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Textualizing Masculinity: Discourses of Power and Gender Relations in *Manguliechi's Babukusu* After-Burial Oratory Performance (*khuswala kumuse*)

Chrispinus J.C Wasike

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Johannesburg, 2013

Declaration

I declare that this is my own unaided work submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand for the fulfillment of the Doctor of Philosophy degree. It has not been submitted before for examination in any other university.

Signature_____Date_____

Chris J.C. Wasike

Student number 0706248k

Johannesburg, 2013

Abstract

This study is a reading of *khuswala kumuse* (funeral oratory) among the Bukusu from the perspective of contemporary theories of masculinity and gender relations. Funeral oratory performance is an age-old practice performed on the third day after burial (*lufu*), of honoured males from clans that enjoy respect from other clans because of their leadership qualities. The thesis is about the performances of John Wanyonyi Manguliechi. Focusing on his unique personality and creative oral skills as a performer, the thesis seeks to demonstrate Manguliechi's artistic contribution to a venerated tradition. This study benefits from ethnography and fieldwork as methods of literary research in order to interrogate concerns of gender, power discourses and performance in a traditional oral text. The study focuses on pre-recorded texts of Manguliechi and critically analyzes them through the prism of masculinity, gender and power discourse. Specifically, our analysis employs masculinity and gender relations theories to study circumcision, ethnicity and elements of power discourses in Manguliechi's funeral oratories.

The notion of 'textualizing masculinity' in this study refers to the various ways of being a man as highlighted by Manguliechi in his recitals. The study examines the funeral oratory as a cultural discourse shaped by masculine nuances and an oral literary genre laden with multiple images of power discourses and gender relations. In the Bukusu parlance, *'khuswala kumuse'* connotes rhetorical excellence, and the genre represents the most elaborate and creative verbal expression. Thus, persuasive public speech is a much-vaunted art form in the community and any man whose oratory skills demonstrate good rhetoric and eloquence is held in the utmost esteem. In this study we argue that although Manguliechi's performances are essentially funeral rituals, his recitals are rare examples of rhetorical genius with highly expressive and idiomatic creativity that can be subjected to literary analysis. The study interrogates the interfaces between the textual and thematic concerns of Manguliechi's *kumuse* renditions on the one hand and the masculine gender constructions and power imaginations within the same texts.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my wife Angela, son Shaka Marcus and little daughter Ivannah Sibongile whose patience and resilience made it possible for me to burn the midnight oil as I ploughed heaps and stacks of research material for my work and braved long nights of loneliness away from home.

In memory of my late mother Sabina Musindalo who taught me the virtues of hard work and patience but couldn't live long enough to see the fruits of her wise counsel; a celebration of my father Julius Charles Wasike who initiated me through the first baby steps of acquiring education and has continuously re-educated me on virtues of 'eating with elders'. Last but not least, this work is in recognition of the late John Wanyonyi Manguliechi, '*Omukasa, Omukambisi, Omukayi*' (elder, counsellor and peacemaker), for his immeasurable nuggets of wisdom and invaluable repertoire of Bukusu cultural knowledge systems which I was so fortunate to tap from before his untimely death.

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The nature of many intellectual projects of this kind entails many hours of solitude and endless moments of reflection which can often be physically and emotionally draining. Special thanks go to my supervisor Prof. Isabel Hofmeyr, not just for her valuable and persistent mentoring and guidance without which this work would have been possible, but for her untiring and humbling gestures of encouragement, mothering and motherliness during moments of extreme difficulty. In *Lubukusu* we say, "*Orio muno mayi, Wele akhutase chikhabi koo!*

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Parts of this thesis have been published elsewhere as book chapters and journal articles. Sections of Chapter Five have been published in a shortened book chapter titled, "(Re) configuring the Soloist as a 'Nomadic' Modernity Trickster: The Case of Composer in Bukusu Circumcision Folklore", in Ganesh. N. Devy, Geoffrey. V. Davis and V.V.Chakravarty (Eds).2013. *Narrating Nomadism: Tales of Recovery and Resistance*, New Delhi: Routledge and also as "Metaphors of Fertility, Phallic Anxieties and Expiation of Grief in Babukusu Funeral Oratory", in Ganesh. D. Devy, Geoffrey.V. Davis and V.V.Chakravarty (Eds). *Knowing Differently; Cultures in Transition*, New Delhi: Routledge (2013). I am indebted to my supervisor Prof. Isabel Hofmeyr for extending funds that enabled me to attend the CHOTRO II, 2009, and CHOTRO III, 2010 conferences held in Delhi University, India at which the first drafts of two papers mentioned above were initially presented. I also thank Dr. Ganesh Devy and Prof. Dr. Geoffrey Davis, the conveners of CHOTRO conference for reviewing and accepting to publish both papers in two different essay collections.

A shortened version of Chapter Six appears as an article in the *Egerton Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education*, Volume VIII, 2009 under the title, "'A Bull Dies with Grass in its Mouth': Performing Memory, Masculinity and Ethnic Nationalism in Babukusu After-Burial Oratory", and an abridged version of Chapter Two is published as a journal article in the *Journal of Black and African Arts and Civilization* Vol. 5 No.1, January 2011 under the title "Masculinity, Memory and Oral History: Examples from the Babukusu Funeral Performance in Kenya". Parts of Chapter Four of this thesis are published as a book chapter titled "'Chewing Words until they are Soft': Narrating Memory, Masculinities and Oral History in Bukusu After-Burial Verbal Art", in Makokha, J.K.S Dipio Dominica et al (2011) *East African Literature; Essays on Written and Oral Traditions* Berlin: Logo Verlag Berlin GmbH. I confirm that I hold the copyrights for all the essays, but appreciate and acknowledge all those who in one way or another facilitated the publication of the essays and book chapters.

Note on Translation and Fieldwork

All the translations from *Lubukusu* language to English are mine - I am competent in both languages. Despite the common challenges that face any form of translation process, I tried as much as possible to surmount them by using the closest English equivalent of every Bukusu word. However, I take full responsibility for all the meanings gleaned from the translations and any typographical errors in this work. During the course of the fourteen months of fieldwork, I collected and recorded six *khuswala kumuse* performance texts and undertook 15 interviews. All interviewees and their brief biographical sketches are listed as Appendix 4 at the end of the thesis. In Appendix 2, I have included *Lubukusu* transcriptions and English translations of all the *kumuse* narrations that are used in my analysis. However the recordings (on audio tape and in video form) are all in my possession.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Background of the Study

The path to understanding masculinity lies in paying attention to male idioms, that is, what these men say about themselves as men. These idioms accentuate 'an intense phallic masculinity'—a particular kind that is, by nature, only available to men to achieve (Herdt, 1994: 1).

1.1Aim of Study/Definition of terms

Echoing Herdt's views above, which appear to acknowledge the contiguity between the idiom and performance of gender, this study proceeds on the premise that there are indeed male "ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations, practices" (Speer, 2005:7); certainly "many ways of being man and of being masculine" and that men often deliberately set out to use specific cultural contexts to look, talk and act in order to be men. This perspective is essentially applied in the analysis of a special Bukusu after-burial funeral oratory (*khuswala kumuse*) as performed by a famous oral performer John Wanyonyi Manguliechi in Western Kenya. The term *oswala kumuse* in the Lubukusu language means the one who performs *kumuse*. So while the act is *khuswala kumuse*, the 'doer' or person is called *oswala kumuse* or *omuswali muse*. The plural of *oswala* is *baswali*. In this thesis, I have used the terms *oswala kumuse*, *omuswali*, narrator, orator and performer interchangeably to refer to the same person.

It is however important from the onset to make a few clarifications on some of the key words and concepts that will keep recurring in this thesis. Benefitting from Scott Kiesling's assertion that "masculinity is a quality or set of practices (habitual ways of doing things) that is stereotypically connected with men" this study presumes that "masculinity is certainly not something inherent to men, but includes performed social

practices that become associated with men" (2007:4). Connell underscores similar views when he posits that every society has a conception of masculinity that is dominant; a *hegemonic masculinity* which is essentially a kind of masculinity that is most valorized and one that most men in particular social settings strive to emulate (Connell, 1995; 1987). Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity, which we constantly lean on in this study anticipates the existence of multiple masculinities but also acknowledges that a small section of them is dominant. Indeed the concept of hegemony as linked to masculinity, certainly acknowledges that masculinity is a cultural discourse (rather than ideology) that describes qualities and practices that a group of people value, desire and strive for in life (Kiesling, 2007:4). In this regard, the notion of 'textualizing masculinity' as envisaged in this thesis alludes to the various ways of being a man and how they are highlighted in an oral literary text such as the Bukusu funeral oratory.

The study adopts masculinity/masculinities as a theoretical framework and uses it as a literary analytical tool of examining how the Bukusu funeral oratory genre (otherwise referred to *khuswala kumuse* in *Lubukusu* language) is a cultural discourse that is shaped by masculine nuances and gender power relations. *Khuswala kumuse* (sometimes referred to as *khusena kumuse*), literally translating as 'stepping in the arena', is a special ritual that is performed to celebrate venerable and successful male elders, from clans that enjoy respect from other clans for their leadership qualities, upon their death. The performers of this genre (*baswali* or *baseni be kimise*) literally translate to 'steppers of the arena'. Definitively, the reference and association of the after-burial oratory to *kumuse* (arena or 'platform of performance') alludes to the 'last dance performance' in honour of a deceased elderly male member of the society. Much like the classical Greco-Roman speeches that extemporized and honoured fallen war heroes in ancient times (Dixon, 1971), *kumuse* congregations are presided over by specially recognized cultural raconteurs or *baswali* (sing. *omuswali*) who are revered orators, spiritual icons and cultural repositories. Like the respected town criers from traditional Nigerian societies, the Bukusu *kumuse* performer is a praise-singer who extols the virtues, achievements and

conquests made by his community (Wanjala, 2013). Indeed within the Bukusu cultural discourse, reference to *kumuse* connotes rhetorical excellence and the genre represents the finest and most creative verbal communication. In the community's cultural milieu, therefore, passion for persuasive public speech as symbolized by funeral reciters is fervently adored and persons whose oratory skills demonstrate a knack for eloquence are held with utmost admiration and high esteem. In this study though, *khuswala kumuse* (or simply *kumuse*) is understood as a funeral ritual with narratological properties that qualify it as an oral genre that can be subjected to a literary analysis.

In more than one way, *kumuse* is examined as a literary text because of its style of performance, the content and thematic emphasis of each of its individual narrative renditions and the general arrangement and structure of interaction between the oral performer and his audience. While the genre's most conspicuous feature is the ability of the narrator to cobble and play around with words while sustaining attention of his listeners in a rapid recounting of the Bukusu past, present and future, the ritual is only performed to commemorate the death of a revered Bukusu male elder among specific clans of the sub-tribe. The correlation between the genre's style of rendition, the context of death and the gender representations and power relations is precisely the preoccupation of this study.

The term discourse in this study is used guardedly. Although it is true that the Bukusu generally look up to *kumuse* as a narrative art form that inspires ethnic patriotism and pride in their culture (Simiyu, 1997; Wanjala,1985) the manner in which I refer to it here as discourse borrows from what Faircolough defines as "situational context of language use"(1991:3) or what Brunner and Graefen refer to as "units and forms of speech and interaction which can be part of everyday linguistic behaviour, but which can equally appear in an institutional sphere"(1993:7-8). Van Dijk's conceptualization of discourse is perhaps more relevant for this study especially when he appreciates discourse "both as a specific form of language use and social situation" (1990:164). Yet from a masculine point of view, discourse easily relates to the "assumed and

stereotypical ways of talking and thinking about men and masculinities" (Kiesling, 2007:5). Borrowing from Michel Foucault's notion of discourse, (1972:34) this study also unpacks *kumuse* as "a cultural discourse that encompasses not only... [masculine] ideas, concepts and values of a society, but also the institutions and practices that are intimately tied to and mutually reinforcing of those ideas" (Kiesling, 2007:7).

The frequent reference to masculinity as a discourse of power in this study is therefore, largely informed by Michel Foucault's definition of "discourse as a system of representation" and exposition of power. Indeed as Foucault argues, discourse in our current context is understood as "a group of statements which provides a language for talking about; a way of representing the knowledge about a particular topic at a particular historical moment" (Foucault, 1979; 1977; Hall, 2004: 72). He further posits that all discourse seeks to attain power in order to control and manipulate it for the maintenance of cultural and ideological gains (1979:94; 1977). From Foucault's standpoint we argue, in this study, that power is not the 'privilege' of a dominant group (men) who exercise it upon the dominated (women). Rather it is a product of the "divisions, inequalities and disequilibriums which occur in human relationships" (1979:94) and a "discourse about the production of knowledge through language... since all social practices entail meaning and meanings shape and influence what we do" (Hall, 1992: 291).

Nonetheless our understanding of discourse in relation to masculinities and power in *kumuse* goes beyond language; it is about language practice and context. We are, again, in tandem with Foucault's constructionist theory of meaning and representation in which he argues that discourse is seen to construct the topic, define and produce the objects of knowledge, and dictates how the topic can meaningfully be reasoned and talked about (1979:94). Therefore in this analysis, the construction of gender masculinities and power relations within *kumuse* are constantly regarded as repeated performances and discourses that can be best understood within a specific historical and social context. Like Foucault, we are only interested in understanding how aspects of masculinities and gender relations in general, are imagined and reconstructed in the *kumuse* performances as discourses that

generate and circulate power in the greater Bukusu cultural context. Ultimately, the study hopes to understand the Bukusu after-burial oratory performance, not just as a specialized, verbalized and performed creative genre, but as a coded, 'gendered' and reenacted discourse. Using illustrations drawn from aspects of its creativity and performance, character of the performer/artist, text's structure and composition, audience, context and setting and the thematic concerns, we hope to show how all these elements gesture towards masculine comportment.

More importantly, the concept of masculinity as discourse, in this context, is deliberately associated with gender power relations and the notions of male identity, manhood, manliness and men's roles in society. Underscoring similar views, Joan.W. Scott posits that gender is actually "a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power" (1986: 106). Herzfeld expresses a cognate point when he contends that masculinity by definition is "anything that men think and do, think and do to be men" and just the fact that some men are inherently or by ascription considered 'more manly' than other men (1985:16-47). But in ordinary parlance, masculinity often boils down to the considered importance of male-female relations such that masculinity is taken to be anything that women are not (Herzfeld 1985:16-47). Kiesling has argued elsewhere that masculinity is more often than not associated with 'dominance', 'authority' and 'power' and "to be a man is to be strong, authoritative and in control, especially when compared to women and also when compared to other men" (2007:7). This view of masculinity is certainly what underlines our analysis of the funeral oratory.

Incidentally, a number of scholars of African oral literature have demonstrated that oral literature texts can be used as instruments of performing power in gender relations (Hofmeyr, 1993; 1992; Benge, 2007). The same scholars have argued that there is an explicit link between how oral literary forms are constructed by regular improvisations and repetition as techniques of articulation, and how whole performances can be understood within gender knowledges (read masculinity) and power relations. Because

of the imaginativeness and creativity that is traditionally associated with the performers of this genre, *kumuse* points to an influential gender power relations and socio- cultural realities of the Bukusu society. In a way the genre appears, to echo Okot Benge's words when he posits that oral art forms "construct but …[are] more often also structurally influenced by the societal issues and communal perceptions that are continuously generated and regenerated into culturally-nuanced and cogent gender regimes" (Benge, 2007:1).

Essentially, the *kumuse* performance we analyze in this study is a genre that uses the occasion of the death of an elderly man in the society to assemble and narrate sketches of the history of the community, and underline the traditional views and ideals about life and death. This thesis is about Manguliechi's *lufu* (after-burial) performance. While there are other performers in Bukusu community who perform the same ritual, our analysis focuses on how unique he is as an oral artist. The body of the thesis demonstrates Manguliechi's contribution to an age-old tradition among Bukusu; a tradition he did not invent. More importantly, the thrust of the thesis is on the verbal skills of the performer and how he perfects them with time and experience. This study also sets out to establish how Manguliechi's funeral oratory projects a masculine agenda and portrays men as threatened and uneasy (hence anxious) with forces that are out to emasculate them. We specifically seek to demonstrate how his narrative strategies during performance portray various images of masculinity and masculine power while at the same time locating them alongside the challenges, both real and imagined, that are viewed as effeminizing or threatening the male privileges and influences.

1.2 Historical Background and Genealogy of the Bukusu sub-nation

As a study that interrogates masculinity in a cultural text, this study can't escape engaging with the Bukusu community's history. Indeed before we even set out to analyze the gender power relations in *kumuse* it is imperative that we outline a brief history of the Bukusu which, in our view, forms the basis of some of the cultural meanings that are

foregrounded in *kumuse* renditions. It is also important to have an idea of Bukusu history for the simple reason that the after-burial narration is largely a historical discourse that is used to illuminate different versions of the community's past (Simiyu, 1997; 1990).

Many conflicting and contestable accounts have been put forth in relation to the origin of the ethnic community that is today referred to as Luhya; a grouping of various Bantu sub-nationalities (the Bukusu included) that are today settled in the Western part of Kenya. There are two schools of thought. One version claims that the Luhya (or Luyia) as a tribe consists of a conglomeration of interlacustrine and autochthonous Bantu entities of East Africa that migrated from a region somewhere in between Egypt and Ethiopia and moved down along the River Nile, with splinter groups spreading to present day Cameroon, through the Congo Forest and finally settling on the north-western side of Lake Victoria sometime in the 17th Century (Makila, 1976; Osogo, 1966; 1965; Wagner, 1949).The same historians of this persuasion claim that the Luhya sub-tribes, though dissimilar and differentiated in terms of linguistic and cultural articulation, were initially one group that splintered because of different migration patterns and interaction with foreign groups. This school of historiographers also point to various cultural similarities between the sub-tribes that lend credence to the origin and use of the word '*Luyia*'. According to Makila, the word *luyia* means 'children of the same father'[1], in a polygamous setting of different mothers, in the *lubukusu* dialect (1976:16). Osogo similarly claims that the word '*Abaluyia'* means 'fellow tribesmen' a term derived from '*okhuyia*'- meaning to burn- a reference to evening bonfires that traditionally became meeting points and sources of familial pastimes (1965:7). Both Makila and Osogo agree that the Luhya subgroups can be traced back to one agnate ancestor in the distant past.

[1] This image alludes to the practice of polygamy among the Luhya which validates the point that all the sub-nations share a patrilineal heritage. The same also points to a male bias in terms of defining history and origin where men are recognized as the originators of the Luhya nation.

The veracity of this claim is obviously contestable as other historians have proven in recent studies that most Luhya sub tribes have totally different origins. Historian Bethwell Ogot argues that the term Luhya in Kenyan history is a latter day coinage (beginning around 1947) by colonialists who were keen to lump together all Bantu-speaking groups in the former region called North Kavirondo (1981:17). However, scholars of the different Luhya dialects have demonstrated that there are indeed specific phonemes, sounds, words, word structures and linguistic modes of articulation that are not just peculiarly *'luhya'* but are easily identifiable within all the dialects in terms of their meanings and etymologies (Miner, 1991).The word '*mulembe'* for example means 'peace' or 'tranquility' in all the dialects of the Luhya and is often frequently used in salutations or in reference to good social tidings. Probably because of the familiarity of this word *mulembe* in Kenyan political parlance, members of the Luhya community love to call themselves as '*abandu ba mulembe'* (people of peace)[2].

A second school of thought claims that the Luhya as a tribe is an assembly of entirely distinct and remotely-related ethnic identities that were lumped together for political expediency. Historians of this persuasion posit that the word 'Luhya' was a creation of the colonial administrators in Kenya (Makila, 2004; 1978; Ogot, 1981; Osogo, 1966;

[2] Interestingly, members of the Luhya sub-tribes regard each other with mutual suspicion. For instance, while other sub-tribes derogatively refer to the Bukusu as '*Kitosh'* (reference to what the Kalenjin called them during their war skirmishes in the 18th and 19th Centuries) the Bukusu also have derogatory monikers for other sub-tribes such as '*Wangasieki'* for the Wanga and '*Biragori'* for the Maragoli. Thus the idea of members of the various Luhya subgroups referring to each other as 'people of peace' is often used for political expediency in circumstances where the political elites seek to galvanise the community's vote as a bargaining ploy at the national stage. Lately though, the term has been conveniently adopted to popularize cultural music theme nights, otherwise dubbed *Mulembe Nights*, at the famous Nairobi entertainment joint The Carnivore

1965; Wagner, 1967). Historians like Gideon Were have even gone to the extent of positing that the Bukusu must have originated from the larger Kalenjin sub-groups that migrated through Sirikwa Hills in the northern Rift Valley, around modern day Eldoret town (Were, 1967). However, other historical records and oral folklore from Bukusu have repeatedly discounted Were's assertions. But to be fair to him, it is true that certain Bukusu clans have strong Kalenjin influences and places like *Silikwa* (Bukusu articulation of *Sirikwa*) is fondly regarded by many Bukusu clans as their cradle of origin. However, the strong Kalenjin influence on Bukusu clans is more attributable to the frequent social interactions between the two ethnic groups rather than the idea that one belongs to the other. It is therefore not entirely correct to conclude that Bukusu are wholly of Kalenjin extraction (Makila, 1978:19-21).

Indeed due to the frequent interactions and wars between Bukusu and Kalenjin groups, the Bukusu were derogatively referred to as 'Kitosh' (from the Kalenjin word 'ketoch' meaning 'warlike'). According to Chris Wanjala, the name Bukusu is fairly recent; probably a coinage from the British colonialists who categorized them together with members of the Kavirondo tribes in colonial Nyanza of the Kenya colony. However, the Bukusu originally loved to call themselves *Banambayi* (those who came from Mbayi) (Wanjala 2013). But whichever the line of historical persuasion one adopts in relation to Luhya origin, the fact remains that there actually exists an ethnic grouping in Kenya that is called Luhya of which the Bukusu are part of. It should also be remembered that the two conflicting theories of Luhya origin are heavily inundated with political undertones, ideologies and supremacy battles that are often accentuated by age-old sub-ethnic rivalries and mutual suspicions; suspicions and rivalries that easily come to the fore because of competing political interests.

The Bukusu are one of the seventeen sub-nations, or more,[3] that comprise the Baluyia cluster of the Bantu groups of the East African region. The other Baluyia sub-tribes are: Baragoli, Batiriki, Bakabaras, Batachoni, Banyore, Bakhayo, Bamarachi, Banyala, Basamia, Babesukha, Babedakho, Bakisa, Barechea, Batsotso, Bawanga, and Bamarama.[4] Bukusu inhabit parts of Bungoma district in Western Kenya and parts of Trans-Nzoia District of Rift Valley province. In addition there are also a number of Bukusu clans in the African Diaspora[5]. A good example is the Bagisu of Uganda who the Bukusu regard as their genealogical cousins.

Among the Luhya, Bukusu possess cultural identities similar to but also different from the other sub-nations. One point of difference emerges with regard to their language/dialect. According to Gunter Wagner, the Luhya people generally speak four dialects of which *Lubukusu* is one. Wagner identified the four as: *Luwanga* (Wanga), *Lulogoli* (Maragoli), *Lunyala* (Banyala) and *Lubukusu* (Bukusu) (1949: 26). In addition to Wagner's categories,[6] we can also add a fifth dialect of *Lwisukha* (for the Isukha

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[3] There are unpublished oral accounts that claim there could actually be nineteen Luhya Sub-nations. See Osogo (1965) who claims that there are 24 Luhya sub-tribes. Whether this assertion is true is also contestable because there are many theories to support and debunk the same claim.

[4] We have deliberately used the *Lubukusu* orthography to capture the pronunciation in the language

[5] Unconfirmed accounts claim that there are Bukusu related clans in Sudan, Ethiopia, Malawi, Southern Africa, Zambia, the Congo and West Africa. See Makila 1978. Nonetheless all these claims remain contestable.

[6] Research has shown that there are more than five categories of languages for the Luhya. For instance the *Banyala, Bamarachi, Bakhayo, Batura and Basamia* sub tribes who live in Busia Kenya have an entirely different dialect of language which is distinct from the rest of the Luhya

which is related to *Lwidakho* for the Idakho) which is spoken around Kakamega District in Western Kenya. While four of the dialects (*Lulogoli, Lwisukha, Lunyala* and *Luwanga*) easily exhibit similarities and convergence in terms of orthography and word meanings, *Lubukusu* is quite distinct such that some words in it do not make any sense in the other dialects. For example while a cow is called '*ing'ombe'* in *Lulogoli, Lwisukha* and *Luwanga* dialects it is called '*ekhafu'* in *lubukusu*. Even more striking is the word '*omutwi'* which in *Lulogoli* means 'head' but in *Lubukusu* it means 'anus'. These dialectical differences in linguistic etymologies and semantic categories could probably be historically explained by the initial instances of ethnic separation where some prototype cultural features were lost as alien ones were picked and fused within the Luhya culture (Makila, 1978). There were also instances where certain sub-tribes borrowed from other non-Luhya groups (ibid). All in all, it seems from the linguistic differences, that each dialect sought to acquire its own individual features in different places and times through deliberate or inadvertent contact with foreign cultures (Makila, 1976:53). These linguistic differences still exist to this day.

Bukusu as a Luhya sub-nation are traditionally divided into clan clusters[7] that have clearly defined and emotive historical anecdotes, introductory praises and totems that are proudly acknowledged and regularly expressed to justify their identity. Furthermore, each clan's origins are also vocalized as sources of self-praise through pompous exposition of societal achievements which are orally documented in common knowledge that is jealously claimed and flaunted by each clan member. For instance, a Bukusu

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dialects. This issue certainly affirms the view that the Luhya's are different ethnic groups that have huge linguistic disparities.

[7] Oral accounts have it that there are actually six clan clusters that have a strong bearing on the migration patterns and history of the Bukusu. See Makila (1978: 48-113)

member of the Bakhone clan which I belong to will traditionally introduce his clan lineage by praising himself thus in *Lubukusu*: "*Ese Nakhone, Omuriti, Namalukwa, Bamwalie, basilambongo; bambukha Njoya khumufunje*[8] *bakwa engelekha khuluusi*" (Trans. "I am *Nakhone, Omuriti*, my mother is *Namalukwa*, from the *Bamwalie* cluster, we don't eat antelope meat, the ones who crossed River Nzoia on a rope bridge and landed on the other side on a thread"). In this praise introduction the one who expresses himself this way is certainly proud of his Bakhone clan genealogy and doesn't hesitate to gloat about it to those who don't know him well. Later on in this study we will examine in detail how such salutation praises (alluded to and foregrounded by the funeral reciter) are used to calcify Bukusu ethnic identity and nationalism.

But the Bukusu identity is perhaps most distinct from other Luhya ethnic identities in the manner in which they have continued to practice male circumcision and the cultural premium that is attached to the ritual. 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 an elephant'[9] but as '*bandu basani'* meaning a 'community of circumcised men'. As a way of invoking the masculine pride in this initiation rite,

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[8] *Kumufunje* in Bukusu craft is a traditional suspension bridge that is woven from a combination of sisal ropes and tough creepers. Such bridges are specifically made by especially skilled men. In the above anecdote the Bakhone take pride in having been the first clan to learn how to use such artistry to enable them to cross the mighty River Nzoia, a river that crisscrosses a huge part of Western Kenya and pours it waters into Lake Victoria.

[9] See also Makila (1978: 48-53). This metaphor is often invoked to galvanise the members of the community in relation to their ability to co-opt other communities into their cultural fold. Historically this statement, it is alleged, was first uttered by Nabongo Mumia of the Wanga in his acknowledgement of the cultural steadfastness of the Bukusu during the colonial era. See also Wagner (1967).

traditional Bukusu often swear by the circumciser's knife thus; "*nakhubea bakheba khabili*" (If I am lying let me be circumcised again). 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 (Makila, 1978: 48; Manguliechi, 2008).[10] More so declaration of one's clan and pride in its shared social-cultural history is regarded as a fierce pledge to stick to the Bukusu collective past. It is this special attachment to the Bukusu history that is reassembled and retold by the funeral reciter in the after-burial oratory performance.

As Chris Wanjala correctly puts it, "*kumuse* means the foundation of the community" and when the funeral reciter describes a line inside the oval shape of the arena formed by the audience during performance, he is literally taking back his listeners to the essence and core foundations of the community's culture and history (1985). In a sense, the purpose of assembling at the home of the deceased person on the third day after burial (*lufu*) is for the community and the throngs of mourners to go back to the foundation of the living community (Wanjala 2013). Nonetheless, the carnivalesque nature of this ritual is often more emphasized by the reciter than the apparent solemn mood occasioned by death of the individual (Wanjala 2013).

1.3 Justification of the study

Oral literary scholarship has a rich archive that has probed a series of formal and sociological questions. From issues of composition-in-performance as originally articulated by Albert Lord and Milman Parry, dimensions of performance (Baumann

[10] Among the Bukusu, circumcision remains one of the most revered and respected initiation rituals that continues to be a focus of social definition of a man whether alive or dead. In fact it is circumcision age-sets that are invoked to estimate a man's age and therefore used to accord him the necessary respectability.

1977; Briggs and Baumann, 1990), gender and metacommunication (Kratz 1994), to orality, literacy, history and textuality (Barber, 1992; Finnegan, 2010; Hofmeyr, 1993;1992; Benge, 2007), the range of issues analyzed by oral literature scholars has been endless. In their pioneering study on oral formulae in Serbo-Croatian tales, Lord and Parry, for instance, focused on the distinctive features and capacities required to generate lengthy oral epics and the use of oral formulas in enabling composition-in-performances as opposed to rote-memorization and completely spontaneous improvisation (cited in Barber 2007:70). In many ways, Lord and Parry's brilliant demonstration of how different oral traditions deploy oral formulas was adopted as a paradigm for reading oral literature forms that were initially not regarded as formulaic so to speak. More importantly, the oral formulaic paradigm as specifically expounded in Albert Lord's *Singer of Tales*, helped not only to shift focus from text to performance, but to train more attention on what Barber calls "the emergent, ephemeral, embodied, interactive and responsive qualities of living genres" (Barber 2001:70). Referring to the same issue but focusing more on the different dimensions of performance, Baumann and Briggs coined the term 'entextualization' to refer to "the process of rendering discourse extractable, of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit - a text - that can be lifted out of its interactional setting" (1990:73). They further emphasized that it is the act of speaking fostered by performance that demarcates stretches of discourse for special attention as texts (cited in Barber 2007:71). Both views by Lord and Parry and Briggs and Baumann are useful to our current analysis. For instance the ideas of oral formula and the different dimensions of oral performances are examined at length in chapter 4 where we discuss the narrative properties and textual features of the *kumuse* performance.

