is a tightly wrapped bundle of arts that are sometimes difficult to separate, even for analysis. Singing,

playing instruments, dancing, masquerading and dramatizing are part of the conceptual package that many Africans think of as one and the same (7).

Our choice to analyze language variety and performance in Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs in order to reveal images of motherhood corroborates Ciarunji Chesaina's standpoint when she notes that whereas written literature uses writing as a medium of expression, Oral literature depends on a combination of language and performance (29).

The performances witnessed in Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs are subjected to their cultural contexts of performance to reveal the different images constructed of the mother in the community.

3.1.1 Abstinence from Conjugal Responsibilities and the Mother's Role during Initiation Performance

Both parents of the candidates to undergo initiation, those to mud the candidates on the morning of initiation, and members of age grade (*Bakoki*) to the parents of the candidates are all required to abstain from sex on the night preceding the event. In fact, they are instructed and conditioned to sleep literally with 'cloths on'. As Kabaji notes, it is common belief among the Luhya that one preparing for any form of competition or contest should abstain from sex. Kabaji further argues that any contact with the vagina is believed to weaken a man (39). Initiation among the Bukusu is actually a battle, hence the need to abstain. Indirectly, the three groups of people mentioned at the start of this section will be battling it out, and any sexual activity may 'weaken' their candidate who may wince at the knife and therefore show cowardice, something the Babukusu associate with some nilotic groups. This is

evident in the ‘Sioyaye’ chant:

LS: Omusinde oteremaka achia ebunyolo!

CH: Haho! Haho! Haho oooo! (BIS 4)

Trans:

LS: cowardly uncircumcised boy should take refuge in the Luo country!

CH: Haho! Haho! Haho ooo! (Makila 175)

Initiation is not only a rite of passage in the community but also a test of one’s bravery and ability to withstand the pain of the knife, hence the need to be psychologically strong by avoiding any sexual activity.

The Babukusu still believe that any sexual activity will lead to excessive bleeding by the initiate after the operation. In BIS 12, the performers remind one another about the mode of sleeping which they had gone through in the night. The song thus goes:

LS: Ngonile Mufware!

CH: haaa!

LS: Ngonile Mufware!

CH: haaa!

LS: Pius okonile orie?

CH: haaa!

LS: Ese ngonile mema!

CH: haaa!

LS: Ngonile omumufu!

CH: haaa!

Trans:

LS: I slept with clothes on!

CH: haaa!

LS: I slept with clothes on!

CH: haaa

LS: Pius, how did you sleep?

CH: haaa!

LS: For me I slept while standing!

CH: haaa!

LS: I slept as am!

CH: haaa!

Whereas there is no mention of sexual intercourse in the singing, one can observe that the song is not only a reminder but also a confirmation that they have abstained from any sexual activity as advised hence ready to have the candidate initiated. In

fact, in the morning when returning from the river after mudding the candidate, express instructions and warnings are given to anybody who might have engaged in any sexual activity to keep off the path to be used by the candidates. Maelo Michael referring to the performer of funeral oral poetry among the Bukusu indicates that on the eve of the performance of the ritual, 'oswala kumuse' abstains from having sex with his wife to keep the purity and sanctity of the ritual. In case the performer fails to observe this, then it is believed that misfortune would befall him (32). Wanyama notes that the mother to the initiate is not supposed to have sexual intercourse during the month of the ceremony as doing this, it is believed would cause some misfortunes to the initiate in the process of being circumcised(4-15).

Failure to abstain from sex by either the parents, those to mud the candidates or a member of the age grade fold may lead to excessive bleeding by the initiate on the morning of the cut. Ben Lusweti and Anastancia Nafula referred to an incidence in 1978 when one initiate bled profusely and the clan was compelled to administer an oath to the women folk present so that it could establish if one of them was the cause. As it were, they confirmed, one of the women present was responsible for rumor had it that she was a lover to the initiate and had had sex secretly with the young man for it would be long before they meet again for the young man had to heal before he could engage in any sexual activity. Despite my efforts to have the name divulged, the two remained adamant and reminded me that I was not supposed to know the individuals involved.

Kabaji referring to bull fighting, states that a bull whose owner indulges in sex on the night preceding the fight may be defeated or the bull turn against the owner (41). Circumcision, we would like to suggest here is in fact preparation of the 'bull' to perform its duties; to make a man virile, dangerous and lethal (Kabaji 39). This

preparation is echoed on the morning of initiation at the time of mudding. Those charged with this responsibility take time to verbally bully the candidates to use their manhood without sparing any member of the female sex; this is in agreement with



making the bull lethal.

Plate six; at the river for mudding during the circumcision of Abraham Kasili.

Plate taken by Researcher.

Ifi Amadiume corroborates the idea of virility when she posits about the Nnobi that the boy's socialization stressed masculinity, equated with virility, violence, valor and authority (94). It is also echoed in BIS9:

LS: Omusinde layo!

Ch: Haho!

LS: Hee!

CH: Orao bachonga!

LS: Masewa!

CH: Haho!

LS: Hee!

CH: Orao babala!

This translates to:

LS: The uncircumcised layo!

CH: Haho!

LS: Hee!

CH: Allow it to be sharpened!

LS: Masewa!

CH: Haho!

LS: Hee!

CH: Allow it to cut fully around!

The performers instruct the candidate to patiently allow the traditional surgeon 'sharpen' him in readiness for a responsibility ahead of him. Normally the initiates in the community were expected to take up mature responsibilities, among them marriage.

Defeat in the bull fight cited above (Kabaji 41) then can be interpreted as the show of cowardice or wincing at the knife or outright defiance by the candidate to go through the operation, there are cases of candidates who have become defiant on the morning of initiation. Such defiance has never failed to receive explanations, however, we may suggest here that it could be linked to either parents or a member of the age set involvement in sexual activities. Kabaji states that men create taboos because they are afraid of being weakened by a woman and thereby tainted with femininity (41). This could explain why the community insists on abstinence on that night.

BS11 below is an appeal to the mother(s) both fictive and biological present on the occasion to remain steadfast and alert the whole night. The song thus goes:

LS: Ngeba mawe akona!

CH: haho, ngeba mawe akona!

LS: Ngeba mawe alila!

CH: haho, ngeba mawe alila!

LS: Ngeba mawe niye?

CH: haho, ngeba mawe niye!

Trans:

LS: Unless the mother is asleep!
CH: haho, unless the mother is asleep!
LS: unless the mother is crying!
CH: haho, unless the mother is crying!
LS: Unless it is the mother!
CH: haho, unless it is the mother!

Whereas in BIS 12 where the performers refer to their sleeping styles on the night of initiation as having slept with clothes on, in the above song, the mothers are reminded about being alert and avoiding anything that may interfere with the success of the initiation, this includes abstaining from any conjugal responsibilities. To further the image of complementarity, on the morning after visiting the river, a paternal aunt is tasked to meet the candidates and have them lick the cooking stick dipped in unripe beer (*Kamayeku*) prepared by the candidate two days to the occasion of circumcision. The aunt will be tattooed using soot from a cooking pan and a piece of flesh put around her ear as she performs the ceremony. Each of the items she uses at this point has a meaning: the licking of the cooking stick is meant to tell the candidate of his impending graduation into manhood or a welcome into the masculine fold, the cooking stick itself means he has to stop any childish behavior while the red meat is meant to let the candidate know that he is about to be circumcised. Among the Bukusu the cooking stick is the mother's symbol of her defense; in case of an impending confrontation especially with a male child the most likely weapon she will land on is the cooking stick. Wasambo asserts that the aunt must have her face blackened with soil; her presence is to make the candidate wealthy and generous, that he may brew and invite a host of friends. The boy therefore is supposed to stop behaving like a child. Her presence again is supposed to show that the boy would marry a woman like herself and produce a child (22).

As she performs this task, the male members will be escorting the candidates towards

the specific spot (*Etyangi*) meant for the operation. The paternal aunt performs a feminine task that affirms that even the female members of the community will not allow a show of cowardice; though she is not a biological mother, she actually ‘other mothers’ the candidates on behalf of the biological mother, while the rest of the male populace who will then be minus the biological fathers perform what we will suggest here as ‘other fathering’ as they escort the candidates to the yard.

What actually stands out is that male and female members of the community are complements of each other. This is in line with Ogundipe - Leslie (229) who emphasizes participation of women as equal partners in transformation of Africa, though a patriarchal function, women are assigned roles that demonstrate equal partnership with men to help create the image of the mother as complement of the father.

3.1.2 The Centrality/role of the Age-grade (*Bakoki*) fold in the initiation performances

The Bukusu have different age- grades (Sets). Makila identifies the following as the known sets: *Kolongolo, Kikwameti, Kananachi, Kinyikeu, Nyange, Maina, Chuma* and *Sawa* (177). During the circumcision period, those to be initiated are tasked by their parents to invite those who are their cohorts in the age grade. On the night preceding the circumcision rite, the members of the cohort will congregate at the venue where the ceremony is to be held. Whereas practical circumcision involved the male members only, the *Bakoki* fold allows the cohorts to come in the assembly with their spouses, the woman therefore on this occasion becomes masculine by association.

In BS 8, the *Bakoki* fold sings and reminds each other about their responsibilities in affirming the candidates’ readiness to go through the cut without any show of

cowardice. This song confirms that those present in the fold are both accountable for the success of the ceremony hence complements of each other. The song thus goes:

LS: Bakoki semwali mwareba omwana!

CH: haa ha!

LS: Bakoki semwali mwareba omwana!

CH: haa aa haa! andi mwarebakho!

LS: Chuma semwali mwareba omwana!

CH: haa haa!

LS: Chuma semwali mwareba omwana!

CH: haa aa haa! Semwali mwareba!

Trans:

LS: Age grade members you should have asked the child!

CH: haa ha!

LS: Age grade members you should have asked the child!

CH: haa aa haa! You should have asked!

LS: Chuma you should have asked the child!

CH: haa haa!

LS: Chuma you should have asked the child!

CH: haa, aa haa! You should have asked!

As fictive fathers and mothers therefore, they are directly responsible for the kind of face the candidate puts up on the material day. Should the initiate demonstrate any cowardice, the shame goes to them. This confirms the mother as a complement of the father.

Kabaji, referring to the role played by the wife of the owner of a bull on the morning before the fight, states that except for the bull owner's wife, no other woman should cross its path (39). Further he states, having avoided sex that night, she is considered a step above females and hence could contribute to the preparation of the bull, and assume some degree of masculinity by association. The Bukusu *Bakoki* (Age-grade) fold regards the woman present in that assembly in the same vein; she assumes some sense of masculinity through association. On some occasions, the man can send his wife to practically represent him in the fold in case of his absence. As opposed to

other traditional fora where women are required to sit on the floor, (during beer parties, solving of domestic disputes) in the *Bakoki* fold, they are offered places to sit just like their male counterparts, hence elevated to an equal status like the males. In addition, long after the death of the husband, the wife still has the latitude to attend the assemblies and receive the award (Lubaka-cluster meat) meant for the husband; this is a clear construct of complementarity.

As the fold drinks and eats (roast beef) all night, the women present, now on equal status with the men, will place orders for anything they want just like their male counter parts.

In BRS 3 those present in the fold reprimand the mother and father to the candidate for being selfish on the occasion. The song thus goes:

LS: Maayi wo omwana!

CH: Sakhuwa walia ta! Bumesi nibwo amanyile!

LS: Kebaa!

CH: Kebaa!

LS: Oli kebaa!

CH: Kebaa kamaindi nacha nakusia nanywela enjaka!

Trans:

LS: Mother to the child!

CH: She can't feed you! All she cares is drunkenness!

LS: She steals!

CH: She steals!

LS: You insist she steals!

CH: She steals maize and barter it for bhang!

Whereas the women present do not place orders straight, from the song it is evident that they remind the mother to play her role in ensuring those present are not hungry for the occasion affords a lot of feasting by those present. In constructing the mother as a mean person through the song, the mothers present ironically call for her proactiveness on the occasion since meanness is least expected of her on the

occasion. Wanyama, while assessing the roles of different people on the occasion reports that the mother is supposed to make sure that there is enough food for the visitors, ensures that the visitors are happy, eat well and have enough of the traditional brew (busaa) (4-14).

This fold therefore is an occasion that empowers the female folk, putting them on an equal footing with their male folk. The *Bakoki* (both male and female) are actually fictive fathers and mothers to the candidate(s) respectively, through this assembly, the Bukusu initiation occasion reinforces the image of motherhood as a complement of fatherhood. The fold imposes sanctions on its members: they cannot engage in any sexual activity on that night, cannot go to their homes in the night and be back at the function among others. These sanctions create order in the fold and a member can be punished for failing to keep the set rules. One such rule in the *Bakoki* fold is prohibition of members to go with each other's wife or husband. To demonstrate the closeness of the age grade members, Wasambo asserts that members of the age set enjoyed comradeship relations which were accompanied by behavioral rules, rites and reciprocal privileges. He further posits that the relationship was so emotionally elevated that marriage to an age mate's daughter was forbidden. In fact, he insists people who belonged to one cluster enjoyed greater degree of intimacy between them and they favored each in the customary distribution of 'Lubaka' (cluster meat) and these clusters served as a means of reckoning and maintaining security in social, legal and ritual matters (14). Wanyama reckons that the age mates of the initiate's father (*Bakoki*) advise and encourage the initiate. They are given special treatment because they are believed to cause harm through their utterances of bad wishes should they get annoyed with the initiate(s) father. He adds that the annoyance normally results from the failure of the initiate's father to meet their expectations.

Examples of harm to the initiate are: prolonged healing period, bleeding and any other kinds of bad luck (4-15).

3.1.3 The ululation performed by the mother in the performance of initiation songs

Duties are assigned to both parents to ensure a successful initiation ceremony. However, there are some tasks that are duly feminine and need not be formally spelt out. In music and dance, especially, among the Bukusu community, ululation is entirely a feminine task and is a mark majorly for a climax or an indication of change of dance steps. The mother to any candidate for initiation is culturally expected to set off (every morning) the candidate in his task of going around to inform relatives, friends and neighbors about his intent of being initiated. While the candidate begins off by playing the metallophones (*chinyimba*), the mother, whether accompanied by other performers or not, will not allow the candidate to leave her compound until she ululates. Once she performs the ululation after brief verbal instructions to the candidate about the seriousness of what he is about to engage in, the candidate is then set off to begin his rounds. This is usually performed every time the candidate leaves the home; it therefore announces the start of events of the day. Later in the day, when he comes back, the mother will still be on the ready, to receive him, the climax of the reception being another ululation performed by the mother.

During the crowning ceremony on the day of initiation after a successful event, the mother and other women will ululate to announce its success; this will be followed by a dance to celebrate the occasion's success. Such duties that are of paramount significance to the occasion without which the ceremony cannot be complete, are a further construction of complementarity in the community. This is because there are other responsibilities that fathers perform which the mother cannot. These include:

mudding the candidate, actual circumcision and soloing the ‘*Sioyaye*’ chant. Whereas there are men who have mastered the art of ululation (Boniface Mukhongo and the late Peter Kundu), it remains the sole responsibility of the mother to perform it during the initiation period. In fact, whenever the operation is over successfully, the men will immediately call for the ululation from the mothers as it is a reminder to them that they have a role to play to make the whole event complete hence the mother is a complement of the father. Wanyama concurs with the study when he says that the mother will remain sitting with her legs in horizontal position to the floor until she hears the circumciser’s whistle. This is when she stands up and ululates as a sign of victory and joy (4-15).

3.1.4 The ‘*Namachengenche*’ concept and motherhood

‘*Namachengeche*’ is a Lubukusu vocabulary for a girl or woman assigned the task of carrying clothes of the candidate on the morning of initiation, acts as their time keeper after initiation and prepares their food, among other responsibilities. On the morning of initiation, those to undergo the operation are taken to the river to wet their bodies in readiness for mudding before being driven home. On stripping naked, the candidate’s attire (pair of shorts) is handed over to the girl or woman. She is thereafter expected to remove the mud from the initiate’s body, she is commissioned to be in-charge of the house where the initiates stay (*Likombe*) during seclusion, manage time of reporting back to the house by the initiates, prepare the meals for them, check the progress of healing and ensure the initiates receive the required medication. This responsibility on many occasions fell in the hands of the grandmother. However in her absence, another female was nominated. She ideally ensures unnecessary interference with the healing process. She has the latitude to

mete out punishment on an errant initiate for example in the event of delaying to come home at the required time or sheltering out of home when it rains. Such punishment can be a fine in the form of an egg or hit the ankles of the initiates. Our argument above corroborates Wanyama's when he asserts that one of the initiate's sisters is given duty of carrying his costumes, instruments and clothes after he removes them on the day of circumcision while going to the river. The same sister also receives gifts/presents given to the initiate after circumcision, cleans up the initiate's body by removing the mud on his head. Lastly, she takes care of the initiate by serving him with food and drinks. Often, he adds, apart from the sister, his grandmother may remove the heap of mud after circumcision (4-17). The sister nominated above or the grandmother are what this study refers to as '*Namchengeche*'.

As Stanlie posits, other mothering is an entire way of a community organizing to nurture itself and future generations (45). The girl or woman (*Namachengeche*) essentially mothers or other mothers the candidates into a new life; after shedding off the skin of being uncircumcised, the girl or woman is tasked to welcome them to the new stage of life as she nurses them through the seclusion period till healing and coming out of seclusion. Apart from carrying the candidates' clothes, (these clothes are never put on again by candidate after initiation as a symbol of graduation to adulthood), her task of removing the mud after the operation and the eventual responsibility of managing their house (*Likombe*) and nursing them overly constructs the female individual as a caretaker/nurturer for she has to perform all these tasks till the initiate's graduation at the end of the year.

Plate seven: ‘*Namachengeche*’ does her work after circumcision of Sammy Wafula (his aunt Mary Khisa).



Plate by Masinde Simon

The Babukusu therefore had understood the concept of other mothering. This is reinforced in BIS 2 that implores the mother to take care of the candidate as a session of sickness is at the corner:

LS: Mayi wo omwana!

CH: Tila omwana, bulwale bwamwolele!

LS: Mayi wa Siando!

CH: Tila Siando, bulwale bwamwolele!

Trans:

LS: Mother of the child

CH: Lull the child, sickness is at the corner!

LS: Mother of Siando!

CH: Lull siando, sickness is at the corner!