From the views of scholars mentioned above, this thesis attempts to build on similar ideas but also seeks to test the veracity of the same views using raw data related to *kumuse* performances in order to engage with similar theoretical grounds regarding textuality and performance in narrative genres. Yet like all other areas of inquiry oral

literature has had to engage with broader areas beyond text and performance that have constantly entered the academy, if not attracted the attention of literary scholars. Gender is one such issue which for a long time has attracted a lot of scholarly attention from literary critics. Evan Mwangi rightly concurs that gender has been at the centre of African metafiction and orature for many years (2009:51). Mbembe echoes similar sentiments when he notes that "sex and gender norms have historically been central to the structure of power relations and to the organization of cultural categories in Africa" (c.f. Mwangi 2009). However, it is evident that more still needs to be done in order to exhaustively problematize the complexities not just of gender identities and interactions but the attendant power discourses and matrices within the context of oral literature forms.

Various scholars have attempted to grapple with the issue of gender in Kenyan oral literature. For instance Ciarunji Chesaina examines in detail the portrayal of Kalenjin, Embu and Mbeere women of Kenya (Chesaina, 1991; 1994). In her rigorous analysis of the images of women in oral narratives collected from the three communities, she observes that more often than not women are not just negatively portrayed but are regarded as 'non-persons' who can only be appendages (either as wives or mothers) of the males who are regarded as persons. Similarly, Wanjiku Kabira singles out the case study of *Kabebe*, a Kikuyu artist, to illustrate the gender dynamics in traditional storytelling (1997). In the analysis of gender in Kenyan oral art forms, these two pioneering analyses emphasize the view that women were victims of male hegemonies rather than being active participants in attempts at subverting perceived or actual male dominance. Granted, a more theoretically nuanced analysis could have been achieved if the two scholars had attempted a more balanced examination of the depiction of both male and female. All the same their efforts are still laudable and useful starting points of any gendered analysis of Kenya oral literature. Our current study hopes to cumulatively build on these early gender analyses of oral art forms.

In his analysis of gender identity construction and power relations in the Acoli song performance, Okot Benge offers a more detailed and balanced analysis when he observes that the investigation of oral literature forms is "bound to reveal their dominant gender perceptions" (2007:1). In his view oral literary forms (in his case songs) not only portray the dominant gender ideologies and relations in society but are also equally involved in their reproduction and/or contestation (2007:2). Further underscoring the fact that oral literature forms are not only conduits of culture but means through which social perceptions and relations are expressed, reproduced and redressed, Benge argues that oral literature is always adjusting to changing realities and social imperatives that are often captured and articulated through oral literature performances. What we can gather from Benge's view that is useful for this study is his appreciation of the manner in which oral art forms are deployed as powerful tools of highlighting gender ideology especially in socializations processes and cultural texts (2007:2).

In an even more incisive acknowledgement of the role of oral literature in engendering societal processes, Hofmeyr posits that the limitations of gender struggles that circumscribe women's lives are more apparent in the contexts of speech and performance (1993:27-28). Using illustrations from extracts of an oral historical narrative from among the people of Mokopane/Valtyn, a Sotho-Ndebele chiefdom in the small town of what was then Potgietersrust in Transvaal, South Africa, she examines the impact of orality and literacy on a colonial community and illustrates the role of story-telling on history and discourse. In her study she notes that *nonwane/ntsomi* (oral narratives) which is often dismissed as imaginary stories are regarded as a female genre while the more factual historical stories of conquest are viewed as a male domain (1993:30). The highly gendered nature of the oral narratives is best demonstrated by one of Hofmeyr's informants who say that "stories cannot be separated from men and women" (1993:30). From her findings she also noted how *dinonwane* (oral narratives by women) gave females some power to influence the minds of children. One thing from Hofmeyr's work that is useful to our study is her demonstration of how gender is central

to oral literature practice and analysis of specific oral literature texts. Indeed her detailed and careful illustration of the interdependence between gender, genre and context on one hand and history and textuality on the other is an idea that will greatly benefit this study.

From our brief examination of works that deal with gender and oral literature in the African context, it is evident that a lot more needs to be done to problematize gender and masculinity in African oral literature. Indeed a more gender-nuanced analysis of a narrative performance like *kumuse* must of necessity benefit by engaging a critical examination of the structure and, content of the text; take cognizance of the attitude of the performer and audience; reckon with the communicative and metacommunicative modes of text delivery, and fully understand the cultural significance of the occasion of each performance. To echo the words of Hofmeyr, in order for any oral literary analysis "to navigate the gender terrain properly, one requires a degree of historical and sociological finesse…one also needs to lift one's eyes from the literary text and venture into other types of discourses" (1992:91). In essence, this analysis relies on a systematic dissection of recorded oral narrations of *kumuse*, but at the same time trains focus on the Bukusu formal and socio-cultural context of performing the genre in order to fully appreciate the gender power relations within the structural and rhetorical aesthetics of its live performances.

The rationale for this study emanates from the fact that very little research has been done on gender and masculinity in folklores genres in general and those that deal with death specifically. In fact most of the work done on gender in African literatures and folklore has generally focused on feminism and the representation of women African literature rather than an all round exegesis of both men and women. For instance one common thread that features in many pioneering works of oral literature in Kenya were attempts to validate the need to study African oral art forms; much like deliberate initiatives to juxtapose orality with literacy, performance and the written text or in some cases an emphasis on classifying, documenting and archiving marginalized and disappearing oral art forms (Chesaina, 1991; 1997; Kabira & Mutahi, 1988; Kabira,

1983;1991;1997; Kabira & Mutahi, 1988; Kavetsa & Kabira 1985; Kipury, 1983; Lo Liyong, 1972; Miruka, 1994;2001).

This study opens up for discussion new frontiers in the 'power and masculinity debate' by studying men as instrumental actors in the production and performance of folklore associated with the dead. The study seeks to appreciate men as cultural initiators of gendered images and actions through folklore performances. This study is probably one of the most deliberate initiatives in that direction.

The use of masculinities as a theoretical tool of understanding the funeral recitation seeks to open new vistas of debate. By recognizing the centrality of performance as an ingredient of a gender analysis this study validates the argument that the true textuality of an oral art form exists in its actual performance (Barber & de Moraes Farias 1989:1-2). Overall, the study's emphasis on masculine intentions in relation to a death folklore performance certainly generates interest in terms of literary theorizing on the issue of men, gender politics and oral art studies. This analysis is also a timely recognition of the role of *Lubukusu* language and many other indigenous languages in folklore translation studies.

1.4 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

As an investigation of the gender dimensions in an oral genre, this study has extensively relied on ethnographic methods of research and data collection. Brewer (2000) underscores 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 meanings 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 study benefitted from ethnographic techniques because they permitted us access to Bukusu cultural meanings of *kumuse* and masculinity through "a close association and familiarity with the social setting" (Brewer 2000:10). The methods afforded us a full appreciation of the context of *kumuse* and the larger Bukusu society because they helped us to "grasp the native's point of view…and realize his vision of the world" (Malinowski 1922:25). Indeed there were instances during my fieldwork research when I had to literally track the 'daily routines' of Manguliechi (December 2007-September 2008) in order to get information from him in the most natural way (Denzin, 1997, Whitehead, 2005). Other techniques I used in this study included informal and semi-structured in-depth interviews, analysis of transcribed texts, personal documents and vignettes; participatory observation; use of fieldwork notes and secondary data analysis of material from archives, written reference material and recorded materials.[11]

The texts we analyze in this study are two audio-recordings and a video clip of a recorded live performance by a funeral performer called John Wanyonyi Manguliechi, who was chosen among other reciters because of his strong reputation, wide acclaim and respectable rhetorical prowess, something confirmed by my fieldwork research. Overall, my social standing as a native speaker of *Lubukusu* and my earlier interactions with Manguliechi and many other people who are cultural enthusiasts, made it easy for me to access six recorded texts of the ritual which had earlier been collected by Mr. Kimingichi Wabende, a lecturer in Drama and Theatre at University of Nairobi. However, the video-recorded text was my own, a recording I had earlier done during the Manguliechi's performance at the late Hon. Michael Wamalwa funeral on 10th September 2003. The

[11] For more on the efficacy of these ethnographic methods see also Brewer (2000) and Denzin (1997), Fettterman (1998) and Whitehead (2005). Though they give illustrations related to anthropological studies but I found their discussion of ethnography useful to my research methodology.

audio-tape recordings were done by Mr. Kimingichi and his research assistant Julie Mayeku on various occasions between the years 2000 and 2009. From conversations I had with him, all his recordings were physically done at live *lufu* congregations that he attended. But for analysis I have settled on three recorded texts which I transcribed and translated. The texts (one video and two audio) were chosen - because of their picture and audio clarity. The recordings are supplemented by ten pre-arranged interviews with the oral artist Wanyonyi Manguliechi at his Maturu village, Kimilili,[12] Bungoma in Western Kenya (See figure 1 and 2 on pages 20-21). In total I did 20 pre-arranged interviews (10 with Manguliechi and 10 with 6 different Bukusu cultural experts) which shed light on the cultural practices of the Bukusu. The interviews were useful in understanding the socio-cultural contexts, processes and meanings within the Bukusu cultural systems (Brewer 1991). I also took a several still photographs some of which appear in the appendices of this thesis.

[12] Kimilili town lies on the north eastern part of the greater Bungoma district overlooking the slopes of Mt. Elgon in the north western side; approximately 5 kilometres north of Manguliechi's home in Maturu Village of Kibingei Location along the Bungoma - Kimilili road. His home is 30 kilometres from Bungoma town and about 450 kilometres from Nairobi, Kenya's capital. Kimilili is bordered by Tongaren Division in the East, Webuye town in the south east, Chwele and Sirisia Divisions in the west and Mt. Elgon District in the north. It's a fertile region with deep cotton and volcanic soils with sprouting flush forest canopies and crops such as maize, beans, coffee, cassava, sunflower, and many other crops. Some families in the region also keep cattle, sheep, goats, poultry and rabbits for subsistence purposes.

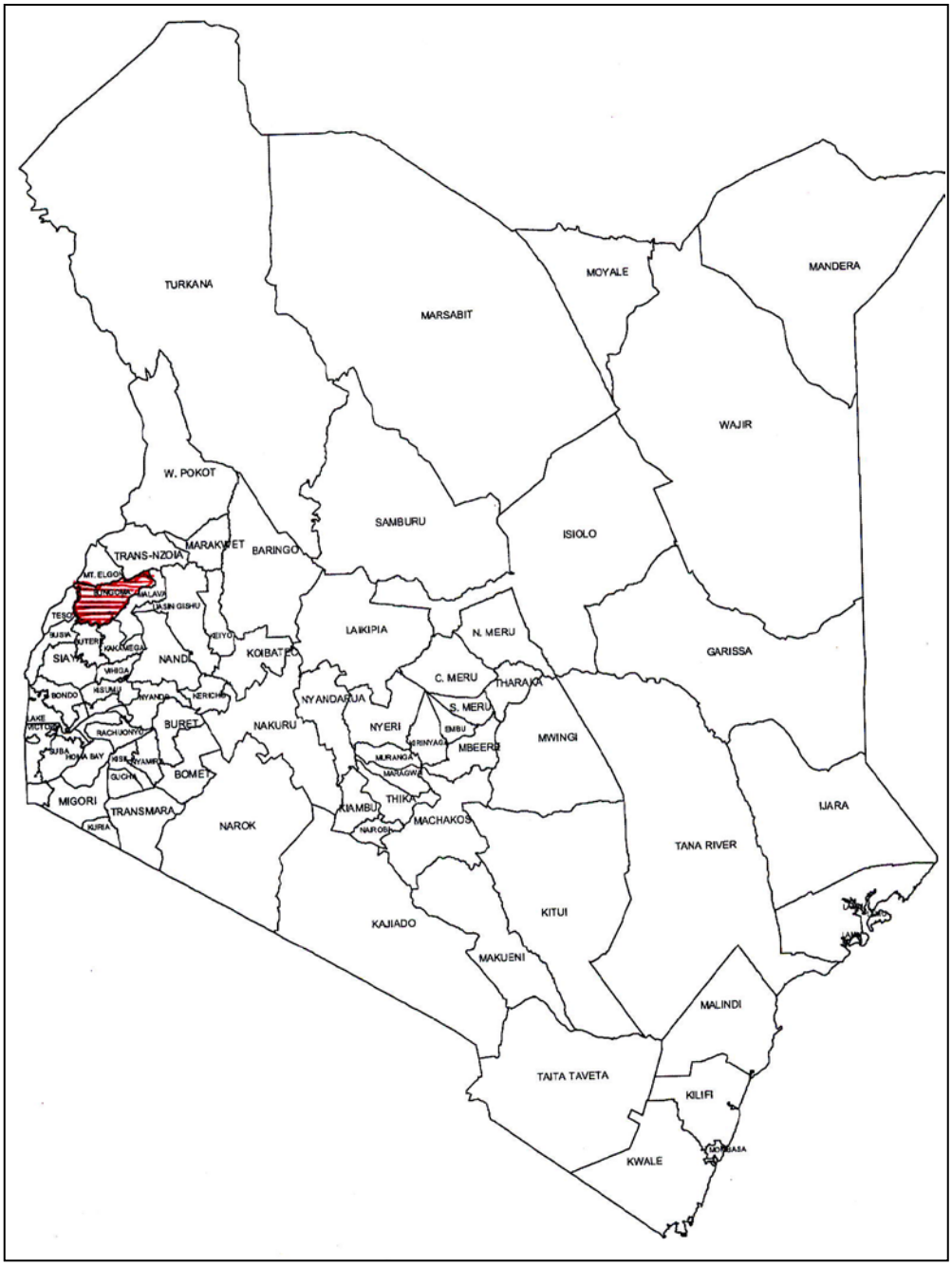


Fig.1: A Map of Kenya showing Bungoma District and other parts

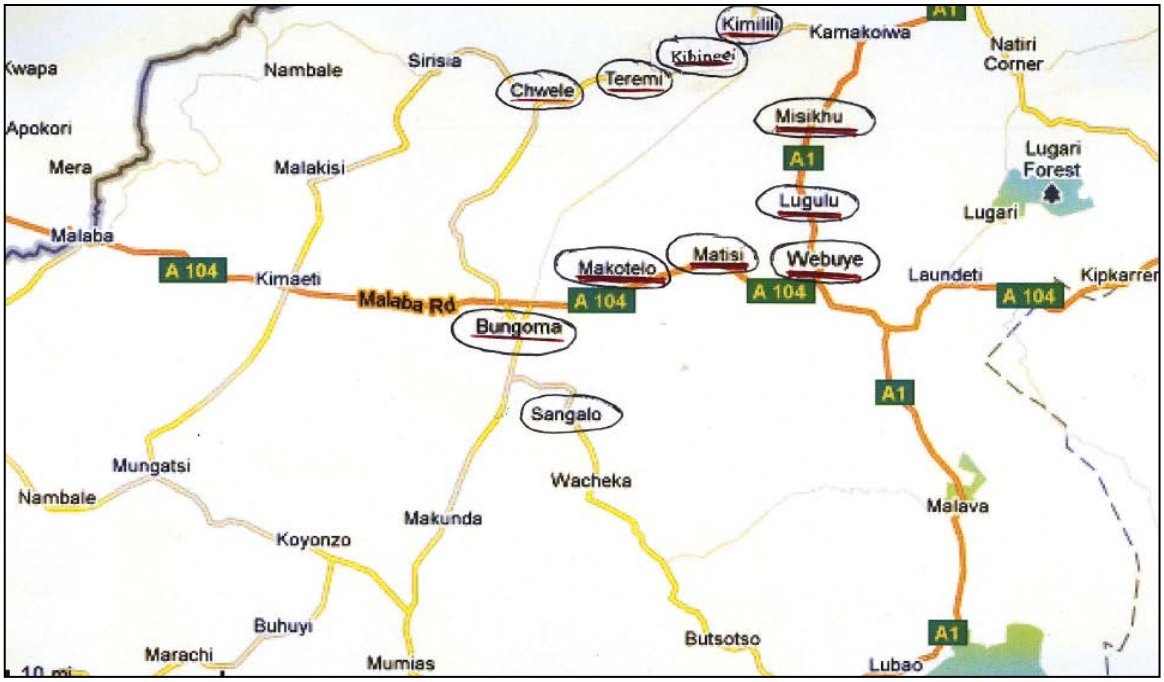


Figure 2: Details of the study area (Kimilili) in relation to other administrative centres in Bungoma District and Western Kenya.

Incidentally, before embarking on this research, I had earlier watched Manguliechi perform on five different occasions. However after commencing the research formally, an occasion for a performance never arose. I was however fortunate to access six tapes of Manguliechi's narrations. My research is hence based on these recordings supplemented by my experience of witnessing his performances before the research started as well as frequent interviews with him which helped clarify the many gaps in my translations and transcriptions. It was also through the interviews that I picked out his personal opinions on various aspects of traditional Bukusu culture and masculinity. In addition I interviewed Kimingichi Wabende, a drama teacher, Bob Wekesa, a journalist and political biographer, Joseph Wanjala, a retired district magistrate with immense knowledge on Bukusu culture and traditions, Charles Katiambo, a retired school teacher and member of the Bukusu Council of Elders, Ben Lubisia (retired teacher) and my own father Julius Wasike (also a retired teacher). All my interviewees were chosen on the

basis of their considerable interest and knowledge on Bukusu culture and funeral oratory. Mr. Kimingichi's research and recordings on Manguliechi's performances which he had collected over a period of 10 years (between 2000 -2009) were particularly illuminating and beneficial to my analysis.

The still photos, video and audio recordings were also helpful in shading light and capturing live moments and comments on issues about *kumuse.* Significantly, performative elements such as the artist's movements in the arena, audience participation, gestures and facial expressions, setting, voice production and variation, songs and other sound and aesthetic effects of the text were only fully appreciated because of the video technology. However, in the process of transcribing the oral texts I was faced with a number of challenges. To begin with, it wasn't easy to translate precisely some words from *Lubukusu* to English because it was difficult to process the contexts of their meanings. In some cases I had to include comments (almost like stage directions in drama) within the transcribed texts just to capture word meanings and the performance dynamics of live narrations. But in my analysis I make use of both linguistic and paralinguistic aspects to interpret the texts.

As a genre that is used to narrativize history, *kumuse* performance inadvertently lends itself to a historical analysis. In a way therefore our analysis couldn't avoid engaging with historical methodologies of reading oral genres. Theoretically, this study acknowledges the funeral oratory as a site of history-making and a 'kernel of historical truth' (Vansina, 1965:4); a genre that requires historical and sociological finesse to appropriately analyze and appreciate it (Hofmeyr, 1992:91). Further, this study deploys gender as analytical tool of understanding societal power relations as expressed within an oral genre which often contains political undertones. The study borrows from a methodology that is adumbrated by Nancy Hunt's assertion in which she values "masculinity as a theme, gender… as an analytic... [and] men as subjects and authors of gendered histories" (1996:323).

1.5 Chapter Break down.

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter One highlights the aims of the study and seeks to define some of the common terminologies that are used in this thesis. The chapter also briefly outlines the background history of the Bukusu society in order to lay a strong socio-cultural foundation and context within which *kumuse* needs to be understood. In the same section, I also offer a justification for this research; explain the methods of data collection used and a brief mention on the theoretical tools of analysis.

Chapter Two describes some of the death and funerary practices of the Bukusu. Because the genre is almost exclusively identified with the Bukusu (except the Tachoni) among the Luhya, cultural details on funerary customs of the community are outlaid for purposes of putting the funeral oratory into perspective. In the same chapter we also review the scholarly literature that has been produced on this genre in the Kenyan context. The same literature review goes further to, not only compare *kumuse* with other narrative genres in Africa, but also attempts to problematize the concept of masculinity within an African context (Bukusu context to be specific) with a view of assessing its appropriateness as a critical framework for analyzing and understanding the gender ramifications and hierarchies that are constructed and anticipated during the text's actual performance.

Chapter Three outlines the biographical details of the main oral artist John Wanyonyi Manguliechi, but more significantly, illustrates how the funeral reciter literally and symbolically performs and articulates masculinity both in person and as an embodiment of masculine authority within the performance arena. The chapter is a critical discussion of the oral artist's role as an embodiment of the masculine imagination and articulation in the text's performance. By outlining his personal life and describing the taboos, apprenticeship and performance regalia of *kumuse*, the chapter demonstrates how the oral artist's personality alongside his text simultaneously contribute to the interplay of gender relations and power discourses.

Chapter Four deals with issues of structure, content and context of the *kumuse* text, and specifically examines the general structural features of some of the recorded narrations by Manguliechi and the use of the performance space. Although *kumuse* doesn't have a conventional or formulaic structure and format of presentation, there is still a semblance of sequential order of narration that emerges and recurs in Manguliechi's renditions. To examine and unravel what appears to be an elusive structure and textual characteristics of *kumuse*, the chapter looks at the opening and closing formulae, the usage of idioms, anecdotes, axioms, images, metaphors, proverbs, clichés, songs, parables, and riddles as elements that can help define the textuality of Manguliechi's funeral narrations. More importantly, we also argue in this chapter that while *kumuse* is essentially conceived as a male-biased genre it is nonetheless an open-ended, structurally amorphous, loose and 'indisciplined' form that relies on the context of a specific occasion, the dead man and the male performer to unify and masculinize its structure, content and oral stylistics.

Chapter Five engages with Bukusu male circumcision and how this male rite of passage is incorporated into the masculinist themes and sexualized imagery of *kumuse*. In this section, I argue that circumcision as benchmark of Bukusu masculinity creates anxiety; an anxiety that seems to be overplayed on every occasion of a male death. Tracing the genealogy of circumcision among the Bukusu, the chapter argues that the funeral performer uses his performance to explore the various ways in which male circumcision is invoked by men to justify their masculinity. However, it is also evident from his narration that circumcision alone is not a sufficient yardstick of masculinity. The chapter also shows how masculine metaphors of fertility and virility are used by the funeral orator to underscore the masculinist concerns of kumuse.

In Chapter Six, we dwell on the thematic issue of ethnic identities, nationalism, and masculinities. The chapter examines the role that *kumuse* plays in narrativizing history in order to accentuate ethnic identities and nationalism. By looking at the correlation between history, masculinity and ethnicity in terms of the past events and personalities

that the narrator talks about, the chapter argues that the narrator is in fact an oral historian who retrieves cultural knowledge from the community's oral archives for use in his narratives. The chapter also observes how the funeral reciter privileges certain events, issues and individuals from the past in order to protect masculine interests, highlight communal ethnic pride and to territorialize the collective Bukusu ethnic identity.

In Chapter Seven we identify and explain some of the emerging forms of modern masculinities that are a departure from the idealized and traditional forms. The chapter critically looks at how issues of colonialism which ushered modernity in terms of education, Christianity and changing social settings have influenced *kumuse* performers and consequently reengineered new ways of imagining the Bukusu man and his power relations in a monetized and capitalistic economy. Through a juxtaposition of old patriarchies and new modern masculinities in this chapter we argue that while older Bukusu men used cultural institutions like *kumuse* and circumcision to fix, control and discipline young men and women, the modern reality is making it increasingly difficult for them to depend on such traditional institutions of ideological control. The tension between old traditional masculinities and new contemporary masculinities, we argue, calls for a rethink on new trajectories of performing masculinity. Finally by way of conclusion, Chapter Eight summarizes the major thematic and theoretical issues raised in the course of the analysis and points out areas for future research on *kumuse* and masculinities.

Chapter 2

Contextualizing the Funeral Oratory: Bukusu Death Practices, African Narrative Genres and Masculinities

Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

(Shakespeare. *Julius Caesar*).

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the Bukusu traditional practices and views on death while linking them with the concept of masculinity. The chapter also attempts a critical survey of scholarly work that has been done on the Bukusu funeral oratory and other narrative genres in Africa that have similar characteristics. Our examination of cultural practices on death sheds light on the aspects of the community's traditions that have a bearing in understanding the socio-cultural and philosophical genealogies of *kumuse* performances.

This chapter also engages with the theoretical tenets of masculinity and their relevance in the interpretation and analysis of the power discourses and gender relations in *kumuse*. Overall, the chapter is a literature review of Bukusu death practices, the *kumuse* genre vis-à-vis other African narrative genres and masculinities. The chapter seeks to contextualize the *kumuse* funeral oratory in relation to Bukusu death practices, other African narrative genres, the theoretical underpinnings of masculinity and the gender dimensions in the Bukusu society. Such a link, in my view, is fundamental in understanding the power discourses and gender relations that are highlighted by the funeral reciter.

2.2 Bukusu Death Customs and Practices.

In many African communities, the concepts of life and death are given various interpretations. Malinowski observes that, "death causes a great and permanent disturbance in the equilibrium of tribal life" (1922:490). But even as death is acknowledged as disruptive and constituting a "partial destruction of cohesion" and "disorganization of normal social life" (Radcliffe-Brown, 1948:285), death brings into sharp focus a society's "cultural values by which people live their lives and evaluate their experiences" (Huntington & Metcalf, 1979:2). But from a gender perspective, death is not just a disruptive force; it also threatens the socially-constructed hierarchies and sexualized cultural regimes in the world of the living.

For the traditional Bukusu death is not just the instantaneous loss of a human life; rather it is the whole process that invokes thoughts of pain, anger, discomfort, loss, separation from loved ones and things we cherish in life and the general cessation of experiencing life as we know it (Perrett, 1987:1). The gravity of these emotions and thoughts depends on the gender, age and status of the deceased. For instance, it is generally believed that the deaths of young well-educated adults who are in the prime age of their lives are regarded as most painful. However the death of an elderly man in his twilight years who had probably achieved various social and economic successes or serving as community chief or political leader is treated more as a culmination of a life well lived rather than an occasion to grief (interview with Lubisia, 4 July 2008).

Generally, the Bukusu regard death with a mixture of fear and reverence, a mixture of awe and trepidation bordering on palpable anxiety which is, consciously or unconsciously, projected even in ordinary banter and interactions during occasions of death. The *Lubukusu* word '*khufwa'* that connotes 'termination of life' is rarely used in live contexts of real grief. Instead various idioms, images and euphemisms that allude to the physical loss of life are used. Terms such as '*khutiba'* (getting lost), '*kakhulekhile'*- (he has left us), '*khukona'* (sleeping), '*khulota engo'* (going home), '*khuhulukha'* (resting), '*liloba liamulia'* (the soil has eaten him), '*kaluswalilekho'* (he has hit the road),

and '*khucha emakombe'* (going to the spiritual world) are frequently used as referents to capture the different moods and attitudes that are associated with the cultural meanings of death. For instance, if the deceased was an elderly man who had been ailing for some time before his death, the general conversation at such a funeral will be punctuated by statements like; '*Papa kahulukhile'* (trans. Our father has finally rested). But in a situation where a successful young adult male dies abruptly probably in a motor accident or other sudden and unclear circumstances, mourners will wail and mutter statements like, "*Papa akhalikhe, Papa abele omusindikilisie*" (trans. Our son's life was snuffed prematurely; our son was pushed to his death). At such funerals emotions often run high especially if there are unconfirmed allegations that the deceased might have been lured to his death through witchcraft (interview with Manguliechi, 3 June 2008; interview with Lubisia, 3 July 2008).

In the Bukusu world view, death and life are closely linked. For one, death is not looked at as the end, termination or alteration of life or the personality of an individual. Rather, death only manages to redefine and change the conditions or status of life. To borrow Horton's words, death presents an opportunity for a person's transition from mortality to immortality as an ancestor and it is through death that "new ancestors emerge and the funeral rite is…a way of coping with anxiety and grief" (Horton 1970: 68). Though accepted as inevitable, the death of a child or a young successful person is still viewed as evil (interview with Manguliechi, 4 August 2008). Such a death is often looked at as a product of evil forces from outside that are jealous of the dead person or the kindred's achievements. On many occasions, witches, envious neighbors or peculiar circumstances are the prime suspects and magical protection and divine powers may be sought to prevent a repeat of such death in the same family. However death from natural causes and particularly from old age is considered to be normal and is readily accepted and even celebrated as a milestone. For the Bukusu, a successful and respectable adult who dies under what are considered 'normal circumstances' *(khufwa sisecha*) will always be accorded the honor of a good and celebratory funeral. Such revered

personalities are given befitting burials and funerals almost like send-off celebrations with little grief. Overall, sudden death in the Bukusu mindset is seen as caused by an external force and not just 'natural' or 'normal'. Indeed even when a man dies of old age, people are wont to ask if he had disagreed or quarrelled with any one prior to his death, or if he had acquired any property in the recent past (interview with Lubisia, 3 July 2008).

The Bukusu also perceive death as the beginning of a new relationship with the after-world, which is inhabited by ancestors who died before but continue to 'live' and communicate with their families. They generally hold the view that death is a transition from a physical materiality to a higher spiritual reality where life then goes on for eternity (interview with Manguliechi, 2008). They traditionally believed that upon death the spirit of the deceased person hovered around the homestead, sometimes resting on nearby trees, but generally restless until certain requisite rituals, customs and sacrifices are carried out to appease it and subsequently allow the deceased to join the spiritual world (Makila 2004: 156). Thus in the community's sense of social hierarchy, every man aspires to be remembered after they have graduated to the uppermost status in the "land of ancestors".[13] For this reason it is necessary that every person be given a proper burial without which, it is feared, the dead person might turn into 'a wandering ghost' and a danger to those who are still alive. A proper burial is therefore a guarantee of peace to the living and a respectable and secure passage for the dead (Makila, 2004:155; 1978: 46).[14]

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[13] The Bukusu refer to ancestors as *bakuka* - our grandfathers - and the land of ancestors literally means '*emakombe*'- spirit world or '*ebakuka'* - land of our dead grandfathers

[14] Among the Bukusu, it is believed that if a person is not accorded a good burial, he/she will turn into *sisieno* a 'stubborn and troublesome ghost' that will torment those who are still alive.

Within the Bukusu cultural world view there is what might be considered 'good deaths' and 'bad deaths'. A good death is that of an elderly person well past his prime age. A 'bad death' on the other hand is considered abominable and disgraceful and generally involves matters that are culturally unacceptable e.g. death by suicide, drowning, infectious and strange diseases (including HIV/AIDS and Leprosy), taboo and curse conditions (interview with Manguliechi, 4 August 2008). Ordinarily, an elderly Bukusu man of high social standing ought to sufficiently prepare his family and kinsmen before finally 'bowing out' in a dignified manner (interview with Mzee Wanjala, 3rd December 2008). The argument is that a 'real man should die like a man' with his dignity intact and social station unblemished; almost as if he was daring death and demonstrating that he has control over it (interview with Wabende, 4 July 2008; interview with Wekesa, 6 July 2008).Thus when a Bukusu elderly man fell sick, the family would take it upon themselves to do all they could to make him recover, but when the illness persisted the patient would be moved from one wife's hut to another in a desperate attempt to shake off the evil spell that might be causing his illness (Makila, 2004:155-159). But when the sickness worsened, a special traditional hut called '*lisali'* would be erected in a discreet location behind the main house so as to keep the ailing person away from potential visitors who might have evil intentions that would hamper his quick recovery (Makila, 2004:155; interview with Manguliechi, 4 August 2008).

When the sickness worsened and defied all forms of traditional medication, a last ditch attempt would be made to seek divine intervention. Based on the diviner's prescriptions, often a sacrificial animal (an ox or bull) would be slaughtered and its entrails examined for any good or bad omens related to the man's sickness (interview with Mzee Wanjala, 5 December 2008; interview with Mwalimu Katiambo, 3 November 2008). The ailing man would also use this occasion to summon all the close family members, including sons, daughters, grandchildren and other close relatives to his deathbed for a last evening of reunion almost the equivalent of a last supper, where the sick man takes time to bless all those he will be leaving behind, pays his last respects and

gives his final wishes (interview with Mwalimu Lubisia, 3 July 2008; interview with Manguliechi, 4 August 2008). It is also believed that on such occasions the ailing old man can easily detect his enemies, pass his curse on errant children and punish all those malicious friends, relatives and neighbours who pretend to be good (interview with Manguliechi, 3 June 2008). At the end of this session, cud from the animal's innards were usually scattered all over the compound with some pieces of meat shared out to attending relatives. After this, no ritual sacrifice was supposed to be performed towards the patient's health until he either recovered or passed on (Makila, 2004:156). Since polygamy was a common traditional practice, it was always expected that an ailing man would be domiciled in the hut of his senior most wife. But in the event of the first wife either being divorced or separated from her deceased husband but not remarried to another man, she would be called upon to come back and nurse the sick man in his last days (Makila, 2004:157).

Once a person was certified as dead, leather straps (*bikhoba*) or banana bark strappings (*kamakhola*) were used for holding the jaws of the corpse by passing the strap below the lower jaw and tying it across the head to prevent the mouth from gaping (interview with Mwalimu Lubisia 3 July 2008). The death of a senior male member was always announced by sporadic wails of women and other female relatives such as wives, sisters and daughters. The wails would quickly spread and echo across the villages as other relatives and neighbours got news of the bereavement and joined in the chorus of mourning and hurried to assemble at the home of the deceased to condole with the grieving relatives (Makila 2004:156). A 'good death' is when a man passes on sometime at night or in the afternoon. But should a person die early in the morning, the announcement of his death and funeral would be postponed and wailing discouraged until the late afternoon (interview with Manguliechi, 4 August 2008). The reason for such restraint, according to Manguliechi, was to avoid the disruptive nature of breaking the sad news, which would certainly disorganize many urgent and important daily routines and activities (interview with Manguliechi, 4 July 2008).

On the morning after the death of a man in a Bukusu family, claims Lubisia, the first wife carrying the late husband's favourite traditional spear (*lifumo*) and shield (*engabo*) would lead the rest of the wailing procession of widows and women relatives as they crisscrossed the length and breadth of the village singing dirges (2008). The women wore ankle-bells (*bichenje*) and decorated their faces with a special ash called '*bukhuchakali*'. The mourning retinue of women also wore banana fibre ribbons (*kamakhola*) around their heads, necks and ankles to signify the onset of a solemn mourning period (interview with Lubisia, 3 July 2008). Henceforth, the body of the deceased man would lie in state for at least one night in his senior wife's house before burial. But in situations where the deceased was a prominent clan elder, chief or political figure, the body would most likely lie in state for as long possible until the majority of his kin and family members had assembled (interview with Mzee Wanjala, 4 December 2008).

Because death is regarded as a transition from one stage of life to another, care is taken among the Bukusu to ensure that the correct passage rites are performed to smooth the dead person's journey to the world of spirits. At such ceremonies, a fattened bull, is slaughtered in the evening after a man's death for the purpose of undertaking what the Bukusu call '*khufumba kamakumba*', literally meaning 'folding the bones of the deceased' (Makila 2004:157). The ritual meat also serves as food for the guests. The size of the bull has to match the social stature of the dead man and it is believed the hide of the slaughtered animal, *lisielo*[15] will be used to wrap the corpse before it is buried. This

[15] In the traditional sense, it is actually an honour and gesture of high social status among the Bukusu, for an elderly man to be buried in the raw skin of a big bull that is slaughtered before his burial. The skin from the slaughtered animal was split into two parts; one portion for laying the body on, while the other was for covering the body during interment. This gesture symbolises that the deceased was a man of means in his lifetime as attested by the many animals he had, one of which escorts him to the spirit world. This also means that a really successful man was expected to rear a bull in his homestead as a mark of wealth and success.

is to signify that the man who has passed on had plenty in his lifetime (*omusecha owe lirambo* - wealthy man) and it is incumbent on his kinsmen to dispatch him to the 'other world' in similar if not better fashion (interview with Mzee Wanjala, 4 December 2008).

Traditionally, a Bukusu funeral has to take place either early in the morning or late afternoon. It is believed that great men have to be buried or laid to rest as the sun rises or sets. The reason for this could be that the man is not really dead but is going to 'rest' and watch over the homestead or *lukoba* (interview with Mwalimu Lubisia, 2008). It is considered a taboo or a bad omen to dig a grave before somebody's demise because it is construed as an act of 'inviting death' and other tragic calamities (interview with Mzee Wanjala, 2008). In case a grave is dug to bury someone and the person regained consciousness, a banana stem (*enjekhele*) would be symbolically buried in the open grave.

As a burial custom, the male corpse is always taken out through the front door, legs first just before the actual burial (interview with Mzee Wanjala, 4 December 2008). In the grave, the corpse of the deceased would be made to face the direction believed to be the historically renowned route from which the clan members of the dead man are known to have arrived into modern day Bukusu country e.g. north-west, north, north-east, south-east and so on (Makila, 1976: 53; 2004: 158). The cultural explanation for this gesture is that the spirit of the dead was believed to return to the original cradle of its specific clan (interview with Manguliechi, 3 June 2008). However clans like the *Balunda* and *Bafumi* that are revered for their rainmaking skills bury their dead in sitting positions. The reason for this is because rainmakers are like the custodians of the community's means of livelihood and to be buried while seated symbolically alludes to being awake to oversee the community's well being (interview with Lubisia, 4 July 2008; Manguliechi, 3 June 2008; Makila, 2004:173).

Out of respect, daughters-in-law of a deceased elder were neither allowed to view the body or even witness the physical lowering of the corpse into the grave. In fact

traditionally a dead man's cheating wives or his circumcision age mates (*bakoki*) were never allowed to view the body in the grave (Makila, 2004). For this reason, wives who kept a distance from their deceased husband's body were immediately suspected of infidelity. Similarly, male relatives, friends or neighbours who might have committed adultery with any one of the dead man's wives would never dare to view the body of their lover's husband.

But not everybody is guaranteed of a good burial. For the Bukusu 'bad deaths' categorized as abominable, or resulting from curses or even deaths of known social miscreants like wizards, thieves and murderers were believed to be unwelcome to the spirit world. Such spirits of the dead were believed to be 'beaten and expelled' by the ancestors thereby turning them into 'wandering ghosts' - *bisieno* (interview with Manguliechi, 4 June 2008). Furthermore, if such deaths occurred inside the house the corpse is usually taken out for burial through the backdoor (*kwandiangu*). In similar fashion, the corpses of small children, uncircumcised men, bachelors, spinsters and barren women were passed through the backdoor and in cases of uncircumcised adults, the dead man must be circumcised before burial (interview with Manguliechi, 3 June 2008).

Three or four days after burial of an adult, the mourners and throngs of relatives would keep vigil as they warmed themselves in the evenings around a bonfire (*khusioso*) that is lit at a central location in the homestead. The night vigils also served as a deterrent to any suspected killers of the deceased who might intend to interfere with the grave or the corpse (interview with Lubisia, 4 July 2008). On the third day after burial or the day of *lufu* (reincarnation, or rising from the dead) the bereaved and their relatives bath in a

nearby stream and shave their hair to symbolize continuation of life after death.[16] On the morning before the day of the bathing and hair shaving ceremony, the apex rod (*lusuli*) on the house of the senior wife is removed to signify that the male symbol of the homestead is no more (Makila, 2004: 155). The bathing and shaving is part of the cleansing process of shedding the bad luck, tragedy and 'darkness' linked to the death of their loved one; a sign of renewal and regeneration for all. On the same day, the deceased's belongings are distributed out to relatives and all liabilities shared out by his next of kin. In fact just before the performance by the after-burial artist, there is usually a special session at which the debts (*kamakobi*), claims and complaints related to the deceased were laid bare for purposes of expediting them once and for all. In case of disagreements, the funeral reciter often stepped in as the cultural arbitrator (interview with Lubisia, 3 July 2008).

Even after burial and final interment rituals, there are still other rites that are practiced by the Bukusu which continue to honour and commemorate the death of an important male member of the community. Nine months or so after the burial of the deceased, a special ceremony called '*khumala silindwa'* (smearing the grave) is carried out (interview with Mwalimu Lubisia, 2008). During this ceremony, relatives of the dead man congregate at his home and assist the widow in clearing the area around the grave and sealing any cracks on it with special soil from a riverbed. Another ceremony that is popularly referred to as '*khukhala kimikoye'* (cutting the ropes) is carried out to honour both the dead man and the widow(s) (interview with Lubisia, 2008). For the widow, the

[16] The shaving of the hair after the burial of the dead is an appreciation of life as a cycle; that after death there is regeneration. While in men this is done after three days, for women it is after two days. This shows gender differentiation even in death.

ceremony of '*khukhala kimikoye'* could be done four or so months after burial as a way of allowing her to start engaging in sexual liaisons[17] with other men (Makila, 2004). As for the dead man, Makila observes that '*khukhala kimikoye*' involves his age mates and relatives who assemble all their cattle in a major animal drive and mock battle to celebrate his death. All the gathered animals are usually taken to graze in the meadows and then to the river where a specific ox or bull is chosen for slaughter by being smeared with riverbed mud. The gathered clansmen would sing popular Bukusu war songs in praise of the deceased man's valour, while drinking specially made local brews. The morning after all these festivities, the center post (*enjeko*) would be removed from the widow's hut and placed on the grave mound. The rest of the house will finally be demolished in a ritual called '*khuyesia likubili'* (demolishing the widow's abode) (Makila, 2004:155-159). After this ritual of demolition of the house, the widow is instructed to wash herself in a symbolic bath at a nearby river before her mourning gear is cut off and burnt. From then henceforth, she is free to dress like an ordinary married woman and can even move into a newly built hut constructed by either her older sons or prospective new husband, if she so wishes.

Ideally, the very last function in honor of a deceased Bukusu man, according to Makila, is called '*khuuya lianga'*, meaning 'transferring the skull'. This ritual, he explains, would ordinarily be undertaken between one to five years after the burial of the deceased (2004:157). From my fieldwork interviews I gathered that this funeral practice entailed fresh grass or a stone being taken from the deceased's grave and temporarily placed at a shrine (*namwima*) that was constructed at a new family homestead. This ritual

[17] It is generally assumed and acknowledged, among Bukusu, that upon death of a husband, a woman is contaminated and impure; a state that is signified by the mourning ash (*bukhuchakali*) and the ribbons (*kamakhola*) she wears during her mourning period. For this reason she is not allowed to engage in any sexual activities until she has been cleansed. See also Makila (2004).

is usually crowned with the slaughter of a sacrificial animal and imbibing of traditionally made brews as the grass or stone from the dead man's grave was wrapped up and deposited in the largest leafy tree nearby. Often, such a task was assigned to the eldest man in the community at that time; the whole process symbolically represents the transfer of the dead man's skull to a new site (interview with Mzee Wanjala, 4 December 2008)

2.3 Traditions, Rules and Taboos associated with *kumuse*

The performance of *kumuse* is an occasion that bestows honour on a once-respected dead man. Though it is one among several other death rituals, it remains pivotal as a specialized art that entails lecturing at funeral gatherings. A specialized yet complex and almost religious and ritual art form, this ceremonial performance is carried out as a mark of utmost respect and the last gesture of idolizing and valorizing the great social achievements of a man's life.

Interestingly, only circumcised and married men who have sired sons as first borns and have circumcised first born grandchildren from their sons' lineage at the time of their death, qualify to be honoured with this ritual. There are exceptions to this rule especially if society and the cultural opinion shapers think that a man's feats and social stature far outweigh the cultural requirements. However, in extremely rare and special occasions, this performance can be carried out to recognize and appreciate extraordinary feats of a younger male member of the community. But under no circumstances, can this ritual be performed for a deceased woman.

The performer of this genre, *oswala kumuse*, *omuseni muse* or *omuswali*, as he is variously known, is not regarded as an ordinary person in the society. He is held in high esteem almost bordering on religious reverence. The calling of performing at after-burial congregations is the cultural preserve of mature married men from '*chikholo chiswala kumuse'* (clans that give public lectures at funeral gatherings). These are: *Batukwiika (Bakwangwa, Basakha and Bakitang'a), Babulo, Bachemayi, Bayemba, Bakhwami,*

Babuya, Bakabo, Bayitu, Basang'alo, and *Babangachi* (Makila, 2004; 1978; Wanjala, 1985). In Bukusu cultural hierarchy these clans are widely considered as the custodians of the community's history and culture.[18] It is this culture and history that 'public comforters' (including Manguliechi) communicate to the audience on the occasion of a funeral (Makila, 1978:111).

Being a spiritually-inspired performance, *kumuse* requires the reciter to wear special regalia, meet certain cultural demands and adhere to stringent taboos. Individuals who wish to participate in live renditions as audience are also expected to observe specific ritual requirements with religious commitment. The taboos and performance robes also appear to have a strong bearing on the efficacy of the whole funeral oratory performance especially because they cause the reciter to be regarded with awe and esteem. Makila reckons that to be recognized as a performer of *kumuse*, or 'public comforter' one "must by birth be a member of one of the clans that practice this art; be married with a male child as his first born; display a brilliant memory; and finally have a magnetic personality" (Makila 1978: 115). Simiyu adds that to qualify for the office of the funeral reciter one "must have married a young woman straight from her home as a first wife and must also have been born of such a mother" (1997:2-3). A funeral reciter is not supposed to be bald-headed, should have successfully undergone the traditional Bukusu circumcision ritual and his first grandchild - a boy - should have already been circumcised before the narrator is officially installed as *omuswali* (Simiyu 1997:2-4).

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[18] There are cases in which performers of *kumuse* could come from other clans but essentially there should be a clear link between performers with any one of these clans in terms of genealogy. The social structure of the Bukusu is such that specific cultural practices and rituals are assigned to particular clans. This was necessary to ensure social cohesion because every clan had a particular obligation and duty to the rest of the community. See also Makila (1978).

On the day of performing *kumuse*, cattle belonging to the deceased man do not graze in fields but are instead restrained to browse within the compound. If by bad luck an antelope (*esunu*) or a guinea fowl (*likhanga*) crosses the performer's path on his way to the funeral venue, it is considered a bad omen and the funeral reciter immediately cancels the trip. Similarly, if there is a flash of lightning moments before the start of the ritual, he will immediately cancel the session and it has to be rescheduled for another day or another performer would be called to preside over the occasion (Wanjala 1985, 1986). Lightning is a sign of ill-luck and every performer of *kumuse* is aware of the tragic consequences associated with it. During the actual performance men and women in the audience sit on either side of a semi-circular-like arena (men on the right and women and children on the left) and they have to observe maximum silence by neither interrupting the narrator nor attempting to walk across the arena. The widows and orphaned children of the deceased sit on the left-hand side of the arena (together with women and children) with their legs spread out in front (*khulambisia*). Sneezing during the performance is a sign of disrespect for the ritual proceedings and the culprit often stands up and leaves the congregation never to come back. Open challenges to the narrators are highly discouraged because, it is rumored, it could lead to unspecified trouble and sickness for which only the performer can heal.

The funeral performance arena is usually a randomly chosen spot in a flat place in the compound of the deceased but a distance away from the graveside. The spot is usually chosen by elders from the deceased's clan who have the express rights to do so. On many occasions, by the time the funeral reciter arrives in the home of the deceased, he usually finds the audience already seated and eagerly awaiting him. The men sit on stools or benches while women and children sit on the bare ground, on mats or on traditional skins with their legs spread out as they face the men in a semi-circle shape.

As he talks, chants and sings during the performance, *oswala kumuse* never swallows saliva but instead spits it out as a sign that no impurities are acceptable in the good words and counsel he promulgates. In all his sessions, the narrator must make sure that the foot

that steps on the arena first is different from the one that steps out at the end and he must always enter the arena while facing the north (*ebunaswa* also referred to as *emasaba*). The explanation for entering *kumuse* while facing north is because the Bukusu believe that their cradle land of origin is *Misri* (Egypt). The narrator thus sets off his narration by acknowledging the community's beginnings, which are believed to determine the present and the future.

All these taboos and constraints clearly have a bearing on the life of *oswala kumuse*, and those who attend as audience. The artist, in particular, has to diligently live up to these rules and taboos and the repercussions of ignoring them are dire ranging from loss of potency and efficacy, or total withdrawal of his spiritual powers; in extreme cases it may lead to severe punishment from the supernatural forces that conferred the initial anointment. For the audience, it is strongly advisable that one doesn't attempt to impersonate the position of the performer. It is believed that any impostor, who dons the ritual regalia and tries to perform, will drop dead and die on the spot in the arena. On the whole, it is the cultural significance and sacrality of these taboos in relation to the performance of masculinity as embodied by the narrator of *khuswala kumuse* that we will be discussing later in this thesis.

Culturally, the office of the Bukusu 'public comforter' requires that one be a high ranking elder entitled to wearing specific signifiers and emblems of cultural power and authority. Such an honorable man often referred to as '*omukasa*' in *Lubukusu* should be, at least, at the rank of wearing *lichabe* when he begins to perform. The term *omukasa* is coined from *kimikasa*, which are copper/gold bracelets that were traditionally worn as insignias and trinkets of the elder status. The performer of *kumuse* is therefore considered as the highest ranking elder and the regalia he wears during the ritual are a symbol of the pinnacle of elderly manhood. On his right upper arm he usually wears *epokoto*, a broad ivory arm band signifying the highest rank. The lowest insignia in terms of traditional Bukusu elder ranking is *enjabasi*, an ivory wristlet that is worn on the lower right arm, while *lichabe*, an ivory armlet worn just above the elbow of the left arm is the next in

rank to *epokoto* (Makila 2004). On his left arm, the performer usually wears *sirere sikure* (a copper or gold bracelet made of twisted wire) and *kumukasa* (singular for *kimikasa*) (Manguliechi, 3 June 2008).

By dint of his special elder status, *oswala kumuse* wears *ekutusi* a kind of official and flowing elders' robe made from the skin of either a patas monkey or leopard, although the latter is considered of higher rung in cultural integrity. The animal skins from which these cloaks are made are carefully treated such that the inside of the garments is smooth while the external hairs are left intact for authenticity. Manguliechi intimated to me that he used the *ekutusi* of a patas monkey because he couldn't afford or get that of a leopard skin. Before his death, he always prayed that he could one day wear a leopard skin robe and get a rhino horn which together with *epokoto*, are the traditional insignias for nobility and the highest rank of Bukusu manhood. On his head he usually wore *ekhorere* also called *ekutwa* (a community leader's head gear) made from palm frond leaves and decorated with cowries (*chisimbi*) with an ostrich's feather (*lifumbo lie enyefwe*) prominently inserted at its peak; all these are significations of wealth both material and in terms of wisdom. When presiding over funeral functions, he would often swing around a special walking stick made from *kumukhendie* tree stem that was uprooted (not cut from a mature tree branch, hence referred to as *ekhendie).* This walking stick is a symbol that is specifically used for arbitrating disputes or admonishing wayward persons, but the artist took care not to point it directly and deliberately at any one in the audience during the performance because it could spell untold ramifications or even instant death. In a nutshell, just like taboos, these ritual insignias, we argue, are all part of the materiality of masculine objectification and discursive gender performance in the male/female dichotomy which are appropriated and deployed by the narrator's body.

2.4 Understanding *kumuse* in the Context of other African Narrative Genres

A number of scholarly studies have been carried out that specifically mention, allude to or analyze the *khuswala kumuse* text. While most of these works are anthropological

and historical in nature, a few of them analyze the oral genre from a literary perspective. Renowned East African literary critic Chris Wanjala has written extensively on this genre. While he concurs that the genre is a 'specialized practice' and custom that celebrates death among the Bukusu, his observations are probably most acute when he points out the legacies and duties associated with the performance of the genre, the process of becoming *oswala kumuse* (funeral orator), the structure of the genre's performance ceremony and the role of the funeral artist as a traditional teacher and counselor (1986; 1985). Wanjala highlights the origin of the genre among the Bukusu and underlines the religious and ritualistic features of the practice including the requisite humility of the narrator as a 'cultural comforter' who is known mostly for urging the bereaved audience to accept death as inevitable (1985). In an essay titled "*The Growth of a literary tradition*" Wanjala makes detailed references to the Bukusu funeral reciter in his discussion of how oral literature influenced pioneer East African fiction writers. For instance he observes that the funeral reciter has the discretion to determine the length of the *kumuse* text depending on the "discipline of the audience, the character of the deceased and the conditions of the weather" (1986:68). He asserts that in situations where the reciter is offended by the audience, believes the deceased man was evil or yet still is interrupted by peals of thunder and approaching rainfall, he immediately cuts short his ceremony, asks for his fee and walks away with his staff (1986:68). In Wanjala's considered view, it is oral artists like Manguliechi and oral art forms like *khuswala kumuse* that have continuously had a significant influence on the style and plot of many written works of fiction.

Gail Presbey in a series of articles (2001; 2000; 1999; 1995) uses Manguliechi and three other African sages as reference points in her exploration of the role of sage philosophy in African philosophy. She specifically raises pertinent arguments on the relationship between sage philosophy and wisdom, and goes further to assert that Manguliechi's use of *kumuse* performances to offer insights into the need for love and generosity, and his understanding of different human emotions, contribute to untapped

and unappreciated African sage philosophy (1995:68). Regarding *kumuse* as 'wisdom literature' because of its textual emphasis on maxims and counsels for the conduct of life, Presbey argues that African cultural icons like Manguliechi are not just sage philosophers who love and embody wisdom but also strive to possess and practice it as an integral part of their daily lives (2001:45; 2000:34; 1995:68). Although Presbey uses three other Kenya traditional sages to illustrate her arguments on their contribution to African philosophy, she goes out of her way to outline Manguliechi's roles as a funeral reciter, public comforter and communal arbitrator in social feuds.

On his part Wagner emphasizes the historical role of the Bukusu funeral performer when he asserts thus:

> It is the duty of the *oswala kumuse* (performer) by using convincing words and arguments to calm down the excited minds reminding them that from long ago it has been the common fate of all people to die and that the misfortune which has come over the clan by the death that has occurred would be increased if the clansmen were now to accuse one another of sorcery or even to harbour thoughts of revenge and retaliation (1970:63).

Mukhwana (2002), Nangendo (1996; 1994) and Wandibba (1972) each have variously mentioned and documented in some detail the ways in which the ritual is performed from an anthropological angle. Although they don't venture to grapple with the creative features of this genre, credit has to go to them for reiterating the cultural, political, economic, health and mystical significance of the ritual. In addition their attempts to explain why the practice has persisted despite the modern influences of formal education, Christianity and technology are laudable. Nangendo singles out our current artist, Wanyonyi *owa* Manguliechi, as one of those funeral narrators, who through his narration, incorporates imagery and idioms that reflect contemporary modern trends in, politics, economy and health (1994).

Other academic treatises on *kumuse* include Maelo's (2009) *Style and Meanings in Khuswala Kumuse: A Case of* Bukusu *Funeral Oratory* and Karani's *The Abatachoni Theater: Its Aesthetics and Social Significance.* Maelo's M.A dissertation is particularly illuminating as it attempts to situate the genre within literary discourse and cogently outlines how the oral narrative techniques, costumes, setting, paralinguistic features and ritual aspects of the genre are deployed to give the text its meaning within the larger social context (2009: 12-24). Karani on his part investigates the *Abatachoni* version of this genre (referred to as '*okhusena omuse'* in the *Olutachoni* dialect) as an indigenous theatre art form (1991). Situating his analysis within the critical realm of folk drama, theatre and performance, he interrogates the genre as a ritual drama that forms part of the larger corpus of traditional *Tachoni* theatre forms (1991). The two scholarly works are relevant to our study insofar as they read the genre from a literary point of view. However, the current study extends this literary analysis by rigorously engaging with the stylistic issues and in particular the power discourses and gender nuances in the text.

Commenting on an African funeral text that has performative similarities with *kumuse* among the *Limba* people of Sierra Leone, Ruth Finnegan observes that;

> [T]hese oratories are full of moralizing and dwell very little on the character of the dead man and instead reflect on the importance of the dead, the duties of the living, the function in life of the various groups listening to them and the general philosophy and ideals which they presume their listeners share (1970: 454).

From Finnegan's description of the *Limba* genre, we can draw parallels with the Bukusu funeral oratory genre especially in terms of similar rhetorical features and the interaction patterns between the narrator and audience. Like the *Limba* narrator, the Bukusu funeral reciter is a master of special narrative styles and commands undivided and unequivocal attention from his audience. However the Bukusu after-burial oratory is in some way a narrative of a different hue. At least in Manguliechi's performances, it lacks the conventional opening and closing formula found in regular Bukusu tales. Nonetheless it

still conjures its own structure, albeit a fluid one. Throughout his narration '*omuswali'* establishes a special connection with his audience, brooking no interruption or interference except from respectable old men of his status or fellow funeral reciters who might be in attendance.

In yet another reference to public-speaking and funerals among the Burundi people, Finnegan makes very cogent remarks on the power of rhetoric at public funeral gatherings. She delineates the characteristics of a good public speaker or orator thus,

> A good orator should address the audience in the most able and unembarrassed manner. He should hold forth to the crowd with complete self-possession and an ease of diction and grace of gesture that will strike envy. Gestures are much used: elders in particular stride about in the centre of the listening group, making much play with their long-sleeved gowns alternating for effect between solemn stance and excited delivery when the whole body may be used to emphasize a point (1970: 16).

The Burundi funeral performance alluded to above is stylistically closer to *kumuse* genre largely because it is a narrative performance requiring substantial levels of dexterity, innovativeness and professionalism by way of oral narration skills. Similar 'dexterity, innovativeness and professionalism' is evident in *kumuse* performances and to borrow Finnegan's words, funeral reciters "…commonly use figures of speech as well as proverbs, allusions and rhetorical questions; they are admired for their ability to express their points by 'going a long way round' in parables" (1970: 455).

Within the ambit of African narrative genres, *kumuse* is not just about linguistic flamboyance. Rather it belongs to the category of rich African oratory texts that are often overlaid by choice words targeted to heap praise on important personalities within and outside a particular language community. Much like the *oriki* genre of the Yoruba people of Nigeria that is extensively analyzed by Barber in her text, *I Could Speak Until Tomorrow*; *Oriki women and the past in a Yoruba town* (1991), *kumuse* is a kind of oral praise text. Though it is not performed only at funeral gatherings, Barber contends that

there is indeed a special *orik*i for funerals. She further describes the Yoruba funeral as replete with a number of dramatic stages and moments that are principally enacted through a series of *oriki* chants that express a range of moods suggested by different styles of chanting (1991:118). While some *oriki* chants are "slow and solemn, others are highly individual and personal wild laments", she adds (ibid). It is also evident that the overall cultural import of the *oriki* funeral performance among the Yoruba is that there is a link between the living and the dead and *oriki* is vital to this link. In Barber's view the *oriki* is performed at funerals to address the "deceased continually with exhortations, farewells, regrets, reproaches and warnings... [because] the dead remain perpetually and potentially present" (Barber, 1991:134).

Although the Yoruba's funeral *oriki* may be structurally dissimilar to *kumuse* in terms of presentation and length, there appears to be many similarities between them with regard to the philosophy and cultural context of performance. Just like the Bukusu, the Yoruba regard the funeral practices and rituals as 'journeys' and through the elaborate funerals in both cases, it is assumed the deceased's spirit is transferred to its other worldly domain (Drewal, 1992: xiii). In many ways therefore, *kumuse* draws parallels with the Yoruba *oriki* tradition of acknowledging a funeral as a performance process that focuses on the living and the dead.

In their analysis of African praise folklore, Gunner & Gwala's reference to Zulu popular praise is very useful in our analysis of *kumuse*. They observe that:

> The act of praising focuses on identifying a person, embodying his/her personality through the process of naming and also in essence providing a link with his/her community, lineage and origins...it is part of their identity, one which may be used even after death when praises are called out on ceremonial or public occasions (1991:2).

While *kumuse* is not pure praise poetry like the Zulu *izibongo* that Gunner & Gwala refer to above, it still has similarities with it in terms of its emphasis on extolling the virtues,

achievements and conquests of successful African warrior men. Indeed like Zulu praises, *kumuse* is sometimes appropriated by powerful Bukusu traditional social elites for political expediency and power influence. For similar reasons, there are segments of the Bukusu community, who feel the genre is a preserve of the rich, powerful and famous; a fear that might be supported by the fact that the genre's performance fora are sometimes dominated by leaders who willfully use it to galvanize political power and validate their positions in the community. All the same the 'praise features' of *kumuse* not only outline the life exploits of the dead man alongside past heroes but to also shore sentiments of loyalty to the Bukusu nation and pride in 'Bukusuness'.