In BIS 10 the mother is called upon to come and check the uncircumcised penis of the candidate. This call upon the mother is a reminder to her as a nurturer/caretaker that the candidate is about to shed his childhood state where she can freely look at his penis but which she may not see again. Though the mother does not practically have a look at the penis, she utilizes this space given to her to give verbal advice to the candidate on the seriousness of the impending ceremony. She does this by making reference to the degree of the pain involved in the cut. She exaggerates the length of time involved in the operation by informing the candidate that it will take the whole day; from dawn to dusk. This is meant to psychologically prepare the candidate for the immense pain involved in the cut. Therefore as a nurturer, she is tasked to perform a maternal responsibility to facilitate the success of the ceremony. The song goes thus:

LS: Mayi wo omwana bira olole!

CH: Aah!

LS: Mayi wo omwana bira olole!

CH: Aah! Mayi wo omwana bira olole esonga!

LS: Senge wo omwana bira olole!

CH: Aah!

LS: Senge wo omwana bira olole!

CH: Aah! Senge wo omwana bira olole esonga!

Trans:

LS: Mother to the child come and have a look!

CH: Aaah!

LS: Mother to the child come and have a look!

CH: Aaah! Mother to the child come and have a look at the penis!

LS: Aunt to the child come and have a look!

CH: Aaah!

LS: Aunt to the child come and have a look!

CH: Aaah! Aunt to the child come and have a look at the penis!

Although, BIS 2 and BIS 10 refer to the biological mother, it is not surprising that a fictive mother is assigned to the initiate for nursing. The idea conceived in the above songs for the biological mother is to prepare the candidate psychologically for the knife then hand over to a foster mother to take care of the initiate. Stanlie argues that the concept of other mothering developed in response to the overgrowing need to share the responsibility for child nurturance (45). The overall impression is that this session empowers the female individual assigning her tasks that carve her as a nurturer or caretaker in ensuring the initiate is taken care of up to time he heals.

3.1.5 The Sitting Arrangement by the Female Folk on the Day of Initiation Performances

The female folk in this regard include biological mother(s) to the candidate(s), the candidates' paternal and maternal aunts and female cousins. Moments before the candidates arrive at the spot meant for the cut (*etyang'i*), the female folk are tasked to sit in one of the houses nearest the spot (mostly the kitchen) with the biological mother(s) at the centre in the pattern of the sitting. The women are required to remain in the sitting position with their legs stretched out straight till the operation is over. Once the men check and confirm that the operation is done, the women will be allowed to come out of the house and ululate announcing successful circumcision and crowning of the initiate with presents for their demonstration of bravery. Wanyama agrees with our position when he states that when actual circumcision is going on, the mother to the initiate sits in her house with her legs horizontal to the

floor until she hears the circumciser's whistle, this is when she stands up and ululates as a sign of victory and joy (4-15). While the mothers will be seated, the fathers will be busy checking out the possible route that the candidates have to enter the compound through, normally it is believed the normal entrance could be bewitched hence the need to open a new entrance. With their walking sticks raised, they insist on the candidate to remain steadfast and withstand the pain. Any member of the sitting women folk who may by chance fold her leg will cause the candidate(s) to show cowardice. Discussing the sitting arrangement, one informant (Khisa Marauni) strongly felt that it is a kind of second birth or delivery being re-enacted by the mother; to deliver the candidate into a new status hence she has to remain steadfast too and deliver a 'healthy baby' or risk 'delivering a still born' (a cowardly initiate). The demonstration of cowardice associated with a member of the female folk folding a leg is still subject to further research. While receiving the candidates, those accompanying them sing the 'Sioyaye' chant. Simiyu notes that 'sioyaye' is mainly for men who carry sticks and clubs lifted high up as a warning to the initiate for dire consequences in case he flitters about circumcision (35). The 'sioyaye' is meant to embolden the candidate as he is reminded about the pain involved in the cut hence the men/fathers play their last important role in psychological preparation of the candidate.

Therefore, whether on the outside receiving the candidates (by men) or in the house (seated by women), each has a role to play to enable a successful initiation event. Whereas the ceremony is a masculine endeavor, one cannot fail to note the space allocated to women in the role assigned to them; they are an indispensable lot in facilitating a successful initiation ceremony. Apart from portraying the mother as complement of the father, it constructs the mother as indispensable individuals. This

is because in the absence of a biological mother, then other ‘mothers’ must be called up and tasked to sit and enable the event go on. In the same vein, the Bukusu women have taken it in their stride, and confidently assert that it is their responsibility. In fact, on some occasions, the women have insisted that they have not sat down hence the candidate(s) cannot come and face the knife. Wabende argues that in effect all initiation ceremonies are social dramas where those who attend are not audiences but rather part of the performers in the enactment of the ritual (24). Whereas the sitting women do not engage in any singing at this point, the silence that prevails in their sitting awaiting announcement from those outside of a successful event reveals that they are part of the performers and not an audience as they immediately jumps to their feet with ululations marking completion of the scene in the social drama. The fact that they sit in silence with their legs horizontal to the floor gives a picture of a freeze position in a theatre as one waits other character(s) to complete their part(s) in a dramatic scene, the characters whether in the freeze position (mothers) or active on stage (men/fathers) outside make the whole ceremony a success hence complement each other. Though a masculine activity, it offers the Bukusu mother a chance to assert herself in the claim of being indispensable.

3.1.6 The Nature and Context of Birth of Twins Ritual Drama and its Significance

Simiyu’s study on the social cultural significance of Bukusu circumcision songs, notes that when twins are born in the community, a special dance (*bukhwana*) is performed taking the name from the kind of children born (23). Nangendo further adds that twins symbolized fertility, prosperity, well being as well as strength of Babukusu and their society which would only be realized with a good harvest. He adds that people engage in what is called ‘*khukhina bukhwana*’ (dancing twinship) in

which people take part in a very peculiar sort of dance where sexual songs are sung (36). In this study, the dance is referred to as a ritual dance. Wanyama adds that during the circumcision of twins they are normally taken to the river as early as 3:00 A.M. and are circumcised at 5:00 A.M.; they are not supposed to be exposed anyhow to the public during anytime. This therefore enhances the fact that twins are a rare phenomenon and they are feared and respected hence must be treated and acknowledged specially in all respects. They are circumcised the same day. The same knife must be used to show that they came from the same womb (Wanyama 4-23). The Bukusu community has a metaphorical reference to twins; '*Bukhwana kamakele*'-which translates to: twinning is leprosy. This is a metaphorical reference to the seclusion period where the couple just like one suffering from leprosy, cannot freely intermingle with the rest of the society until the ritual is performed. Once a couple delivers twins, their freedom of movement is curtailed. The ritual can be performed twice or once depending on how well off the family involved is. Each of the parents has to have a session for the dance. Both parents are responsible as the history of twins in a given family can be traced from either the father's lineage or the mother's. Family members of the father and those of the mother respectively have to perform the ritual and allow members of their family to come out of seclusion. However, depending on the prevailing economic situation, a single ritual can be performed for the couple. The ritual starts with slaughtering of a sheep which is prerogative. Once the sheep is flayed, the couple is made to bite a raw part of a specially cut piece of meat. As they bite the raw piece, they are taunted with the phrase: '*wamwene ne kukhwana kwenye*' which translates to "it is upon you and your twins". Despite this comment sounding negative, Ben Lusweti insisted that it is meant to encourage the couple to find pleasure in delivering twins. Another special herb (*libombwe*) is tied

round their neck (Check DVD Clip), this is supposed to prevent and or protect the twins from being unnecessarily weak then and in future especially during cultural functions such as initiation. Each of the parents to the twins is paired up with an assistant equivalent to a best man and maid in a wedding. Once all these have been done, the dance can then commence.

The ritual does not have a definite period after delivery but it has to be spaced enough to allow the mother regain strength to enable her partake of the ritual as expected. On the day of the ritual, the couple will be locked inside their house with brothers and cousins to the husband or rather brothers - in -law to the lady.

The door will not be bolted as such but will be held in place by those inside. The other team coming in to 'open' the twinning and break the period of seclusion, will start singing on nearing the compound, but before then, a drum will be sounded to announce their arrival and readiness for the dance. The moment the drumming starts, the performers who are out allow themselves into the arena and take the floor. However, there is one individual who will be nominated to oversee the tug of war. The dance pattern evident in the whole session of ritual is the waist wiggle. The dancers are adorned in sisal skirts and have their bodies tattooed. The performers will advance towards the locked door; there will be a tug -of - war between those inside and those out (See clip), as this happens, those not involved in the tug-of-war will be gyrating the waist. The individual nominated to oversee the tug-of-war will referee it and determine when it should end. While the tug - of - war is on, the ritual dance proceeds, it climaxes the moment the door is flung open, then the couple comes out and joins in the ritual dance, this is where the waist wiggle climaxes. The couple dances without any fear and they take steps imitative of the sexual acts as those present sing to them rhetorically asking them whether they were having intercourse

explicitly so or they were hiding some aspects of it. BRS 5 demonstrates the same, it thus goes:

LS: Omukhasi Okhabeula!

CH: Sanywa mungoyelo!

LS: Ne abone omutiya wewe!

CH: Aboa bunikula!

LS: Namung'ong'oli ng'o!

CH: Namung'ong'oli ng'o!

LS: George ne abone kata!

CH: Saboa kwatinya!

LS: Wakisangakho namwe wakholanga busa ori!

CH: Wakisangakho namwe wakholanga busa ori!

LS: Khinakho ndolee!

CH: Khinakho ndolee!

Trans:

LS: A Wife who can't shave her private parts!

CH: She can't drink in assembly of men!

LS: When she sees her man friend!

CH: She loosens her pants!

LS: An exposed penis of a man!

CH: An exposed penis of a man!

LS: When George sees Katherine!

CH: He loosens his loin cloth!

LS: Were you doing this in privacy or openly?

CH: Were you doing this in privacy or openly?

LS: Dance so that we can see!

CH: Dance so that we can see!

The Rhetorical questions in the second last stanza show how those present taunt the couple whether they had sex explicitly or hid aspects of the same. The questions are in reference to the waist wiggle dance steps. The performers eventually request the couple to perform the sexually connotative steps through dancing.

Before the door is flung open the babies are held by the nominees who are equal to the best man and maids during a wedding ceremony. The nominee to oversee the tug-of-war will carry the children once the door is open and the best man and maid hold the hands of the couple and dance around the house. The soloist will keep shifting from one song to the other depending on the flexibility of those involved and sometimes would yield to pressure from those present to lead a given song because it is their favorite. The songs on this occasion have a lot of vulgar vocabulary touching on the private parts of both men and women and the dance steps are imitative of sexual acts. Because of the kind of diction involved in the singing and the sexual dance steps, parents to the couple cannot participate in this ritual dance. In the same vein, the children to the couple (if any) are not allowed to participate in the ritual dance due to the dance steps and the diction.

Thereafter, there shall be a celebration which may involve slaughtering of a cow or sheep in honor of the birth of the twins. Though the ritual dance is performed by women (majorly), men are offered space. The fact that the dance is meant to be performed for each spouse differently is a way of underscoring the fact that each of the spouses has a responsibility to play in the biological process of getting children, the ritual dance then is in line with Deidre's argument on the complementarity of man and woman in the dispensation of life responsibilities (93). The ritual therefore

constructs motherhood as a complement of fatherhood.

The whole concept of twinning in the Bukusu has lots of superstitions. Among them, twins at a tender age do not die; they simply fly away. In addition, a couple that has not held the ritual dance should not cross through a field of groundnuts for they will (groundnuts) be scorched. Anastancia Nafula insisted that there are those who ignored the dance and who have since been affected by the twin effect; they have had their skins scalded (*bukhwana khukhwosia*- being scalded by twins). Other superstitions that surround twins include: twins cannot dig a grave for a fellow twin; they cannot view the body of the dead, and cannot be allowed to sit by the door in a social gathering like a beer party session.

3.1.7 The Sharing of termites after Harvesting

After a successful harvest of termites, the women (performers) are solely in- charge of the sharing, this is as opposed to other occasions among the Babukusu when men are at the centre of distribution of anything. Termites can never be denied anybody; those present and who may not have participated in the tapping will always be spared for a share. They can as well place request through a single word '*khinekho*', which may not have an English equivalent but which can be explained to mean (in the register of white ants tapping) 'offer me a share' of the harvest. As witnessed in the performance, '*khukhina*' is actually an award/a reward for finding one on the scene of tapping the white ants. Because white ants can never be denied anybody, this constructs the mother as generous, caretaker and a nurturer in the society. Khaoya posits that in the Bukusu community, the person who has harvested 'chiswa' must give out some to people at the end of the harvest for blessings. It is a taboo for one to carry the whole harvest home without sharing it with others as this enhances

communalism and discourages individualism (99). Khaoya concludes that group chemistry in chiswa harvesting songs encourages sharing and condemns selfishness (95).

Khaoya's conclusion above is echoed in BWS2 where the performers ridicule women who are egocentric and have tendencies of hiding what has been harvested (Termites). The song, in the conclusive stanza brings out the stingy nature of such women. The stanza thus goes:

LS: Omukhasi we lusooba kaboa sindu mulukhola!

CH: Omukhasi we lusooba kaboa sindu mulukhola!

Trans:

LS: A Woman with selfish tendencies has hidden something (termites) in dry banana leaves!

CH: A woman with selfish tendencies has hidden something (termites) in dry banana leaves!

Group chemistry is also echoed in BWS 8, where the performers of white ants tapping songs condemn one of them whom they had suspected of fouling the air during the tapping process, something the fold does not take lightly. The song thus goes:

LS: Winyambile winyambile!

CH: Winyambile winyambile, kumusi kurombe haa!

LS: Kumusi kurombe!

CH: Kumusi kurombe! Haa!

Trans:

LS: Whoever has farted! Whoever has farted!

CH: Whoever has farted, whoever has farted! May his/her anus develop a growth! haa!

LS: May the anus develop a growth! May the anus develop a growth!

CH: May the anus develop a growth haa!

The performers warn the suspect of dire consequences for fouling the air. It is believed that fouling the air may stop the termites from coming out, leading therefore to a failed attempt at harvesting of the termites. The termites harvesters therefore

insist on similar group chemistry for the success of their endeavour. The Bukusu mothers then are proactive individuals in the way they forestall deterrent measures in ensuring a successful harvest. They are able to order their own space and control all those present not only during the harvesting but also during the sharing. In their generosity, they portray the communal nature of the Bukusu society. To reinforce the idea of a communal spirit, Orhrle and Emeka say: ‘.....thought processes from the so-called developed world descend from Descartes’ powerful idea on which western individualism is based: ‘I think therefore I am’. Thought processes out of Africa, stem from the basic idea of *ubuntu*: ‘a person is a person by virtue of other people. These two ideas are the opposite sides of the same coin. Descartes’ idea fosters strong individualism while the concept of Ubuntu fosters development of communal spirit’ (8).

In BWS 3 for example, wizardry is condemned by the performers coaxing the termites to come out or else those dilly dallying are likened to the behavior of wizards.

LS: Ne wirekeresha aba olinga kundu kulosi!

CH: Ne wirekesha aba olinga kundu kulosi!

Trans:

LS: If you dilly dally, you are like a wizard!

CH: If you dilly dally, you are like a wizard!

Wizardry therefore is a vice that the community detests, that is why performers use it as bait in coaxing the termites to come out by talking to them (termites) through singing. Those present therefore indirectly learn about wizardry and are implored to avoid it.

3.2 Performance Spaces

In this section, we bring to the fore some of the outstanding performance spaces observed during fieldwork. Schechner Richard says that a particular place is where a ceremony takes place, where a mythic event has happened in the past, where beings manifest themselves through songs and dances and where special actions converge creating a theatrical space by poetic means (166). Okpewho, on his part posits that performers differ from one another depending on factors such as age and energy of the performer, the nature of the occasion, the type of setting whether or not any musical accompaniments are used especially by the performer, and whether it is solo or group performance (46). Every informant whom I interviewed or had to perform was quite different, however all of them performed from memory. Most of the performances were outside the houses due to the dancing and drama involved. Evan Mwangi recognizes the presence of dramatic spaces which he argues includes the physical space on which a drama text is performed (46). In the songs, there is physical space which is clearly defined. Whereas initiation songs are performed in anti-clockwise direction; birth of twins songs involve a lot of dancing within and around the house of the couple. Termite tapping songs are performed in a kneeling or sitting position. (See DVD clip)



Plate eight; revelers doing the anti-clockwise movement during initiation. Plate by Stephen Namanda

Ben Lusweti, an ardent performer of birth of twins songs and initiation songs could not take a seat in the course of performing. He punctuated his performances with myriad gestures, facial expressions and sometimes with laughter, a show that he was enjoying the performance by listening to his own performances. Being a herbalist, he would occasionally give instructions to the wife to check on the herbs being boiled but would remain steadfast in the performance. He occasionally winked at me to check whether I was following the performance. He admonished me for laughing during one of his performances when he sang out a vulgar part of a birth of twins' song.

Anastancia Nafula, a midwife, due to her age, had no problem discussing any of the issues that emerged, in fact, her repertoire of knowledge on the birth of twins songs and the accompanying dance steps guided a lot our discussions. Her standpoints in

discussing the songs were respected by the audience due to her vast experience.

Judith Machuma was shy initially but put up an apt performance and the audience applauded her for what it considered a sterling performance. It is Okpewho who argued that an audience is the only context within which an oral performance makes any sense (57). Dan Ben Amos says that once a story teller starts, he is spell bound by his own art, completely removed from the tribulations of daily life; consequently he is likely to neglect all his other duties (111). Once Machuma began her performance, she got so engrossed in it leading to the audience's applause which I believe then brought her back to her normal senses then ran off to her house.

Kabaji infers from Yankah Kwesi who points out that the audience's role in performance of folklore is varied (141). Yankah insists that the composition of the audience determines what item of folklore, style or lexicon to employ in a given situation and that the mood of the audience may condition the duration of the performance. It was after Judith's return that we were able to discuss her performance.



Plate nine; Machuma dashes back to her house after performing and being applauded by the audience. She tied her jacket around the waist to make her performance more dramatic. Despite her initial shy nature, she put up a very

startling performance. Plate by Researcher

Machuma's shy approach was contrasted with Kennedy Wamalwa's who insisted that those present must join him in the singing for the performance to make sense. Upon agreement, he went ahead to perform. It is Okpewho who still maintained that the performer relies on the audience clapping, tapping their feet, laughing, exclamations, sighs and other aesthetic embellishments to carry the performance (57). Karin Barber in addition asserts that audiences play a vital role in the constitution of texts and performances; they make the meaning of the text whole by what they bring to it because they constitute the structure and meaning of an utterance (137).



**Plate
ten;
Kenned
y
Wamal
wa
makes a
point
during**

his performance in the presence of his friends. (Centre) Plate by Researcher

Jane Juma's and Pius Mulongo's performances had one thing in common; both were attending to their chores as they performed. Mulongo makes and sells enclosures for rearing and or selling hens (*kamatabuku*), he therefore insisted that his performances go on as he puts finishing touches on his work. Jane sells a local brew (Busaa) and she gave orders to her children to attend to customers as she put up her performance.