However, a full contextualization of an African folklore genre like *kumuse* requires interrogating the role of the performer. Graham Furniss believes that the African oral artist is a raconteur and grand master of the narrative process of his/her text (1996). Discussing the Hausa folklore narrator, he comments that "the performer controls physical space while at the same time manipulating the people around him so that they are switched by him from observer status to the participant and back again"(1996:108). "In other instances", he adds, the narrator sets his own rules, "mocks some members in the audience and gently manipulates people to continue to listen to him; albeit with humor" (1996: 108-109). In similar fashion, the Bukusu funeral reciter is certainly a man in charge of what he does in terms of the text's progression, the movements, chants and songs, and the overall dialogues and monologues. Furniss's views on the role of the oral narrator are germane to our current study because it is through recognition of the role of the performer that one can be able to discern and appreciate the gender dynamics of the *kumuse* text.

Issues of sexuality and gender are often deftly embedded in African folklore. Wanjiku Kabira's views on Kikuyu oral literature and gender best capture the relationship between gender studies and folklore texts. She asserts that, "differences between men and women are socially constructed... [and] very often nature is invoked in an attempt to explain these differences. The differences are seen as inborn and hence

beyond the scope of social change" (1993: 89). Kabira here focuses on the narrative as an expression of "culture, gender and ideology within the society" (1993:89-90). In her view, the social construction of men and women is the centerpiece of understanding the oral text and, "narratives... [a]re works that are produced by society, reflecting the values and norms of the society" (1993:33). She underscores the importance of gender in the narrative process of folklore by stating that "the associations between men and women are usually socially determined and 'stereotypical'" (1993:33). This appears to be the same scenario in the case of the *khuswala kumuse* rendition where the individual artist doesn't necessarily express his personal views but rather articulates the society's hegemonic male position. This study concurs with the view that gender perceptions and constructions are the product of the society but are articulated by the performers of folklore.

But to a greater extent, folklore genres like *kumuse* do not operate and function as timeless projections of or for the society. At some point, they ought to illustrate what reality is and how it is experienced (Drewal, 1992:174). The issues engaged and discussed in oral art forms are also ideological contests that resonate with real life situations. In the words of Barber, *oriki* funeral performances are fraught with "struggles for power…and legitimation of the status quo because… [they] are used to swell the reputation of the person they are addressed to" (Barber, 1992:3). Among the Bukusu, the power dynamics are such that men take the responsibility of organizing and directing the performance of *kumuse.* Indeed the Bukusu social structures always inform the content of each performance of *kumuse* while exposing the gender disparities therein. But beneath the glaring gender inequities and differences is a simmering ideological battle of the sexes with political proportions that perpetuate the very differences (Kabira, 1994). It is these 'battles', tensions and differences that need to be constantly re-examined for purposes of getting more meanings from a folklore genre like *kumuse.*

Okot Benge in his work titled *Ethnopoetics and Gender: Identity Construction and Power Relations in Acoli Song Performance* draws attention to fact that, "there is a direct

relationship between gender identity construction and gender power relations - none can be fully understood without study of the other" (2007:13). He goes on to argue that a "gender analysis of performance should involve a critical examination of the language and content of the text of performance, the attitude of the performer and audience, the communicative and metacommunicative modes of performance and the cultural significance of the occasion of performance" (2007:25; see also Kratz 1992: 16-18). Benge's ideas are useful largely because of his emphasis on the socio-cultural importance of context in relation to the construction of gender identities. Although he does not deal with a death genre in his analysis, he still acknowledges that, "oral art is not just a purveyor of cultural notions but it is also actively involved in the construction of these notions" (2007:28). We also concur with his assertion that, "oral art is double-edged…shaped by and it also shapes societal concerns" (2007:28). In many ways, it seems gender constructions are often embedded in the dialectic of folklore performance and an understanding of how men and women see and represent themselves, and how gender relations are organized and depicted in an oral text. Taking account of these factors provides a better understanding of the same text.

Much of the research that has been done on gender relations in African rituals and folklore reveals interesting ideas about the African man and woman's perspective on traditional norms, customary practices and attitudes to the prescribed male ideology (Kabira, 1992: 64). However, it is evident that very little has been done in terms of research carried out so far on death folklore and especially on genres of death and depiction of masculinities and power relations. Jean Derive captures the need for interrogating more on gender and power agencies in African oral literature when she posits that;

> It is impossible to ignore the field of oral art when one studies the power relations of a society based upon oral tradition. It may indeed be an important vector in the practice of power. In the case of the powerful, the use of speech, of course, is only one way among many to express. But in the case of the socially dominated, a

> genre authenticated by tradition is sometimes the only legitimate means of exerting compensatory or counter powers (1995: 129).

Derive's views are cogent to our study which seeks to analyze a genre that underscores the importance of rhetoric and the art of oratory in societal power discourses. To paraphrase the words of Furniss and Gunner from another context, a funeral genre like *kumuse* can obviously be appreciated because it is "a cathartic working through of inherent tensions", as a social text it constitutes "a voice that affects the interactions between people,…the exercise of power, sometimes of the inferior over the superior and sometimes more tangentially" (1995: 9-11).

2.5 Theorizing Masculinities in the African Context

Generally, the concept of men domineering in many spheres can be understood alongside the construction and perpetuation of institutions and structures that 'naturally' place men at the helm. Studies of gender and sexuality in African oral literature appear to have been shaped by false dichotomies of men versus women (see also Kabira 1994, 1993, 1992, Chesaina 1993, Obinna 1997 and Nfah Abbenyi, 1997). Early feminists and gender theorists in Africa focused on the views and experiences of men and women and often men are mentioned mainly "as villains, abusers, oppressors, patriarchs" who are 'part of the problem' that afflicts the plight of women (Lindsay etal 2003:7). Although studies on men have been going on for many centuries, there is still a huge gap between scholars who implicitly examine men as being dominant and those that undertake a more nuanced study of men as men and men in relation to women.

Evidence from many African folklore genres reveals that the process of archiving communal verbal art forms is sometimes deliberately done with a specific gender and social hierarchy bias. This appears to be the same case with Manguliechi's *kumuse* performances in which he consciously sets out to praise and valorize the community's elderly male heroes. Barber further illustrates this viewpoint with examples from the Yoruba *oriki* when she observes that "the individual whose…personal achievements,

distinctions and idiosyncrasies are commemorated by *oriki* is conceived of as a member of a larger group that claims common origins" (1991:136). "Just as the community's identity is fed and renewed by the fame of individual members, so the individual members derive glory from the inherited, collected fame of the community to which they belong", she adds (1991:136). The community members, through folklore, proclaim their membership to a group or assert their independence and also use the same to negotiate the many ambivalent relationships between them (Barber, 1991; Drewal, 1992; Furniss, 1996). Constructions of masculinity are fashioned in similar circumstances.

It should however be noted that African gender identities (masculinities in particular), and especially those relating to traditions and rituals, are very fluid, contentious and contestable. On most occasions they heavily depend on wealth, age, seniority and influence on ritual functions for their full articulation. Within every community, clearly defined and even steep differences of status have to always be maintained and everybody is expected to know who is 'senior' and 'junior' to them (Barber, 1991). This strong consciousness about seniority is sometimes so pronounced to the extent that it overrides gender distinctions. I have in mind here African 'female masculinity', a situation in which women attain seniority, the status and positions, usually regarded as the preserve of men, because of age or extraordinary characteristics of bravery or achievement. Clearly this is a level of masculinity but with clear benchmarks; it is social not physical. It also means that not all versions of masculinity have equal power and legitimacy (Lindsay & Meischer, 2003; Reid & Walker, 2005). Connell argues that at a specific time in a society's history we always have the "hegemonic and subordinate masculinity that compete for the enjoyment of the 'patriarchal dividend'" (Connell 1995:79). These variants of masculinity are best exposed in a fluid social environment. All these are issues that affect all communities and are not peculiar to African men or Bukusu men for that matter. In fact in every community and social context there is always a peculiar benchmark of 'hegemonic'

masculinity; a dominant ideal of masculinity that every individual is presumed to aspire for.

Commenting on the concept of manliness in a rural Zambian Village, Paul Dover opines that men are almost innately regarded as superior to women, and the fact that women should defer to men is an accepted public attitude (Dover, 2005). This social image of manhood in his view "is closely tied to economic forces and the socio-economic change and the resultant ways in which a society manages human reproduction and socialization" (Dover 2005:178). This version of rural masculinity is still very strongly expressed in many African folklore genres where the yardstick of power for men, is still defined by values such as, "self-reliance, hard work, success as a provider, helpful, fearless, calm, decisive, slow to anger but defends family honor and doesn't complain or show pain" (2005:178). The opposite is a powerless man who is seen as "lazy, fearful, fails, falls and he is probably a drunkard" (2005:178). This trope of masculinity persists to date with minor variants in African fiction and folklore; it is certainly a good reference point in this study.

According to Connell, "men wield and access power differently, depending on the racial, class and sexual locations" (1995). Interestingly, masculinity for most African men has been shaped by the work place, rural life and traditional society customs and practices. Rural traditional life in particular has legitimated a gender and generational regime in which "men dominate all levels - from traditional chieftaincy, which controls access to land to sexual division of labor in the household" (Reid & Walker 2005: 7). But perhaps the African 'big man' trope provides the most ubiquitous image of African masculinity useful for this study. Projected as the all-knowing, idolized and wealthy man with unbridled virility as demonstrated by his propensity to practice polygamy, the image of the 'big man' (also referred to as *mheshimiwa* - a Kenyan Swahili political term for 'honourable' in Kenya political lingo) is perhaps best exemplified by the African political tyrants. Be it the quintessential 'rural man' or the 'big man', what is fascinating about all these figurations of African masculinities is that they are always linked with "a

cluster of norms, values and behavioral patterns...[that] express explicit and implicit expectations of how men should act and represent themselves to others" (Lindsay & Miescher 2003: 4). These portraits culturally persist and are "historically constructed, although their meanings are continually contested and are always in the process of being renegotiated in relation to the changing power relations" (Lindsay & Miescher 2003: 4). The analysis of masculinities and power relations in the *kumuse* text benefits from the often circulated stereotype that "the big man is always at the center of everything and other members of the family exist only by virtue of their relationship to him" (Barber, 1992:184).

The idea of raw political power as exercised by the 'African big man' in the African context is best delineated by Achille Mbembe in his *Provisional Notes on the Postcolony*. Using examples from independent Cameroon and Togo, Mbembe posits that 'the banality of power in the postcolony' is characterized by "elements of the obscene and grotesque that Mikhail Bakhtin located in 'non-official' cultures". (1992: 3) He goes on to add that "[t]he postcolony is chaotically pluralistic…characterized by a distinctive style of political improvisation…a tendency to excess and a lack of proportion" (ibid). He also observes that power in the post colony, "creates a world of meanings all it's own, a master code…and attempts to institutionalize its world of meanings as a 'socio-historical world'…turning it into a part of people's common sense" (ibid). Mbembe demonstrates that 'the grotesque and obscene' are major characteristics of 'post- colonial regimes of domination' which are often used by state power to "dramatize its own magnificence through 'ceremonial displays' which manifest its majesty and offer spectacles for subjects to watch" (4). Mbembe's views on power are relevant to this study in as far they echo articulation of male power as not just being politically over determined and vulgar but often exercised within the complex dichotomies of the 'ruler' and the 'ruled'. His argument that there is a relationship of zombification between rulers and the ruled that complicates any simple binary imagining of ruler and ruled is relevant to this study. In the same breath Connell emphasizes that exclusion from social

hierarchies is always a recipe for conflict because men have been historically socialized to be at the helm of things and destabilizing dominanted understandings of the male subject can help understand the true ramifications of gender inequalities (1995:29). Thus it is only by analyzing 'threatened' and 'anxious' masculinities that we can fully appreciate the ways in which men articulate their power and how this is manifested in folklore performances.

Yet images of masculinity often have strong sexual connotations and interpretations. The male and female sexual anatomies still remain as references in analyses of human power relations and co-existence. Dover reminds us that "sexed bodies have ramifications in the historical and social manifestations" and "sexual differentiation and fertility are central to African cosmology" (Dover, 2005:184). Dover also points out that the African 'big man' image is also about strength and implicit potency that is manifested in the way he is treated through "bodily postures of autonomy, domination and submission" (ibid). Predictably, the "big man is a virile man and the phallus defines masculinity, potency, fertility and male strength" and "the male sexuality is about giving power and making life" (Dover, 2005:182). Symbolically therefore, the phallus is a mark of authority and it 'stands' for life giving creative power; a power and authority that is dependent on the presence or absence of the phallus as 'a privileged signifier' (Butler, 1990:44, Segal 1997: 85). Essentially, this also means that the phallus cannot exist on its own; it needs its opposite to become (Butler, 1990:44). Consequently, women's acquiescence is seen as a necessary counterpoint to the phallus in order to allow men the construction of power and autonomy or 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1995; 1987). All these images of male-hood are significant in understanding the gender dynamics inherent in a cultural text like *kumuse* because they help in appreciating and examining how the male body is a locus of gender constructions of power.

Interestingly, in many real life instances masculinities do overlap and co-exist. Lindsay et al argues that in the African context, "there is a co-existence of a dominant masculinity based on fatherhood and one based on elite status" (2003:7). This situation,

they explain, arises from the "various expectations and images of proper male behavior which is sometimes influenced by images of 'maleness' that are both local and foreign" (ibid). However, notions of masculinity can be approached as expressions of social and cultural practice that have to be observed in specific contexts. When need arises, this also means that, gender is not just 'constructed' but is produced through the views and practices of men and women in their daily interactions within cultural contexts. Walker & Reid raise similar issues when they discuss the 'crisis in masculinity'; a reference to the tendency for men to react differently in response to the changing nature of power relations between them and women in relation to economic power, sexuality and emotions (Reid & Walker, 2005: 10). This crisis, they argue, is centred on men's roles, tasks and identity and women's advancement and achievements have been a popular scapegoat of understanding 'masculinity crisis'.

In the words of Segal, such crises are "appropriated for conservative use" and they tend "towards blaming women for the anxieties of men" (1999:120). The men's sense of failure, in such cases, is viewed against the widely held assumption of female dominance. The concept of men feeling threatened because of changing social contexts and gender relations is relevant in understanding how modern social trends have impacted on the way men think about themselves in relation to women and fellow men. Nonetheless, the fact that *kumuse* is performed specifically to commemorate the passing on of a famous male elder symbolically constitutes a 'natural crisis' that perennially and continuously attenuates and threatens the social position of the traditional Bukusu man. The concomitant fears and anxieties associated with death are merely symbolic of the deeper male trepidations and tensions in relation to the ever changing perceptions about the role of men in the society. This study will hopefully demonstrate how these fears, tensions and anxieties come to the fore through the Bukusu after-burial oratory genre.

So far, our theoretical exploration of masculinities in the African context reveals that most images about men are not static or given; they keep changing in response to the ever-changing social relations because of cultural and economic realities. Even as we

adopt 'masculinism' and masculinities as paradigms of understanding *kumuse*, we are still cognizant of Dawson's assertion that "masculinities are imagined forms that are 'made up' by creative cultural activity and yet materialize in the social world as structured forms with real effects upon both women and men" (1994:22). He argues that masculinity "as narrative forms of imagining exist in a temporal dimension of flux and dynamic contradictions" (1994:22). Foxhall & Salmon adumbrate this view when they contend that in the construction of individual self, the success of masculine values rests in their ability to arrange and rearrange the goalposts so that their "self-interest is always paramount and the selves cannot be other than male" (1998:21).

Overall, our theorization on masculinities has focused on the African man who in various ways represents the Bukusu figurations of manhood. However, this study is not claiming a homogenous portrayal of the Bukusu man. Neither is it assuming that there is an agreed Bukusu image of masculinity. Rather the analysis of 'masculine power and anxieties' in *kumuse* text proposes to benefit from the performativity theory as espoused by Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*. In her idea of gender as performativity[19] she argues that, gender is a performative act deeply embedded in social and historical circumstances; an act, a style, an effect, a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning (Butler, 1990). She further asserts that it is performativity, its acts, gestures and enactments that produces the overall effect of a stable inner core of gender (ibid). In a sense, the continual repetition of the same acts and gestures is, for Butler, a characteristic of performance in gender and in our case masculinity. This study adopts Butler's view

[19] Butler's concept of performativity in gender borrows heavily from the linguistic philosopher J.L. Austin who first introduced the term 'performative'. According to Austin (1959), all language is not just readable by means of its relation to the real but it also consists of "performative utterances characterized by the fact that in saying what I do, I actually perform the action" (1959: 24).

that masculinity is more of a performance rather than an essential part of the male body (Butler, 1990).

Furthermore, the study borrows extensively from Butler's theoretical assertion that gender (and masculinity) is "a performance which shifts and changes in different contexts and times; it's not a fixed attribute in a person" and more often than not, "it requires repeated performances of gender-appropriate behavior which can never be fully internalized" (1990:26). The contention that men often put on 'a performance to look masculine' at any given time is supported by Morgan who argues that "gender and masculinity may be understood as part of a presentation of self, something which is negotiated implicitly or explicitly over a whole range of situations" (1992:47). Herzfeld further distinguishes between 'being a good man' and 'being good at being a man' because in his view, it is the 'performative excellence' of manliness that counts more than merely being born male (1985:16, 47). In our analysis of *kumuse,* the aim is to subject it to rigorous analyses to expose the multiple 'gender performances' and meanings of masculinity that come out through language, discourse practices and narrative processes. In this analysis, Butler's concept of performativity easily finds a place in the assertion that "masculinity is as much about the utterances and actions which take place in social contexts" fraught with a myriad historical and cultural meanings (Morgan 1992:47).

2.6 Masculinities and Dimensions of Gender Relations among Bukusu

Having discussed masculinity in general and masculinity in African contexts, it is imperative to get some sense of the different dimensions of gender relations in the Bukusu society. To achieve this we proceed by tracking the societal changes in the communal structures, family units and sexual division of labour in precolonial, colonial and up to the present times. Simiyu Wandibba observes that during the precolonial era family ties in the Bukusu community were stronger than today and the roles played by individual members of each family were culturally spelled out (Wandibba, 1985). In his

view gender roles in the traditional family context, family links and the roles of each individual in the household were governed by cultural norms which were known and obeyed by all (1992). This sense of communal unity was largely enhanced by some of sort of informal education and gender ideological control system presided over by both male and female adults - but mostly by male adults - who played a pivotal role in the specification of duties of different members in a family (Makila 2004: 173, Wandibba 1992; 1985).

The Bukusu were also traditionally known for being cattle-rearing people. Apart from keeping livestock - which included cows, goats and sheep - they also practiced crop agriculture. Like most pre-colonial agrarian African societies the practice of agriculture was at the centre of the community's sexual division of labour. Gender roles and duties were closely associated with farming activities such as cultivation of land, animal husbandry, hunting and gathering and fishing (Wandibba, 1985, Sifuna, 1985). However it was the duty of elders, in their bid to control children from an early age, to teach them how to perform different roles and duties in society. Within the homestead, siblings, parents, extended family and older relatives all played a role in training young Bukusu boys and girls on their social and economic responsibilities (Wandibba 1992, Makila 2004, interview with Manguliechi, 3 June 2008). Nonetheless, the distinctly male and female duties were spelt out to boys and girls during their teenage years (between ten to fifteen years). Girls were taught about the intricacies and obligations of womanhood and motherhood by their mothers and grandmothers (interview with Manguliechi 3 June 2008). They were also initiated into taking up more responsibilities in the production, reproduction and acquisition of food for the rest of the family by undertaking feminine duties such as fetching water and firewood, gathering vegetables, grinding the necessary cereals such as millet (*bulo*) and sorghum (*kamaemba*) and cooking food for the family (interview with Lubisia 3 July 2008).

Boys were equally initiated early into male duties, manhood and fatherhood. By the age of five they were expected to take care of calves and the young of small stock such

as goats and sheep. To hone their skills of caring for animals, a parent would extend 'mock ownership' of a specific cow, sheep or goat (in some cases chicken) and in the process make it the responsibility of the young boy to take care of it by ensuring it was always fed and safely brought back to the kraal each evening (interview with Mzee Wanjala, 4 December 2008). Alongside their fathers, boys participated in clearing farmland for cultivation, planting, weeding and harvesting of crops like maize, millet and sorghum. They also grazed cattle in the meadows and learned how to trap birds, small game and fishing in small rivers, and ponds. Duties such as milking cows, goats and sheep were taught to both boys and girls and Bukusu children of both sexes thoroughly enjoyed activities of gathering wild fruits and mushrooms and swimming in small rivers.

At about fifteen years of age, boys and girls underwent puberty rites – circumcision for boys and marriage/sexual counseling for girls. While girls' puberty rites were never elaborate or publicized, the boys' circumcision ritual was as elaborate as it was significant. It entailed cultural festivities where boys who had voluntarily declared their desire to undergo the rite eventually underwent the painful physical excision of their foreskins as a mark and signifier of attaining manhood. Immediately after undergoing the puberty rites, girls could get married. However, boys were expected to undergo more maturation before marrying. In essence, circumcision (*khukhwingila*, or *khukhebwa*) was one of the steps towards attaining traditional Bukusu manhood and masculinity so to speak. Newly circumcised young strong men were also chosen and trained as fighters. But more significantly, circumcision as a rite of passage was one of the many cultural institutions through which older Bukusu men exercised gerontocratic partriachal power over the young men. By insisting that one can only become a man after circumcision, the older men, in a way, used circumcision as a way of ideologically controlling the young men's attainment of masculinity and its privileges.

While a lot has significantly changed in terms of traditions in the community since the pre-colonial period, adult men and women in the contemporary Bukusu set up still play different roles in order to ensure the sustenance and stability of the community's

members. The same gender roles and duties that were traditionally inculcated into their psyche from a very young age are still encouraged and emphasized. The ultimate purpose of each of the roles was to ensure families were provided for with the requisite food and to maintain a sense of security and communal collectiveness. Although farming played a key role in the pre-colonial Bukusu economy and cultural division of labour, the duties of men and women were never evenly or equitably shared. While men cleared the land for cultivation and participated in weeding and harvesting staple cereals like millet and sorghum, women undertook the more tedious tasks of cultivating the land, planting, weeding, harvesting, processing and storing the cereals (Wandibba 1992; 1985). It was the duty of women to grow food crops such as sweet potatoes, simsim, groundnuts and different varieties of vegetables.

In animal husbandry, men looked after animals and performed duties such as slaughtering and skinning animal carcasses especially during special ceremonies and rituals. The popular Bukusu practice of bleeding cattle (*khuchala kamasile*) was also the duty of men. Interestingly, it was the women who cleaned the places where animals slept (*khung'ilila kamatala*) and although milking was done by both men and women, it was often done more by women. Churning milk (*khusacha kamabele*) in a large gourd was the duty of women and children and women also processed the resultant butter to obtain oil and ghee (*libonda*) – a special delicacy that was eaten with ugali or used in frying vegetables. It was also the responsibility of men to build homes, erect granaries and fences, dig wells, engage in, woodcarving (*khubecha*) and the making of drums. In a nutshell, men were engaged in more outdoor and public leadership duties such as presiding over public forums and fighting in wars, while women were confined to the domestic sphere in sustenance occupations like farming, collecting firewood, fetching water and raising children. This distinction between male and female roles had a huge influence on the gender relations and social interactions so much so that women often worked hard as care-givers but earned less respect in the public sphere which was considered a male domain.

Predictably, all the divine and spiritually-sanctioned talents and duties among the Bukusu such as *bukimbi* (rain-making), *bukhebi* (circumcision), *khuswala kumuse* (performing at after-burial congregations), *bung'osi* (prophesying) *bubasi* (blacksmithing) and *bufumu* (traditional healing/fortune telling) are all done by men. In the words of Manguliechi, it is "almost sacrilegious to imagine a Bukusu woman doing any of these duties" (interview with Mangulliechi 3 June 2008). In addition, even to this day, village and clan elders (*bakasa*) who preside over public functions and adjudicate over social disputes are men. Even though women can participate in public sessions like dispute arbitration cases, their roles are often as minimal as being witnesses offering evidence or even being bystanders. In general, high-level public forums at which important decisions are made on behalf of the community are often the preserve of men (Makila 2004: 16). Bukusu women never preside over ritual sacrifice ceremonies. In some instances they are even prohibited all together from attending them. For instance they are never allowed to circumcise boys or even accompany the initiates as they go to the river before circumcision because of their perceived 'contaminating' menstrual fluids (interview with Manguliechi 3 June 2008). Similarly, men are also warned to avoid 'contaminating intercourse' with their wives on the eve of any auspicious or important cultural ritual, sacrifice or even war for the warriors. Essentially Bukusu women are shunned and excluded when it comes to matters of high cultural significance. And as part of the older men's strategies of controlling women, they always sanction them when it comes to participation in public functions and even when they are allowed to take part they only play peripheral roles. By ensuring that culturally significant roles such as rain-making, divining, circumcision, blacksmithing and after-burial oratory can only be performed by elderly men, the older men ensure a firm grip on the instruments of their patriarchal power with which they use to control women and young men. The performance of *kumuse* is one such instrument of controlling women and children.

Because of the patriarchal nature of the society, the Bukusu man is always the head of the family and centre of authority – his word is law. His authority arises from the

ownership of land and cattle which gives him economic power over women and children. The traditional Bukusu man - who would often be polygamous - owns exclusive rights to the means of production, land and cattle as well as the labour of women and children. Women have no rights to property and no say on the sale of farms proceeds like crops and animals though they are expected to care for them on behalf of their husbands. Industriousness, meekness and submissiveness are popular qualities of women that young men were encouraged to look for when they want to marry a girl. During marriage, dowry negotiations are always the domain and prerogative of men and livestock (or monetary equivalent) is the currency in exchange of wives. For this reason, girls are regarded by fathers as a source of wealth because the livestock acquired through bride wealth is a testimony of a man's propriety, reliability, diligence and responsibility (interview with Mzee Wanjala, 4 December 2008).

The gender delineation in terms of division of labour is also replicated at the level of performance genres. Indeed among the Bukusu, there are performance genres that are considered as being either 'male' or 'female'. Folktales (*chingano*), riddles (*kiminayi*) and songs (*kimienya*) (excluding war songs) are generally associated with women. The duty of telling stories to young children is left to mothers and grandmothers. Grandmothers are popular with songs and riddles because they enjoy a joking relationship with their grandchildren and also act as confidantes and counselors on touchy issues such as sexual morality. On some occasions young aunts or older siblings can tell stories to the younger children. Narratives on ogres (*kamanani*) and the trickster hare (*wanakhamuna*) are very popular among Bukusu children although tales that emphasize moral lessons are equally enjoyed.

On the other hand, performance genres such as proverbs (*chisimo*), war songs, witticisms and puns, parables, allegories, idioms, public speaking and the after-burial narration are considered as male. Genres that are generally associated with public sessions and special cultural events and ceremonies are seen as the domain of men. For instance, proverbs, idioms and parables are considered as male genres because they are

more intellectually challenging. According to Manguliechi, women cannot fully grapple with the complex layers of meaning in parables, idioms and proverbs and that's why they prefer the lesser challenging ones such as oral narratives, riddles and songs, (interview with Manguliechi 3 June 2008). Nonetheless Bukusu men are also known to take part and enjoy story-telling and singing. The only difference though is that their stories and songs are of a masculine nature; often celebrating and glorifying masculine conquests and prowess. War songs and circumcision songs are also sung by men to instill bravery and strength in boys.

By and large the gender relations and interactions between Bukusu men and women in the traditional precolonial set up were complex and should be understood from multiple dimensions. The status differences among individuals were based on gender, age and seniority and to some extent kinship status/ties and material wealth (cattle), special talents and abilities (including rain-making and prophesy) and personal qualities such as charisma. Within this complex gender matrix masculinity had different dimensions. The term masculinity can be translated into various equivalents in *Lubukusu* language. From the word '*omusecha*' - a man - we can forge the terms '*busecha'* – manhood - and '*lusecha'* - manliness. While '*lusecha*' refers to the act of trying to act or behave like a man, '*busecha*' is more physical and is sometimes used as a metaphor to refer to semen - the life-bringing male fluid. The term '*busecha*' in relation to masculinity alludes to virility and man's ability to sire children while '*lusecha*' is more about braggadocio, masculinism or socially-sanctioned behaviour patterns that are associated with being a man.

Yet being the ideal Bukusu man (the equivalent of hegemonic masculinity) is a combination of very many social and personal features. To begin with, one has to be circumcised (*omusani*), mature (*omukhulu*), of chiefly or royal status (*omukasa* or *omwami*) and probably wealthy (*omuyinda*). In the same category of revered men included rainmakers (*bakimbi*), prophets or diviners (*bang'osi*) and funeral orators (*baseni be kimise*). The Bukusu also cherish male virtues such as pride (*lukhole*), good

oratory skills (*khukhoba chilomo*), good-heartedness (*kumwoyo kumulayi*), diplomatic skills (*bukayi*), physical resilience (*kamani*), the ability to attract the attention of women, (*lukwaki*) and bravery (*bunyindafu*). Thus in the traditional sense a high ranking man can variously be referred to as '*omusecha owe kiminie'* (a man of means) or '*omusakhulu owe lirie'* (a man deserving respect), *omukhulu* (elder) '*omwami'* or '*omukasa'* (king/leader), '*omukhongo'* (powerful) or '*owe lichabe'* (man of high cultural rank). All these titles refer to versions of masculinity that are dominant in particular social contexts. But like all forms of hegemonic masculinity, they remain ideal because it is impossible for a man possess all these characteristics.

The Bukusu society's gender structures were in many ways affected by the advent of colonialism and white imperialism. By 1895 when Kenya was declared a British colony, the Bukusu gender hierarchies had remained intact and unfettered for a long time. Colonialism therefore represented the encounter and clash of British and Bukusu cultures. But more importantly, gender was always an important axis along which colonial power was constructed and exercised. Nancy Rose Hunt underscores this view when she argues that "European projections of Africans and other colonized peoples as demonized, sexualized feminine 'other' worked to feminize and tame, and thus diminish and control, colonized men and women" (1996:331). In her view, the initial meeting of British colonial culture and the African ways of life were framed on the colonizer's presumptive "polarity between the manliness of imperial heroes and adventurers and their subordinate variants, effeminate male or tamed female colonized subjects or sexualized territorial spaces" (Hunt 1996:331).