She welcomed her customers to join her in the choruses which made her performance quite interesting. It was part of her customers that offered to supplement her performances whenever she was overwhelmed with serving others.



Plate eleven; Jane Juma in her gear for the sale of Busaa in which she performed. She gestures at herself as she performs.

The influence of modern technology could not go unnoticed in the performances; Vincent Barasa's performances were occasionally interrupted by calls from his clients as he is a social worker. Despite such interruption, he was able to get back on track and finish his performance.

Metrine Lusweti and Jane Wambanda performed their roles as house wives as they performed. The former went on with preparing her ground nuts as she sang while the latter went on with cleaning her compound close to her door step as she answered my

questions.

Plate twelve: Jane Wambanda cleans her compound as she performs. Plate by Researcher.

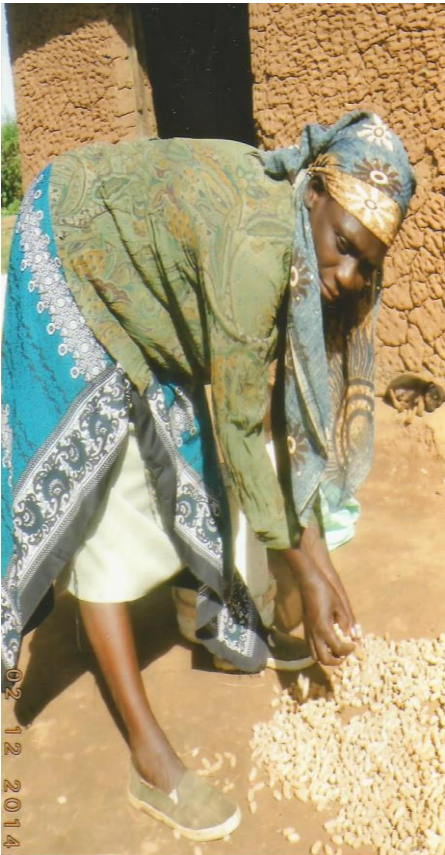
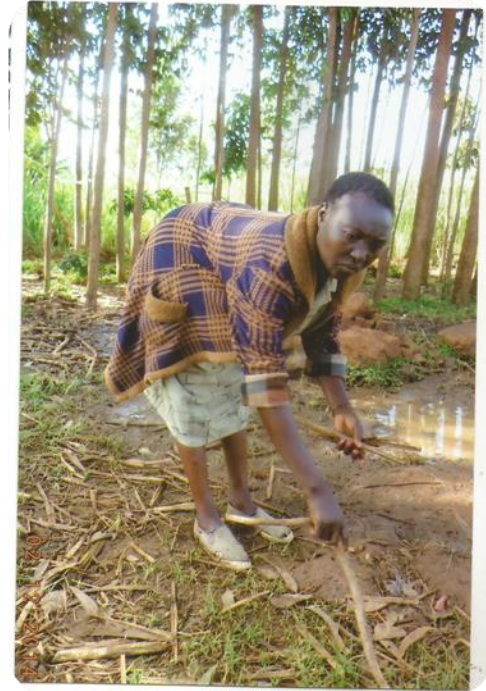


Plate thirteen; Mitrine Lusweti airs her groundnuts as takes us through the performance. Plate by Researcher.

3.9 CONCLUSION

We have analyzed the drama that is evident in the construction of images of motherhood. What stands out is that a lot of drama is evident in Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs. The Babukusu men and women use drama to reveal different images of the person of mother

both in feminine and masculine occasions. The most outstanding image of the mother

that stands out is that of complementarity; however the Bukusu regard their mothers as indispensable individuals, generous, a nurturer and a caretaker. These images are evident in the following gender dynamics: abstinence from conjugal responsibilities, the centrality of the 'Bakoki' fold (age grade fold), the ululation performed by the mother, the 'namangeche' concept, the sitting arrangement by the female folk on the day of initiation, the nature and context of the twin ritual drama and the sharing of termites after harvesting.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMAGES OF MOTHERHOOD IN BUKUSU WORK, RITUAL AND INITIATION SONGS

4.0 Introduction

In the Lubukusu dialect and therefore the Bukusu community, the female individual is associated with different images. Whereas any mature woman is called '*Omukhasi*', the mother is called '*Mayi*'. '*Omukhasi*' is sometimes semantically construed negatively and its use in reference to a female should be approached with caution. Wabende quoting Manguliechi, a Bukusu genealogist posits that the word '*Omukhasi*' (woman) is associated with 'asi' (down) which is justification why the woman has to be below or under men (189). Because this is a patriarchal construct, one cannot fail to see why a female individual may want to dissociate herself with the title '*Omukhasi*'. The title '*Mayi*' however connotes a lot of respect. This title is extended to paternal aunts (those married to paternal uncles) and maternal aunts (sisters and cousins to one's mother). Even those who are constructed as step mothers in English still receive the title '*Mayi*.' A woman therefore is not the same as a mother in the community. For example in counting (mathematically), when one is asked to state the number of passers-by and in the company there is one mature male, a child and a mature female, the answer will be; one person, a woman and a child. This therefore means women are not persons, yet to be a mother presupposes the fact that one is a woman. Bukusu people however, have a different regard for their mothers. Whenever something happens accidentally and which may presuppose danger, both men and women call out for the mother's intervention through the phrase: '*Mayi wee!*' meaning; 'Oh mother!' Mothers culturally in the community are

perceived to be more concerned about the welfare of their children hence the call out for their intervention. The Babukusu men for example construct their praise names in reference to their mothers. Old men retiring from a beer party will be heard shouting: '*Etalang'i ya Nabayi yalota*' meaning; 'the lion of Nabayi is retiring'. More so, Babukusu men swear in the name of their mothers as a final vow for readiness in a war situation; '*Ese okhwa Namurwa nakhubea, ngona ne mayi!*' Which translates to: I the son of Namurwa, if am cheating, I can make love to my mother! (As narrated by the late Joseph Wamalwa). This swearing is a show that what has been said cannot be retracted. Therefore the person of mother enjoys some space.

Every society has a distinct method of constructing itself in its oral literature. For example, Foucault posits that as humans we make a phenomenological interpretation of our everyday existence through discourse, a construct that mediates our way of being (qtd in Jeylan 96). Jeylan insists that in Africa this is done through proverbs (96).

Osedebay emphasizes the centrality of songs in African society as:

We sing when we fight, we sing when we work, we sing
when we love, we sing when we hate, we sing when a child is
born, we sing when death takes its toll (48).

The person of mother among the Bukusu has different images constructed about her in work, ritual and initiation songs. By images, we refer to the community's encoding of the person of mother and as decoded by the study. Images of motherhood in the study are analyzed with reference to the tenet of African feminism espoused by Steady Filomina who argues for complementarity between women and men in the struggle for gender equity (9). The mother is constructed as: a true parent,

indispensable, proactive, a caretaker, assertive, generous, knowledgeable, hardy, a complement of the father and a lousy and irresponsible individual. The images are however broadly classed into: biological, cultural and social.

4.1 BIOLOGICAL IMAGES

Biologically, the Babukusu person of the mother is encoded as the true parent. This is implied in BWS 2, the song goes thus:

LS: Kwa ndala ndala mbilile maayi wa saala.

CH: Kwa ndala ndala mbilile maaayi wa saala

LS: Ndala ndala sendia, mbilila Kongo wa Ng'ina

CH: Ndala ndala sendia, mbilila Kongo wa Ng'ina

Trans:

LS: Drop in one by one I take for mum who gave birth to me.

CH: Drop in one by one I take for mum who gave birth to me.

LS: One by one, I don't eat; I take to Kongo of Ng'ina (Grandmother)

CH: One by one, I don't eat; I take to Kongo of Ng'ina (Grandmother)

The conceptualization of 'mother who gave birth to me' pre - supposes the presence of another mother who didn't give birth to the performers but who therefore has mothered the performer(s). The mother as a true parent is underscored by the fact that despite who father's one, it is only the mother who is able to carry one for nine months and eventually give birth to one (biological mother). The Babukusu women are aware of the concept of other mothering. Derrida argues that we only know something because it differs from some other bit of knowledge. He goes ahead to postulate that we know something because it differs from something else to which it is related (125). Among the Babukusu women therefore, their knowledge of a biologically true parent in the person of mother is different from the other mother but who is related (in role) to the biological mother.

In the community, in the event of the biological mother (true parent) dying for one reason or another, a foster mother was appointed to nurture the child to maturity. Fostering in the community was necessitated on medical grounds such as mental challenges, lack of enough breast milk and during war time (As explained by Ben Lusweti). There are cases of people in the community who have grown up on breast milk of those who are not their biological (true parents) mothers. Bernice Johnson argues that mothering within the Afro-American community and throughout the black Diaspora can be viewed as an entire way a community organizes to nurture itself and future generations (167-80). The Babukusu women therefore are aware of the need of a cultural organization to nurture their community for posterity purposes, however, credit still is given to the biological mother who performed a very important task of first delivering before the foster mother (other mother) takes over the responsibility; the performers are therefore underscoring the fact that the mother is actually the true parent. In the same song the performers implore the termites to drop in one by one so that they can take part of the harvest to their grandmother (Kong'o wa ng'ina). One then will not fail to note the singers' deliberate choice of the female individual and not the grandfather. Our argument is that the mother as a true parent here stands above the male counterpart whose responsibility can be performed by any man but conception and eventual delivery is given premium with reference to the mother.

In the same BWS 2, the performers coax the termites to drop in one by one as they enumerate the children the mother has given birth to whom they would share the harvest after tapping:

LS: Kwa ndala ndala mbilile Wanjala wa maayi!

CH: Kwa ndala ndala mbilile Wanjala wa maayi

Trans:

LS: Drop in one by one I take for Wanjala of my mother!
CH: Drop in one by one I take for Wanjala of my mother!

In enumerating the members of the family, apart from echoing the fact that the mother is the true parent, we want to suggest here that, the termites harvesting occasion gave the woman room to indirectly praise their ability and strength to sustain the growth of the Bukusu nation. This is echoed in the birth of twins songs performed by women to celebrate motherhood; this underscores the mother not only as a true parent but also a nurturer, not just of the fictive child but also for the Bukusu nation.

In BIS 6, the performers call on the biological mother to come about and not show any form of fear during the initiation ceremony. This song is performed during a masculine occasion but the female folk are implored to put up a brave face because the success of the ceremony partly depends on them. The song goes thus:

LS: Mayi webula alina!

CH: Hahaa!

LS: Maraba kakhutila!

CH: Kuna maraba!

LS: Maraba kakhunyola!

CH: Kuna maraba!

LS: Maraba wowee!

CH: Kuna maraba!

Trans:

LS: Where is the mother who gave birth?

CH: Hahaa!

LS: Are you now scared?

CH: There are indications of fear!

LS: Cowardice has engulfed you!

CH: There are indications of fear!

Since the song refers to the mother who gave birth, it constructs the mother as the true parent as opposed to another mother who did not give birth to the candidate for initiation. Whereas BWS 2 is majorly performed by women, BIS 6 is majorly a male affair; however, one can note that the two songs encode the mother as a true parent. This comparison allows us arrive at the conclusion that biologically a mother is the true parent. Nketia reinforces the concerns of the above songs when he posits that in African music, themes of songs tend to centre around events and matters of common interest and concern to the members of the entire community or the social group within it; they may deal with everyday life or with the traditional beliefs and customs of the society (189). The Bukusu women and men have issues of common interest; mothers are the true parents and are nurturers both biologically and fictively.

4.2 CULTURAL IMAGES

In cultural terms, the Bukusu community being a patrilineal one, the female individual occupies a peripheral position. However, in work, ritual and initiation songs, the person of mother is constructed culturally as a caretaker and a nurturer. These two images are put together because they bear a similar approach in the community.

In initiation songs, the image of the mother as a nurturer and caretaker dates back to the origin of the 'Sioyaye' chant. The chant is taken back to the Bukusu origin of circumcision. In Bukusu mythology, this initiation is linked to one man named Mango (Makila 171). During his time, the Babukusu were not practicing circumcision seriously and systematically as their neighbors Barwa. At a place called Mwiala, there was a monstrous serpent called '*khururwe-yabebe*' that devoured

beasts and human beings. On one occasion, Mango's son (Malaba) was killed by the serpent, something that enraged Mango that he swore to kill the serpent single handedly. The neighbors Barwa laughed derisively and told Mango that if he killed it, they would not only circumcise him but also offer him a bride from their community for he would have proved himself an indomitable warrior. Makila further insists that when Mango therefore managed to kill the serpent, women in the village ululated until their singing could be heard miles away (174).

The Barwa spectators said:

How can an omusinde (an uncircumcised person) achieve such an incredible feat? Mango must be circumcised now'. So Mango agreed to be circumcised and when he was being led to the circumcision ground, his old mother burst into tears and cried: 'Wooeii, wooeii my only son. Ahaaa, hooh, Mango did I not tell you that this circumcision is painful? You have chosen it yourself. There you are! (Makila 174).

The above quote is in reference to how the mother to Mango felt about the son's choice to be circumcised, a feat that was associated with Barwa; she felt her son may not withstand the pain of the knife.

Makila further posits that the Babukusu are said to have turned the fateful words of the mother about the son's choice of being circumcised into a song, thereby composing the now famous 'Sioyaye' chant sang when the candidate is being returned from the mudding place (Esitosi) to the circumcision ground. After his circumcision, the Bukusu are claimed to have taken on a more systematic approach to the rite. Whereas Mango may have fathered the Bukusu nation a new in giving it a

renewed and revalorized approach to the initiation rite, we would like to suggest that Mango's mother nurtured and mothered the Bukusu nation by giving and crafting the original words that gave the Bukusu the 'Sioyaye' chant that presently defines the Bukusu nation. The song therefore constructs the Bukusu mother as a nurturer in psychologically preparing the candidate for initiation; to be able to withstand the pain of the knife. Whereas the choice to go through the cut is voluntary, ability to withstand the pain is a corporate affair. Barasa maintains that the worst thing that can happen to a family is if a son fears the knife, fidgets, and gives a loud cry or calling his parents to rescue him from the circumcision (Standard on Sunday 18/8/2012). For such an initiate, he insists, the crowd gives instant punishment without the help of the circumciser, by forcibly cutting off the foreskin. This is why the mother needs to nurture him to withstand the pain to avoid embarrassing the family, the clan and the community at large. This chant has a sacred upholding in the Bukusu cosmology. Ideally during initiation, it is sung close to five times before the actual circumcision.

The song goes:

1. Hee-hee-hee
Hee
Hee-hee
Hee
Hee-heee
Heee-heeeh!
2. Wangwe maaule wekhale
Haa-Haah
Omusindewe
Haah-haah
Omusindewe
Haah-haah hoo!
3. Embalu yefwe ekhalakhale yebele
Hoo,
Omusindewe
Hoo
Omusindewe
Hoo-hoooh!
4. Mango we mwiala wakhwawa embalu

- Haa-haah
 Wakuwa embalu
 Haa-Haa
 Wakuwa embalu
 Haaha-hoooh!
5. Omusinde oteremaka achia ebunyolo
 Haaaha
 Achia Ebunyolo
 Haaaha-hoooh!
6. Embalu elumbubi eli bamatabula
 Haaaha
 Eli matabula
 Haaaha-hoooh!
7. Kumwoyo nekulimboro wibele
 Hoooh
 Omusindewe
 Hoooh
 Omusindewe
 Hooo-hoooh!
 Trans:

‘The leopard which scratches hard is waiting in hiding to pounce on you/ our age-old circumcision tradition should remain with us/It was handed down to us by Mango of Mwiala/a cowardly uncircumcised boy should take refuge in Luo country (where circumcision is not practiced) /When the knife comes to the end, it hurts badly/ If you, uncircumcised boy, are unprepared for the knife you better give up now before it is too late’ (Makila 174-175).

The song reiterates the intensity of pain one has to withstand through the use of animal imagery by likening the circumciser to a leopard. This is meant to embolden the candidates to face the cut, something that dates back to days of Mango’s mother. Presently, as Barasa notes, a circumcision candidate who exhibits signs of cowardice is regarded as an outcast and will forever not sit in the socio-cultural structure of the society for bellowing out his parents names when faced with the surgeon’s knife, thereby causing his family unfathomed agony (Standard on Sunday 18/8/2012).

During the times when the candidates in the community are going around informing

relatives and family friends of their intention to get circumcised, in BIS 2, the mother is advised to prepare the candidate for the set to come period of sickness; nursing the wound after initiation.

The song thus goes:

LS: Mayi wo omwana!

CH: Tila omwana bulwale bwamwolele!

LS: Mayi wo omwana!

CH: Tila omwana bulwale bwamwolele

Trans:

LS: Mother to the child!

Choral: Lull the child (candidate), sickness is around the corner!

LS: Mother to child!

CH: Lull the child (candidate), sickness is around the corner!

The song is performed by men who are imploring the female folk to psychologically prepare the candidate for the knife. The mother therefore has to psychologically care and nurture the candidate to withstand the pain of the knife. In this work, this is a statement, we may argue, the centre (patriarchy) talks back to the periphery (matriarchy) reminding them of their responsibility on the occasion. Ideally then, men utilize the space given to them to ensure that the candidate undergoes the cut but remind women of the space allocated to them in the same event, through this, Steady Filomena's advocacy on complementarity of African men and women in struggle for gender equity comes to light; men and women co-join in different roles and develop the images of the mother as a nurturer and caretaker. Barasa posits that fathers to candidates who exhibit cowardice would have his eldership in Bukusu community revoked and members of his clan would for a long time come to walk dejectedly with heads bowed down (Standard on Sunday 12/8/2012). The mother, he argues, will never again socialize freely with other women and share intimate conversation with them at the market place. Women therefore are empowered

during a male occasion to enable the function succeed. The same image of a nurturer is constructed in BIS 1, where the mother is reminded to inform the candidate that time is running out. She therefore has to psychologically prepare the boy for the knife. The song goes:

LS: Maayi wo omwana!
CH: Oooh! Oh!
LS: Maayi wo omwana!
CH: Bolela omwana chinyanga chawe!
LS: Maayi wo omwana!
CH: Ooh! Oh!
LS: Maayi wo omwana!
CH: Bolela omwana chisa chawe!
LS: Chisa chiwele!
CH: Ooh! Oh!
LS: Chisa chiwele!
CH: Bolela omwana chisa chawe!
Trans:

LS: Mother to the child!
CH: Oooh! Oh!
LS: Mother to the child!
CH: Remind the candidate /child that days are numbered!
LS: Mother to the child!
CH: Ooh! Oh!
LS: Mother to the child!
CH: Tell the candidate/child time is running out!
LS: Time is running out!
CH: Tell the candidate/child time is running out!

The role of the mother as a nurturer/caretaker is also evident on the very day the candidate starts the errands of informing the community about his intentions of being circumcised. The mother will prepare meals for the candidates all through till the day of initiation. She ululates every morning to announce the candidate's start of the day and in the evening to mark the end of the day. She punctuates her ululation with verbal instructions (maternal/motherly advice) on the need for the candidate to put up a brave face on the day of the cut. The advice is normally full of threats (exaggerated) about the degree of the pain involved. Ananstancia demonstrated this

when offering her piece of mind during our discussion on the importance of these verbal instructions. She used the following examples: '*bakhala busa mpaka enyanga ekwe*', which translates to: the cutting will take from sunrise to sunset, and yet in another example she states: '*sebakhalanga kumusala ta*' meaning: 'they don't cut a tree', eventually, she summed up with '*kamala kakharurire niyo bakhalile ao*' which means that 'intestines will come out at the point of the cut'. All these verbal motherly pieces of advice are meant to psychologically orientate the candidate to the intensity of the pain involved hence need for readiness. This as already noted is psychological preparation of the candidate for the knife; this constructs the mother as a nurturer / caretaker utilizing the space given to her by a male occasion to facilitate its success. The role of female person that constructs her as a nurturer is also evident on the morning of initiation when a paternal aunt is chosen to meet the candidate. She will be tattooed using soot from a cooking pot, and will ensure the candidates lick a cooking stick dipped in unripe beer (*kamayeku*). This role is meant to inform the candidate about the fact that the female folk are keen about the kind of face he puts up during the operation. The following discussion captures the importance of the drama.

Kasili: *Nanu okhombianga omusinde kumukango?* (Who offers the candidate the cooking stick to lick?)

Ben: *Ndi sengewe!* (Is the paternal aunt)

Kasili: *Kumukango kwi melela si?* (What is the significance of the cooking stick?)

Ben: *Embelekeu rurayo!* (Move away from disrespect)

Kasili: *Ne enyama niyo aboa khwiru?* (And the red meat tied to her ear?)

Ben: *Khumwokesia ali tayari khukhwakanila kumubano mala burafu!* (Demonstrates

that he should be ready for the knife which is painful!)

This is basically the last rite before the candidate faces the knife and therefore it marks the last agreement/covenant with members of the community for the candidate about his readiness for the ritual. The aunt therefore nurtures the candidate and enables him graduate to another level through initiation. Makila posits that circumcision is a measure of attaining a sense of maturity (176). This therefore means the paternal aunt performs the last but very essential ritual that ushers the candidate to attainment of a sense of maturity; graduates the initiate into manhood by withstanding the pain of knife. In BCS 23, the paternal aunt, just like the mother is implored to have her last look at the uncircumcised penis of the candidate. This is a reminder to her that she has a role to play in the success of the circumcision. It is then no wonder that she is given the last but cardinal assignment in sealing the candidate's resolve for the cut.

One final responsibility that constructs the female individual in the community as a nurturer /caretaker is the female individual nominated to take care of the initiate till coming out of seclusion (*Namachengeche*). The female individual has the responsibility to manage the house of the initiates (*likombe*) which, will be then out of bounds to any foreigner. She will prepare their meals, manage their time, check on their healing and ensure they have received treatment, among other responsibilities. The female chosen may be a girl or a woman but mature enough to understand the responsibilities bestowed upon her. Whereas the male populace oversee the actual removal of the foreskin, they handover the initiate to the female to run the remaining responsibilities till graduation from seclusion by the initiates. Such responsibilities indeed construct the female individual as a caretaker or a nurturer who oversees the progress of the initiate from the time of initiation to the

time he comes out of seclusion.

The termites harvesting women fold in the community also enhances the images of the mother as a nurturer/ caretaker. As ‘other mothers’ in the community, the Bukusu women during the harvesting and eventual sharing of termites after harvesting, instill in the young present on the occasion virtues of patience, generosity and appreciation; patience to allow the termites come out, appreciation for the harvest and generosity in the sharing for termites are never denied anybody. This is evident in BWS 2 where the performers discourage selfishness among themselves by condemning one woman with selfish tendencies for hiding termites in dry banana leaves. The song goes:

LS: Kwa ndala ndala mbilile Maayi wa saala!

CH: Kwa ndala ndala mbilile maayi wa saala!

LS: Ndala ndala Sendia, mbilila kong’o wa ng’ina

CH: Ndala ndala sendia, mbilila kong`o wa ng`ina

LS: Kwa ndala ndala mbilile Wanjala Wa maayi!

CH: Kwa ndala ndala mbilile Wanjala wa maayi!

LS: Omukhasi we lusooba kaboa sindu mulukhola!

CH: Omukhasi we lusooba kaboa sindu mulukhola!

Trans:

LS: Drop in one by one I take to my mother who gave birth to me!

CH: Drop in one by one I take to my mother who gave birth to me!

LS: One by one, i don’t eat take to Kong’o of Ng’ina! (Grandmother)

CH: One by one don’t eat take to Kong`o of Ng`ina! (Grandmother)

LS: Drop in one by one I take to Wanjala of my mother!

CH: Drop in one by one I take to Wanjala of my mother!

LS: A mean woman hid something in a banana fibre!

CH: A mean woman hid something in a banana fibre!

The last stanza condemns the mean woman who hides the harvest (termites) from those who may want a share of it. Usually, after a harvest, termites are packed in banana leaves and therefore the performers are ridiculing those who would want to hide the catch. This reinforces the virtue of generosity in the performers. This is therefore an agrarian activity and a female model for inculcating virtues of motherhood among them generosity; the mother comes through as a generous person.

The performers again insist that they will share the harvest with other siblings as they enumerate them in the song. Further, they confess that they will take some to the grandmother who may be too old to participate in the tapping. All these allow the mother to come through as generous and caring. A woman as a mother has to take care of every member of the society present including the men around. Men can never be in-charge of the sharing of termites. The female individual therefore doesn't just biologically mother the members of Bukusu community but other mothers other members of the society in ensuring they have a share of the termites' harvest. The termites tapping session is an occasion for reinforcing virtues that define motherhood such as generosity; a virtue the community values a lot, patience and appreciation; patient to allow termites come out, share out the harvest and ululation (happiness) for coming out of termites. This can be correlated with the concept of twinning; patience to carry the twin pregnancy and the dance thereafter to appreciate the women.

The association of termites with aphrodisiac qualities too constructs the female individual as a caretaker / nurturer. The performers (women) are considered as care

takers / nurturers of the Bukusu nation and its survival, hence have to ensure that their male counterparts are virile enough to propagate the community. This proves that the women are not only caring and nurturing the present Bukusu Nation but also its posterity. Ananstancia responding to my question on the issue that termites improve virility in men first argued that any woman has to ensure that her husband is well fed for him to perform his conjugal responsibilities. In addition, she should ensure that any bedroom shortfalls are addressed in the secrecy of their bedroom. Therefore she can serve any remedial measures without blurting it out to anybody. She then conclusively stated that termites are like a blanket, they offer the comfort required for the wife and husband to meet for conjugal responsibilities. From her argument, one can easily understand why the community associates termites with aphrodisiac qualities. Apart from Ananstancia's version, discussing the same idea with Jane Juma in the presence of her customers, one of her daughters quipped at one point :(*chiswa chiyetanga si* ?-what is the importance of termites?). This unexpected question caused laughter in the discussion to which Jane quickly replied: '*osili omwana, se omanyile ta*-you are still a child, you don't understand!). Upon further interrogation, she put it point blank that termites (in her words) 'improves the mean score' of the husband. The study concluded that the Babukusu mother does not only care for and nurture the present Bukusu nation but its posterity too.

Culturally still on the occasion of the birth of twins ritual, the mother is constructed as an impenetrable rock, therefore a very hardy member of patriarchal Bukusu society. BRS 2 captures this image which is constructed in licentious performances.

It thus goes:

LS: Kumunie kwo omukhasi lwanda!

CH: Kumunie kwo omukhasi lwanda!

LS: Okhomaka, Okhomaka Lwanda!

CH: Okhomaka, Okhomaka lwanda!

Trans:

LS: The vagina of a woman is a rock!

CH: The vagina of a woman is a rock!

LS: However much you hit it, you hit a rock!

CH: However much you hit it, you hit a rock!

By constructing such an image in an occasion where motherhood is being celebrated (giving birth to twins), it is true that the mother is accorded senior status in the society of being unbreakable hence ability to deliver as many twin children as possible. On the same occasion, fatherhood will be constructed as being a champion; this is seen in BCS 4. The song goes thus:

LS: Endene ye Peter!

CH: Endene ye Peter lukoye!

LS: Endene ye Peter!

CH: Endene ye Peter Lukoye!

Trans:

LS: The penis of Peter!

CH: The penis of Peter is a champion!

LS: The penis of Peter!

CH: The penis of Peter is a champion!

One cannot fail to notice the contrast between the two images given to motherhood and fatherhood respectively. Durham, a Cherokee Indian posits there are ceremonies of all sorts of phenomena, and what we do is trying to get ourselves into certain rhythms of certain moods. He goes ahead to argue that, when he dances the ‘wolf’ dance he puts himself in a completely different place from where he normally is and he sees himself and the world at large through different eyes for a time and he partakes in someone else’s (the wolf) rhythm and power (15-16). We would like to suggest here that, the performers of the birth of twins songs, like the Cherokees, put themselves in different moods and rhythms and hence are able to employ vulgar language without any restraint, they are not themselves then but are enacting the

process of conception hence the use of vulgar vocabulary. It is through such licentious performances that the Bukusu mother crafts for herself a strong image of being an impenetrable rock. Further by constructing motherhood as impenetrable and fatherhood as a champion, one can observe that the two (motherhood and fatherhood) are put in complementary position so that none outdoes the other. Complementarity is also demonstrated on the night before circumcision where the mother and the father to the candidate(s) are expected to abstain from any conjugal responsibilities. The image that the occasion carves for the mother (motherhood) as she practically abstains like the father from conjugal responsibilities is that of complementarity; the two have responsibilities to perform to ensure the success of the festival. Initiation then among the Babukusu though established and defined in patriarchy, gives space for the mother to play her role as an equal partner to the father in the society. This then also allows us to read the mother as a complement of the father.

4.3 Social Images

On the social front, the Bukusu mothers are constructed as proactive members of the society. This is witnessed in the termites harvesting songs. In BWS 3, the performers in the tapping process use interrogative statements in the song to challenge their male counterparts in the society on why they cannot get pregnant. This is done through allegory. The song thus goes:

LS: Khaswa khano khalimo naswa sina?

CH: Khaswa khano khalimo naswa sina?

Trans:

LS: This mound has what type of white ants?

CH: This mound has what type of white ants?

The mound (*Khaswa*) in this case is the woman performer herself, and the white ants

(*Naswa sina?*) being wondered about are the children she should give birth to. This is of course in the register of termites harvesting fold. It in effect therefore suggests that the Bukusu women are conscious of the need for survival of the Bukusu nation through procreation; pro-actively reminding their male counterpart of their conjugal responsibilities in order to ensure their nation survives. As discussed in the section on form and structure, Bukusu women understood the biology of their bodies and controlled it. Ananstancia identified three phases (of the menstrual cycle) that women go through before any conception: '*Kwa ndukusi*' (full bloom moon where no conception can take place), '*Chelechenje*' (ready for conception) and '*Kubona bakhasi*' (up coming new moon where the woman can menstruate). The singing in the song therefore is an indirect reminder to the male populace about their conjugal responsibilities since the women have read their biology and are ready for conception. This is no wonder that the Babukusu have a strong association of termites with aphrodisiac abilities. The discussion between the researcher, Ananstancia and Jane Juma in the foregoing section has illustrated the idea that the Bukusu strongly associate termites with aphrodisiac qualities. To reinforce their proactiveness, the women performers in BWS 4 overtly claim that they can only feel the call of their '*Kumwanjo*' (Symbol of virility in men), the song thus goes:

LS: Nase nono mbulila kumwanjo kwange!

CH: Nase nono mbulila kumwanjo kwange!

Trans:

LS: As for me I can only hear (have a feel of) the call of my Kumwanjo!

CH: As for me I can only hear (have a feel of) the call of my Kumwanjo!

'*Kumwanjo*' refers to the main stick that is laid on the ground to provide the percussive effect during the singing. (Some informant called the same '*Biyinjo*'). The fact that the women attest to the idea of only having a feel of the effect of a virile

man then confirms their proactive state. Ekejiuba points out that women were expected to order their own space, their own affairs and protect their own interests as women (10-11). The Bukusu termite tapping fold, as indicated in chapter two, is one that originated in response to the Bukusu men's interference with the domestic space given to women in the kitchen by instructing that women would not taste chicken, a delicacy in the community. Bukusu men are not expected to cook nor sit in the kitchen. The kitchen is wholesomely a domestic space for wives, mothers and daughters. Discussing about the origin of termites harvesting, the female informants (Ananstancia, Jane, Metrine and Immaculate) insisted that as mothers they were responsible for gathering of supplements to the main meal (ugali). This involved gathering of mushrooms, cowpeas and termites. However, with the males insisting that they (women) cannot eat and or taste chicken, it was only prudent that they come up with a protest statement hence establishment of the tapping fold to allow them also have space of their own to order and control. The male informants, however, only argued that tapping is a feminine task and men who join are actually effeminate. One can easily see the masculine ego in the responses of males. We can therefore conclude that the Bukusu women carved another space for themselves in which they are fully in control, this is why the argument by Ekejiuba in terms of ordering their space stands; they are in charge of the harvesting, the sharing of the proceeds and receive the largest share of the harvest in tapping. Eventually then, we may suggest here that the termites harvesting fold is a call from the periphery (matriarchy) back to the centre (Patriarchy) to recognize the periphery as equally important with abilities to organize and order their own space.

This is in line with Obioma Nnaemeka's argument on African feminism's language of collaboration and negotiation in which the women welcome men as the other half

to fulfill a conjugal responsibility. This is a sure construction of the Bukusu mother as a proactive member of the society; the termite tapping fold is therefore a female model, an architect of social transformation in language advocating for more public space for the women (Bukusu) and allowing men to join them in the social transformation of society. This argument can be summarized in Steady's words: 'Women are the rightful owners of the country; we give birth to men so in a way we own them (97)'. Though a political quote, Ekejiuba asserts that though women were galvanized into militant action to protect and enhance a space that assigned them security and status, their consciousness as women included civic concerns and a feeling of responsibility for social issues and progress.

Socially still, the Bukusu mother is constructed as a complement of the husband. This image stands out quite clearly in both the birth-of-twins ritual and initiation ceremonies. In the event of the delivery of twins, both parents are secluded from the rest of the society till the ritual is performed. The seclusion is occasioned by the society sanctioning the parents from freely mixing with the rest of the community. The ritual is meant to welcome the couple back to the normal lifestyle of free interaction with the rest of the society. It also serves as an initiation to the twin children who will be allowed to also mix freely with the rest of the society. It is also a celebration of motherhood as the women praise themselves for being able to carry twins to safe delivery. There are a number of superstitions associated with delivery of twins in the community though. Ben (one of the key informants), confirmed that as a twin, one is not allowed to sit close to the door in a beer party, twins cannot dig a grave for a fellow twin, if they are first born children, it is a blow to the clan (can cause a divorce or precipitate the death of the father) and when they die at infancy,

they are described to have flown away. Deidre Badejo argues for recognition of the inherent multiple roles of women and men in reproduction and responsibility of sustaining human life (93). We would like to suggest here that, the fact that the two parents are equally put in seclusion, and thereafter participate in the ritual together attests to what Deidre advocates for, this then constructs the Bukusu women and therefore mother as a complement of the father.

During initiation, there are performative aspects that place the mother at positions that allow her perform responsibilities that complement those of the males. Ogundipe-Leslie echoes the idea of participation of women as equal partners in the social transformation of Africa, hence empowerment of women and society (229). An analysis of the performative aspects shows agreement with Leslie's position. Right from the parents abstinence from conjugal responsibilities on the day preceding the initiation event, the sitting arrangement by women on the day of initiation to the nomination of a female individual to nurture the initiates to the time of healing, while the father/male's perform other responsibilities construct the mother as a complement of the father. The duties which are of paramount significance to the initiation ceremony without which the occasion cannot be complete is evidence of complementarity in the community, this is because there are other responsibilities that fathers perform which the mothers cannot, such as actual circumcision, mudding and being the lead soloist in the 'Sioyaye' chant.

4.5 Conclusion

The person of mother (*mayi*) in Bukusu work and celebratory songs enjoys a number of different images. The images are classed into: Biological, cultural and social. The Bukusu community has a special regard for the person of mother. Biologically, the mother is a true parent; she conceives, carries the pregnancy and delivers. The true

parent as a mother is contrasted with 'other' mothers who may not be related in role with the biological mother. Culturally, the mother is a caretaker/nurturer. This is even enshrined in the mythical origin of the '*sioyaye*' chant which is associated with the mother of the first man to be circumcised among the Bukusu (Mango). The mother nurtures the candidate during the initiation period and prepares him psychologically for the pain of the knife through verbal advice. She is also constructed as an impenetrable rock in the birth-of-twins ritual through licentious performances.

Socially, the mother is a proactive member of the Bukusu community. She understands the biology of her body and therefore challenges the male counterpart on why she cannot conceive in the performance of termite harvesting songs. Their proactive nature allows them to come up with their own space (domestic) which they order and control. Further, the mother is a complement of the father/husband as witnessed in the seclusion of both father and mother after delivery of twins and the eventual ritual involving both of them. In addition, the fathers and mothers are assigned responsibilities during initiation that are complementary to enable the ceremony be successful.

CHAPTER FIVE

STRUCTURE AND LANGUAGE IN BUKUSU WORK, RITUAL AND INITIATION SONGS

5.0 Introduction

The foregoing section analyzed the different images that motherhood is associated with. They were classified into: biological, cultural and social. In this section, we analyze the language variety of the songs as forms of oral poetry. The Babukusu work, ritual and initiation songs as forms of oral poetry have a rich language variety. This section of the study analyzes structure and language as witnessed in the construction of images of motherhood in selected Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs. It is Alembi who argued that in analyzing the style of oral poems, it is essential that we do so within the context of their performance (169). The language variety is examined in the light of the African feminism tenet espousing the existence of compromise, collaboration and negotiation in the language in order to create social change. Bernth Lindfors argues that oral literature should be treated to an interpretive investigation of its 'artistic functions or aesthetic implication' (230). The study examined the language and structure of work, ritual and initiation songs. The performers employ different stylistic devices in order to come up with images of motherhood. Aspects of language use deployed in the construction include: Allegory, Rhythm, Drumming, Antiphonal form, Symbolism, Euphemism, Taboo words, Metaphors, Similes, Rhetoric questions, Repetition, Alliteration, Assonance, Chanting, Creativity on the spur of the moment, use of paralinguistic features and use of opening formula.