However, Derek Peterson has argued elsewhere that while colonialists together with their missionary counterparts always fashioned themselves as "emissaries of a modern world…and human carriers of a hegemonic world view,…the empire was more than a political and cultural force and not all Africans settled into the simple dichotomy between 'foreign' and 'native' culture " (2012b : 6). He further notes that colonialism and the missionary movement in particular "opened up a great number of discursive

networks for Africans to participate in" (Peterson 2012b:7). One way in which colonialism influenced the pre-colonial Bukusu gender structures was through the introduction of Christianity. Robert Morell argues that "one of the first forces that challenged African hegemonic masculinity was the Christian church" (1998:621). Among the Bukusu, the missionary influence (championed by Quakers and Catholic missions) that started in the 19th century introduced new ways of life, new commodities and a new understanding of the meaning of life and life after death. Colonialists used Christianity and evangelism to justify their imperialism (Peterson 2012b: 6) and missionary activity was always intergral to colonial conquest. The colonial moment offered a different meaning of masculinity and gender relations. For young men and women, missionary activities provided an opportunity to go to school, migrate to towns and enter gainful employment as a way of bypassing gerontocratic patriarchal power strictures of the older men in the pre-colonial set ups. Colonialism and the missionary movements certainly made women and young men to realize that learning, working and participation in a capitalistic and monetized economy were features of a new masculinity that rivaled the pre-colonial forms (Morell 1998:621).

Apart from reconstituting gender relations and masculinity in particular colonialism was also responsible for redesigning the sexual division of labour. Simiyu Wandibba observes that three or so decades after Kenya became a British colony, the community's sexual division of labour had remained virtually intact (1992; 1985). But from the 1920's things changed especially with the advent of formal schooling as more Bukusu parents started taking their sons to school. At first many parents were unenthusiastic to take their daughters to school partly because girls were seen in terms of growing up, getting married, producing children and bringing bridewealth to their fathers (Wandibba 1985). For these reasons, schooling for girls was initially regarded as a hindrance that would delay the girl's cultural roles of giving birth to children and enriching their fathers (Wandibba 1985; Makila 2004: 132).

By the 1930's, more and more parents desired to educate girls for the sheer reason that education was suddenly recognized as a tool of shaping girls into better wives and mothers (See also Wandibba 1985; Makila 2004). Furthermore, fathers with more educated and literate daughters started demanding and receiving higher amounts of bridewealth and thereby inspiring fellow men to educate their daughters (interview with Lubisia 3 July 2008). This trend is still rife today and probably explains why most Bukusu parents no longer discriminate against girls on matters of education and schooling. None theless education had a huge impact on the traditional gender roles that boys and girls could play. By embracing education, the Bukusu had finally acknowledged that men and women could no longer stick to the cultural roles that had initially been designated for them. For both boys and girls, for instance, going to school meant that they could no longer fully participate in domestic chores since they had to divide their time between school and the family. The only time they could assist their parents was in the afternoons, evenings, weekends and during school holidays. By going to school, girls abdicated their duties of assisting mothers with home chores. Going to school also pushed up the girls' marriage age and in the process delayed the bridewealth that fathers could reap when they got married. This essentially meant that fathers no longer had control over their daughters' bridewealth.

On the other hand schools as purveyors of modernity and institutions that represented change during the colonial period posed the first threat to hegemonic masculinities. Commenting on masculinity in the South African context, Morell observes that "young men went to school to free themselves from the control of their fathers and to gain access to women" (1998:622). He specifically points out that "schooling created a new masculinity that was rebellious and less respectful of elders" (1998:622). Among Bukusu a similar scenario played out largely because the school system disrupted the traditional circumcision age-set system (*bibingilo*) which essentially challenged and dismantled the authority of the elders over this rite of passage. As one of the key institutions through which older men exercised political and social control over young men, circumcision

remains one of the most significant cultural practices that defined traditional Bukusu masculinity. Thus when older men lost control over this ritual and process by which boys became men, it signaled a generational struggle by the young against the old and the emergence of a new Bukusu masculinity.

Gradually, Bukusu boys who went to school in the colonial period began to reject traditional ways of doing things and questioned the rationale of some of the customary practices. Worse still, the spread of colonial influence through the imposition of taxes (*busuru*) and the settler control of the economy effectively neutered any remaining form of influence that older Bukusu patriarchies had over young men (interview with Mzee Wanjala 4 December 2008; see also Morell 1998) . The open defiance of authority of the elders and blatant disregard for customs and traditions was borne out of the reality that there existed a weakened African patriarchy that no longer had control over the means of production and instruments of creating wealth in the colonial context. The young men saw schooling as the only avenue through which they could enter the labour market and gain some of form of economic independence. Again with the pressure to earn bridewealth in a weakening rural economy young men had to seek work in a colonial economy even if it meant modifying or rejecting some of the customs and practices altogether (Morell 1998: 621). These challenges to pre-colonial male power structures form an intergral part of the modern and contemporary gender dimensions in the Bukusu society. Overall, it is these complex gender dimensions that Manguliechi grapples with in his *kumuse* narrations.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has been an attempt to examine the relationship between the Bukusu death practices, *kumuse* and masculinity. By reviewing scholarly works and views that have been expressed on the *kumuse* genre, other African genres of oral literature and theories of masculinity/masculinities the chapter has laid a foundation on how we can analyze power discourses and masculinities in *kumuse* text. The chapter began by

outlining the traditional funeral practices of the Bukusu with a view of appreciating how the community's world view is represented by the funeral reciter in his performer. The chapter also explored how the taboos, rules and regalia associated with the funeral oratory have a bearing on the cultural significance of this genre. Our discussions in this chapter have revealed that the Bukusu death practices, taboos, rules and regalia worn by the funeral reciter offer useful insights into the cultural contexts and meanings of *kumuse*.

The chapter also examined at length the various scholars who have studied not only *kumuse* but other African narrative genres. The purpose of the review was to contextualize the genre within the African oral literature canon by juxtaposing it with other genres in Africa. We concluded this section by reviewing the ideas of several scholars of masculinities whose views are useful for the analysis of a death folklore genre like *kumuse*. Since the key purpose of this thesis is to examine masculinity and power discourses in *kumuse*, the chapter has highlighted and explained the background of the study by foregrounding some of the key cultural and theoretical issues that will be useful for analysis in our subsequent chapters. Lastly, the chapter focused on the masculinities and gender relations in the Bukusu society and how they have changed over time because of colonialism and modernity. In particular we have highlighted the Bukusu meaning of hegemonic masculinity and how several other institutions like circumcision, rainmaking and divination fit into the cultural schema of Bukusu gender relations.

Chapter 3

Life and Experiences of Manguliechi: The Funeral Reciter as an Embodiment of Masculinity

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we acknowledge the role played by the oral artist and his personal experiences in shaping the cultural epistemes and philosophies that are circulated in his *kumuse* performance texts. The chapter outlines biographical details of John Wanyonyi Manguliechi in order to demonstrate the extent to which his personal life and character determines and shapes his socio-cultural status as a symbol of Bukusu masculinity. In this section we also trace his apprenticeship and professional development as a funeral reciter in order to show how his cultural duties and ritualistic role as *omuswali* has transformed him into the embodiment of ideal religio-traditional masculinity. Relying heavily on interviews I held with Manguliechi and other Bukusu cultural commentators, this chapter seeks to understand the role played by *oswala kumuse* in imparting cultural mores and influencing certain recalcitrant images of Bukusu traditional masculinity.

3.2 'Omukinyikeu waamba Mutalia': Manguliechi's Life, Apprenticeship and Experiences

My first encounter with John Wanyonyi Manguliechi was way back in the late 1980s when I watched him perform at an after-burial congregation of a prominent Bukusu elder near my high school.[20] Before then, I had heard about him from a number of respected

[20] This was actually way back in 1988 when I was in high school and as part of our oral literature fieldwork research we had gone to watch him perform at a home in Chebosi village, Bokoli Location in Bungoma District..

older people, who were all praises for the oral artistry of the man who is still renowned for capturing the imagination of both the young and old members of the community with his rhetorical genius. His fame is still attested to by many across the whole community and some of what we outline in this section as biographical details already exist in the public domain either as oral accounts or information appearing in Kenyan media.

However, Manguliechi the man that I encountered during the fieldwork research for this study (between January and August 2008) was a very different human frame from the one I had last met earlier. To begin with, his left leg had been amputated and he now moved around in a wheelchair often pushed by an aide. Even as he welcomed me to his modest home for our first interview on 3rd June 2008, I couldn't help but immediately pick out signs of a forlorn and desolate man who was clearly struggling to look happy. The Manguliechi I had known before was a tall, robust and jocular man with a slight and athletic built; suave with slightly graying cropped hair and a matching short goatee; always modestly draped and well-spruced up in clean neat clothes or if in performance resplendent and brightly garlanded in his conspicuous performance robes; a person whose step both within and away from his ritual space, was quick, assured and belied his advanced age. The man that I had watched on many occasions in action, was a quick-witted personality with razor-sharp memory, a knack for humor and detail in his description of events and characters, yet extremely gentle and generous with a diplomatic mien.

The jaded man on a push wheelchair was very different. The general state of disrepair of his homestead added to the grim picture of a man who was struggling under the burden of modern capitalism and grinding poverty. Around the compound and especially behind the houses were small plots of mealy-maize and traditional vegetables which point to small scale farming, probably practiced by his wives and family to eke out a living. Even as I mustered courage to engage him in the usual Bukusu traditional pleasantries and greetings, it was clear that there was something amiss with the renowned wordsmith; there was a stark disconnect between the real man and the fame that his name

elicits. Throughout the numerous interviews I had with him I noted though that he still maintained a good part of his sharp memory and quick wit.

John Wanyonyi Manguliechi confirmed to me that he was born on 18th March 1930, as an only child (*omutelwa*) of his late father Manguliechi Tolwa and mother Dina Nabalayo. He belongs to the *Bameme* clan (his father's clan) of the larger *Baneahala* group (those who came from '*Mwihala wa Mango'*- Mango's Cave) of the Bukusu genealogy. His mother was from the *Babuya Bakabo* clan group. Both his parents have since passed on. His father died in 1936 when he was hardly six years old but his mother passed away much later in 1976 when he had married his second wife. With regard to Bukusu history and clan genealogies, he explained that the Bukusu can be generally identified under six clan clusters (*chiboloili)* namely: *Basilikwa, Bakikayi, Bamwalie, Banabayi, Bamalaba* and *Baneahala*.[21] The clusters are further sub-divided into clans (*chikholo*). All these clans, as we shall demonstrate in our chapter on Bukusu nationalism, memory, history and ethnicity, are honorific names that carry a lot of historical sentiments that are intrinsic in the cultural definition and signification of malehood.

Like most boys of his times he underwent the traditional male circumcision ritual as a teenager in 1946 just after the end of the Second World War. In reference to this historical epoch, the Bukusu society in their characteristic cultural duty, appropriately

[21] These clan categories like many historical aspects of the Bukusu community are contestable and might vary from one oral artist to another. However these variations clearly illustrate the political stratagems that are involved in the retrieval of any society's memory and history.

named this circumcision age-set '*Kinyikeu sia Wamba Mutalia*'[22] which literally translates to '*Kinyikeu* of Catch the Italian'. What this naming captures in metaphorical terms, is the aftermath of the Second World War that had just ended. In that war the Italians as part of the Axis powers had been conquered by the Allied forces, hence the ridiculing and demeaning phrase 'catch the Italian'. We shall elaborate more on this circumcision nomenclature and phallic meanings in our subsequent chapters. However it is important at this point to mention that among the Bukusu, the circumcision ritual is closely linked to the community's history and sense of memory. For this reason, it is always incumbent upon a council of elders of the community (sometimes under the guidance of an elder statesman like the funeral reciter) to give a relevant name to a circumcision cohort in line with the prevailing events of that year. It is not surprising, therefore, that most Bukusu men take pride in invoking their year of circumcision because of the specific historical events that are associated with each particular cohort year. Notably, it is also a marker of age, status and social seniority/inferiority schema. Declaration of one's year of circumcision age-set (the actual ritual is carried out biennially, in every even year) is standard practice in both formal and informal introductions between traditional elderly Bukusu men.

Manguliechi was proud of his circumcision cohort and fondly referred to himself as '*Omukunyikeu Waamba Omutalia'*. But more significantly, in his view, disclosures about years of circumcision and cohort names were originally useful in estimating the age of men, especially in traditional pre-literate settings where exact dates of birth of people

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[22] The Bukusu have eight traditional circumcision age sets of which *Kinyikeu* is just one of them. This particular naming of a circumcision cohort is usually done by a council of respected Bukusu elders of which the performers of after-burial oratory ritual (*baswali*) form part. The burning issues of the time take precedence and centre stage in the considerations of the name for the age-set. See also Makila (1978:32)

were hard to ascertain in the absence of calendars (interview in 3 June 2008). For instance, he admitted that although he wasn't sure of the exact year of birth of his father, he was certain his father Manguliechi Toywa was circumcised in 1890 under the *Sawa-Maliongobi*[23] circumcision age-set. Estimating that his father was circumcised when he was 20 years or younger in those days, Manguliechi traced back and approximated that his father, most likely, was born on or a few years after 1870.

As a family man, Manguliechi was a polygamous husband with three wives[24] and a father of 21 children; 10 boys and 11 girls. He married his first wife Mary Naliaka from the *Balunda* clan in 1957 with whom he had his first born son (a key traditional Bukusu requirement for being a funeral narrator) named Patrick Wamalwa Wanyonyi. His first born boy was later circumcised in 1972. Sadly this particular son has since passed on, but the rest of his children are still alive and all grown people some with their own families, well-educated and in gainful employment. For example, he mentioned to me that one of his sons is a high school teacher and another one is a marine officer in the Kenya Navy. His second wife Rosemary Nakhumicha from the *Baechalo* clan was married to the artist in 1968, a few years after Kenya's independence in 1963. With her, Manguliechi had a first born son named Joseph Barasa Wanyonyi in 1969. Joseph is a pastor at the local

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[23] As mentioned earlier, the Bukusu often have a name for every circumcision cohort or generation of young initiates that were circumcised the same year. The actual ritual is done every leap year although some time back in 1930 and before there were instances were young boys were initiated in an odd year. For more on Bukusu circumcision age sets and cohorts read Makila (1976).

[24] Media reports indicate that at the time of his death on June 26th, 2012, Manguliechi had married a total of 5 wives. This was reported in an obituary that appeared in the *Daily Nation* newspaper 1st July 2012

New Apostolic Church an evangelical Christian parish in the neighboring Kopsiro village in Mt. Elgon district.

Manguliechi's youngest wife, Maximilla Nasimiyu from the *Bakitang'a* clan still has young children with some barely in their teens. Unfortunately, as at the time of our first interview on 3 June 2008 one of his wives (the eldest), had passed on some years back and again in early December 2008, his second wife also passed away after a short illness. This situation seems to have compounded his melancholic demeanor and thoroughly tested his ability to confront bereavement at a personal level though he could still afford a smile during our interviews. On a lighter note he once vehemently defended and justified the practice of polygamy as part of the African culture which he has no qualms with and cheekily quipped that he personally married many wives to have more children in order to make up for what his parents couldn't do (interview with Manguliechi, 3June 2008).

For a man known for his flamboyance in *Lubukusu* more than anything else, it was interesting to discover that Manguliechi underwent a brief period of formal schooling. He confirmed that he attended formal school at Kamusinga School from 1938 to 1941, where he studied up to primary class three[25] in those days. He vividly recalls his school days because he was a very ardent and committed athlete who specialized in short sprint races. He hilariously recounted a specific incident when as an athlete he was terrified when he first heard the sound of the starter pistol partly because in those days any sound of gunshot was associated with the colonial administrators who were notorious for

[25] There are conflicting reports and accounts on whether he actually studied up to primary class three or four. While media reports indicated he studied up Standard Four he personally said that he learned up to Standard three. His version was also corroborated by his son Joseph Barasa Wanyonyi.

arresting and torturing natives. Overall, Manguliechi appeared modestly literate and it was evident from his fluency in *Lubukusu* language and his average reading and writing skills in Swahili, the official language in Kenya. He could also write well in his mother tongue but he could only barely pick out one or two words in English. Obviously, he was comfortable conversing in *Lubukusu* and was quite eloquent.

In the Bukusu tradition, Manguliechi observed, the art of performing at post-burial congregations is not a trade that anybody can do even with rigorous training alone (interview in 2008). Like many other Bukusu vocations and customs that require special training such as *bukhebi* (art of circumcising), *bubasi* (blacksmithing), *buliuli (*witch-finding) and *bung'osi (*divination or prophesying), it is associated with a calling that is intertwined with *kimisambwa* - ancestral spiritual powers. This belief in the spiritual power of the dead emanates from the ontological premise that people who die can't have their memories and spirits erased from the midst of the living; instead they are transformed into *bana misambwa* – ancestors - who eternally preside over the affairs of the living from the land of the living dead. Essentially therefore, *kumuse* is '*kumusambwa*' or a spiritually-inspired vocation that from the outset manifests itself when a person persistently falls ill and behaves in an inexplicably delirious and erratic manner as if he or she is mad.

Interestingly, it is believed that the *kimisambwa* spirits associated with trades like *kumuse* only afflict those for whom their ancestors in their lineage had such afflictions. According to Chris Wanjala, there are very stringent rules and elaborate procedures governing the appointment and the investiture of *oswala kumuse* and clans that have this privilege are known and limited (1985). Simiyu adds that the honour of being a funeral reciter is usually bestowed on an individual by a member of the 'joking relative clan' -

Omukulo[26] - in recognition of his integrity, wisdom and vast knowledge of Bukusu culture, history, law and outstanding intelligence and oratorical qualities (1997:2-3). This probably explains why performers of this genre believe that they are anointed by '*bakuka'* - great grandfathers. In the case of Manguliechi, the spiritual calling to recite at funerals happened sometime in 1962, when he fell seriously ill and despite being given all kinds of medication and antidotes, (both traditional and modern) by different doctors and healers, he wasn't healed. But sometime in 1963, a group of respected Bukusu elders (*Bakulo*) invoked for him the spirits of '*khuswala kumuse'* and he was cured almost instantly and began apprenticeship as a future *omuswali*. From that moment, Manguliechi claimed he only fell sick in early 2007 when he suffered pain and diabetic complications which necessitated the amputation of his left leg. From then on, he was not able to perform his art like before although he claimed he could still dispense his wise oratory while seated. He even confirmed that in October 2008 he actually presided (without walking up and down) at the after-burial performance of an elder called Thomas Watolwa Chemiati who passed on in Namawanga village near Webuye town. Fortunately, with the assistance of well-wishers who included Bukusu politicians, he procured an artificial leg in 2006 which he was still learning how to use at the time of our first interview on 3 June 2008.

Recalling his apprenticeship years in the 1960s and 70s, Manguliechi explained that soon after he was healed from the *kumusambwa* illness, he was commissioned and allowed by a coterie of revered Bukusu elders to immediately pursue his calling of performing at after-burial assemblies. But since he was still an apprentice, he was by custom restricted to reciting while fixed at one spot either standing or sitting. In action

[26] The concept of '*Omukulo'* in Bukusu culture relates to the fact that within the community there must be members from two specific clans who are permitted to play pranks on each other or even chide each other without any offence being taken. See also Makila, (2004).

therefore, he was only allowed to talk but without the characteristic pacing up and down the arena - *kumuse* - in the usual peripatetic fashion of mature acclaimed artists. In fact at that stage, he confesses that he only performed under the strict tutelage of seasoned performers and he could still not be allowed to put on the performance regalia of *oswala kumuse* (2008). His first official performance as an apprentice, which he carried out while seated (‘*aloma nekekhale’* - narrating while seated) was in 1976. It was not until 1980 while undergoing an apprenticeship with the renowned funeral reciter Masakha, that he was permitted to at least perform his rhetorics while standing (‘*alomela khungak*i’ - narrating while standing) although not yet permitted to ‘walk’.

Between 1982 and 1983, Manguliechi underwent a more intensive and rigorous apprentice with the then well-known funeral congregation orator Luka Namulala who further sharpened his cultural repertoire and performance sensibilities. According to Manguliechi, it is Luka Namulala who gave him the blessings to go ahead and start performing alone as a full-fledged post-burial ritual convener with all the trappings of donning the proper regalia, strutting about and being listened to and appreciated in his own right. After being officially enthroned on 23rd November 1985,[27] as a performer who could wear the ritual regalia in a special ceremony called ‘*khufwala engubo’*- literally meaning ‘wearing the robes’- his popularity as an after-burial orator rose steadily as he presided over numerous occasions of *kumuse* that were linked to very important *Bukusu* personalities. The post-burial congregations at which he performed included that of the late Elijah Masinde owa Nameme (in 1987), the former self-

[27] The certainty of this date is in doubt though because from his own oral accounts Manguliechi claims to have been officially enthroned as funeral ritual performer in 1984. However his more literate son Joseph Barasa Wanyonyi claims to have records and memoirs that indicate how he was installed on this date.

proclaimed leader and prophet of *Dini ya Musambwa,*[28] a pseudo-religious and political outfit formed in the 1940's to advocate for the practice of Bukusu customs and fighting the colonial invasion; that of the late Masinde Muliro (in 1992) a key opposition figure in Kenya's fight for multiparty democracy in the early 1990's and that of the late Michael Wamalwa Kijana who was the country's vice-president at the time he passed on in August 2003. The video clips of his performance at the late vice-president's funeral are part of the core texts we shall be analyzing in our current study. Because of his staunch advocacy for the observance of Bukusu cultural traditions, especially through his performances, some cultural critics mistakenly associated him with *Dini ya Musambwa* and its late leader Elijah Masinde owa Nameme. Manguliechi confessed that while he agreed with some of the ideas of the pseudo-political and religious sect, especially with regard to cultural nationalism, he was never a member of the group. Nonetheless Manguliechi was always proud that his *Bameme* clan had produced mothers for such remarkable cultural heroes like Mukite owa Nameme and Elijah Masinde owa Nameme, who were both '*Babewana Bameme'* - nephews of *Bameme* clan.

For Manguliechi, the art of performing at after-burial congregations is not just a calling but a professional job that he did for a long time to earn his living. Before he embarked on this duty, he concedes to having worked and been employed in several places. He got his first job in 1952 as a milk man on a white settler's farm in the then white settlement scheme presently known as Trans-Nzoia district. He worked at this job until his first marriage in 1957. Later he also worked as a clerk at a local tea factory in Kibisi near his home village from 1969 until 1972. By 1976, he completely moved away from any kind of formal employment as he concentrated his efforts on learning his trade of performing through apprenticeship and attending the performance sessions of his

[28] For more on *Dini ya Musambwa* see also Nandi (2007), Wipper (1977*)* and Simiyu (1997).

senior mentors. By the time he finally started practicing as a fully-fledged performer, he was well aware of the value and importance of undertaking the craft.

Oswala kumuse need not be a rich man. Indeed many of them are never rich, but are still recognized as Bukusu elders or *Bakayi* (Simiyu, 1997:2-3). Although the fee that funeral performers charge for their services is not commercially commensurate with their work it is generally agreed that it should be reasonable but never prohibitive given the sad context and nature of the assignment in addition to the likely event of the bereaved relatives being hard up.[29] Traditionally, if the family is well-off the funeral reciter is normally given a bull. But in case the bereaved family is poor or hard up, even a small heifer or *sisiayo* (a goat or sheep) is acceptable. In extreme cases the narrator may offer the service *pro bono* especially if he was close to the deceased man or if he feels obligated to do a good turn for the family. In the modern context many people prefer to pay a cash equivalent for the animal that the reciter wants. Nonetheless the reciter is careful not to sound greedy or else, it is rumored, the potency of his words will gradually start to dissipate (interview with Manguliechi, 3 June 2008).

Because of his powerful performances at the funerals of politically-recognized Bukusu personalities, his fame to this day remains unmatched and unsurpassed in comparison to other performers. Apart from ritual duties, Manguliechi was regularly

[29] The funeral reciter is expected to be reasonable. If he becomes too greedy it's believed his rhetorical potency will disappear, he could become ill or face some unspecified calamity. Indeed it is rumoured that part of the reason why Manguliechi's leg was amputated (which led to his eventual death) was probably because he had become compromised by politician's monetary gifts. Another claim is that he is suspected of having performed at the after-burial congregation of his *bakoki* or circumcision age mate which is a taboo. However all these remain unconfirmed rumours whose veracity cannot be ascertained. His own son Joseph Barasa Wanyonyi confirmed that his father died of diabetes-related complications. See also Obonyo (2012a and 2012 b).

consulted by various Bukusu leaders who sought guidance and wisdom on salient social issues. In the cultural sense, he was a resourceful teacher and sage on communal wisdom. However, he often strove to maintain political neutrality to steer clear of political patronage. In instances when politicians sought his views on potentially divisive national and community-specific issues, he was often careful to always remain reconciliatory in order to avoid antagonizing anyone. In his own words, his job entailed the duty of '*khukaya kamaya ne bulomani'* which means 'arbitrating in fights and disagreements' (interview with Manguliechi, 4 July 2008).

According to Manguliechi's view, the Bukusu practice of '*khuswala kumuse'* was originally associated with a man called Samba Sambararira Ngunyi, a son of the first man *Mundu,*[30] the eponymous father man in Bukusu genealogy. Manguliechi could not clearly confirm whether Ngunyi was the first to perform the ritual or to be performed for after his demise. However, according to him Ngunyi was the first man to be circumcised, interestingly by women, and most probably that is the reason why this practice is believed to have started with him. All in all, Manguliechi concedes that the custom and tradition of performing at after-burial congregations aims to impart good virtues, etiquette, manners and respect for traditional mores that are carried over by the wise and elderly for the benefit of both the young and old (2008). He acknowledges that as a narrator he often deployed his rhetorical ingenuity, flowery language and persuasion skills to dissuade community members, particularly the young, from engaging in social vices like adultery, witchcraft, theft, drunkenness, laziness, showy opulence and disdain for the poor, cheating, violence, murder, jealousy and disrespect for the elderly (interview with Manguliechi, 3 June 2008).

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[30] There are written and oral accounts that contest this. For instance according to Makila (1978) the second son of Mundu was called Malaba. But in the context of *khuswala kumuse*, Manguliechi insists that Ngunyi was the originator of the practice and genre.

More significantly, as an *omukambisi* - an adviser/counselor - who forewarns and admonishes those who practice bad behavior, Manguliechi also takes on an extra role of a 'comforter' who solemnizes the occasion by encouraging the audience to remain strong in the face of adversity (interview on 6 June 2008). As he earnestly implored the ancestors and *Wele Khakaba* - God the Giver - to welcome the dead man, he also calmed the grief and anger of loss of the living and bereaved by explaining to them the inevitability of death and emphasizing the need to maintain unity, peace and good morals despite the destabilizing reality of losing a loved one.

Unfortunately, this great sage who was like an encyclopaedic embodiment of the Bukusu cultural memory and archive passed away on 26th June 2012. According to his son Joseph Baraza Wanyonyi his father died after a protracted battle with diabetes complications which had earlier necessitated the amputation of his left leg. It is alleged, Manguliechi was due for another amputation of his right leg. But in typical Bukusu masculine stubbornness that characterized his whole life, he brazenly dared death by proclaiming that he would rather die with one leg than go the grave with all his legs amputated. Although he is no longer there to perform *kumuse* and dispense wise counsel like he used to, Manguliechi is arguably still remembered as an icon of Bukusu cultural repertoire. In his heyday he bestrode the funeral congregation arena like a cultural colossus and rhetorical maestro; a cultural philosopher who commanded unparalleled respect, admiration and reverence. But with the benefit of hindsight maybe we can benefit from the philosophical import of his once favourite Bukusu proverb that says, '*Omulayi akhina lulala mumuse'* - 'A good man dances once in the arena'. Manguliechi really 'danced well' while he could. Sometime in 2011 before his death, he intimated to me that although he was in a wheel chair he was happy to have lived his life and done what he could for the community. Maybe now that he has finally bowed out, many cultural pundits and the community at large can fully appreciate the place he occupied among the Bukusu and hope that he passed on his invaluable skills, knowledge and reins of his art to the younger generation.

3.3 The Cultural Status of Manguliechi, the Wordsmith

A man who has language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language…mastery of language affords remarkable power (Frantz Fanon 1967:18).

The centrality of the performer/artist's personal life cannot be ignored in any attempt to understand the discursive role of folklore in societal gender constructions. As a cultural institution that projects masculine power structures and instruments, the efficacy of any *kumuse* rendition largely depends on the skills and personality of the reciter. Furniss & Gunner acknowledge the role oral artists play in formulating and entrenching social power relations when they argue that, "the people producing oral literature are not just commentators but are often also involved in relations of power between themselves, in terms of supporting or subverting those in power" (1995:3). If anything, they add "the forms with which [oral artists'] work are themselves invested with power; the words, the texts, have the ability to provoke, to move, to direct, prevent, to overturn and to recast social reality" (Furniss & Gunner, 1995:3). In the Bukusu cultural construction of male identity, the gift of good speech is regarded as a benchmark of masculine maturity. One sign of adulthood in this regard is the acquisition of all round skills in speech and thought and specifically in knowing what to say and what not to say at whatever time or place. Such skills involve both eloquence and taciturnity especially in revealing or withholding information in order to sustain the listeners' attention (interview with Manguliechi on 6 June 2008).

Among older Bukusu members Manguliechi was regarded with almost cultic reverence and the genre of *kumuse* is almost synonymous with his charismatic personality. According to Mzee Wanjala, so renowned and idolized is the name Manguliechi that even after his death in June this year (interview with Wanjala 3 April 2012) his name is still famous and any public figure who tries to match or mimic the

funeral narrator's oratory skills is instantly christened '*Manguliechi*'.[31] Nonetheless, the more elderly Bukusu men I talked to easily pointed out names of other prominent funeral performers like Luka Namulala, Masakha, Bakari Wanami okhwa Munyifwa, Njibwakale owa Nambuya, Batroba and Wangachi who were equally famous before Manguliechi arrived on the scene. However, there appeared to be a general and tacit consensus that Manguliechi's personality and genius as a funeral performer is obviously a rung above the rest of them as illustrated by his rhetorical prowess and cultural idiomatic repertoire. For many Bukusu therefore, Manguliechi '*akhobanga chilomo'* (he was 'a wordsmith') and '*anyanyanga elomo enoka'* (literally meaning 'he knew how to chew words until they are soft'). We will return later in the next chapter to unpack how the imagery of 'chewing words until they are soft' is appropriate in understanding the textuality of the *kumuse* narration. Because of his idiomatic prowess, many Bukusu to this day still fondly refer to Manguliechi with somewhat amusing pet names like '*Sili mbakha'* - the conversationalist, '*Nasiloma'* - meaning 'Chatterbox' or one who never tires to speak and '*Radio BBC',*[32] a reference to how his cultural wisdom is acknowledged across the whole community almost like the vaunted British Broadcasting Corporation radio newscasts.

The Bukusu like many African societies, regard death as a public and open social affair. Death is openly acknowledged in the public space because it is believed grief is a collectively-owned emotion and the deceased person is a loss for all. This means that when *oswala kumuse* performs, his sessions are symbolic at the personal and social

[31] Because of his good oratory skills, former Sirisia Member of Parliament Hon. John Munyasia is sometimes referred as 'Manguliechi'.

[32] This term was picked during my conversations with Mzee Joseph Wanjala and Mwalimu Ben Lubisia who both acknowledged that the nickname is fondly used with reference to Manguliechi because of his fame within the Bukusu community.

levels. First, as a ritual performer the community collectively appreciates the roles he plays in '*khulilisia bafubi'* - condoling the orphaned - and '*khuolelesia kimioyo'* - mollifying the souls of the bereaved. However as a senior elder statesman he also used the occasion of his narrations to basically mourn the loss of one of his kind. At such a level, *omuswali* is a cultural emissary and comforter acting on behalf of the whole community.

Precisely because of the symbolic dispositions of the *kumuse* performance, many in the community believe that through his solemn oratory Manguliechi sought to expand death, grief and the related emotions of anger and loss, from the private space of the immediate family into the larger public sphere of the community. The huge crowds that attend after-burial oratory performances clearly demonstrate that *oswala kumuse* is a symbol of unifying the larger community during the time of death and grief. The funeral performer also seems to occupy the symbolic but liminal space between life and death. In traditional parlance, he is in fact regarded like a wise man who "speaks to both the living and the dead" (*Alamila balamu ne bamakombe*). From an ontological perspective of life and death, he certainly seems to carve the image of an arbiter between the living and the dead despite his own mortality. Unfortunately, politicians often exploit the genre of *kumuse* and the stature of *omuswali*, just as they as they resort to divination and Christian prayers, to validate their positions and legitimacy in the Bukusu community (Wanjala, 2013).

John Wanyonyi Manguliechi belonged to the *Bameme* clan, the majority of who live in today's Nalondo, Bokoli and Kimilili locations (Simiyu, 1997: 2-5). Historian V.G. Simiyu contends that the *Bameme* clan has the distinction for producing some of the senior-most Bukusu elders in form of *bang'osi* – prophets - and *baswali kimise* -funeral orators (Simiyu, 1997:2-3). Manguliechi's clan, according to Simiyu, has an added cultural clout among Bukusu, because legend has it that the mother of Mukite, one of the greatest 19th century Bukusu warriors and prophets was *Omumeme* (1997:2-3). He was in fact popularly known as Mukite owa Nameme. For this reason, Manguliechi as *omuswali*

kumuse and *Omumeme*, is a highly respected personality in Bukusu culture and history, especially because he presides over funeral congregations at which he recounts the community's history, extols Bukusu traditions, culture, morals and law and exhorts the living to live up to the mark of past and present heroes (Simiyu, 1997:2). In a sense he also inspired his audience to uphold the moral rectitude of age-old practices and embrace the courage and bravery of community heroes. Indeed by virtue of his social duty as the one who gives eulogies for departed elders, Manguliechi was also sometimes referred to as '*Omukayi'* - the Peacemaker.

But in terms of how *kumuse* explores the discursive male gender formations, the funeral reciter appears to be a cultural symbol and representation of the social body of the Bukusu man both in the corporeal and the spiritual sense. While the body of the deceased and death in general are used as referents by the narrator in his attempts not only to expiate grief but also use the occasion to reformulate, re-imagine or emphasize various cultural stereotypes about Bukusu men, in many of his sessions Manguliechi used to underscore the view that it is in fact the male circumcised body (*busani*) that represents the culturally acceptable and real Bukusu masculinity (interview in 2008). On many other occasions, he also used his own lived experiences to highlight how the arduous process of apprenticeship constitutes a significant stage that prepares him for the duties of performing at funeral congregations.

While it is easy to imagine that the *oswala kumuse* has to always represent community interests in his oratory, (given his societal duty) this is never true all the time. Almost unexpectedly, *oswala kumuse* sometimes elects to go against what 'masculine hegemonic' institutions and practices anticipate he should stand for. This could happen when he consciously uses his own position as a moral rector to launch diatribes at masculine mannerisms, persons or cultural and social experiences he strongly believes are destructive to the society's fabric and well-being. Indeed Manguliechi's social standing among the Bukusu was not without controversies. In conversations I had with my respondents a lot was mentioned about his travesties and supposed unethical

behaviours including occasions when he would enter drinking places dressed in his ritual regalia much to the chagrin and bewilderment of cultural conservatives. I personally interviewed him once in his ritual regalia at his home before we later proceeded to a local pub in Kimilili where I compeleted my interview with him over a beer while he still wore his performance costume. I only learnt much later from cultural purists, who totally disapproved of such mannerisms coming from a man of an almost sacred cultural order, that it was wrong for him to wear his regalia in 'contaminating public spaces' like bars.

But according to Chris Wanjala who has done extensive research on the etiquette of *kumuse* performance, Manguliechi's masculinity was of a 'bizarre kind'. Noting that the renowned performer preached about moral rectitude of which he wasn't a good example, Wanjala, specifically takes issue with the way Manguliechi used to advise women not to visit their daughters when they were in their menstral periods. For him this was weird coming from such a revered elder (Wanjala 2013). Even more controversial was an incident when Manguliechi went against all the rules on *kumuse* performance by forcing his way to perform at the late Hon. Wamalwa's funeral. Although he found another ritual performer already in the arena he still insisted on performing because, by some accounts, he was eyeing the political limelight and hefty fee that would be paid for the occasion. Ironically, Manguliechi's standing and career as a funeral reciter was never the same after that incident and many cultural pundits attributed his change of fortunes to that 'moment of greed'. Expectedly, Manguliechi used to deny such allegations but certainly such incidents remained as blemishes on his otherwise onerous and illustrious ritual career.

3.4 Manguliechi as a Voice of Bukusu 'Hegemonic Masculinity'

Because of his status in the cultural hierarchy of Bukusu, Manguliechi often symbolically stood out as a voice of dominant masculinity. By virtue of his social standing in the community, his status certainly elevated him to prominence and visibility. For example when he praises himself as *'Omukinyikeu owaamba mutalia'* (One who was

circumcised under the *Kinyikeu* of *waamba Mutalia* cohort) and repeatedly reiterates that "*kamakhuwa kano sekali kakase tawe, kakenywe niko*" (These words are not mine they are meant for you); he deliberately foregrounds not just his circumcision cohort but his symbolic role as the voice of 'circumcised Bukusu male hegemony'. Given the cultural premium attached to circumcision, Manguliechi incidentally speaks on behalf of all circumcised men who strive to be at the top of the masculine power hierarchy.

Again by dint of his spiritual-like duties and his ranking alongside other cultural roles like divining and rainmaking, he is highly regarded as a representative of Bukusu sacred order. For many, Manguliechi was a religious and moral barometer of the community and due to the mortal fear that is linked with death; the vocation of performing at after-burial congregations is often elevated to some kind of priestly order (interview with Bob Wekesa in 2008). Within the performance arena, the performer instantly becomes a religious icon and a messenger of the ancestral spirits (*bakuka)* that inspire his cultural position and continue to wield influence in the world of living. Consequently, he is viewed as being close to God and the spirit world and everything that he proclaims is deemed as God-sanctioned. This respect for him is not just triggered by his superior knowledge of the Bukusu cultural rituals and practices but also because of his unparalleled gift of memory. His endless narration as he paces up and down with gusto is believed to be 'God-given' (interview with Mwalimu Lubisia, 4 July 2008). While the narrator's association with godliness is an acknowledgement of his superior masculinity, his skill of good oratory (*khukhoba chilomo* - carving words of wisdom) elevates him to a cultural paragon who is accorded special masculine status.

In the words of Makila, funeral performers are ranked highly in the Bukusu masculine hierarchy because they were "looked upon as 'the educated elite'" whose memory is prodigious and they have "virtually nobody above them from whom they could learn the affairs of the nation" (1978:115). They also have the free hand to enrich the scope of ethnic history and culture by adding to their store of knowledge what they consider to be valuable events or ideas in the life of the community (Makila 1978:115).

Incidentally, it is his sharp memory and ability to take stock of community events before making any pronouncements that continually endeared Manguliechi to his audiences. In a sense, communal respect was accorded to him, not just because of his age and repertoire of cultural knowledge, but by the weight and relevance of the counsel contained in his performances. For the same reason some people tend to think *baswali* are religious diviners who represent prophetic voices of seers (*bang'osi*).

As a symbolic arbitrator between life and death, Manguliechi often commented on social issues after a lot of soul-searching, reflection and divine guidance. Indeed the veracity of his judgments, warnings and advice often vindicated him in the fullness of time. On several occasions, he would shoulder the onerous task of reassuring those still living that death is like a rite of passage through which a man moves from one state to another. He was therefore believed to play the role of interceding on behalf of the dead so that the ancestors can receive them happily in the spirit world (interview with Manguliechi, 3rd June, 2008).

Nonetheless, the funeral reciter's embodiment of traditional masculinity needs to be further understood from the basis that he is in fact a beneficiary of both filial and spiritual privileging of male gender construction and elaboration. To begin with, he is a product of a cultural conditioning that favours maleness and his vocation of performing at funeral congregations is a culturally engineered calling that is passed on to him through the male ancestral spirits of his lineage; spirits that project themselves initially as *kimisambwa* (ancestral spirits). Thus, even before he embarks on the actual performance, the funeral reciter is a 'symbol' and 'agent' of male-dominated and spiritually-sanctioned cultural structures and institutions. Thus when he performs, Manguliechi epitomizes the privileging of a hegemonic masculinity that borders on the religious, priestly or even unworldly.

Omuswali also extols and espouses the virtues of bravery and stoicism that are requisite in overcoming grief. During his narrations sentiments of unflinching resilience,

stoicism and bravery are summoned to encourage the grieving men to overcome their sorrow. The narrator as a mourner-in-chief is a symbol of 'unwavering resilience', stoicism and bravery. He therefore rallies his fellow men and community at large to face the tragedy of losing a loved one with extraordinary strength and patience. In fact, when in action Manguliechi always demonstrated that a real Bukusu man has to always be in charge of his emotions, by encouraging his audience to exercise control over theirs. On many occasions he will exhibit virtues of good temperament in the face of a crisis. These are held up as true characteristics of Bukusu hegemonic masculinity.

Age is yet another aspect of masculinity that is well represented and valorized by the *kumuse* performer. For the Bukusu, old age is not just regarded as a sign of vaunted wisdom, but is a testimony of time-tested experiences. Old men are particularly respected because of maturity, resilience and level-headedness. Wagner (1965) underscores these virtues among the Bukusu when he observes that, "old age carries with it prestige and authority, not only because seniority is one of the basic principles of social order, but also because people who have grown old have successfully held their own against all the disruptive forces of life, and have succeeded in maintaining their ritual status at a high level" (1965; 45). This view probably explains why funeral performers are only allowed to perform once they have reached *kamase kamakora* - mature age. The reason for this is because it is believed wisdom comes with age and consequently superior masculinity comes with age. The notion that elderly men have prestige and power because of their age is so highly regarded that it forms the focus of every elderly counsel propagated to youths.

By and large, when *oswala kumuse* steps in the performance arena he is an embodiment of a circumcised, reliable, mature, wise male old body that has attained personhood, fatherhood, grandparenthood, and elder status. These, in traditional terms are significant milestones in the male status hierarchy, and little wonder the audience has to look at the performer with awe and admiration. But in addition the regalia that he wears during the performance underscore his status as a mature noble man. From the

head gear (*ekutwa* or *ekhorere*) made from ostrich feathers and cowrie shells, the ritual robes made from monkey or leopard skin, the copper bracelets, the elephant ivory and rhinocerous horn worn as arm bands, to the *ekhendie* walking stick that swings during performance, the funeral reciter is adorned with trinkets of authority and immense respect. The performance regalia afford him the status of an influential elderly community leader partly because they are phallic symbols of male power and status. Notably, the *ekhendie* walking stick that the performer uses is a signifier of the arbitration duties of *oswala kumuse*. Ordinarily, the stick is associated with elders who arbitrate in disputes but on rare occasions its tip can be pointed at incorrigible youngsters as an elderly curse. Thus the possession of this walking stick by the performer bestows on him the duties of a peace-maker (*omukayi*) who is also feared by wrong-doers because of the cursing potential of the stick he wields.

Within the context of *kumuse*, the ritual taboos associated with it appear to gesture towards a sense of decorum and purity of the body and soul. Almost like a religious monk, *oswala kumuse* has to renounce his humanly desires and cravings for the sake of his sacred calling. By avoiding delicacies like white mushrooms and termites and even abstaining from having sex with his wife on the eve of every performance, *oswala kumuse* becomes a pillar of good morals, patience, restraint and self-sacrifice. For the same reason, the narrator doesn't swallow saliva during the recital to symbolize the need for purity of body and soul for both the living and dead. This character of renouncing bodily desires as a process of knowing the self resonates with the Bukusu virtue of self-denial in the face of tragedy like death; a demonstration of true manliness (interview with Manguliechi, 6 June 2008). In the community's cultural practice that is often inculcated in every young man, true masculinity is built on sacrifice and to move closer to attaining ideal masculinity, a man has to regularly be willing to sacrifice, including his own life, for the good of the community (interview Manguliechi, 6 June 2008). This sense of sacrifice is what Manguliechi appeared to stand for in his daily life and even during his performances of *kumuse*.

3.5 Conclusion

From our discussions in this chapter it is evident that knowing the personal life of John Wanyonyi Manguliechi is useful in understanding his cultural status in the society, the significance of the genre and his role as a representative of masculine interests in gender relations. The chapter has also revealed how his life experiences are instrumental in appreciating various aspects of Bukusu cultural imaginary of hegemonic masculinity as depicted in the after-burial narration. Through a critical analysis of how the narrator, in various ways strives to represent and highlight various cultural meanings of being a man in the Bukusu world view, the central argument in this chapter has been that the artist plays a very symbolic role in *kumuse* performances, through his narration, the regalia he wears, personal mannerisms, taboos and societal status.

The chapter explored at length how the artist's embodiment of Bukusu traditional masculinity in his own life and through his regular performances, continuously formulates gender symbols of power that he projects in his narrations. We have also demonstrated how Manguliechi's life experiences and his various roles in society are social metaphors of hegemonic masculinity. However, we also noted that despite Manguliechi's ability to capture the imagination of his audiences through his narrations and his enchanting personality, he was nonetheless a controversial figure. His personality coupled with the masculine images he strove to highlight in his recitals starkly contradicted his sometimes weird and capitalistic mannerisms in real life. And while his ritual stature earned him respect as a traditional sage and rhetorical genius, his strange behaviors often earned him disdain from sections of the community. Although he has since died Manguliechi is all the same still highly regarded for having been a cultural reservoir and institution of cultural wisdom. His superior repertoire of cultural knowledge and perceived possession of communal/spiritual secrets, despite his occasional bizarre mannerisms, still placed him as the ideal voice of the almost unattainable 'Bukusu hegemonic masculinity'.

Chapter 4

Text and Textuality in Manguliechi's Funeral Oratory

> *"[Textuality]… is people doing things with and to words in many ways and senses - performing them, entextualize them, playing with them at many levels, decorating them multi-modally, reflecting on and through them, interpreting them perhaps."* (Ruth Finnegan 2007:3)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to delineate the textual and literary features of the funeral oratory. The aim is to demonstrate how this genre works, not just as literary text, but as a performance text with structural units that can be analyzed. The questions we seek answers for in this chapter include: What is text and textuality in *kumuse* performance? What is the basic structure of a Bukusu funeral oratory? What factors determine the style, structure and thematic concerns of *kumuse*? Since our interest is the genre's literariness in relation to masculinity, this chapter provides insights into the textuality of *kumuse* and how it deals with masculinist themes. More significantly this section not only explores how the content of kumuse reflects masculinist concerns but the extent to which its forms masculinity. The chapter will attempt to isolate the performative features, thematic concerns, narrative strategies and contexts and examine how they intersect with masculinity. Using excerpts from various recorded clips from our field study, in this section we illustrate how a typical funeral oratory performance by Manguliechi is not only open-ended in form but deliberately plays up concepts of textuality and masculinity.

4.2 The Nature of Text and Textuality in the Funeral Oratory Performance

All cultural behavior, argues Clifford Geertz (1984), has textual characteristics that require an interpretation or reading. Paul Ricouer also argues that all human action is like a text simply because it is inundated with discourse metaphors; metaphors that are pervasive in everyday life not just in language but in thought and action and they are models for understanding the world (1976:81). Yet for Erving Goffman (1959), the textuality of social interaction is as dramatic as a staged performance, because there is always something fundamentally performative about human beings in a social context and interactions between individuals are characterized by expressivities that are punctuated by voices, gestures, facial expressions, body postures and actions (1959:14). On her part, Finnegan equates the textuality of oral texts with 'doing things with words'. In her view, oral words as text envisage words in the context of action. Thus, the expressivity associated with human activity and in particular the coherence and connectivity inherent in oral art forms, consequently accords them textual features. Based on the preceding views by various scholars, we can argue that *kumuse* indeed has textual features which can be examined to reveal multiple interpretations and meanings.

Folklorists and literary scholars are in agreement that oral art forms are texts that deserve critical and intellectual indulgence. But before trying to prove the textuality of *kumuse* performance, let's briefly examine the meaning of text and textuality in the context of oral performance. According to Greetham (1999), "a text is a tissue of words" and the term is coined from a Latin word '*texere'*, meaning "to weave, join together, plait or braid and therefore, to construct, fabricate, build or compose" (1999:26). Barber echoes this line of definition when she says that "text…is an utterance that is woven together in order to attract attention and to outlast the moment" (2007:2). The two definitions above allude to text as the creative arrangement of words for literary and aesthetic purposes. A similar view is proposed by Barber & de Moraes Farias (1989) when they assert that the 'literariness' of 'utterances as text' or species of social action lies in the old science of rhetoric, persuasion and effectuality; the notion of poetic license that brings out the capacity of utterances to be understood beyond their original

meanings (1989:3). All these definitions of utterances as text are certainly relevant to the analysis of a folklore genre like *kumuse*.

Interestingly, the definition of orality as text appears to lean towards the formalist-structuralist school of thought that views the basic linguistic units of such texts as utterances. W.F.Hanks underscores this viewpoint when he defines textuality as "the quality of coherence or connectivity that characterizes text" (1989:96). He further argues that the same textual connectivity is determined by among other factors the inherent properties of the textual artefact and interpretive activities of a community (ibid). Similarly, the idea of reading oral genres as utterances is evident and well-illustrated by the following extract from Manguliechi's narrations.

> *Ne babukusu ndikho khembolela, mwabene kamakhuwa kano kali kakenywe niko, sekali kakange tawe. Wele omwene wambelesia.*

Translation

> It is you Babukusu that I am telling, these words are meant for you, and they are not mine. It's God *Wele* himself who gave them to me.

In the above lines, Manguliechi inadvertently acknowledges that his performance consists of words of a sacred nature. By drawing attention to his religious pronouncements from the very beginning, the funeral reciter reminds his audience of the sacred textuality and somber context of his sessions that are punctuated with emotions of grief, fear and trepidation which are evoked by the death of a Bukusu elder. On such occasions, the funeral narrator is regarded as a religious sage who uses words to recapitulate images of nostalgia and yearnings for the idealized past and heroes in order to mollify the bereaved family and the community at large.

However, defining the text and textuality of *kumuse* requires us to go beyond the concept of structural coherence and connectivity. As Hanks warns us, not "all texts are necessarily unified by textuality" (1989:96). If anything, he adds, "some kinds of texts

may contain within them significant anti-textual elements…they may fail to have thematic, stylistic, or other kinds of unity but still constitute a 'text'" (ibid). Hanks' views best capture the situation that obtains within *kumuse* partly because he appreciates textual fluidity in the study of oral texts. In the same breath, perhaps the best assessment of what I consider a cogent definition of textuality in relation to *kumuse* was aptly offered by Wanyonyi Manguliechi himself during one interview I had with him. While emphasizing the possession of cultural wisdom as being central to the definition of Bukusu manhood, Manguliechi argued that a distinction should be made between *chingano* (narratives), *chilomo* (wise idioms) and *kamakhuwa* (allegories). For him, *chingano* (like fireside narratives) are meant for women and children, but 'a real man' is counted for his ability to 'chew wise idioms until they are palatable' (*khunyanya likhuwa linokele*) and 'dissect deeper meanings of words' (*khukhoba chilomo*) (interview in 6 June 2008). Essentially, from Manguliechi's point of view, the textual features of his own *kumuse* narrations entail a complex and fluid process; a process of not just playing around with words, but coining and carving new words and meanings; a process that requires gifted rhetorical ingenuity on the part of the funeral reciter, almost like 'chewing words until they are soft'.

In concurrence with Manguliechi's assertion on the fluidity and complexity of *kumuse* renditions, the Bukusu have two proverbs that relate to the power of words as kernels of cultural meaning. The first one goes, "*Makhuwa melu*" (Words create an 'insatiable craving'). The second one says, '*Elomo notekha wihoyanga, sokhakhana ta*' (If you are cooking wise words, be patient and don't hurry). The metaphors of 'cooking words patiently', 'chewing idioms until they are palatable' and wise words leading to an 'insatiable craving' for more words all capture the ambiguities and ambivalences associated with utterances as texts. As Barber & de Moraes Farias remind us, oral texts not only have the propensity to be "evasive and ambiguous" but have the "capacity to take on radically different significances from one historical moment to another" (1989:1). In similar fashion, Bukusu wise men are traditionally expected to be

individuals who are reflective, patient and measured with their words; people who fully understand the 'ambiguities', 'evasiveness' and the double-edged meanings of words. For this reason, the narratives, imagery, metaphors, analogies, puzzles, witticisms and many other turns of phrases used by Manguliechi belong to the class of 'wise idioms' - (*chilomo*) and allegories (*kamakhuwa*). Unlike the oral narratives that are traditionally taken to be the preserve of women, the after-burial oratory is considered to be a superior cultural text that contains intellectually serious themes and elevated imagery pitched at a level only understandable by elderly men. In part, the masculinity of *kumuse* essentially rests in the Bukusu custom and tradition; the fact that it's a verbal artform that has traditionally been reserved for men and hence it is implicitly masculine. Let's now proceed to illustrate some of the textual features of the after-burial oratory.

4.3 Structure and Style of *kumuse* Performances

Structurally and stylistically *kumuse* narrations are fluid with no fixed conventional opening and closing formulas. As we mentioned earlier this genre possesses a fair share of anti-textual elements. In many instances the narrator has the leeway to assemble various oral sub-genres, oral stylistic devices and thematic concerns into one amorphous grand narration. Like praise poetry that is often constituted by heaping together examples, anecdotes, commentaries, admonitions, analogies and many other oral subgenres, *kumuse* is an open-ended form. In many respects it seems to follow the open-ended logic of praise poetry which has no definitive end or closure. The form suggests that it could continue indefinitely heaping up and hyping the attributes of the person or object being praised (the title of Karin Barber's book *I Could Speak Until Tomorrow* captures this concept very well). Indeed in many of Manguliechi's narrations it always seems as if its form is infinite and there is no definitive closure or ending like in a novel or dramatic play. Any semblance of unity in *kumuse* narrations come from the audiences being addressed and the specific occasion of an elder's death.

From songs, riddles, folk narratives, puns, metaphors, imagery and chants to tongue-twisters, proverbs, lampoons and obscenities, *kumuse* is an amorphous bricolage of Bukusu idioms, anecdotes, allegories, axioms witticisms and conceited-like phrases; a kind of meta-narrative that is carefully crafted at the discretion of the funeral reciter who, in the eyes of the audience is a master griot and raconteur with unrivalled rhetorical skills. The genre's open-endedness is in a sense only unified by the dead person, the occasion and personal authority and discretion of the performer who can stop things short if he so wishes. From a gender perspective, *kumuse* appears to take the logic of forms of praise poetry like the Zulu Izibongo and Yoruba oriki which are structurally loose, open-ended and 'indisciplined'. To masculinize all the elements assembled in the funeral narration, the onus seemingly is on the male performer and the male deceased to fashion and determine the form of *kumuse*. Suffice to add that among theBukusu, praise poetry especially that associated with men of high social status was recited by men (interview with Manguliechi 3 June 2008). But in the case of *kumuse* form and style, it is as if men, both dead and living attempt to colonize and control the major intellectual forms of the society.

In Bukusu cultural parlance, the elusive textuality of *kumuse* is such that it can only be performed by men and it is almost unimaginable for women to perform the ritual. Although it is a ritual that requires closely monitored apprenticeship, it is a talent that is passed on to the living by ancestors in clans that are known to perform it. According to Manguliechi, spirits that inspire *kumuse* (*kimisambwa kie khuswala kumuse*) only affect men and not women. In a sense therefore this genre is spiritually-sanctioned to be performed only by men and for a woman to even imagine performing *kumuse* is something akin to blasphemy and sacrilege (interview with Manguliechi 4 December 2010). In the community's cultural imaginary, the *kumuse* text is not just masculine through and through but it's associated with older mature men. Thus both in content and form *kumuse* narrations are biased towards masculinity.

Ordinarily, Manguliechi would start his *kumuse* narrations by literally storming into the performance arena in silence as he paces up and down. In the short period of silence, he appears to be in a trance as he summons sacred powers to guide his performance. After several peripatetic movements within the arena, he then would proceed to drive his trademark walking staff (*ekhendie*) into the ground and the hole created by the stick forms one end of his performance space. From then hence forth, he narrates, chants and sings as he walks and trots in between the seated formation of the audience (with men and women on opposite sides), creating a visible line in the grass. In similar fashion, the funeral reciter ends his narrations with short spells of silence before suddenly storming out of the arena in a huff. In symbolic terms though, the path that he creates as he paces up and down signifies gender differentiation between men and women. It is also a kind of 'liminal space' that separates the worlds of the living and the dead (interview with Manguliechi, 6th June, 2008).

The funeral reciter speaks for the first time, when he walks away from the hole he has created in the ground. In a religious fashion, he takes care to ensure that the foot that steps into the arena first is not the same as the one that will step out first upon completion of his narration. To signal the end of his narration the funeral reciter makes several frantic runs across the arena in an emotionally-charged and delirious fashion referred in *Lubukusu* mourning practice as '*khusoma'* (a confused state of grief). At this juncture, the reciter performs mock mourning because this is the only opportunity he has to officially mourn the deceased man, albeit without shedding tears. But most endings of Manguliechi's *kumuse* performances were characterized by his abrupt exit from the arena after which everyone in the audience was expected to stand up immediately and anyone who remained seated risked a tragic misfortune befalling him/her family. In many ways therefore, the reciter's ritualistic routines and antics at the beginning and end of his narrations constitute very important textual features of the *kumuse* performance.

In actual performance proper, *kumuse* has no conventional opening or closing formula. In fact what we discuss and analyze here as opening and closing formulae are

derived from watching Manguliechi's personal narrative style which is not necessarily adhered to by other funeral narrators. Nonetheless, any funeral reciter usually has the sole discretion to control the structure, length and content of his texts at will. As he paces up and down the arena he is virtually unchallenged as he textualizes masculinity by determining when to end his narrative. However, the opening statements of Manguliechi's recitals, for instance, are usually somber, soulful and spiritual incantations that invoke the name of *Wele Khakaba* the 'Giver of life' and the 'Giver of words' who is exalted as the ultimate power and authority that inspires the narrator's rhetorical muse. The example below illustrates this.

> *Ndarakikha khumwene nono. Ndeba papa Wele! Ndi Wele we enche! Ne Wele mwana! Ne Wele murumwa, ne kuka Wele Mukhobe, omwene wakaba! Waana lifwa! Mala wacha wabola oli, oli "lifwa nilio khembana".*

Translation

> Let me start with God Himself. I ask you God the Father! God of the Universe! God the son! God the Messenger, and Grandfather God Mukhobe, the one who gives! You gave us death! Then you said, "It is death that I give you".

In the extract above the Manguliechi invokes the spiritual powers of the Holy Trinity (God the father, the son and God the grandfather *Mukhobe*), which are the names of the different traditional Bukusu gods. By beseeching the gods to guide his performance, he appreciates religion and divine intervention as the guiding aspects and themes of the *kumuse* text. Yet the melancholic mood of the moment demands that the funeral reciter summons divine guidance to help comfort the bereaved family and society at large. The regular invocation of Bukusu religious cosmology is precisely the reason why many audiences thought and believed that Manguliechi occupied a special spiritual rank in the society. However, the sacredness of his opening remarks often set the tempo for the prevalent somber mood which certainly influenced the structure and content of all his narrations. Building on the emotions of grief that pervade within his audiences the

narrator would often, intensify or sometimes attenuate such emotions throughout his performance. For instance, in the opening lines quoted above, the funeral reciter foregrounds and emphasizes the themes of death and religion to underscore the spiritual and melancholic mood that characterizes his narration. He also appears to initiate the cathartic process of soothing the bereaved and expiating emotions of sadness. As if addressing God *Wele* directly he says "You gave us death! Then you said, 'It is death that I give you'". Through such a direct address Manguliechi alludes to the Bukusu belief that death is preordained almost like a gift from *Wele*; hence inevitable. Indeed this is a theme that permeates many sections of the funeral oratory.