5.1 Allegory

Allegory is one of the outstanding and identifiable styles in the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs. Allegory taken from the Greek word ‘allos’ meaning the other (Ogude 45), involves saying one thing and implying something else. Laurence and Thomas understand allegory to mean a narrative or description that has a second meaning beneath the surface (608). Further they insist that allegory sometimes is defined as an extended metaphor and sometimes as a series of related symbols (608). To them still, allegory has a one-to-one correspondence between the details and a single set of ulterior meanings and is an effective way of making the abstract concrete. In our analysis of allegory we proceed with Alembi’s idea that the register used by the performer cannot be removed from the cultural set up of a particular community/society (166). In addition, Eyor Luke argues that a study of oral literature that considers context is likely to be more resourceful than one that looks to the past and seeks to archive oral genres because oral literature of a people is intricately tied to the social, cultural and political aspirations and goals of the people at a given point in time (1-3). Richard Bauman argues that performance represents a transformation of the basic referential uses of language; in other words, in artistic performance of this kind, there is something going on in the communicative inter-change which says to the auditor ‘interpret what I say in some special sense; do not take it to mean what the words alone, taken literally, would convey’ (292). We therefore analyze allegory in the context of the performance of Bukusu work ritual and initiation songs.

The performers employ rhetorical allegory. They infuse rhetoric questions in the allegory. The termite mound that is addressed by women during singing in the course of harvesting of termites is an allegorical trope of the bedroom scene. The performers, majority women refer to themselves as the mound. This is evident in the

BWS 3:

LS: Khaswa khano khalimo na naswa sina?

CH: Khaswa khano khalimo na naswa sina?

Trans:

LS: This mound has what kind of termites?

CH: This mound has what kind of termites?

The rhetoric questions paused above are a challenge to the male counterparts in the society, ideally, the performers challenge their husbands as to why they cannot become pregnant. Talking to Anastancia Nafula, she confessed that the termite tapping procedure is in fact a bedroom scene. Tapping in Lubukusu is called '*khubilika*' a term which can be used in reference to being in bed with a member of the opposite sex. This occasion of termite tapping therefore offers the women a site for self assertion. The Bukusu mother therefore inverts the courtship process; it is usually initiated by a male member of the society. The woman does not play an active role in its inception, but by throwing interrogative statements at the male, it is a manifestation of negotiation in creation of a transformed society where women play an active role hence creating an image of proactiveness for the Bukusu mother. For women, Steady Filomena agreeing with Ogundipe-Leslie states: 'male' is not 'the other' but part of the human same with each gender constituting half that makes the human whole' (9). In addition, Ellen Chukwuma posits that African feminism, unlike western feminism, does not negate men, rather it accommodates them; men are central to their lives and so their continuous presence is assured (224). In the singing then, performers (women) are asserting that they are equal to the task and ready for it, men who are the part of the human whole ought to pick up the challenge and perform their duties to make the human whole. The occasion then also enhances the construction of the image of motherhood as complementary to that of fatherhood.

In the community, termites are believed to be aphrodisiac in nature; the Bukusu women then demonstrate knowledge of the need for survival of the Bukusu nation by indirectly contributing to their males' ability to perform conjugal responsibilities. Khaoya, researching on 'chiswa' harvesting songs, postulates that white ants are nutritious, and have a good store of fat and protein (29). This area of termites being aphrodisiac however requires further research in science to establish whether truly consumption of white ants contributes to an increase in sperm count among males. Steady Filomina studying the Sande female secret society, posits that it was clear that some traditional female collective action were more effective in controlling male aggression than the modern law enforcement instituted by the patriarchal colonial system because the traditional society emphasized male and female complementarity (93). We would like to equate the Bukusu termite tapping fold to the Sierra Leonean Sande women fold whose function is the cultural management of fertility, pregnancy and childbirth whose leader is a midwife; hence maintains vital elements of culture that are decidedly female. Though the tapping fold does not have a head; it can be linked to the Sande fold because of its concern with fertility of males and therefore pregnancy. Just like the Sande facilitates 'secret' knowledge about virtues of womanhood that ensures fertility, the termite harvesting fold of the Bukusu has the same bearing: to 'secretly' share knowledge about how to upgrade and maintain one's husband's virile state through tapping of termites, whose consumption the community believes upgrades the husband's virile state.

In the course of singing while harvesting termites, the performers use sticks cut to the size of broomsticks. The sticks offer a percussive effect in the course of singing. We would like to read these sticks (*Biwinjo*) in Freudian terms. Kabaji argues that erect sticks in Freudian terms are a phallic symbol imitating an erect penis (40). The

broomsticks used on the occasion are therefore in this representative of the male phallus, and the rhythmic effect that they offer in the course of singing is allegorical for the thrusts by the husband and wife, this is because when the termites come out, they are received by ululations; this is similar to the sexual climax witnessed in the bedroom. The tapping process is in fact summative of bedroom scenes. It is called '*Khubilika*' which in the tapping fold literally means the process of trapping the termites but read deeper, it summarizes what transpires in the bedroom. To prove this claim, the community has a proverbial statement to refer to those who are perceived to be infertile: '*siachila enje*' which translates to: 'it escaped the trap' meaning hopeless individuals in reproductive terms. Mudambo who did DVD Clips for me was surprised when I asked about the meaning of the whole tapping process as Ben Lusweti and his wife Metrine gave it sexual connotations hence the conclusions made above.

The tapping fold is a session for inculcating virtues that define motherhood, among them patience. One may sing but the termites may fail to come out, this is synonymous with failed bedroom attempts at conception; there is need at patience and one cannot fail to understand why the community associates termites with aphrodisiac qualities. To reinforce the allegorical trope of the bedroom on the broom sticks, the women performers attest in one song that they can only hear (feel) the impact of their '*Kumwanjo*' meaning they can only respond to a virile man. This is evident in the song:

LS: Ndala Ndala sendia mbilila kong'o wa ng'ina

CH: Ndala Ndala sendia mbilila kong'o wa ng'ina

LS: Nase nono mbulila kumwanjo kwange

CH: Nase nono mbulila kumwanjo kwange (BWS 2 and 4)

Trans:

LS: One by one I don't eat, I take for Kong'o of Ng'ina (Grandmother)

CH: One by one I don't eat, I take for Kong'o of Ng'ina (Grandmother)

LS: As for me I only hear the sound of my 'kumwanjo'.

CH: As for me I only hear the sound of my 'kumwanjo'.

'*Kumwanjo*' is a Lubukusu vocabulary which metaphorically connotes (in the register of termites tapping fold) the male penis. The performers therefore assert that they can only respond to a virile man. Talking to Khisa Marauni, he categorically stated that for one to have an affair with a female he has to court her into submission, the courtship process is synonymous with the singing in the tapping process where the termites are implored to come out one by one. In his own words Khisa responded this way: '*Ndi siswa upaka*' which means you must implore the ants to come out; this is the courtship process.

Steady Filomina argues that the element of female consciousness has the potential of mobilization and social cultural transformation (93). She illustrates this with reference to the 1929 Igbo's war in Nigeria which was an act of war against the taxation of women by the colonial government. This was a revolt against violation of women's cultural space; the identity of women had been challenged. Taxation of women gave them an identity that placed them in a male system denying them advantage thus female militancy led to change in British colonial government. We would like to suggest here that when the Bukusu man denied the woman a chance to taste and or eat chicken prepared in her both cultural and private space (the kitchen), the males were putting the females in not only a tempting position but also in one of disadvantage (you cannot eat or taste what you are cooking). The invention of the tapping of the termites to us was a protest move against patriarchy, the women also invented their own space handling a delicacy in which men have little room - women are at the centre; they control the sharing: they receive the biggest share while men are at their mercy. Nasimiyu Ruth notes that white ants were rare delicacies just like

mushrooms (15). Amadiume studying the Nnobi of West Africa posits that as wives and mothers, the Nnobi women had an exclusive formal organization with specific rights involving the fertility and marriage of daughters (162). She adds that motherhood was therefore economically and politically rewarding. The termite tapping fold then becomes a female model which is rewarding to the Bukusu mother. In this regard then the Bukusu women curve and create for themselves an image of an assertive person; the mother is assertive. Because of this possibility, it may account for why presently the Bukusu women partake of the chicken stew. Historians however may be interested to trace down the line when and how the Bukusu women began eating chicken.

Another allegorical trope is witnessed in the birth-of-twins ritual. Before the dance climaxes, there is a session of tug-of-war between those who've come to dance to mark the end of the seclusion and the couple who are by then locked in the house. Those dancing outside are compelled to forcefully open the door but those inside will offer resistance for some time, but eventually let the door open; this will now be the climax of the dance (check DVD clip). Anastancia Nafula laughed openly when I asked her about the significance of the tug-of-war. She boldly explained how the Bukusu girls of her age had been cultured into resisting every advance from a male and how they had been trained to knot their pants that it was nearly impossible for a man to untie the knot before intercourse. In fact, she claimed there were cases of men who gave up in trying to have sex with them because they could not untie it. The tug-of-war was therefore a reminder of this wrestle between husband and wife during courtship, then eventual acceptance by the woman and successful conception in marriage. The tug-of-war is not just about twins, it is a reminder, therefore allegorical of the process that husband and wife go through before conception. The

Bukusu women would not openly agree to the advances of the husband, and she had her own bedroom battles to fight, the tug-of-war is in fact an allegory of the courtship session hence when the woman gives in is synonymous with the eventual opening of the door by those who are then inside the house. Nangendo referring to Bukusu harvest dances argues that they were an explicit recreation of the sexual act. He adds that the same sexual songs and dances were and are still reproduced and enacted during the birth of twins. People engage in what is called '*khukhina bukhwana*' (dancing the twinship) in which people take part in a very peculiar sort of dance where sexual songs are sung and sexual acts are imitated by the dancers. However men in the dance are forbidden from sustaining an erection, if they do they are fined a bull (36). We corroborate Nangendo's observation in our argument about the allegorical nature of the tug of war. The peculiar nature of the dance is in reference to the dominant waist wiggle in the dance which is imitative of sexual acts. To confirm our allegorical assertions about the tug -of -war, parents to the couple in whose honor the dance is being performed and their children cannot participate in the dance as it is deemed they will see a replay of what their children or parents went through before conception. Ideally, one's parents and children should not witness such sexually imitative dance steps and the taboo vocabulary employed in the same. The two allegorical tropes from the harvesting/tapping of termites and the birth-of-twins ritual have one similarity; concern for the survival of the Bukusu Nation. As Kabaji observes, the more dramatic the performance, the more readily the audience come to believe the ideas and attitudes as the cherished values of society (140). This is why this work associates the two tropes with survival of the Bukusu nation. The two tropes end in a similar way; they both end in ululation, the termite harvesters ululate to announce the coming out of termites (happiness) and those of the birth-of-

twins ritual ululate at the successful opening of the door by those inside. In Sum, the two tropes construct the female individual in the community as a knowledgeable person, proactive and assertive member of the Bukusu community. Alembi insists that performance sets up or represents an interpretive frame within which the messages being communicated are to be understood and this frame contrasts with at least one other frame; the literal one. He further insists that linguistic items used by the performer are normally tied to their contexts and interpreting words outside the code being shared by the performer and audience can lead to serious misunderstanding of the message (23-24). The meanings we have assigned to the different allegorical tropes emanate from the discussions between the performer(s) and the audience that were present during the performances.

5.2 Rhythm

Rhythm is another aspect of form in the Babukusu work, ritual and initiation songs.

Finnegan observes that:

The fundamental importance of rhythm in vocal as in other African music is widely accepted, but there is little agreement as to its exact structure. One beneficial distinction is between songs in 'free' and those in 'strict' rhythm. In the former songs, the singing is not coordinated with any bodily rhythmic activity such as work or dancing. The very common songs to strict rhythm, however, have a beat that is articulated with dancing, rhythmic movement, percussion by instruments or hand clapping, all of which contribute to the form and attractiveness of the song (265).

From Finnegan's argument, it is clear that songs can either be in 'free' or 'strict' rhythm. The Babukusu work, ritual and initiation songs have a strict rhythm. In the termite harvesting songs, a percussive effect accompanies the singing drawn from

hitting of the broom like sticks on one main stick lain on the ground; this is done in the kneeling position or in the sitting position (Check DVD clip).

The same strict rhythm is witnessed in initiation songs; the singing is in rhythm with the playing of jingles, whistles, sometimes stamping of feet on the ground and performers pairing up in the body movement (*khutila kamagari*). Wasambo asserts that metallophones are played in certain rhythm depending on the songs that are being sung (14). Simiyu adds that the performances are embellished by whistle blowing and sporadic spontaneous ululations. In some instances, Simiyu insists, improvised pawpaw stalks and sometimes water pipes were played to embellish the music (37). During the night, the '*Baasinde*' stand in the middle of a circle and play *chinyimba* while the rest dance in pairs; Girls keep their hands on boys' shoulders while the boys take the girls by the waist (Simiyu 35).

In the birth-of twins ritual, the playing of the drum sets the performers in motion and their dance steps are in unison with playing of the drum and which drives the performers to a climax. All the songs collected except the chanted form in harvesting of termites are accompanied with dancing, percussive effects, instrumentation or drumming that occurs simultaneously with the singing. This qualifies the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs classification under strict rhythm. Olajubu (24-25), Finnegan (481-199), Miruka (8) and Okpewho (9) posit that the combination of singing and instrumentation produces music that has greater impact on the artist and audience. In Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs, the presence of instrumentation allow the audience to join in the performance more freely than when singing is done alone.

5.3 Drumming

Though drumming has been mentioned above as enhancing strict rhythm, it also forms part of the form of the songs on its own. The drum for the birth-of-twins ritual among the Babukusu is a special one, the size of a half kilogram tin. It is decorated with leg rattle-like percussive accompaniments that enhance rhythm during the twin dance. Nalova observes that the drum principally dictates the tempo of certain kinds of performance (240). The rhythm, Nalova adds, slows down or quickens according to the movement of the dance or more predominantly its patterns may dictate change in action. In the Bukusu birth -of-twins ritual, change in action is signaled by drumming. It welcomes the performers to the dance arena and puts them in the mood of the dance then accelerates the dance to its climax. The regular beat (strict rhythm) of the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs articulated by the dance, accompaniment of drumming, playing of jingles, whistles and stamping of the feet contributes to the form and beauty of the songs and enhance its poetic style, the rhythm adds to the aesthetics of the songs.

Finnegan writing on drum literature posits that the literary significance of drumming has been overlooked in general discussion of African oral-literature though expressions through drums often forms a not inconsiderable branch of the literature of a number of African societies (481). She argues that drum communication can have a conventional code where pre-arranged signals represent a given message. The Bukusu birth-of-twins ritual, drumming signals the start of the dance and drives it to a climax. Finnegan also argues that there are drum messages for births, marriages, deaths and forthcoming hunts among the Kele in the Congo. Among the Bukusu , drum literature in the context of the birth –of-twins ritual, announces the celebration of motherhood, the

end of seclusion and the praise of fertility of the female individual in the community.

5.4 Antiphonal Forms

The songs also exhibit the antiphonal form. Mutia posits that that the antiphonal form involves collaboration of the lead singer and the chorus. He argues that this involves repetition of key phrases over and over (392). This is quite evident in the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs. In termite harvesting this form is prevalent:

LS: Enje yaola opicho se okwa makalama?

CH: Enje yaola opicho se okwa makalama? (BWS 6)

LS: The day has calmed, why can't the Swallow lie on its back?

CH: The day has calmed, why can't the Swallow lie on its back?

The lead singer's words are all repeated by the chorus whenever the lead singer alters her words, the chorus will pick them up verbatim. This form allows the lead singer to modify the content of the song as she deems fit. The same anti-phonal form can be observed in BWS 4. The song thus goes:

LS: Khatawa khano khalimo naswa sina?

CH: Khatawa khano khalimo naswa sina?

LS: Nase nono mbulila kumwanjo kwange!

CH: Nase nono mbulila kumwanjo kwange!

LS: Nase nono mbulila kumwanjo kwange!

CH: Nase nono mbulila kumwanjo kwange!

Trans:

LS: This mound has what kind of termites?

CH: This mound has what kind of termites?

LS: As for me, i can only hear the call of my kumwanjo!

CH: As for me, i can only hear the call of my kumwanjo!

Another type of antiphonal collaboration is between the lead singer and the chorus is

the solo and chorused refrain (Mutia 393). The lead singer usually uses the refrain to gain time to think of the next thematic element to insert in the song. This is witnessed in the initiation songs. BIS 5 illustrates this pattern. It goes:

LS: Nyanyile hee eeh Nyanyile?
CH: Munyanye!
LS: Mawe anyanyanga sie Embusi!
CH: Munyanye!
LS: Mawe anyanyanga sie Ekhele!
CH: Munyanye!
Trans.
LS: Chew for me hee eeh chew for me?
CH: Chew her.
LS: The mother chews like a goat!
CH: Chew her.
LS: The mother chews like a frog!
Ch: Chew her.

In the above case, the refrain is picked from a key idea from the words of the lead singer. Antiphonal form allows the lead singer to construct different images of the mother. For instance in likening her to a goat and a frog, the mother is portrayed as a careless person. Whereas Finnegan does not write in the context of Babukusu work, ritual and initiation songs, she agrees with the above proposition on the freelance nature that the antiphonal form gives the lead singer. She argues that it provides scope for far more flexibility, rich elaboration and varied interpretation than is immediately apparent from the biad statement which is the characteristic structure of the African song. She posits that it is most suitable form for the purpose to which it is put hence it makes possible both the exploitation of an expert and creative leader and popular participation by all those who wish or are expected to join in. She finally notes that lack of demand on the chorus makes it appropriate particularly for dancing and the balanced antiphony gives the poem a clear structure and adds to its musical attractiveness (262). We would like to suggest that indeed the antiphonal form among the Bukusu initiation songs allows for dancing to be incorporated in the

performance hence contributing to the structure of the songs as the performers combine both verbal and non-verbal skills of delivery.

5.5 Symbolism

Another familiar literary device in the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs is symbolism. Mutia, researching on Bakweri dirges understands symbolism as the ability to use words whose meanings cannot be perceived from their face value (400). Laurence and Thomas posit that a symbol means what it is and something more; it functions literally and figuratively at the same time (600). They further posit that the symbol is the richest and at the same time the most difficult of poetic figures. Bergman and Epstein regard a symbol as an ordinary object charged with additional significance (173). Symbolism in this work is analyzed in reference to the context of performance of Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs. Foley underscores the importance of performance by positing that outside this forum for exchange, the signals will lack their implied content and will necessarily 'read' according to a code other than that employed by the performer on generating them (49).

Among the Bukusu, '*kamabuli*' a type of termite that the Bukusu men are forbidden from eating on any public footpath are symbolic of the go-between (mediators) during courtship. This sanction on men is a construct of the Bukusu termite harvesting/ tapping women fold. Tapping of termites being a fold for women, and a space that they control, in their use of a type of termite to sanction the behavior of their men reveals their concern for protection of their women folk. Men are not supposed to 'feast' on the mediator, hence their concern about the essence of the family as a societal unit. A wife running away from the husband and encountering the '*kamabuli*' at any eating point would not go further than that. This is in reference to meeting the person who played the role of the mediator before their marriage. She

would then be convinced to go back to her family and if the husband wondered where she had been she would present the '*kamabuli*' she had collected, and that would ideally end the feud in the home. This explanation sustains our argument about '*kamabuli*' being symbolic in the community; it is not just a symbol for the mediator but also a symbol for peace as it assists resolve family feuds. The community has in fact coined a proverbial statement in praise of the mediator: '*wamwanda akhila okhukhwela*' which translates to a 'mediator is more important than whoever pays dowry for you'. Courtship precedes dowry payment hence the need to underscore the role of the mediator.

Another symbol is in the word '*kumwanjo*' which is the stick lain in the ground to which the short broom like sticks are hit to provide a percussive effect during the harvesting of termites. By fact that the Babukusu woman claims only to hear the sound of their '*kumwanjo*' which means they can only respond to a virile man is evidence that it stands for the male's virile state. Bergman and Epstein classify symbols into two: traditional and representative symbols (174). They further argue that traditional symbols are ingrained in the culture of a community and artists import them into their performance. The Bukusu women then import the two symbols into their performances. Paul Hunter highlights the context, the audience and the artist as elements that give symbols their significance (143). In addition, Cirlot posits that the orientation and location of a symbol should concern a scholar since they influence its symbolic significance (iii). The meaning of '*Kamabuli*' and '*Kumwanjo*' as traditional symbols in Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs can only be deciphered from the context of termite harvesting songs performance. Discussion about this symbolic significance generated a lot of debate among the

audience, the researcher and the performers, however, the three groups were able to eventually agree on the meanings ascribed to the symbols above.

5.6 Euphemism

Euphemism also stands out clearly in the oral texts. Euphemism in the songs in the study involves the use of more softer acceptable terms to refer to aspects one cannot talk about in ordinary assemblies. The repository hole (*efubo*) dug during the harvesting of termites for trapping of the termites is euphemism for the women's reproductive organs. As already stated in the analysis of allegory, the whole tapping process is an allegory of the bedroom scene. '*Efubo*' is a lubukusu noun. To prove its allegorical form, the Bukusu inflect it to form a verb '*Khufubula*' which means to break the virginity of a female especially by a man - this affirms the women's use of it allegorically as the repository hole is dug from a virgin ground.

Ardener argues that women may be disadvantaged when wishing to express matters of concern to them (197). Ardener suggests that women's ideas might find a way of expression in forms other than direct expository speech, possibly through symbolism, art, myth, ritual, special speech, registers among others. We would like to suggest here that by the women developing such expressions of euphemism is in agreement with what Ardener calls special speech registers to enable the women play around with the Lubukusu vocabulary in referring to their private parts without causing unnecessary discomfort among those present. The same euphemism is witnessed in BRS 5.

LS: Namung'ong'oli ng'o!

CH: Namung'ong'oli ng'o!

Trans:

LS: The penis of a man!

CH: The penis of a man!

In the above song the performers (women) do not openly refer to the phallus, instead use a vocabulary from the register of the birth-of-twins ritual to refer to it. The use of euphemism in BRS 5 above constructs the Bukusu woman as a knowledgeable individual who is able to constructively use language appropriately in different contexts.

In BIS 10, the performers (majorly men), do not refer to the penis explicitly but use euphemism by referring to it as '*Esonga*'. This is a Lubukusu vocabulary used in reference to the male sexual organ of children or even uncircumcised boys. In this context, the male performers take advantage of the fact that the candidate for initiation is still regarded as a child hence their use of the term '*Esonga*' which is more acceptable than the use of '*Endene*' which would be construed as vulgar. The Mother therefore as a complement of the father can have a final look at it before the candidate graduates to maturity after circumcision where the mother may never see it again.

In the community then, the termite harvesting session as a fold for women allows them to exercise linguistic freedom and prowess otherwise inhibited in other sittings in the community. With such linguistic prowess, the Bukusu mother develops a special register to allow her express what she wouldn't have done through the use of plain language; and indeed such special register confirms that the harvesting session is a fold for women. Comparative linguistics students could be

interested to do a comparative study of the use of language among men and women in the community but as used in different contexts.

5.7 Taboo words

Taboo words abound in the birth-of-twins ritual. This is contrast with the same women performers who employ euphemism in harvesting of termites. In the birth-of-twins ritual, the women have no reserve on the exploitation of sexually explicit vocabulary. In BRS 2, they openly refer to the male and female reproductive organs. The song thus goes:

LS: Kumunie kwo omukhasi Lwanda!

Kumunie kwo omukhasi!

Kumunie kwo omukhasi Lwanda!

CH: Kumunie kwo omukhasi!

Kumunie kwo omukhasi Lwanda!

Kumunie kwo omukhasi Lwanda!

CH: Okhomaka okhomaka okhomaka okhomaka lwanda!

LS: Okhomaka okhomaka okhomaka okhomaka lwanda!

Trans:

LS: The vagina of a woman is a rock!

The vagina of a woman!

The vagina of a woman is a rock!

CH: The vagina of a woman!

The vagina of a woman is a rock!

The vagina of a woman is a rock!

LS: However hard you hit, you hit a rock!

CH: However hard you hit you, you hit a rock!

In BRS 2, the performers refer to the penis explicitly:

The song thus goes:

LS: Endene ye omusecha!

Endene ye omusecha lukoye

Endene ye omusecha lukoye!

CH: Endene ye omusecha lukoye!

Endene ye omusecha lukoye!

Endene ye omusecha lukoye!

Trans:

LS: The penis of a man!

The penis of a man is a champion

The penis of a man is a champion!

CH: The penis of a man!

The penis of a man is a champion!

The penis of a man is a champion!

The two songs portray female genitalia as rocky while at the same time constructing the male penis as a champion. These two descriptions are bedroom derivations which then comparatively pit the reproductive organs against one another with none emerging as a winner. The Bukusu mother is constructed as a hardy individual especially so in regard to ability to give birth to twins. Marriage and procreation is appreciated in the community, men and women who are of marriageable age but unmarried are regarded as abnormal. Twins are special children in the community hence accorded special status beyond the single born child. The occasion is also a session for praising the fertility of the couple. It may therefore be of need to suggest here that the use of such vocabulary captures

the procreation scene in its apt picture. Durham, talking of the wolf dance, argues that in the course of this, he is trying to get into certain rhythms of certain moods, and is able to put himself in a different place away from where he normally is hence seeing himself through different eyes and therefore partaking of the wolf's rhythm and power (15-16). In this perspective, we would like to suggest that at the time of performance of this ritual, the performers perceive themselves through different eyes and allow themselves to partake of the rhythm and mood of procreation hence their use of taboo words.

Kabaji, quoting Dundes, argues that the meaning of folkloristic fantasy is unconscious and folklore provides a socially sanctioned outlet for the expression of what cannot be articulated in the more usual direct ways (09). He further asserts that it is through jokes, folktales, proverbs, folksongs, children's genres and gestures that anxieties can be vented. Amadiume, referring to the dance mounted for a newly married couple among the Nnobi, says that the end of the marriage ceremony in the community was symbolized by the fertility 'mud' dance where women poured palm wine on the ground and sang to the newly married couple who danced on the mud. This was exclusively female. She adds that wives as seasoned women and non-virgins sang lewd songs reproducing the sound and rhythm of copulation and dancing on the mud made it even stickier while women sang (72). The taboo words are therefore a socially and culturally sanctioned outlet for expressing what would not be articulated in the usual way. Sexual issues are not discussed openly and in the presence of an active audience but because culture allows it on this occasion, they are laid bare. The use of taboo words during birth-of-twins ritual therefore echoes the bedroom scene aptly. Through these taboo words then the Bukusu mother comes out

as a proactive member in reproductive terms for she understands bedroom politics and is able to convey it without being prompted.

5.8 Metaphors

From the foregoing section on taboo words, we note that the performers employ metaphors in their performance. Both reproductive organs are likened to a rock (female) and a champion (male). The vivid description of the two genitalia allows one to visualize the qualities of motherhood constructed. In constructing the female reproductive organs as a rock, it allows us to decode an image of motherhood as an impenetrable rock and therefore a hardy individual who is able to give birth to twins. Another metaphor constructed in the texts is in reference to the harvesting of termites. Usually, in preparation for the harvesting, procedurally, the whole mound is cleared off any grass or shrub. Being an allegorical trope, the clearance of the mound is a metaphor for a clean shaven reproductive region of the women performers. In the community, women quite understood very well the biology of their bodies and indeed control it. Menstruation among the Bukusu women is described in reference to the appearance of the moon. The Lubukusu phrase for menstruation is '*khucha mumuesi*' which literally means 'to visit the moon'. Anastancia Nafula identified three phases that Bukusu women go through before menstruation: '*Kwa ndukusi*', refers to full bloom moon where no conception can occur, '*Chelechenje*', is the period ready for conception while '*Kubona Bakhasi*' is upcoming new moon where the woman can menstruate. The pattern of occurrence of the phases is: *Kubona Bakhasi*, *Kwa ndukusi* and *chelechenje*. A woman who read her body and understood possibilities of ovulation, hence possible conception would

definitely shave her pubic hair in readiness for meeting her husband. The same women despise fellow women who do not shave their pubic hair. This is constructed in BRS 2. The song thus goes:

LS: Omukhasi okhabeula!

CH: Sanywa mungoyelo!

Trans:

LS: A Woman who doesn't shave her private parts!

CH: She cannot drink in a full council sitting of a beer party!

Ogundipe- Leslie argues for the need to demasculimize the language of discourse and find androgynous and generic terms to discuss what concerns both men and women (104). The Bukusu women therefore choose to use a non-verbal form of communication in order to pass information to their men in conjugal assemblies; they are knowledgeable and proactive members of the community.

5.9 Similes

Similes are employed in the construction of images. In two songs in the initiation ceremony, the performers use similes constructed from the local environment.

BIS 5 goes:

LS: Mawe anyanyanga sie embusi!

CH: Munyanye!

LS: Anyanyanga sie ekhele!

CH: Munyanye!

Trans:

LS: The mother chews like a goat!

CH: Chew her!

LS: She chews like a frog!

CH: Chew her!

Yet in another song (BIS 3), the performers construct the mother as:

LS: Mayi wo omwana kamiukha emwalo nga liondo!

CH: Simbula ndole emayeye aah!

Trans:

LS: The mother of the child has a smooth bottom like a pumpkin!

CH: Allow me see the hairy part aah!

The performers in BWS 3 cajole termites to come out by use of a simile that discourages wizardry in the community. The song goes thus:

LS: Ne wirekeresha aba olinga kundu kulosi!

CH: Ne wirekeresha aba olinga kundu kulosi!

Trans:

LS: If you dilly dally then you are like a wizard!

CH: If you dilly dally then you are like a wizard!

The simile demonstrates the Bukusu mother inculcating virtues in those present; to keep off vices such as wizardry. The first simile above constructs a negative image of the mother; being lousy and inconsiderate like a goat by referring to the feeding habits of the goat. In the second instance, feminine qualities that define womanhood in the community are echoed through the plump and smooth backside of the woman. These negative constructions are no wonder derivations of patriarchy since initiation is a domain of males.

5.10 Rhetorical questions

Rhetorical questions are also evident in the songs especially the termite harvesting songs. The song has rhetorical questions tinged with sarcasm as the women rhetorically remind men of their conjugal responsibilities. The song goes:

LS: khatawa khano khalimo na naswa sina?
CH: Khatawa khano khalimo na naswa sina? (BWS 4)
Trans:
Soloist: This mound has what kind of termites?
Chorus: This mound has what kind of termites?

While '*Khatawa*' in the language of termite harvesting is in reference to the prolificacy of a woman, '*Sitawa*' is metaphorical for breasts at the age of puberty for girls. As analyzed in the section on allegory, the tapping process is an allegory of the bedroom scene. When the performers invert the courtship process and make the initial move, it constructs the Bukusu woman as a proactive individual in the society. The same rhetorical questions are present in BIS 8:

LS: Bakoki semwali mwareba Omwana?
CH: Aaah! Ha! Ha!
LS: Bakoki semwali mwareba omwana?
CH: Aaah! Ha! Ha! Aah semwali mwareba!
LS: Bakoki semwali mwareba omwana?
CH: Aaah! Ha! Aah! Ha! Ha! Khane andi mwarebakho!
LS: Mwalie semwali mwareba omwana?
CH: Aaah! Ah! Ah! Andi mwarebakho!
Trans:
LS: Bakoki, did you question the child?
CH: Aaah! Ha! Ha!

LS: Bakoki, did you question the child?

CH: Aaah! Ha! Ha! Aah you should have questioned!

LS: Bakoki, did you question the child?

CH: Aaah! Ha! Ha! Aaah! Ha! Ha! Seemingly you should have questioned!

LS: Sawa, did you question the child?

CH: Aaah! Ah! Ah! You should have questioned!

As fictive parents to the candidate(s), the age grade members remind themselves of the fact that they ought to have ascertained the candidate's resolve to be initiated. This is because in their fictive position, they are partly responsible for the kind of face the candidate puts up on the morning of the cut. The kind of face put up by the candidate on the occasion is a corporate affair (has a communal effect and affect) hence their concern. Since the assembly consists of men and women, then it is an enough construct of the mother as a complement of the father. Since they are concerned with the success of the ceremony, the mothers present on the occasion enjoy the image of being caring. In BWS 5 the performers wonder why some people in the society are concerned about their affairs and explicitly dismiss their concerns as inconsequential. This allows them to construct the mother as assertive individuals who are able to run their own affairs regardless of what other people think of them.

The song goes:

LS: Nendia khubiange mumbolela sina?

CH: Oh yaya mumbolela sina!

LS: Natamba khale mumbolela sina?

CH: Oh yaya mumbolela sina!

LS: Nendia khuswa mumbolela sina?

CH: Oh yaya mumbolela si!

LS: Samwene namanya umbolela sina?

CH: Oh yaya umbolela sii!

Trans:

LS: When I feast on what is mine, what does it concern you?

CH: Oh! Mates, what does it concern you?

LS: I was poor those says, what does it concern you?

CH: Oh! Mates, what does it concern you?

CH: As I eat white ants, what does it concern you?

LS: Oh! Mates what does it concern you?

CH: I know it all, what does it concern you?

CH: Oh! Mate what does it concern you?

5.11 Alliteration

From the above example (BWS 4), we notice the performers use of alliteration and assonance. Mutia understands alliteration as repetition of the first consonant sounds in lines(401). In the line '*khatawa khano khalimo na naswa sina?*'; there is the repetition of the sound /x/ at the beginning of words. The sound /x/ is represented by the letters 'kh' in Lubukusu. The same sound /x/ is repeated in BWS 1 in the line: '*khakuninile khukwikha khekhela omurwe*', it occurs at the start of words represented by the letters 'kh'. In the same song, the consonant sound /k/ recurs in the line '*kamwemwenda kechula bitubi na binaninga*'. In BIS 1, the performers repeat the sound /ts / at the beginning of words. This is represented by the letters 'ch' in phrase '*chisa chawele*' transcribed as 'tsisa tsiwele' meaning time is running out in this case for the candidate.

5.12 Assonance

In BWS 8 the performers too employ assonance in the phrase '*Omukhasi we lusooba kaboa sindu mulukhola*'; there is repetition of the vowel /o/ within words in the sentence. Still in BWS9, the performers again employ assonance in the sentence: '*Ne werekesha aba olinga kundu kulosi*'. The repetition of the vowels /u/ /a/ and /e/ are examples of assonance. The same assonance occurs in BWS 2 where there is repetition of vowel /a/ in the line '*kwa ndalandala mbilile mayi wa saala!*' Both alliteration and assonance create rhythm in the songs which is complimented by the percussive effect offered by hitting the short broom like sticks on one main stick laid on the ground during the harvesting of the termites.

5.13 Repetition

Apart from the above literary devices, repetition as a style runs across the two oral texts. Alembe posits that repetition refers to the recurrence of a mood, idea, sound, word or line in a poem. He further asserts that in oral poetry, the most repeated features are the words, lines or set of lines coming regularly after each stanza (158). Repetition in the songs is either at the soloist's words or at the chorus. The chorus may repeat whole words or part of the soloist's words.

In the birth of twins songs, the soloist's words are repeated wholesomely: This is witnessed in BRS 3.

LS: Ngeye haha! Ngeye haha! Ngeye yo omwana, ngeye seli khunyuma!

CH: Ngeye haha! Ngeye haha! Ngeye yo mwana, ngeye seli khunyuma!

Trans:

LS: Waist wiggle haha! Waist wiggle haha! Waist wiggle for the child, the waist wiggle is evident on the backside!

CH: Waist wiggle haha! Waist wiggle haha! Waist wiggle for the child, the waist wiggle is evident on the backside!

In the termite harvesting songs, the chorus again repeats the words of the soloist verbatim: This is seen in BWS 2.

LS: Ndala sendia mbilila kong'o wa Ng'na!

CH: Ndala ndala sendia mbilila kong'o wa Ng'na!

Trans:

LS: One by one I don't eat, I take for Kong'o of Ng'ina. (Grandmother)

CH: One by one I don't eat, I take for Kong'o of Ng'ina (Grandmother_)

As Okpweho puts it:

Repetition is no doubt one of the most fundamental characteristic features of oral literature. It has both aesthetic and a utilitarian value: In other words, it is a device that not only gives a touch of beauty or attractiveness to a piece of oral expression but also serves certain practical purposes in the overall organization of the oral performance(171).