Quite apart from religious incantations that capture the melancholic mood of death, Manguliechi is also a master of Bukusu allegories. Indeed his narrations are often dotted with well-known Bukusu folk tales, narratives, legends and myths which he recontextualizes for purposes of teaching certain moral lessons to his audience. An extract of a myth from one of his performance best illustrates this. He narrates thus:

> *Narakikha nende historia eye Babukusu, nga Wele ne kahumba sibala. Ne bakhalanga Wele ta ewe, bakhulanga bali Khabumbi, wamwene weumba. Ewe niwe omung'osi owe bweni, soli ne mao ta, soli ne rarao ta, soli nomwana tawe, ewe niwe khabumbi. Ne bung'osi bwo wang'ola bwe ebweni waumba likulu khwabona ne chimoni chefwe. Sia khabili wang'ola, waumba liloba khwabona ne chimoni chefwe. Sia khataru wangola waumba sibala khwabona ne chimoni chefwe. Sie khane wangola waumba sisialo khwabona ne chimoni chefwe. Sie kharano wang'ola waumba bikulu khwabona ne chimoni chefwe.*
>
> Translation
>
> Let me start with the history of the Babukusu, the way God created the world. Before you were named *Wele*, you were called Creator, you created yourself. You are the first prophet, you have no mother, you have no father, you have no child, and you are the creator. Through your prophecy you first created the sky and we saw with our own eyes. Secondly you prophesied and created the earth and we saw with

> our own eyes. Thirdly you prophesied and created the world, we saw with our own eyes. Fourthly, you prophesied and made our country, we saw with our eyes. Fifthly, you prophesied and created hills, we saw with our own eyes.

In the preceding extract, the funeral reciter uses an origin myth to draw the audience's attention to religious significance of the occasion and uses the story to glorify and praise God, *Wele*. In this myth which serves as the opening vignette of his narration, Manguliechi explains the genealogy of the Bukusu, using an origin myth. Of note though is the fact that the motif on Bukusu origin and genealogy is one that keeps recurring in his texts. But in the version of the myth he narrates here we can note strong resemblances with the biblical creation story, especially when the narrator recounts how *Wele* originally created the universe in 'five days'. The similarities between Manguliechi's version and the bible story of creation, clearly attests to the influence that Western traditions and especially Christianity has had on Bukusu culture. Fully aware that many in his audience have huge Christian influences, Manguliechi stylistically deploys the myth as a literary device of explicating the meaning of death both in the traditional and modern sense. Additionally he also appears to underscore the view that death in a way is associated with the origin of the community and it is as old as human kind. Looked at from another perspective, the myth also signals the cyclic nature of life where death also means a regeneration of life.

But in remarks that follow immediately after the opening statements discussed above, Manguliechi is more vivid in delineating the meaning and inevitability of death to his audience by circumspectly warning his audience against committing murder because the retribution and punishment is heavy. Employing a well-known Bukusu anecdotal story of a termite as an allegory he says;

Wanakatawa[33] *nga wakwa wacha khwikulu enyuni yakilia. Wacha khungaki omundu wakilia. Nga wacha mwiloba walunabe wamulia. Bona eswa yalila eli nenja khwikulu bulilo, bona eswa yalila eli nenja khungaki, bulilo, bona omundu anandia.Bona eswa yalila nenja mwiloba bulilo, wanalunenge andia. Bona embilo nio eswa yalila, bona embilo nio eswa yalila. Bana ba papa eswa ebolela enywe newira omundu wabene kumulilo mwikulu kwakhulinda.Munyasia lola wekhale,newira owasio kumulilo kwakhulinda. Wamalwa Kijana okhwa nakitang'a Wanakhombe Batulo we kamachabe ke Webakitusi, ne wira omundu wabene kumulilo kwakhulinda.*

Translation

When Wanakatawa came out and flew to the skies a bird ate it. He remained on earth a man ate him. And when he went underneath the soil black ants ate him. The termite cried out "If I go to the skies there is danger". It cried out again " If I remain on earth there is still danger, still man will eat me". Listen to the termite as it cries, "If I go underneath the soil Wanalulenge the black ant will eat me". Take note of the termite's struggle and plea, note the termite's struggle and plea. You my kinsmen, the termite's pleas speak to you - if you kill somebody's person hell fire awaits you in heaven. You Munyasia now that you are seated here, if you kill your colleague hell fire awaits you. Wamalwa Kijana son of Nakitang'a of the

[33] 'Wanakatawa' is a creative reference and coinage that personifies a certain species of black termites which *Lubukusu* language are called *chindawa.* This species of termites are normally in season when it rains, although they are cases where special sticks are used to hit particular spot on the ground in order to provoke them to come out of the soil. The story has strong historical relevance because it is rumoured to strongly remind the Bukusu of the time when they were migrating to present Kenya from Ethopia near the present Lake Turkana; a time when they suffered attacks from hostile Nilotic and Cushitic tribes. See also Makila (1978).

> Wanakhombe Batulo clan, the lineage that wears ivory arm bands and head gear insignia, if you kill somebody's person hell fire awaits you.

In the excerpt above, Manguliechi uses the story of an ill-fated termite Wanakatawa to explain the inevitability of death. Death is essentially acknowledged as inescapable, almost like a jinx or curse that no one can ran away from. The predicament of the termite in the tale whose fate is sealed whether he flies to the skies, remains on the ground or even decides to go back underneath the soil, best illustrates the Bukusu philosophy concerning death. In this context, the narrator again uses an oral narrative to illustrate the futility of human kind's attempts to grapple with, dominate and make meaning of death. The 'pleas' and 'struggles' of the termite to extricate itself from inevitable death metaphorically demonstrates similar futility of humans attempting to avoid death. On the other hand, those in the community who may attempt to commit murder are warned that, like the termite, they can't escape punishment and retribution wherever they go. Though this is well-known story among the Bukusu, the narrator applies his own rhetorical ingenuity to generate a seemingly innocuous analogy which is, nonetheless, relevant to the lives of the audience and their figuration of the meaning of death in general. The dilemma of the termite is retrieved and juxtaposed with ordinary human experiences so as to underscore its immediacy and the lessons to be learnt. This use of stories, myths and historical anecdotes to explain the meaning of death and impart moral lessons to his audience is part of his skill of '*khunyanya elomo enoke'* or 'chewing words until they are soft' and 'carving new meanings' (*khukhoba chilomo*) of renown oral narratives. Certainly, these are stylistic choices that form part of the textual features of the funeral narration.

But while the theme of death is obviously central, *oswala kumuse* also extemporizes on a number of pertinent cultural issues such as the the origin and migration patterns of the Bukusu, circumcision and sexuality, marriage and dowry, cultural etiquette, wars, heroes and cultural sites. To highlight these issues Manguliechi once again deploys a whole range of rhetorical devices to construct and embellish the structure and content of

his narration. Like we noted earlier in this chapter, the structure of the *kumuse* is often haphazard. However, the thematic trajectory of life vs. death is maintained, sustained and built upon by the reciter using a mixture of proverbs, riddles, dramatic repetition, narratives-within-a narrative, songs, word rhymes and conceited images. In addition, the figurative language and idioms used by the *kumuse* performer throughout his narrations are employed as signposts of passing across pertinent messages relevant to the contemporary social realities. For instance in the excerpt below Manguliechi best demonstrates his ability to assemble different forms of oral sub-genres as stylistic techniques that construct the *kumuse* grand narrative.

> *Likhuwa liechela mung'eni, eng'eni endaayi nio Wele kanyoa kaumba wara mumechi bakilanga bali nambale. Omutai wekhoyela nambale. Omutai wekhoyela nambale, womia nambale. Khalosi khalunga nambale, kumunyu kwang'ona, oli nambale, bali silayi munambale kumunyu. Nambale walila ali Wele wakana wandamo kamakumba. Sekaba nambale ta, seyaba eng'eni ta, silayi munambale kumunyu. Ewe Munyasia bulayi munambale kumunyu. Nolia ne babandu, newikhala ne babandu, Wamalwa newikhala ne babandu, Musikari Kombo.*

Translation

> A lesson that we can learn from fish, the first fish that was created by God and put in water was called *nambale*. The first man liked *nambale*. First man liked *nambale*, and turned himself into this fish. An old woman cooked *nambale*, it's soup was good, that's why they say the good thing in *nambale* is its soup. Then *nambale* fish pleaded, " Oh God if it pleases you make me full of bones". It wasn't *nambale*, neither was it fish the point of reference, the good thing in *nambale* fish is it's soup. You Munyasia the goodness in *nambale* fish is the soup. If you eat with other people, if you stay well with people, Wamalwa if you stay well with people, Musikari Kombo, if you live well with people, you are like the *nambale* soup.

In the extract, Manguliechi conveniently but dexterously appropriates a well-known Bukusu proverb that says, "The good thing in *nambale* fish is its soup" (*Silayi munambale*

kumunyu), in order to reconstruct a narrative vignette which he in turn uses to illustrate the importance of humility and sharing among the Bukusu.

Ordinarily, the proverb on *nambale* is used to highlight the cultural virtues of humility and selflessness; that a person is judged not by his/her physical size but the content of character. For the Bukusu, *nambale* (a kind of sardine-like small fish) is considered a delicacy because of its enticing soup. Similarly, a man's good character is revered more than his body size. The import of this wise saying is that good character, outlasts the physical body, because death (given its frequency and inevitability) certainly takes away the human body. The narrator further drives home this point by exhorting prominent politicians in attendance like Honorable Munyasia, Wamalwa and Musikari Kombo to learn how to be humble people of good character like the proverbial *nambale*. Thus from a simple proverb that is easily recognizable by many in his audience, Manguliechi manages to spin a mini-narrative that teaches those in attendance a vital life lesson on humility and good character. Once again, Manguliechi demonstrates that certain sub-genres can be reappropriated in the context of *kumuse* performance, to not only emphasize and extrapolate their original meanings, but to also carve entirely new meanings. Indeed it is through such rhetorical dexterity that Manguliechi continously constructs and reconstructs the *kumuse* narrative text.

Karin Barber has argued elsewhere that the interaction of different genres in many African oral performances where one genre is quoted in the context of another (what she refers to as 'quotability'), "draws attention to the fact that the formulations being uttered have been uttered before...[and] they pre-exist the immediate context' (2007:77). The quotation of a proverb in traditional Bukusu conversations, for instance, is signaled by introductory remarks such as 'that's why they said' (*nio babola bali*) or 'our forefathers said' (*batayi babola bali*). The indication that a proverb existed even before its current usage in a narrative context certainly frames it as an authoritative utterance.

Yet in many of Manguliechi's *kumuse* narrations, proverbs serve various other purposes ranging from serving as warnings, wise counsel, admonitions, persuasion, reprimands or for didactic reasons. Although they are compact archives of wisdom, they also act as social metaphors, allusions and analogies that draw from real events of the past and moral lessons that the audience can benefit from. Indeed on many occasions Manguliechi didn't merely mention a proverb but always went ahead to contextualize its original cultural genesis and illustrated its relevance to modern circumstances. The example below illustrates this point clearly.

> *Lusimo lukhola khabili, nimwo emboko yaambukhila eng'ana yaambukhilamo. Babukusu nimwo emboko nimwo yaambukhila nio eng'ana yaambukhila.Kimima kienywe kye Babukusu, nikio batayi balomaloma mukhoya mube mumima kimiene ne kimiene, mukhalekha kimima ekio tawe. Bibingilo bitila kimima ekio kaba Omusawa, Omukolongolo, Omukikwameti,Omukananachi, Omukinyikeu, nomunyange, nomumaina no muchuma. Sebamwata kimima ekio ta! Luno khwamwatile kimima. Nio batayi baloma bali nimwo emboko yambukhila nio eng'ana yambukhila!*
>
> Translation
>
> The second proverb says, "Where the mother buffalo crosses the river is the same spot the calf crosses". You Babukusu people, where the mother buffalo crosses is where the calf also crosses. Your cultural practices as Babukusu, the very ones your forefathers talked about, you should remain with very very ones, don't leave those practices at all. All the circumcision age sets held dearly to these practices including *Omusawa, Omukolongolo, Omukikwameti, Omukananachi, Omukinyikeu, Omunyange, Omumaina* and *Omuchuma.* They didn't throw away our customs at all! And that is why our forefathers said, "Where the mother buffalo crosses, the calf also follows suit!"

In this extract Manguliechi applauds the customs and practices of the Bukusu forebears. Using the proverb, 'Where the mother buffalo crosses the river the calf

follows suit' as a signpost, he urges the audience not to abandon the old Bukusu ways for the allure of Western cultures. While the proverb is foregrounded as a conceit that has multiple meanings, Manguliechi systematically breaks down its meaning in the contemporary context by using male circumcision as an example of a cultural experience that shouldn't be abandoned. By listing all the names of the Bukusu circumcision age-sets, he alludes to the need to maintain the community's cultural identity through the continued practice of the ritual. Although he maintains the original meaning of the proverb, Manguliechi also succeeds in recontextualizing and blending it well within the larger structure and content of the after-burial narrative performance. But from a masculine perspective, Manguliechi reiterates the importance of male circumcision as a masculinist theme and cultural institution through which older men maintain power and discipline over young men. By underscoring the centrality of this rite of passage in the Bukusu, he represents the anxious older masculinities that are always keen to 'discipline' young men through institutions like circumcision and *kumuse*.

But perhaps what stands out as the most pervasive textual feature of *kumuse* is not just the choice of words but narrator's skilful management of linguistic transitions. In particular the ease with which Manguliechi manages to cobble together various genres like folktales, songs and word puns while still transitioning from one cultural theme/issue to another, is enviable. Finnegan underscores the importance of such a narrative skill in the structure and style of an oral text when she argues that "within the confines of language the individual story teller can embroider, expand, dramatize or exaggerate by the various means of language and technique at his disposal" (1967:75). Similarly, the structural and stylistic efficacy of *kumuse* performances are largely hinged on the narrator's ability to persuade his listeners using his flair with word coinages and above all his penchant to break into song to spice up and intensify his performances. The following folktale extract illustrates this point well.

Chingano nicho bakana. Khengane chingano chitaru. Lukano lukila orie sirikali ye sibala. Okhafwochola sirikali ye sibala. Okhafwochola babami be sibala.

Kukhu kakana lukano ali omwami we chinyuni wafwa, lukukulo lukwa, omwami wafwile. Enyuni yanyoa yolao yaba kisilili. Kisilili nga kola ali kachululukha. Kisilili nga kola ali kachululukha. Bali omwami kafwile walila oriena! Siruchu siola sili andi ndile khale. Siruchu siola sili andi ndile khale. Ngoli wola;

Ali iii…iii…iii!

omwami afwile.

iii...iii...iii,

omwami afwile.

Bali sina omanyile khulila. Namuriri khola khamokela mubufumbo, khali ah! Bakhaloma bali omwami afwile, khali omwami afwile makacho.

Namuriri ndalila ano,

Tia tia tia!

Namuriri ndalila ano,

Tia tia tia!

Namuriri kharekukha. Bakhwakhwasia chinyuni bachilia. Niko kamakhuwa Kakenya.

Translation

The tales that were told by our forebears. Let me recount three of them. The folk tale that teaches you to respect the authorities of the land. Don't underrate the leadership of the land. Don't underrate leaders. A grand mother narrated a story; when the king of birds died, there was a loud wail of grief, the king had died. The first bird to condole the bereaved was Hawk. When Hawk arrived at the homestead, he remarked " Oh my, how the king drips with sweetness!". Hawk arrived and commented, "How sweet and palatable he looks!". Then the mourner throng

complained, “The king has died but how dare you mourn him thus?” The Raven arrived in the bereaved homestead and quipped, “I should have eaten him already”. The Raven quipped, “I should have eaten this already”. The crested crane arrived and wailed;

Ahii iii...iii...iii!

The king has died.

iii...iii...iii,

The king has died.

The funeral throng commented, “Now, here is a man who knows how to mourn”. Namuriri the bird arrived, and peered at the dead man through his feathers and remarked, “Ah no! Even if they say the king is dead, his death looks strange.

Namuriri, I mourn here

Tia tia tia!

Namuriri, I mourn here,

Tia tia tia!”

Namuriri went away. All the birds that remained were later gathered and eaten. That’s the same way things happen in Kenya today.

Just like in his usage of proverbs Manguliechi, in the excerpt above, uses a well-known trickster folktale to transpose and carve new meanings in the context of *kumuse*. In this instance he has deliberately used the folktale as a sub-narrative within the bigger narrative of *kumuse*. When he introduces the story with remarks such as ‘The tales that were told by our forebears’, he is clearly signaling to his audience that the folktale is well-known in the community and he is only using it as an anecdote that has allegorical meanings and cultural moral lessons that need to be learnt by his audience. In this

instance he warns his listeners to be wary of dishonest leaders. Although he advises his audience to always respect those in authority, he uses the story of the 'dead King Bird' not only to satirize Kenyan political leadership, but to warn all people to be wary of political leaders that take advantage of their gullibility. Ultimately, the narrator uses the story to highlight contemporary and emerging issues while at the same time prompting his audience to reflect on their own lives in a manner informed by the multiple meanings that can be teased out from a simple trickster narrative. While this illustrates stylistic genius on the part of the narrator, a deeper prodding of its import reveals that it is a common textual characteristic that runs throughout the *kumuse* oratory.

In terms of performance dynamics, Manguliechi's dramatizations, mimicry, gesturing and body movements are some of the outstanding extralinguistic features that reinforce his renditions. Indeed in many of his live performances Manguliechi often showcased his dramatic prowess when he effortlessly switched from narration into song to intensify his narrative prowess. For example in the extract of the 'Dead King Bird' narrative discussed above, Manguliechi not only mimicked but sang the song by *Namuriri* the bird. He even went further to dramatize, to the audience's amusement, the mourning style of the Crested Crane, complete with its antics and body language. By employing all these extra-linguistic features the funeral reciter enhances the narratological flow of his performance. His dramatic use of ideophones and mimicking of the different sounds made by various animals and birds as they arrive to 'mourn their dead king' adds variety to his rhetorical strategies. By and large these performance dynamics are regular features and integral parts of the genre's textuality.

But the deployment of riddles in Manguliechi's narrations is yet another interesting rhetorical strategy and regular textual characteristic of *kumuse*. Just like proverbs, folktales and songs, the inclusion of riddles in *kumuse* is often geared to serve as anecdotes and analogies that give pedagogical lessons related to contemporary social circumstances. The example below best illustrates how riddles are employed as brain-teasers that provoke the reading of more meanings from the original purposes of such

genres. Simulating what sounds like a traditional riddle-telling scenario Manguliechi says:

> *Kumunai kucha khulondakho, kukhu kapa ali, "Namunaii". Ali, "Namunaii". Ndi, "Khokwiche!" Ali, "Khuyukhuyu paa!" Ndi, "Kukhu senyala ta". Ali, "Mbe nche ndie".Ndi, "Chaupe cha Tendete". Ali nachipa chabuyabuya. Nga nembolile ndi khuyukhuyu paa, ali embusi khulukoba".Kino kiminai kiefwe, nikio balomaloma.*
>
> Translation
>
> In a riddle that will follow, a grandmother posed,. She said "Riddle, riddle!" Then I answered, "Let it come". Then she said, "Khuyukhuyu paa!" I answered, "Grandmother, I can't unravel it". Then she said, "Give me cows I eat". I answered, Go on I have given those from Chief Tendete's herd". She responded, "I will gladly gather all of them into my herd. Like I said, '*khuyukhuyu paa'*, it means a he-goat spurring in a homestead. These are our riddles, the ones our forefathers talked about.

In the preceding example, Manguliechi adeptly uses his narrative skills to simulate a riddle-telling scenario within his own grand narrative. The relevance of the riddle demonstrates the funeral reciter's creative versatility as a story-teller and a testimony of his depth of Bukusu cultural knowledge. In a way, Manguliechi appears to suggest that riddles always have a deeper meaning even in daily usage and they shouldn't be taken at face value. For instance in normal *Lubukusu* discourse the words '*khuyukhuyu paa'* means nothing, but in a riddling context they are understood as ideophonic representations of how an African he-goat raises its front feet in readiness to fight another male he-goat. As a riddle though, it is also an analogy of male dominance and a symbolism of the Bukusu cultural expectation for men to always be ready to defend their compounds in case of external aggression.

More importantly though, Manguliechi's deployment of riddles and oral narratives offers a good illustration of how textuality and masculinity intersect in *kumuse*. In this context, the funeral performer takes for granted the fact that riddles and narratives are a

given and he need not enact or retell them in detail. Instead he only gestures towards such forms by prompting the audience to recall them in full before he goes on to comment on them. And partly because narratives and riddles are ordinarily performed by women, Manguliechi seems to be positioning himself as being above such forms. By underscoring the idea that riddles and narratives are the domain of women, he is also implicitly setting himself up as the meta-expert which is the textual domain of men. In a sense he is adumbrating the notion that while women performed certain genres, it was the duty of men to raise the intellectual discourse by commenting on them.

Overall, the discourse of *kumuse* texts is often more elevated than what is used in ordinary speech. Be they, songs, proverbs or riddles, their intended meanings within the *kumuse* are usually pitched at a level of cryptic puzzles and conceit-like images that require utmost wisdom to understand the multiple meanings, undertones, silences and ironies embedded in them. On several occasions only a few people (mostly elderly wise men) could fully appreciate the connotations, inferences, symbols and ironies that the funeral reciter deploys. The extract below is a case in point.

> *Engunyi ekhale, engunyi seli yaluno ta... balebe mukhalila ta... Olabona engokho etima nende kamala ke eyasie, yosi balitima nende kamala kayo. Olabona ehunwa eyipana ekhupakilisia kumukhinga aba ekana khukhwakukhakho.*
>
> Translation
>
> Grief is age-old, grief hasn't come today. My kinsmen don't cry. When you see a chicken running around with another's innards, even its own innards will face the same fate. Whenever you see a fighting bull wagging its tails just know it is about to surrender.

In the example above Manguliechi assembles three different sayings in succession. To an ordinary listener the three sayings simply underscore the ubiquity and inevitability of death. But for those steeped in Bukusu cultural symbolism the proverbial reference to a 'chicken oblivious of its own death' and 'feasting on the innards of another' points

more to how some people celebrate the death of others forgetting that their turn will also come. On the other hand the proverb that relates to 'a surrendering bull wagging its tail' alludes to death as a fight that even the bravest of 'bulls' have to surrender to eventually. While the meanings of these proverbs are expected to be understood by all in attendance, the truth is that only a handful of knowledgable elderly men can be able to decipher the conceit-like images and the various interpretations and nuances that emanate from such elevated discourse. In fact the few older men who can flesh out multiple meanings from Manguliechi's narrations are considered senior citizens and communal sages just like the funeral reciter. In a sense, Manguliechi's use of obscure proverbs and convoluted images not only projects *kumuse* as an enigmatic text but one that underlines the Bukusu's propensity to relish and idolize rhetorical opacity. Like the *Baganda* oral poets analyzed by Susan Kiguli, the linguistic condensations in *kumuse* are not merely allusive but "deliberate devices to disguise meaning" (Kiguli 2004:223). Interestingly, anything in the after-burial oratory which is too self-evident and 'lacks layers of allusion' and multiple meanings is considered by many *kumuse* attendees as uninteresting. Ultimately, obscurity is one of the key stylistic features of the funeral oratory text. In particular, the obscurity of language and meaning in *kumuse* appears to be a feature that dramatizes the power of older men who are presumably the only ones who might understand the obscure references, insinuations and innuendos used by the narrator. The form then dramatizes a kind of solidarity and conspiracy between patriarchs in order to intellectually and ideologically control women and young men.

However, there are situations when the narrator's word collocations are not just meant to obscure or bring out various meanings but to also play on the tonality of *Lubukusu* language. The key emphasis in the repetitive use of certain words and the syntactical combination of certain words and sounds is to create puns, highlight clever sound systems and simple rhymes. Indeed anyone who has had the privilege of listening to Manguliechi's renditions can attest to the fact that the real rhetorical flair and beauty of *kumuse* is manifested through the use of repetition. On many occasions, he would

poetically employ repetition through use of rhymed puns, witticisms, repeated words, phrases and sometimes whole sentences. The panache in his pronouncements is underscored by his play with ordinary onomatopoeic words and ideophones in order to create, musicality, rhythmical resonances, assonance and alliteration. The following example best illustrates this;

> *Enywe bandu ba Kenya. Muchaluo noli ano, Omunandi noli ano, Omumia noli ano. Efwe khumanyile sifuno sia Kenya, menya Kenya nga Wele nekenya. Wamalwa linda Kenya nga Wele nekenya. Mukhisa linda Kenya nga Wele nekenya. Munyasia, linda Kenya nga Wele nekenya. Bona Wele wenyile semulinda, semulinda sibala?*

Translation

> You people of Kenya, if a Luo is here, if a Nandi is here, if a Teso is here. We people who understand Kenya, lets live in Kenya the way God wishes, take care of Kenya the way God wishes. Wamalwa lead Kenya the way God wishes. Mukhisa lead Kenya the way God wishes, Munyasia lead Kenya the way God wishes. Now that God wishes why not defend it? Now that God wishes why don't you take care, take care of the country?

In the illustration above Manguliechi plays on the tonal features of *Lubukusu* language to urge the political leaders present at his session to unite the different ethnic groups in Kenya. His concatenation of the '*ke*' and '*nya*' sound in the words '*Kenya'* '*nekenya'* and '*menya'* creates both assonance and alliterative effects. Moreso, the pace at which he renders the words coupled with his voice variation creates a poetic and musical aesthetic and emphasis that captures the attention of the audience.

Nonetheless, there are instances where the repetition of words is a narrative ruse employed by the narrator, not just as a form of emphasis, but as a signpost that signals thematic change or his intention to transition from one issue to another. The following example illustrates this.

Enywe basoleli be mubunge, ese ndomela khwinywe luno, ese ndomela khwinywe luno. Enywe basoleli be bunge, engo busa yatakha embwa, ekhoya babechukhulu bakhwakala, ekhoya bakhwakala. Ewe Munyasia ne sewakala, Wamalwa sewakala, Kapteni sewakala, Kituyi sewakala. Enywe semwiyakala, enywe semwiyakala, enywe bana ba papa semwiyakala, ngoso yatakha mbwa. Batayi bacha baloma "Biibambo biaamba biabundu biliamba ne ndemu, biibambo biamba bia bundu biliamba ne ndemu. Kumubano kwabaka ya putu kulibaka ne ndamu. Sisieboela mba busiro".

Translation

You young men in parliament, I am talking about you today, I am talking about you today. You young men of parliament, if a home lacks a dog it must have grandchildren to scratch your back, it must have those who can scratch you. You Munyasia why don't you scratch, you Wamalwa why don't you scratch, Kapteni why don't scratch, Kituyi why don't you scratch. You people why don't you scratch each other, you people why don't you scratch each other, you my kinsmen why don't you scratch each other, so that the dog heals from scabies. Our forebears said, 'Traps that are set everywhere will one day trap a snake, traps that are set out everywhere will one day trap a snake. The knife that skinned a cow diseased with anthrax may also skin a snake. Anything that straddles itself does not feel weight'.

The repetition of the phrase "You young men of parliament", is a way of warning to his audience that whatever issue he wants to embark on is not just different from the previous but will be targetted at the politicians who are in attendance. Again when he repeats the phrase, "I am talking about you today", he is deliberately calling the politicians' bluff and warning them to take his counsel seriously. It should also be noted that immediately after repeating his warning words Manguliechi goes on to admonish the politicians using a barrage of proverbs that are cryptic and obscure to many in his audience. His use of cryptic proverbs draws the attention of the political leaders and gives them something to ponder over even after the ritual is done. For instance, the narrator rallies the politicians to unite and look after the community's interests by

'scratching each others backs'. However the reciter's use of proverbial allusions about 'traps that will one day nab a snake' and 'the knife that skinned an anthrax carcass will also skin a good carcass', is a sublime warning to the same politicians that if they don't take care of the community's interests, they will not be voted back to their current positions next time. Overall it is evident *kumuse* is inundated with many stylistic and structural elements that are constructed and deployed at the descretion of the reciter. Whether they are oral narratives, proverbs, riddles, songs, repetition or puns, the funeral reciter has the sole pleasure of creating and recreating the form and content; style and structure of this genre. Indeed he has the right of 'carving meanings' by 'chewing words until they are soft'. However, the multiple meanings can only be fully understood with the specific context of each specific performance.

4.4 Traditional Etiquette, Cultural Sites and Migration patterns as Thematic Concerns in *kumuse* texts

Apart from the outstanding oral aesthetics and the theme of death, there are a number of other didactic issues that are regularly emphasized as important thematic elements of the *kumuse* text. Although these thematic concerns are not stock issues that have to appear in every performance, the fact that they keep recurring in Manguliechi's narrations made me believe they form an integral part of the genre's textuality. In an interview I had with Manguliechi he conceded that apart from the core functions of *kumuse* as a way of teaching people about their past history, customs and practices using subgenres like *kiminayi* (riddles), *chingano* (oral narratives) and *chisimo* (proverbs) the genre is also used to educate people on the community's migration patterns from the cradle of origin (*kimiatikho),* cultural sites (*chingoba*) as well as etiquette (*kimima*) and circumcision age-set names (*bibingilo*) (interview on 6 June 2008). In many ways therefore *kumuse* narrations are instruments for retrieving and memorializing a fading culture for posterity. With the influence of European cultures and Christianity on Bukusu customs, Manguliechi uses his narrations to bemoan the disintegration of the good

traditions and cultural practices. In the following extract, he reprimands his audience thus;

> *Okharakho omwana wowasio sia akhakholile ta. Lilaka lia saba siabene siamoni, nesitamba walera. Lekha kamatala kabene. Lekha bibiaki biabene, lekha chipenki cha bene, mufuna chasina. Lilaka lia munane, okhachekha omwana owo owasio ta. Okhachekha batambi ne bamanani ta! Lilaka lia tisa kumwikale kwabene, kumwikule kukwoo.Nio babana basoleli balekhile babana bakhana bechule khuno batimila balosi bong'ene. Khane namunyu kabiila eikila. Likonjo likwa khusikele nio chisi chalondakho. Nio baundilekho balosi bong'ene. Mukholile muriena basoleli*.

Translation

> Do not accuse your friend's child of something he hasn't done. The seventh commandment, other people's property has eyes, don't touch. Avoid adultery with peoples wives. Avoid people's granaries. Don't touch people's banks, why do you break them? The eighth commandment, don't laugh at your neighbor's son. Don't laugh at the poor and helpless! The sixth commandment, the married woman is a closed door, the young girl is an open door. Behold young boys have now left young girls who are all over the place they are now scampering only for old women. So they say 'Hyena always goes for the injured!' 'It's when a leg gets injured that flies gather on the festering wound'. Like flies, boys are now hovering around old women. What is wrong with you boys?