Okpweho goes ahead to note that repetition of a phrase, a line or a passage does have a certain sing song quality to it. If it occurs between intervals, he says, the audience is often delighted to identify with it and to accompany the performer in going over a passage that has now become familiar. Nketia, commenting on dirges, notes that in them, repetition is a musical mode of meaning or may be a means of emphasizing points (104). Wanyama posits that textual repetitions serve the purpose of emphasizing the messages imbedded in the

songs (5-26). In reference to the Bukusu birth-of-twins ritual song, the repetitions witnessed are actually a reflection of the focal point of the dance. The outstanding dance pattern is the waist wiggle, therefore the repetition emphasizes and directs the dancers on which part of the body to be overwhelmingly involved in the dance, this then enhances the rhythm of the dance and crowns its aesthetic balance. In the termite harvesting song, the repetition is a reflection of the anticipated one by one delivery (birth) of children in a family. This is in agreement with what Nketia says in reiterating that repetition is a musical mode of meaning. Zurmin confirms our argument on termites harvesting songs when he argues that repetition serves to highlight certain issues in the poem. Miruka (90) and Okpweho (9) further insist that repetition in African verse is intended to serve useful purposes such as stressing main points and pressing issues of the verse. The argument by Miruka and Okpweho is in agreement with our posit on the birth-of-twins ritual song which directs the focal point of the dance (the waist) and the termites harvesting song which reiterates the number of children delivered by the mother. In addition Kabaji, quoting Max Luthi, argues that the most notable characteristic of style and composition is the principle of repetition (147). Repetition is in fact the most outstanding feature of style in the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs as witnessed in BIS1,BIS2, BIS3,BRS1,BRS2,BRS3, BWS1,BWS 2, BWS3, BWS4, BIS4, BIS5, BRS5, BIS7, BIS8 and BWS5. This corroborates Finnegan's stand point on repetition when she argues that repetition is the most marked feature of oral poetry (90).

5.14 Chanting

Chanting is another style present in texts. It is evident in BWS 1. All the women performers chant as they harvest termites. The image constructed of the mother is that of a nurturer as she is the source of food in the baby crying for the breast of the mother. This is a show of how the Bukusu women understand the responsibility bestowed upon them by the community in bringing up children. The song thus goes:

Mbele mbira mbulila omwana alila,
Omwana alila
Omwana alila, alila turu turu.
Turu turu masika kamwemwenda
Kamwemwenda kechula bitubi na binaninga

Trans:

While I was passing, I heard a baby crying,
The baby was crying
The baby was in need of a mother's breast.
In need of the mother's breast, tears flew feely!

The Bukusu mother captures the deplorable state of a hungry child who needs the mother's breast. This chant reinforces our argument about the Bukusu mother being a nurturer and a caretaker therefore having at heart the concern for the growth of Bukusu nation. The performers demonstrate the beauty of Bukusu oral poetry through the use of alliteration in the line: '*Kamwemwenda kechula bitubi na binaninga*'-there is repetition of the consonants /k/ and /b/ at the start of the words in the sentence. The length of the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs varies. Most of the texts collected are relatively short, in fact one stanza. The songs are in the call and response format. The songs are rarely performed through solo performances.

5.15 Composition on the spur of the moment

Nketia commenting about Akan oral poet he says:

The singers' ability to improvise reflects the alertness of mind or presence of mind. A singer must be sensitive to or show a general awareness of current situations. Since he has to perform in public, he must not be very shy when performing, indeed, some of histrionic temperament is said to be desirable, for a singer is involved in a dramatic communication(56).

In Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs, the performers exhibit a lot of creativity on the moment of performance. This is sometimes conditioned by the presence of certain individuals in the audience, excitement after being rewarded during the performance, the occasion of performance and sometimes when under the influence of the local brew (Busaa). This therefore confirms the transient nature of performance in literature and its ability to respond to different contexts,

The presence of the researcher for example influenced some performances. In BIS 2 the lead singer deliberately infused the nick name of the researcher to enrich his performance. In appealing to the mother to prepare the candidate psychologically for the knife, the lead singer tells the mother of Siando (my nick name) to lull him in readiness for impending sickness resulting from the cut. The song thus goes:

LS: Maayi wa Siando!

CH: Tila Siando, bulwale bwamwolele!

Trans:

LS: Mother to Siando!

CH: Lull Siando, sickness is around the corner!

This is proof that the lead singer has the latitude to infuse in the performance those present in the audience as a way of welcoming them into the performance or reminding them that they are part of the performance. In BIS12, the lead singer asks one of those present in the audience how he had slept, this is in reference to the fact that members of the age grade fold should abstain from sexual intercourse on the night preceding the cut. The song goes:

LS: Okonile orie?

CH: Haa!

LS: Pius okonile orie?

CH: Haa! Ngonile mufware!

Trans:

LS: How did you sleep?

CH: Haa!

LS: Pius how did you sleep?

CH: Haa! I slept with my clothes on!

Pius was a member in the audience whom the lead singer put to task to confirm that he abided by the set rules of avoiding sex on that night. Whereas Pius does not respond, the chorus picks it up and affirms that indeed he abided by the rules in confirming that he slept with clothes on meaning he was awake throughout the set time. The lead singer therefore utilizes this creative moment to remind those present

about their responsibilities and the expectations of the community during the initiation period; they should avoid anything that may affect the success of the function. This affects both mothers and fathers, hence encoding them as complements of each other.

Wanyama quoting King in reference to the 'call and response' nature of African music argues that it is used in a myriad of ways with marvelous creativity; the brilliance of this form is the room for flexibility in the way it is organized. It can be adapted, augmented, shortened and expanded. It all depends on the needs and goals of the song at the time it is sung (9). This argument is in line with our study as the lead singers respond and adapt the songs to those present and make the performance a communal enterprise.

5.16 Paralinguistic Features

Richard Bauman has argued that paralinguistic aspects are culture specific constellations of communicative means that serve to key performance in particular communities (56). The Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs employ a number of paralinguistic aspects within the performances in different ways. Ben Lusweti's constant winking at me during the performance was a reminder to me as part of the audience to be alert and sometimes away of drawing my attention to a member in the performance overdoing a jig in the dance. Among the Bukusu, winking is a non-verbal cue of passing a secret message. He was therefore in secret communication with me as the researcher to take note of what he thought was important in the performance.

The performers of termites harvesting songs put on different facial expressions. They would beam with excitement at the realization that the termites were coming out in large numbers to fill the repository hole. This led to intensified shoulder dances and sporadic ululations. The more the termites came out and the longer they took, dictated the length of the performance. Alembi (2), Finnegan (105), Okpewho (8) and Olajubu (72-73) agree with our argument about length of performance being a dictate of the length of time the termites came out in their argument that the length of any verse is determined by a number of factors pertaining to the audience and the physical circumstances surrounding the performance.

5.17 Opening Formula

Just like performers of oral narratives, performers of termites harvesting songs employ opening formula. Before any performance starts, the women performers take time to recite out their clans' introductory praises which serve to set the stage for performances. The women are quite proud about these introductory sessions; they are compulsory rituals before the harvesting process and immediately followed by the word 'kuruuuu!' which is ideophonic meant to ward off any birds that would be on the ready to feed on any escaping termites. Jane Juma, performing BWS 3, took me through her clan's introductory praises as '*ese omuala omukoyabe omusilamande, omusila mukasa, nebachi, nambaya, natela, waacha khulia waacha nembako*'-this translates to: 'An *omuala* of *Bakoyabe* sub-clan does not eat the bird Emande, can't wear *kumukasa* (a bracelet) and a greedy eater and works hard'. These formulaic beginnings construct the Bukusu mother as an assertive member of not only the Bukusu community but one who understands her origin by reclaiming her association with a particular clan.

5.18 CONCLUSION

The Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs have a rich language variety. The novel nature of the oral poetry is demonstrated through the use of literary aspects such as: allegory, rhythm, drumming, antiphonal form, symbolism, euphemism, taboo words, metaphors, similes, rhetorical questions, assonance, alliteration, repetition and chanting. Apart from demonstrating the aesthetics of Bukusu oral poetry, the rich language variety enhances the performers' construction of the images of motherhood in the community. Some of the images captured through this include the mother as a lousy, inconsiderate and careless individual by likening her behavior to that of a goat in similes. The same careless nature is encoded in the chant. She is also a proactive, assertive and knowledgeable as seen in her use of metaphors, euphemism, taboo words, allegory and symbolism. Repetition in the songs enhances the message being portrayed and directs the dance patterns especially in the birth-of-twins ritual songs. To crown the aesthetic beauty of Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs, the performers employ strict rhythm, alliteration, assonance, drumming, composition on the spur of the moment, paralinguistic features and opening formula.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study aimed at identification of the different images of motherhood among the Babukusu in work, ritual and initiation songs. This was done through the examination of the language variety and the gender dynamics that enhanced the construction process. A total of twenty five oral texts were examined. The study proceeded with the idea that literature is a reflection of society.

The study employed the African feminism strand of the broader feminism theory in analysis of the construction process. The issues of ‘Negofeminism’, stiwanism, complementarity, negotiation and the idea that African feminism is suffused with language of compromise and collaboration were the guiding principles in achieving the set objectives of the study.

On a general front, the study aimed at how the Babukusu work, ritual and initiation songs portray the person of mother in the community. It therefore strove to establish the gendered discourses in the oral texts that define motherhood in the community. Being a comparative study, we interrogated the space(s) given to both men and women in work, ritual and initiation songs to understand how the two groups construct images of the mother in the community.

Chapters one and two of the study focused mainly on the background information to the study, theoretical issues in which the study was grounded, reviews of the different works that dealt with the song genre and works that dealt with gendered discourses and the methodology of research.

The rest of the thesis is an analysis of the different images of motherhood which are

derivations from the data collected among the Bukusu. Chapter Three analyzed the gender dynamics and the drama that enhanced the construction of images of motherhood while Chapter Four handled the identified images of motherhood in the community. Chapter Five interrogated the structure and language of the oral texts as witnessed in the construction of images of motherhood.

Finally, the study came to the following conclusions: The performance of the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs involves a lot of Gender dynamics. The Gender dynamics witnessed do not only offer the performers' space to create images of motherhood but it is also a method of imparting knowledge about the Bukusu community. It was revealed that the Bukusu community values complementarity between father/husband and mother/wife. The Bukusu community gives the mother space(s) in masculine assemblies and festivals to enable her carve for herself an image of complementarity. She is given space in the '*Bakoki*' age grade fold to sit in a forum meant for men and be at par with the male members present. She is equally assigned duties which the males cannot perform during initiation: the sitting arrangement on the morning of initiation, the ululation she performs daily and on the morning of initiation and acting as a custodian of the house for the initiates (*Likombe*). The Gender dynamics also enhance the concept of generosity and indispensability of the Bukusu mother; through the sharing of termites and the sitting arrangement respectively. The idea of complementarity is further constructed in the abstinence from conjugal responsibilities on the night preceding initiation and participation in the ritual for twins after being in seclusion after delivery of twins.

It was also established that the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs have a rich language variety that enhances the construction of images of motherhood. The language variety demonstrates that the Bukusu mother is quite knowledgeable in the

way she employs aspects such as allegory, symbolism, euphemism, imagery, among others. In her knowledgeable status, the Bukusu mother for example inverts the courtship process by throwing rhetoric questions to the husband/male counterpart of the community. She constructs herself as the true parent through the same rhetoric questions. She understands the biology of her body and therefore has control over it; this is demonstrated in the allegorical trope of the cleared arena for tapping of termites and how it relates to her reading of her body language to know the correct time for conception and therefore shave her private parts in readiness to meet the husband. She is able to communicate/talk to nature (apostrophe) when she assumes the position of the termite and laments to *opicho* (the swallow) as to why it cannot lie on its back yet it has fed on so many of the termites. She captures the bedroom scene aptly through employing vulgar vocabulary in the ritual for twins. The study too revealed how the Bukusu community appreciates feminine qualities though it condemns lousiness in the Bukusu mother. The male members encode the roundedness and smoothness of the backside of the woman as ideal feminine qualities. Through metaphors and similes, the male members construct the mother as lousy and irresponsible. By way of analogy, the Bukusu woman constructs the female individual as a hardy individual; this is in her ability to give birth to twins. The Bukusu mother terminally through rhythm, alliteration, assonance and drumming demonstrate the beauty of the Bukusu oral poetry; this is proof of the rich language variety of the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs.

Lastly, the study established that the Bukusu work, ritual and initiation songs have outstanding images of motherhood. As opposed to the father, the mother stands out as the true parent. In a marriage situation, a child born within wedlock but conceived of a man who is not the father is part of the family and can never be given to the

biological father. This is encoded in the proverbial statement: '*Waunwa kalia mosi!*' Which translates to: 'The owner of the Bull cannot claim the calf'. Like other communities, the Bukusu have a cultural construct for the mother; she is a nurturer/caretaker. The mother does not just nurture the foetus to delivery but prepares the candidate psychologically for the pain of the knife, nurse him to healing and prepares all meals for him. The nurturing spirit is taken back to the origin of the 'sioyaye' chant, whose content is attributed to Mango's mother's words. This nurturing image is also evident in the women's use of the termites harvesting fold to inculcate virtues of generosity and condemn selfishness and wizardry. The mother as a proactive member of the community also came to the fore. Aware of the need for survival of the Bukusu (continuity), she taps termites which she feeds the husband on and which contribute to improvement of his virile state. In addition, she contests encroachment on her domestic space by men (by disallowing her to eat chicken which she prepares) by inventing a fold that is entirely meant for women; tapping of termites and their sharing. Finally, the community perceives the mother as a complement of the father; she has tasks carved out for her in the community which males cannot perform and has equal space in men's folds through association like in the '*Bakoki*' fold.

Having shown the conclusions drawn from the research, the study then recommends the following aspects that may need further research: other comparative studies can be done in other types of songs to highlight other gendered discourses apart from motherhood which was at the centre of this study. The short forms of oral literature can also be examined to unravel their construction of the gendered issue (motherhood) in the Bukusu community through the study of their form and content. This could be done through the African feminism prism. Celebratory songs like

those of marriage, harvesting and birth can be studied to reveal their language variety. Studies should be carried on other Bukusu ritual songs apart from the birth of twins songs to reveal their structure, aesthetics and any gendered discourses present in them. Other comparative studies should be carried out in the Luhya community to reveal the female cultural position and consequently then the importance of women in various social and political systems. As established in this study, termite tapping is a fold for women, more research therefore is needed to establish whether the Bukusu women had other folds based on their cultural, social, political and economic status, to strengthen this proposal, Amadiume studying the Nnobi community posits that the indigenous women's organizations were political with some form of representation at every level of political organization (170). The drama that is evidenced in other oral texts can be studied to demonstrate how the drama enhances the message conveyed in them.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you/When were you born?
3. Have you ever participated in termite tapping?
 1. Briefly explain the tapping process
 11. How did you come to know of termite tapping songs?
 111. Perform briefly some of the white ants tapping songs that you remember.
- IV. What role do the following play in the tapping.
 - a. Women
 - b. Men
 - c. Children
 - v. Why does the community sing for termites during tapping? Explain.
- VI. How is the harvest of termites shared out?
- V11. Do you find the songs for tapping of termites interesting? If yes what makes them so?
- V111. Name the type of eatable termites you know.
- IX. Why would men be barred from eating 'Kamabuli' from a public pass?
- X. Explain how the tapping came about?
- XI. What do you understand by 'Khukhina' in tapping of termites?

B

1. Do you understand the concept of twinning among the Babukusu? If yes, explain.

11. Briefly explain how the twin dance is performed

111. What is the role of the following during the dance?

a. Women

b. Men

IV. Explain briefly any superstition that relates to twins.

v. Briefly perform any of the twin dance songs that you remember.

VI. How does the society regard the twin child? Explain.

VII. How does the society regard a woman who gives birth to twins?

VIII. What is the purpose of the seclusion period among the Babukusu after the delivery of twins.

IX. Are there any specific attire meant for performance of the twin dance?

X. Is there any form of instrumentation during the dance? Explain.

XI. What dance patterns are evident in the dance and why?

XII. Enumerate for us the various names given to twins.

XIII. Of what significance are the names?

XIV. What makes the twin children special?

XV. Why does the community perform the dance in such taboo/obscene words?

XVI. What is the purpose of 'Lilombwe' in the whole twinning period?

XVII. Enumerate any superstition related to twins.

C

1. What is your understanding of initiation among the Babukusu?

11. What purpose to the songs serves during initiation?

111. What role do the following play during initiation?

a. Men/fathers

b. Women/mothers

vii. When does initiation end? Explain

VIII. Who are the circumcisers and why?

IX. Perform for us any initiation song that you remember.

D

1. What is the Bakoki fold? Whom does it involve and why?

11. How does the initiate relate with a member of the age-grade of his father?

111. Why do parents of the candidates of initiation abstain from conjugal responsibilities in the night preceding initiation?

IV. What is the purpose of 'Khukhombia Kumukango' (offering of the cooking stick dipped in unripe bear) for the candidate to lick on the morning of initiation?

V. Is there an age limit for the person tasked to perform the same?

E

1. How do the Babukusu regard their:

a. Women

b. Mothers

c. Men

d. Fathers

11. How do the Babukusu understand the following?

a. A woman

b. A mother

c. A man

d. A father

111. What is the different between a mother and a woman?

IV. Were there any times when a child was fostered? If yes, explain

v. Which conditions occasioned fostering?

VI. Was it a formal arrangement between those involved?

VII. What is the prescribed age of a person to be a foster mother?

VIII. What kind of people in terms of kinship or otherwise were involved in fostering?

IX. How does the foster mother compare with the biological mother?

X. Were there cases where the other mothers were contested?

APPENDIX 11

BIS 1

Name: Kennedy wamalwa

Born: 1976

Village: khachonge

L.S: Maayi wo omwana!

CH: Ooh! Oh!

LS: Maayi wo omwana!

CH: Bolela omwana chinyanga chawele.

LS: Maayi wo omwana!

CH: Ooh! Oh!

LS: Maayi wo omwana,

CH: Bolela omwana chisa chawele!

LS: Chisa chiwele!

CH: Ooh! Oh!

LS: chisa chiwele!

CH: Bolela omwana chisa chawele!

BIS 2

Name: Erastus Nalobile

Village: Chwele

Born: 1967

LS: Maayi wo omwana!

CH: Tila omwana bulwale bwamwolele!

LS: Mayi wo omwana!

CH: Tila omwana bulwale bwamwolele!

LS: Mayi wa siando!

CH: Tila siando bulwale bwamwolele!

BIS 3

Name: Gerishom Wandabwa

Village: Mukuyuni

Born: 1960

LS: Maayi wo omwana wa sanja emwalo nga kumunawa!

CH: Simbula ndole emayeye!

LS: Maayi wo omwana wamiukha emwalo nga liondo!

CH: Simbula ndole emayeye!

LS: Maayi wo omwana wasimba emwalo nga khasimba!

CH: Simbula ndole emayeye!

BIS 4

SIOYAYE CHANT

Name: Donysius Masinde Mulongo

Born: 1970

Village: sichei

LS: Hee hee we musinde wee!

CH: Hee, he hee he! Hee he hehee!

LS: Omusinde oteremaka acha ebunyolo!

CH: Haho! Haho! Haho ooh!

BIS 5

Name: Henry Khisa wekesa

Born: 1967

Village: Mukhweya

LS: Nyanyile hee eeh nyanyile?

CH: Munyanye!

LS: Mawe anyanyanga sie embusi!

CH: Munyanye!

LS: Anyanyanga sie ekhele!

CH: Munyanye!

LS: Eeh! Eeh! Eeh!

CH: Munyaye!

BIS6

NAME: Anastancia Nafula Wekesa

Village: Bwake

Born: 1924

LS: Mayi webula alina!

CH: Hahaa!

LS: Maraba kakhutila!

CH: Kuna maraba!

LS: Maraba kakhunyola!

CH: Kuna maraba!

LS: Maraba wowie!

CH: Kuna maraba!

BIS 7

Name: Khisa Marauni

Born: 1948

Village: Chekulo

LS: Mayi wo omwana!

CH: Sakhuwa walia ta! Bumesi nibwo amanyile!

LS: Kebaa!

CH: Kebaa!

LS: Oli Kebaa!

CH: Keba kamaindi nacha nakusha nanywela enjaka!

BIS 8

Name: Innocent Wamalwa

Born: 1967

Village: luuya

LS: Bakoki semwali mwareba Omwana?

CH: Aaah! Ha! Ha!

LS: Bakoki semwali mwareba omwana?

CH: Aaah! Ha! Ha! Aah semwali mwareba!

LS: Bakoki semwali mwareba omwana?

CH: Aaah! Ha! Aah! Ha! Ha! Khane andi mwarebakho!

LS: Mwalie semwali mwareba omwana?

CH: Aaah! ah! Ah! Andi mwarebakho!

BIS9

Name: Nafula Kadogo

Village: Bwake

Born: 1956

LS: Omusinde layo!

CH: Haho!

LS: Hee!

CH: Orao bachonga!

CH: Sawa!

CH: Haho!

LS: Hee!

CH: Orao babala!

BIS 10

Name: Anastancia Nafula Wekesa

Born: 1924

Village: Bwake

LS: mayi wo omwana bira olole!

CH: Aah!

LS: mayi wo omwana bira olole!

CH: Aah! Mayi wo omwana bira olole esonga!

LS: Senge wo omwana bira olole!

CH: Aah!

LS: Senge wo omwana bira olole!

CH: Aah! Senge wo omwana bira olole esonga!

BIS 11

Name: Ben Meshack Lusweti

Village: Sikenga

Born: 1953

LS: Ngeba mawe akona!

CH: Haho ngeba mawe akona!

LS: Ngeba mawe alila!

CH: Haho ngeba mawe alila!

LS: Ngeba mawe niye!

CH: Haho ngeba mawe niye!

BIS 12

Name: Anastancia Nafula Wekesa

Village: Bwake

Born: 1924

LS: Ngonile mufware!

CH: haaa!

LS: Ngonile mufware!

CH: haaa!

LS: Pius okonile orie?

CH: haaa! (Pius shouts back: 'sewambone!-Can't you see me!)

LS: Ese ngonile mema!

CH: haaa!

LS: Ngonile omumufu!

CH: haaa!

BRS 1

Name: Ben Meshack Wanjala

Village: Sikenga

Born: 1953

LS: Endene ya Peter!

CH: Endene ya peter lukoye!

LS: Endene ya peter!

CH: Endene ya peter lukoye!

LS: Endene yo omusecha!

CH: Endene yo omusecha lukoye!

BRS 2

Name: Wanjala Lumbasi

Village: kisiwa.

Born: 1972

LS: Kumunie kwo omukhasi!

CH: Kumunie kwo omukhasi lwanda!

LS: Kumunie kwo omukhasi!

CH: Kumunie kwo omukhasi lwanda!

LS: Okhomaka, okhomaka!

CH: Okhomaka, okhomaka lwanda! Okhomaka, Okhomaka lwanda!

BRS 3

Name: Metrine Lusweti

Village: Kabuchai

Born: 1966

LS: Ngeye haha! Ngeye haha! Ngeye yo omwana, ngeye seli khunyuma!

CH: Ngeye haha! Ngeye haha! Ngeye yo omwana ngeye seli khunyuma!

LS: Omwana lung'eng'e!

CH: Ngeye yo omwana, ngeye seli khunyuma!

LS: Omwana lutoro!

CH: Ngeye yo omwana, ngeye seli khunyuma!

LS: Omukhasi omwene Minyele!

CH: Ngeye yo omwana, ngeye seli khunyuma!

BRS 4

NAME: Ben Meshack Wanjala.

Born: 1953

Village: Sikenga

LS: Naswa arekire!

CH: Nawe otekula bukhwana!

LS: Nasike arekire!

CH: Nawe otekula bukhwana!

LS: Wambanda Arekire!

CH: Ne Nekoye atekula bukhwana!

BRS 5

NAME: Judith Machuma Khisa

Born: 1972

Village: Luuya

LS: Omukhasi Okhabeula!

CH: Sanywa mungoyelo!

LS: Ne abone omutiya wewe!

CH: Aboa bunikula!

LS: Namung'ong'oli ng'o!

CH: Namung'ong'oli ng'o!

LS: George ne abone kata!

CH: Saboa kwatinya!

LS: Wakisangakho namwe wakholanga busa ori!

CH: Wakisangakho namwe wakholanga busa ori!

LS: Khinakho ndolee!

CH: Khinakho ndolee!

BWS 1(chant)

Village: Chekulo

Mbele mbira,

Mbele mbira, mbulila omwana alila,

Omwana alila,

Omwana alila, alila turu turu,

Turu turu, mrumba sekuninikha,

Sekuninikha wanambwa khakuninile!

Khakuninile khukhwikha khekhela omurwe!

Khekhela omurwe masika kamwemwenda,
Kamwemwenda kechula bitubi naninga
Chingila ne chakhulonda nenja ebukhocha wefwe
Kalukha ndole!
Kaluu!

BWS 2

Name: Immaculate Sitawa

Village: luuya

Born: 1974

LS: Kwa ndala ndala mbilile Maayi wa saala!

CH: Kwa ndala ndala mbilile maayi wa saala!

LS: Ndala ndala Sendia, mbilila kong`o wa ng`ina

CH: Ndala ndala sendia, mbilila kong`o wa ng`ina

LS: Kwa ndala ndala mbilile Wanjala Wa maayi!

CH: Kwa ndala ndala mbilile Wanjala wa maayi!

LS: Omukhasi we lusooba kaboa sindu mulukhola!

CH: Omukhasi we lusooba kaboa sindu mulukhola!

BWS 3

Name: Jane Juma

Born: 1965

LS: Wanakauni khalimo Na naswa sina!

CH: Wanakauni khalimo Na naswa sina!

LS: Khwasa khano khalimo naswa sina?

CH: Khwasa khano khalimo naswa sina?

LS: Khwasa khano khalimo naswa sina?

CH: Khwaswa khano khalimo naswa sina?

LS: Ne werekeresha olinga kundu kulosi!

CH: Ne werekeresha olinga kundu kulosi!

BWS 4

Name: George kasili

Village: sikenga

Born: 1974

LS: Khatawa khano khalimo naswa sina?

CH: Khatawa khano khalimo naswa sina?

LS: Nase nono mbulila kumwanjo kwange!

CH: Nase nono mbulila kumwanjo kwange!

LS: Nase nono mbulila kumwanjo kwange!

CH: Nase nono mbulila kumwanjo kwange!

BWS 5

Name: Margaret Wanyonyi

Born: 1966

Village: Bwake

LS: Nendia khubiange mumbolela sina?

CH: Oh yaya mumbolela sina!

LS: Natamba khale mumbolela sina?

CH: Oh yaya mumbolela sina!

LS: Nendia khuswa mumbolela sina?

CH: Oh yaya mumbolela si!

LS: Samwene namanya umbolela sina?

CH: Oh yaya umbolela sii!

BWS 6

Name: Gallicano Ndongole

Village: Chekulo

Born: 1936

LS: Enje yaola opicho sokwa makalama?

CH: Enje yaola opicho sokwa makalama!

LS: Enje yaola opicho sokwa makalama?

CH: Enje yaola opicho sokwa makalama!

BWS7

Name: Juliana Nakhumicha

Born: 1946

Village: Chekulo

LS: Nifwe wanangokho ko!

CH: Nifwe wanangokho!

LS: Wanangokhoo!

CH: Sakulila makulu ne walia, nifwe wanangokho ko! Nifwe wanangokho!
Wanangokhoo! Sakulila makulu ne walia nifwe wanangokho ko! Nifwe
Wanangokhoo!

BWS 8

Name: Ben Meshack Lusweti

Village: Sikenga

Born: 1953

LS: Winyambile! Winyambile!

CH: Winyambile winyambile kumusi kurombe! Haa!

LS: kumusi kurombe!

CH: kumusi kurombe haa!

APPENDIX III

TRANSLATED SONGS.

BIS 1

NAME: Kennedy Wamalwa

Born: 1976

Village: Khachonge

LS: Mother to the child!

CH: Ooh! Oh!

LS: Mother to the child!

CH: Remind the child days are numbered!

LS: Mother to the child!

CH: Ooh! Oh!

LS: Mother to the child!

CH: Remind the child time is over!

LS: Time is over!

CH: Ooh! Oh!

LS: Time is over!

CH: Remind the child time is over!

NB: 'Child' is used here to refer to the candidate.

BIS 2

Name: Erastus Nalobile

Village: Chwele

Born: 1967

LS: Mother to child!

CH: Lull the child sickness is at the corner

LS: Mother to the child!

CH: Lull the child sickness is at the corner!

CH: Mother to Shiando!

LS: Lull Shiando sickness is at the corner!

BIS 3

Name: Gerishom Wandabwa

Born: 1960

Village: Mukuyuni

LS: Mother to the child has juicy bottom like fatty meat!

CH: Allow me see the hairy part!

LS: Mother to the child has a smooth backside like a pumpkin!

CH: Allow me see the hairy part!

LS: Mother to the child has a hairy bottom like a lion!

CH: Allow me see the hairy part!

BIS 4

SIOYAYE CHANT

Name: Donysius Masinde Mulongo

Born: 1970

Village: Sichei

LS: Hee hee you the uncircumcised boy!

CH: Hee, he hee he! Hee he hehee!

LS: The cowardly uncircumcised boy takes refuge in luoland!

CH: Haho! Haho! Haho! Ooh!

BIS 5

Name: Henry Khisa

Born: 1967

Village: Mukhweya

LS: Chew for me hee eeh chew for me!

Ch: chew her!

LS: The mother chews like a goat!

CH: Chew her!

LS: She chews like a frog!

CH: Chew her!

LS: Eeh! Eeh! Eeh!

CH: Chew her!

BIS 6

Name: Anastancia Nafulla Wekesa

Village: Bwake

Born: 1925

LS: Where is the mother who gave birth?

CH: Hahaa!

LS: Are you now scared?

CH: There are indications of fear!

LS: Cowardice has engulfed you!

CH: There are indications of fear!

BIS 7

Name: Khisa Marauni

Born: 1948

Village: Chekulo

LS: Mother to the child!

CH: She can't give you something to eat! Drunkenness is her concern!

LS: She steals!

CH: She steals!

LS: You insist she steals!

CH: She steals Maize and barter it for opium!

BIS 8

Name: Innocent Wamalwa

Born: 1967

Village: Luuya

LS: Bakoki, did you question the child?

CH: Aaah! ha! ha!

LS: Bakoki, did you question the child?

CH: Aaah! ha! Ha! aah you should have questioned!

LS: Bakoki, did you question the child?

CH: Aaah! ha! ha! aaah! ha! Ha! Seemingly you should have questioned!

LS: Sawa, did you question the child?

CH: Aaah! ah! ah! you should have questioned

BIS 10

Name: Anastancia Nafula Wekesa

Village: Bwake

Born: 1924

LS: Mother to the child come and have a look!

CH: Aaah!

LS: Mother to the child come and have a look!

CH: Aaah! Mother to the child come and have a look at the penis!

LS: Aunt to the child come and have a look!

CH: Aaah!

LS: Aunt to the child come and have a look!

CH: Aaah! Aunt to the child come and have a look at the penis!

BIS 11

Name: Ben Meshack Lusweti

Village: Sikenga

Born: 1953

LS: Unless the mother is asleep!

CH: haho, unless the mother is asleep!

LS: unless the mother is crying!

CH: haho, unless the mother is crying!

LS: Unless it is the mother!

CH: haho, unless it is the mother!

BIS 12

Name: Anastancia Nafula Wekesa

Born: 1924

Village: Bwake

LS: I slept with clothes on!

CH: haaa!

LS: I slept with clothes on!

CH: haaa

LS: Pius, how did you sleep?

CH: haaa!

LS: For me I slept while standing!

CH: haaa!

LS: I slept as am!

CH: haaa!

BRS 1

Name: Ben Meshack Wanjala

Village: Sikenga

Born: 1953

LS: The penis of Peter!

CH: The Penis of Peter is a champion!

LS: The Penis of Peter!

CH: The Penis of Peter is a champion!

LS: The Penis of a man!

CH: The Penis of a man is a champion!

BRS 2

Name: Wanjala Lumbasi

Born: 1972

Village: Kisiwa

LS: The Vagina of a woman!

CH: The Vagina of a woman is rocky!

LS: The Vagina of a woman!

CH: The Vagina of a woman is rocky!

LS: However much you try, you hit a rock!

CH: However much you try, you hit a rock!

BRS 3

Name: Metrine Lusweti

Born: 1966

Village: Kabuchai

LS: Waist wiggle haha! Waist haha! Waist wiggle for the baby, waist wiggle is on the backside!

CH: Waist wiggle haha! Waist wiggle haha! Waist wiggle for the baby, waist wiggle is on the backside!

LS: The baby is troublesome like a mosquito!

CH: Waist wiggle for the baby, waist wiggle is on the backside!

LS: The baby is childish!

CH: Waist wiggle for the baby, waist wiggle is on the backside!

LS: A wife who has twins!

CH: Waist wiggle for the baby, waist wiggle is on the backside!

BRS 4

Name: Ben Meshack Wanjala

BORN: 1953

Village: Sikenga

LS: Naswa has set a trap!

CH: And you, you make sure she has conceived twins!

LS: Nasike has set a trap!

CH: And you, you make sure she has conceived twins!

LS: Wambanda has set a trap!

CH: And Nasike conceives twins!

BRS5

Name: Judith Machuma Khisa

Born: 1972

Village: Luuya

LS: A Wife who can't shave her private parts!

CH: She can't drink in assembly of men!

LS: When she sees her man friend!

CH: She loosens her pants!

LS: An exposed private part of a man!

CH: An exposed private part of a man!

LS: When George sees Katherine!

CH: He loosens his loin cloth!

LS: Were you doing this in privacy or openly?

CH: Were you doing this in privacy or openly?

LS: Dance so that we can see!

CH: Dance so that we can see!

BWS 1(chant)

Village: Chekulo

While i was passing,

While I was passing heard a baby cry,

The baby was crying for the mother`s breast!

The breast! the ‘mrumba’ is unclimbable!

It is unclimbable, ‘wanambwa’ climbed it!

It climbed it but descended headfirst!

It descended head first tears streaming!

Tears streamed and filled unnumbered pails!

When footpaths track you to your maternal uncles

Come back! Kaluu!

BWS 2

Name: Immaculate Sitawa

Village: Luuya

Born: 1974

LS: Drop in one by one I take to my mother who gave birth to me!

CH: Drop in one by one I take to my mother who gave birth to me!

LS: One by one, i don`t eat take to Kong`o of Ng`ina! (Grandmother)

CH: One by one don't eat take to Kong'o of Ng'ina! (Grandmother)

LS: Drop in one by one I take to Wanjala of my mother!

CH: Drop in one by one I take to Wanjala of my mother!

LS: A mean woman hid something in a banana fibre!

CH: A mean woman hid something in a banana fibre!

BWS 3

Name: Jane Juma

Born: 1965

LS: Wanakauni has what kind of termites?

CH: Wanakauni has what kind of termites?!

LS: This termite mound has what kind of termites?

CH: This termite mound has what kind of termites?

LS: This termite mound has what kind of termites?

CH: This termite mound has what kind of termitesPP?

LS: If you dilly dally, you are a wizard!

CH: If you dilly dally, you are a wizard!

BWS 4

Name: George Kasili

Born: 1974

Village: Chekulo

LS: This mound has what kind of white ants?

CH: This mound has what kind of white ants?

LS: As for me, i can only hear the call of my kumwanjo!

CH: As for me, i can only hear the call of my kumwanjo!

BWS 5

Name: Margaret Wanyonyi

Born: 1966

Village: Bwake

LS: When I feast on what is mine, what does it concern you?

CH: Oh! Mates, what does it concern you?

LS: I was poor those says, what does it concern you?

CH: Oh! Mates, what does it concern you?

CH: As I eat white ants, what does it concern you?

LS: Oh! Mates what does it concern you?

CH: I know it all, what does it concern you?

CH: Oh! Mate what does it concern you?

BWS 6

Name: Gallicano Ndongole

Village: Chekulo

Born: 1936

LS: The day has calmed, why can't the swallow lie on its back?

CH: The day has calmed, why can't the swallow lie on its back?

BIS 9

Name: Nafula Kadogo

Village: Bwake

Born: 1956

LS: The uncircumcised layo!

CH: Haho!

LS: Hee!

CH: Allow it to be sharpened!

LS: masewa

CH: Haho!

LS: Hee!

CH: Allow it to be cut around!

BWS 7

Name: Juliana Nakhumicha

Village: Chekulo

LS: We are like hens!

CH: We are like hens!

LS: Likened to hens!

CH: We use our feet before we eat, we are the hens, we are the hens, we use our feet before we eat, and we are the hens!

BWS 8

Name: Ben Meshack Lusweti

Village: Sikenga

Born: 1953

LS: Whoever has farted! Whoever has farted!

CH: Whoever has farted, whoever has farted! May his/her anus develop a growth!
haa!

LS: May the anus develop a growth! May the anus develop a growth!

CH: May the anus develop a growth haa!

APPENDIX IV

MAP OF BUNGOMA CENTRAL

Source: Bungoma central headquarters