Alluding to the biblical Ten Commandments Manguliechi, in the extract above, outlines some of the community's taboos, etiquette and cultural practices. Despite the prevailing mood of grief, he uses his position as a ritual performer to chastise his audience not to always disrespect the communal practices and laws. By alluding to the biblical Ten Commandments he proceeds to list the 'dos' and 'don'ts' in Bukusu culture. For instance, in the excerpt he weighs in hard on young men and women by using proverbs to lampoon them for their moral decadence and lack of respect on matters of

sexuality. The proverbs are as ironical as they are vitriolic especially when they are applied to illuminate contemporary issues about the society's changing value systems and sexuality. By comparing the youngsters to the predatory and opportunistic 'Hyena' that goes for 'injured game' and 'flies' that hover around 'festering wounds', the funeral reciter launches a stinging diatribe against the modern young generation who appear to have lost direction on issues of sexuality and respect for the elderly. He specifically challenges them to go for girls of their age instead of cavorting with older women. In a way, Manguliechi comments can be understood as a conscious attempt by the old patriarchy to 'discipline' women and younger men in terms of the content of *kumuse*.

However, Bukusu legends are sometimes incorporated in the after-burial narrative as devices for reminiscing on the community's past migration patterns. In the following extract Manguliechi attempts to explain the origin of the name 'Bukusu' thus:

> *Bakhulanga bali babayi. Sekhuli Babukusu ta! Khulia ne babandu, khubaya babandu, khusima babandu. Basamia ba ng'alia omundu bali Etolobi wabasa chimbako, warera ne kimwini. Malaba wamureba ali makusi sina, ali mboele ekhafu. Wamuboela wacha. Oyo wacha wabolela basamia basie. Omundu bali Wabwile, Wabwile wabasa walera, Malaba wamureba ali makusi sina! Ali mboele chikhafu chibili. Nio balanga bali Babukusu, babandu be bukusi. Mulukoba bali Ebukeya nocha Ebukanda kumukhono kumukhasi Basoka, kumukhono kumusecha, Bakwe.*
>
> Translation
>
> We were called the shepherds. We are not Babukusu! We eat with other people, we shepherd people, we like people. The Basamia had a man called Etolobi who crafted metallic hoes, he also made hoe handles. Malaba asked, "How much is the price for these?". "Please give me cow in exchange", he was told. The goods were packed for him and he left. The seller went and told his fellow Basamia tradespeople. A man called Wabwile also made hoes and came to sell them. Malaba asked him, "What is the price for these?" "Please give me two heads of cattle", he was told. That's how

> come they called us Babukusu, 'people of price'. In a fortress called Bukeya when as you go to Uganda, where on the left there are the Basoga people and on the right, are the Bagwe people.

From the above excerpt, Manguliechi claims that Bukusu got their name through their interaction and trade with various ethnic sub groups, notably the Samia. Elaborating on the etymology of the *Lubukusu* word '*bukusi'* which means 'price' , he posits that the community were named as 'people of price' - 'Bukusu' from *'bukusi'* - by their *Samia* neighbors. He goes further to retrace how the Bukusu originally lived at a place called *Bukeya* in modern day eastern Uganda and even fondly lists some of the prominent community's leaders such as *Malaba* who was at the helm of the community's leadership then .

But in an even more interesting account about the community's migration routes and its heroes, Manguliechi lists some of the important places that the community moved to.

> *Efwe bandu khusalwa mulukoba bali Ebung'onelo,Ebukambilo, Wananyanga wanakhupa khwama Ebung'onelo,Ebukambilo wa Wananyanga Wanakhupa. Khwecha abundu bali Esituluku, khwama Esituluku khwacha abundu balanga bali Esibakala.*

Translation

> We are a people who were born at a place called *Ebung'onelo, Ebukambilo* , *Wananyanga Wanakhupa*. We came to *Esituluku*, we left *Esituluku* and went to *Esibakala*.

This recounting of the Bukusu past certainly has legendary importance especially when the funeral reciter lists all the places (*chingoba*) that the community lived and migrated to, starting with *Ebung'onelo,* which literally means the 'the Cradle of Creation'. Places like *Esituluku* (Place of Hills), *Esibakala* (Place of Open Meadows), *Ebukambilo* (Place of Counsel) and *Wananyanga Wanakhupa* (Place where the Sun heats) are honorific

names of places that are fondly remembered with a tinge of nostalgia and a sense of pride in the community's roots and origin. It suffices to note that the community's social movements are certainly regarded and remembered with pride through *kumuse*. But from a masculine power perspective, Manguliechi's narration of the Bukusu histories of migration represents a thematic intersection between masculinity and the textuality of *kumuse*. In a way he seems to be territorializing the dead man within the historical confines of the places he is listing just the same way he is attempting to grapple with and pin down the elusive, open-ended and loose structure of *kumuse* (Hofmeyr 2012, personal comment).

However, the funeral narrator reserves his best plaudits and hyperboles to describe the various war conquests the Bukusu attained in their frequent interactions and run-ins with different ethnic groups at different places during their migrations. The example below illustrates this.

> *Nacha kamae, nacha kamae kefwe. Efwe khwerana ne chikholo. Khubela khwaba ne kimiandu. Khwerana na Bamia. Lukoba lwa khwerana ne Bamia. Khwerana Eburangasi, khwerana na Bamia enyanga yakwa! Muburangasi, khwerana na Bamia enyanga yakwa! Mubitobo khwerana na Bamia enyanga yakwa!*

Translation

> Let me now go on to our wars. We fought with different tribes. It was because we had wealth. We fought with Teso. We fought and killed each other with the Teso. We battled at Burangasi, battled with the Teso until the sun set! In Burangasi we battled with the Teso until the sun set. In Bitobo we battled with the Teso until the sun set!

Using a narrative strategy that is evident throughout most of his performances, Manguliechi signals his intention to start on a new theme or event by using such introductory remarks like, 'Let me go now to..., let me go to our...' In this extract he outlines how the Bukusu fought wars with their *Teso* neighbors at places called

Eburangasi and *Ebitobo* mainly because they had wealth in form of cattle. Hyperboles such as 'we fought with the Teso until the sun set' is part of the narrator's strategy of dramatizing and valorizing the community's past warriors and prowess in war. It's obviously a strategy of celebrating the valiance, resilience and fearlessness of the Bukusu warriors while demeaning and belittling their Teso neighbors. More importantly, it is clear that the topic of war, war heroes and past communal conquests is often a central theme in many of Manguliechi's funeral narrative texts

Of course the veracity of some of the claims made by Manguliechi is contestable when compared with written records of Bukusu historiography, an aspect we shall be investigating at length in our next chapters. All the same, it must be appreciated that his narrations play a big role in documenting and archiving communal history. By narrating about various social issues from the past, he shares the community's history with his audience. Nonetheless, the range of themes covered by the reciter, as we mentioned earlier, is determined by what the performer choses to share with a specific audience. At some point the narrator haphazardly moves from one theme or topic to another without any particular order. But to an audience that has grown accustomed to his renditions, he essentially handles the central theme of the meaning of death onto which other themes are cleverly latched and woven into a "performance that possesses an organic unity and focused thematic message" (Benge 2007: 18).

4.5 The Influence of Context and Audience on the *kumuse* text

The influence of context and audience on the style, structure and content of *kumuse* cannot be gainsaid. So crucial are these elements to the overall features of *kumuse* that in Wanjala's words "the funeral reciter makes his recital long or short according to the discipline of his audience, the character of the deceased and the condition of the weather" (1986:68). Wanjala notes that, "If a member of the audience offends... [the reciter] or in some way puts his life in danger, he ends his recital" abruptly and demands his fee (ibid). Even more interesting are Wanjala's claims that if the deceased man was

of evil character, his spirits will cause the funeral reciter to slur in his speech and feel heavy in the feet and henceforth he has to immediately stop his narrative to avoid any calamity befalling him (ibid). In a nutshell, Wanjala seems to point to the fact that the performance space, audience demeanor and the general ambience of the performance surroundings have a huge influence on the textual features, length and content of *kumuse*. These elements confirm the fact that *kumuse* is indeed open-ended and loose in structure.

A number of African scholars of oral literature have also examined the role of contexts, audiences and performance spaces in understanding an oral text. Gunner & Gwala, for instance, argue that while oral literary texts cannot be pigeonholed into fixed categories and genres with fixed boundaries like written genres, they nonetheless remain fluid and "very responsive to social and historical pressures and open to ideological manipulation" (1991:2). Henry Glassie insists that, "context is the source of interpretation…the environment of significance... [and] outside context there is no understanding" (Glassie 1995). Karin Barber 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" (2007:137).

An example of Manguliechi's narration quoted below appears to be alluding to and adumbrating the view expressed by the three scholars discussed above. He says;

> *Mayi Neala wekhale aaho, Khaemba wekhale aaho. Munyasia wekhale aaho. Enywe nio khembolela. Wele kakesiya. Omundu we sikhasi, mayi Neala wewe, khukhula kimirongoro kichuba omwana wohoo….*

Translation

> You my daughter Neala, as you are seated there, Khaemba you are seated there. Munyasia you are seated there. You are the ones I am telling all this. God is very clever. A woman, you my daughter Neala, we are uprooting the trees that are meant to curse your own child...

While acknowledging his hosts, the narrator uses them as a focal point of his narrative examples and analogies through mentioning their names and addressing them directly. He specifically honours the bereaved family consisting of the wife *Neala* and her husband *Khaemba* (a son of the deceased elder) and recognizes the presence of a local member of parliament a Mr. Munyasia. Subsequently he directly addresses or uses the three of them as reference points in his explanation of the different curses that parents and elderly relatives can proffer on errant youngsters. When he mentions 'trees that can curse your own child', he is metaphorically referring to the different relatives and kin that have powers to curse a young person among the Bukusu. These include the father and mother, paternal aunt, maternal uncle, grandfather and grandmother. Manguliechi also warns youngsters to respect their elders when he says, '*okhasindikha rarao kakwa tawe... aba wamayana'* (Do not push your father to fall down…you will be demented by his curse). However, he equally reminds parents and the elderly to be careful not to misuse their power of cursing to punish innocent children. He warns parents thus, "*Okharakho omwana wowasio sia akhakholile ta"* - (Do not accuse you friend's child of something he has not done).

In terms of the structure and content of *kumuse,* it is clear from the above example the narrator randomly engages members of his audience to generate narratives and issues that have moral lessons to the larger audience. Although *kumuse* is a highly monologic narration dominated by the reciter but like most oral texts its structure, style and content is also dependent on the contexts of different audiences whose benign endorsements inspire and determine the efficacy of each rendition. In some instances, the reciter directly engages a member in the audience or allows an interjection from a respectable male elder or senior fellow funeral narrator present who may remind the reciter to educate the audience on a specific cultural aspect. Except on such rare occasions, the level of audience participation in *kumuse* performance is controlled by the narrator sometimes through questions that he asks to tease his listeners. In one instance he asks;

Ewe wabonakho Wele? (Racous laughter from the audience as they shake their heads in the negative) *Ewe papa wabonakho Wele. Luno tarehe sina*? (‘*Tarehe tisa’* audience responds). *Tarehe tisa? (Heee* - responds the audience). *Luno khemwekesia Wele mumubone*. *Mufukilia mubone Wele? Heee!* (Responds the audience). *Mukhalomanga busa muli mumanyile Wele mala mukha mubonakho tawe*.

Translation

Have you ever seen God? (The audience responds with raucous laughter shaking their heads).You my son, have you seen God? (The audience shake their heads again). What is the date today? Ninth. (Audience answers). Ninth? Heee! (Audience answers). Today I will show you God so that you see him. Do you wish to see God today? Heee... (audience answers in the affirmative). Don’t just be saying that you know God and yet you have never seen him.

In the example above, Manguliechi asks his audience banal questions with the aim of eliciting laughter and challenging their knowledge on African religion. Although he limits the audience’s levels of involvement in his narration, there are situations when he gladly allows his listeners to enjoy his stories and ribald jokes. In such cases the reciter clearly doesn’t mind the audience’s interference and in fact relishes the exchange with them. To that extent therefore, the audience also plays a pivotal role in the structure and content of the funeral performance, so to speak.

But on certain occasions the audience could get overly excited with Manguliechi’s narration especially when he takes on those in political leadership or reiterates a moral issue that resonates well with the contemporary social context. In such contexts, the funeral narrator like most oral performers takes it in his stride and guardedly acknowledges applause from the crowd as he continues to tantalize them with his naughty jokes and continues to satirize irresponsible leaders. The following example illustrates this.

Mwabene musimane, musimane, muambane, mukosiane, muambane mube sindu silala. Lola emoni yacha, Wamalwa nganachile ario kabele emoni yefwe. Nono luno luri efwe khwalolile enywe. Mukhwasi obukule lurimba khomucha khuaya chisang'i. Mala bali embongo ekwa mulurimba pebe, basi enywe mwabukula, mwabukula kamafumo mwanja mwabene nono khuunana. Aba kene esangi mukire? Tawe (audience responds). (Voices from the audience shout *Toboa! Toboa!). Akano sekali kakange ta. Kali kakenywe niko.* (More excited voices from the audience chime, *'Bola, babolele!'*) (However at this point the narrator waves his hand to signal the audience to be more restrained). *Sekali kakange ta…mwabene musimane mukendele alala...ata yakhaba siama nga sia FORD Kenya sikhoya omundu nga yaba Wamalwa omwene. Musikari nekhola ndi aba ewe niwe niye khembolela!* (Round of applause and approval from the audience).

Translation

All of you unite, love each other, unite, dote on each other, unite and be one thing. Now that our eye has gone, now that Wamalwa has gone and he was our 'eye'. Now from this moment we are looking at you. My brother-in-law (*referring to Hon. Musikari Kombo, a Member of Parliament*) you have taken your traps and gone to hunt for game. Then you and Noah, for instance, go hunting game. But when a bush buck gets caught in the trap, you both take your spears and start stabbing each other. Will you really kill the animal? No. (Answers the audience almost in unison) (More voices from the crowd encouragingly add) *Toboa! Toboa!* (Swahili words literally meaning 'Lay bare the truth for them, lay it bare'). These are not my words. (More excited voices from the audience chorus) Tell it as it is! Tell them! (*However at this point the narrator signals the audience not to be restive*). These are not my words…you have to love each other and walk together…even for a political party like FORD Kenya it needs somebody who is just like what the late Wamalwa was. As I say all these words, it is you Musikari that I am telling all this.

In the same excerpt above Manguliechi is clearly aware that some politicians are attending his performance, and doesn't hesitate to directly admonish them to the glee and

approval of the rest of the audience. When he lambasts the two Bukusu political leaders (Hon.Musikari Kombo and Hon. Noah Wekesa) in attendance for their lack of unity the audience applaud his tirade as an admirable act of defiance; a gesture of speaking truth to power. But from a stylistic and structural point of view, the audience's reactions, cheers, plaudits, nods of approval/disapproval and interjections are like meta-narratives that give impetus to the narrator as he improvises, constructs and weaves together his endless, multiple narratives into one grand narrative, *kumuse*.

More interesting are occasions when a section of the *kumuse* audience suggest, insist or remind the narrator in a subtle manner to highlight a special issue that they think he has forgotten. Like we noted earlier, these suggestions (often in coded language) can only be acknowledged from respectable elders in attendance and not from everyone. In instances when such suggestions and prompts are made when the narrator is about to conclude his narration, he has to be tactical enough to appreciate the requests while maintaining control of the whole ritual. The following example illustrates this.

> *Nga nenama anano omundu akhakhinga tawe*. (Voices from the crowd) *Omwana keranga mawe! Omwana keranga mawe!* (Narrator acknowledges the crowd's requests with his wave of the hand) *Naulile, mbele ndikho nicha lakini natong'ile sa kamakhuwa kabili kong'ene, mukhakhindia ta. Maayi Nakitang'a naulile bali alwala. Aluno ari basoleli be ango ano mukhoya mwamwombakhila khasali mungo muno. Ndoma ndio ne William Wambwa akhaninda khungila ali namunulile omukhasi tawe*! (Laughter from the crowd).
>
> Translation
>
> As I am about to leave, let nobody plant any witchcraft in my way to harm me. (*Restive voices from the crowd*) A mother is killed by her own child in labour! A mother is killed by her own child during labour! (*Manguliechi acknowledges the audience request with the wave of his hand*) I have heard, I was just about to come to that but I have only remained with only two words, you will pardon me but don't hold me for too long please. Mother Nakitang'a (*a reference to the late Hon.*

> *Wamalwa's mother*), I have heard is unwell. You boys from this home please make sure you build for her even a small hut in this home. Don't forsake her. But as I say that, I beseech you William Wambwa (*a reference to the spirit of the late Hon. Wamalwa's father William Wamalwa*), do not wait to attack me on my way back home thinking I want to take away your wife! (*Laughter from the crowd*).

In the example above, the audience doesn't just participate in the narrator's performance but prompts and directs him to comment on the late Hon. Wamalwa's mother who was ailing at the time his son passed on. Most notable is the clever and tactful way in which the crowd urges him to talk about the plight of the deceased politician's mother. Uttering the proverb "A mother is killed by her own child during labour", a clique of the elders in attendance prompt Manguliechi to consider highlighting the suffering of the old woman who was then rumoured to have been in bad health because of losing her son. To an outsider not privy to the etiquette and rules of *kumuse* the audience's interjections might sound like irritating distractions. However, a deeper interrogationof the different layers of meaning in such performances reveals that interjections and interruptions of this nature are in fact part and parcel of the structure of *kumuse*. By taking time to acknowledge the audience demands, Manguliechi recognizes the fact that he doesn't have monopoly of opinions on cultural matters. If anything this gesture also confirms that the funeral reciter is only human and also counts on his audience to enrich and embellish his narration.

Like all culture-specific oral art forms, paralinguistic features are an integral part of the *kumuse* text. Paralinguistic features by their nature emerge within specific contexts as performative features that serve to intensify the creative effect of an oral performance. As Richard Baumann has argued elsewhere, paralinguistic aspects are "culture specific constellations of communicative means that serve to key performance in particular communities" (1977: 56). In *kumuse*, the words of the narrator alone cannot be the basis of understanding its structure and meaning. As Finnegan notes the meaning of an oral text is embedded in more than the words and "bare words cannot be left to speak for

themselves" (quoted in Okpewho 1991). *Kumuse* also involves the use of extralinguistic features such as peripatetic movements within the arena, verbal pauses, a variety of body poses, facial expressions, gestures such as the waving of his performance walking staff, spitting of saliva and even short moments of silence in between narrations. All these features together with traditional performance regalia pass messages and complement the narrated word meanings. More significantly, the performance mode of half-chant, half-narration and sometimes an infusion of songs sung with solemnity and a sacred tone are just some of the examples of extra-linguistic aspects that Manguliechi regularly employs to maximum effect. Although the transcribed texts used in our analysis do not exhibit anything extra apart from the words, in actual performances captured on video the narrator could be seen gazing up in the sky as if supplicating and addressing *Wele* directly as he gesticulated, mimicked, chanted, sung and walked up and down the arena. His words bear a sacred comportment and the whole ritual is like atonement and placation of the ancestral spirits as the reciter tries to summon divine intervention on human life. Overall, paralinguistic features as textual elements of *kumuse* are useful in enhancing meanings and clarifying others in the context of the performance.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the textual features of *kumuse*. Our key purpose was to ascertain the extent to which the genre as an assemblage of different genres and sub-genres dealing with all manner of thematic concerns is shaped into a modicum of textual unity. While acknowledging that the concepts of text and textuality are often associated with certain forms of oral and written literature, we proceeded to examine how *kumuse* diverges from the formalist meaning of text as unified utterances. Our analysis has demonstrated that while a typical *kumuse* has no conventional opening and closing formulas, Manguliechi's narrations are only unified by the references to the dead man, the occasion of the performance and the personality and authority of the performer who has the sole discretion on when to end his narration. The chapter noted just like many genres of praise poetry, the form of *kumuse* is also masculinized by dint of the fact it

depends on reference to a dead man and its performer, who determines the length and content of the narration, is a man.

In relation to themes we have demonstrated how most of Manguliechi's narrations deal with issues such as past wars and heroes, cultural sites, etiquette, customs and practices, important epochs in history and many other pertinent contemporary issues that the narrator deems fit. It was also evident from our analysis that all these themes are not discussed, or incorporated into *kumuse* in any particular way. Rather it is at the discretion of the funeral reciter to choose whatever issues he wishes to discuss to a specific audience. Although the funeral narration is structurally haphazard, we noted that its sense of unity coalescesd around the central issue of death, and its meaning to the living and the authority and discretion of the performer. Its stylistic and structural coherence also appears to be hinged more on the narrator's ability to recontextualize and recreate well known genres like narratives, proverbs, riddles, songs and puns to carve new meanings in a contemporary setting. We also explored how Manguliechi, uses context, and audience to enhance the formless, indisciplined and open-ended nature of *kumuse* performance. By and large we can conclude that the Manguliechi's funeral oratory text is largely constructed by his rhetorical ability to 'chew words until they are soft'. To paraphrase Finnegan's words, Manguliechi's endless, and effortless 'ability to do things with words' is in fact the textual anchor of his funeral oratories.

Chapter 5

'Circumcised Masculinities' and Images of Sexuality in *Kumuse* Narrations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to analyse how the funeral reciter uses the occasion of performing *kumuse* to highlight concepts of masculine power in relation to male circumcision, sexuality and death. Cognizant of the fact that male circumcision is a fundamental signifier of male identity among the Bukusu, we anchor our arguments on the premise that circumcision is not just a rite of passage but a cultural benchmark that is often invoked by the funeral reciter to underline sexual virility and power relations. Furthermore, the chapter also leans on Jacques Lacan idea of the 'phallus' as a signifier of gender relations, to identify images of sexuality that are employed by the funeral reciter to justify circumcision as an index of male power in the context of death. The chapter is not just interested in showing how circumcision is used to rationalize Bukusu phallic masculinities but hopes to demonstrate how circumcision is in fact associated with anxious masculinities. In a nutshell, the chapter examines how the reciter's phallic symbolisms and sexuality imagery often associated with circumcision are both sources of affirming male superiority and male anxiety with reference to power discourses and gender relations.

5.2 Origin and Practice of Bukusu Male Circumcision

A community legend that is retold from generation to generation has it that Mango, an elder from the *Bakhurarwa* clan, was the first to reform and remodel the ritual of male circumcision to the form in which it is practiced up until today. The same legend claims that Mango, the famous hero of circumcision, slew a big killer python (*khururwe yabebe*) that had been terrorizing the Bukusu at a place called *Mwiala* (a cave situated somewhere

near *Bugishu* District in Eastern Uganda). The huge serpent was feared by all and killed many unsuspecting villagers. But when the dreaded serpent killed Mango's own son, the bereaved father swore to personally seek revenge for his dead son and went ahead to hunt for the deadly beast. Armed with a sharp special knife called *embalu,* a short strong piece of a tree stump (*sisindi*) and a short spear (*wamachari*), the story goes, Mango laid ambush by hiding in the fiery snake's cave and waited for it almost the whole day. When the fire-spitting serpent arrived outside its den after foraging for food, it proceeded through the entrance. But on smelling danger in the vicinity, it hesitated and slithered out of its lair with anger and furiously lashed out its tail at the near bushes while spitting balls of fire to scare away any intruders. Convinced there was no more looming danger, it entered its den and proceeded to coil itself unknowingly around Mango before finally placing its head on the *'sisindi'* (piece of strong wood from a tree stump) which he had strategically placed at the entrance. With one clinical strike of *embalu* (sharp machete) Mango chopped off the head of the serpent. The snake's head flew out because of the impact of the blow and bit a nearby tree whose stem, roots and branches, it is claimed, dried instantly because of the venom. Meanwhile, inside the cave the rest of serpent's body coils (*kamakanya*) were constricting Mango and almost suffocating him. Luckily, he still managed to muster enough energy and using his '*wamachari*' and '*embalu*'; he went on to slice and chop the snake's body into smaller pieces (*birundu*) and finally extricated himself from its grip.

Too excited and not believing his own brave feat, Mango left the scattered pieces of the snake and triumphantly walked back to the village to the bewilderment of dazed villagers who couldn't believe he had actually killed the terrible serpent. But after confirming that *khururwe yabebe* was truly no more, elders from the *Sebei,* a neighbouring community that was already practicing circumcision, proposed to Mango that he should be circumcised and offered a girl from their tribe as a wife to appreciate his unparalled valour. Since this singular feat by Mango, it is generally believed that the

Bukusu adopted male circumcision in much the same way as it was originally done on Mango.

The legend of Mango is part of Bukusu cultural folklore that Manguliechi was fond of retelling in his narratives albeit with frequent variation although the plot line remained the same. And because of this legend, the Bukusu have continued to take pride in referring to themselves as '*efwe bandu basani'*[34] - 'we are a community of circumcised men' or '*basecha bema khuaywa*'[35] - 'men who survived the sharpness of an axe'. Such assertions are apparently invoked as binary opposites to '*basinde'* or '*banyifwa'* - uncircumcised 'others' - which are terms used to refer to neighbouring tribes like the Teso (*Bamia*) and Luo (*Banyolo Banyifwa*) who do not practice the custom. Indeed the Bukusu sense of masculine consciousness is inseparable from the practice of male circumcision. In the Bukusu world view male circumcision remains one of the mostvalued, if not overated, ritual observances that are deliberately used to shore up feelings of virile, phallic masculinity.

Notably, the Bukusu use circumcision age-set names that appear to have strong links with the Kalenjin age-set names (perhaps to acknowledge the fact that they adopted the

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[34] The term *basani* is also used by the Bagisu tribe of Uganda who are historically regarded as cousins of the Bukusu and bear similarities in language and ancestry. For more on this concept see also Heald (1989).

[35] During the operation of circumcision, the initiates stand at a specific spot in the father's or an agnate member's courtyard (*etiang'i*). Under that spot there was an axe-head over which certain ritual roots (*chitiang'i*) had earlier been carefully buried under the soil. Since the axe-head over which the initiate stood was made of steel, it was symbolically believed that he will develop a strong-willed heart of steel to enable him make bold decisions especially in times of war. See also Makila (2004).

ritual practice from the Kalenjin groups). They are named as; *Kolongolo, Kikwameti, Kananachi, Kinyikeu, Nyange, Maina, Chuma* and *Sawa*.[36] Each of these age-set names (*bibingilo*) has six sub sets or cohorts (*chibololi*) except the *Bachuma* cluster that normally has eight because of historical reasons that we will explain shortly. Mango is believed to have been circumcised under the first *Kolongolo* age-set cohort that was aptly called '*Kolongolo sya khururwe yabebe'* (*Kolongolo* of the 'Dreaded Killer' python). In total, each circumcision age-set category takes about 10 years to complete with the ceremonies taking place in August of every even year (e.g 2000, 2002, 2004 etc) but the *Bachuma* age-set takes a total of 12 years to complete. While the circumcision age-set names are useful in fostering communal pride and unity male circumcision is for the Bukusu the first step in a man's attempt to attain the precious status of malehood.

The Bukusu refer to male circumcision using various terms such as '*khukhebwa'* (to be cut), '*khukhwima embalu'* (standing the knife), and '*khukhwingila*' (literally to enter into manhood') and '*khukhwima khuaywa*' (standing on axe). The term '*khukhebwa'* alludes to the 'circular chopping' action that is employed in removing the foreskin during the actual operation, while '*embalu'* (much like the sharp knife that Mango used in killing the python) conjures images of the sharp, fierce and stinging fire of the circumciser's knife that is widely famed for the excruciating pain that is inflicted on initiates during the operation. '*Khukhwingila'* signifies the transitional process of an initiate moving from uncircumcised childhood and entering 'circumcised adulthood'. However, '*khukhwima khuaywa'* is a kind of imagery that literally refers to an actual axe-head that was traditionally buried next to the spot an initiate stood during the operation (*etiangi*). In addition, the axe also symbolically related to the sense of

[36] For more on the Bukusu circumcision age-sets and cohort names read also Makila (1978) and Makila (2004)

achievement and toughness that an initiate acquires after successfully undergoing circumcision.

The practice of male circumcision is voluntary. Once an adolescent boy is given the green light by his father to undergo the ritual, he visits (*khulanga*) relatives' homesteads beating circumcision metallophones (*chinyimba*) and stylishily dancing to the accompaniment of various circumcision songs[37] sung by a retinue of singers (usually called *baminya*). On the eve of the day of circumcision the initiate usually goes to his maternal uncle's (*ebukhocha*) place where a bull is slaughtered and a piece of the animal's meat from the breast (*luliki* or *likhoni*) is put round his neck and carried all the way to his father's compound. At his father's compound another bull is slaughtered and a piece of the animal's entrails (*khasombo*) replaces '*likhoni'* as remains from the slaughtered animal's innards (*buse*) are smeared on the boy's face and chest. Throughout the night before circumsion day, the initiate is chided through songs that are meant to encourage him to be brave. On the morning of the day of circumcision, the boy is taken to a nearby river (*esitosi*) stripped naked and smeared with river mud (*khumana*) all over his body. A special grass called *hututu* is placed on top of his head using mud. On the way to his father's courtyard, a special sacred song called '*sioyaye*' is sung to finally inspire and instill bravery in the boy as the ultimate moment draws near.

The actual operation takes place in the father's courtyard (*khuluya*) at a spot in front of the house where grains were traditionally spread to dry. It involves the surgical removal of the foreskin by a specially trained traditional surgeon (*omukhebi*). The initiate is expected to display unwavering fortitude during the whole process of circumcision without betraying any signs of fear or cowardice. When the boy successfully goes

[37] For more on Bukusu circumcision and circumcision songs see also Wanyama (2009) and Egesa (2009).

through the ritual, men roar their approval in unison to welcome him to the male club and women join in with choruses of ululations and dances of triumph around the newly initiated. Men celebrate the boy's success with war songs that recapitulate Mango's original triumph when he killed the python.

From our preceding description, it is clear that circumcision among the Bukusu is designed to inscribe the male body with instruments of performing male power and influence. To them manhood is a status achieved through the painful process of removing the foreskin. Although the original purpose of the ritual was designed to test bravery and endurance in order to train boys to be warriors, over time the ritual was adopted as a benchmark of masculinity and Bukusu identity. These are some of the issues we shall be focusing on shortly as we identify and explain phallocratic images in Manguliechi narrations.

5.3 Foregrounding 'Circumcised' Masculinities in *Kumuse* Performances

The relationship between circumcision and representations of masculinity in *kumuse* performance cannot be overstated. Through his narrations, Manguliechi revealed the fact that there is indeed a cultural thread in his performances which deftly links the circumcision ritual and masculinity. Often, he would either directly mention aspects of circumcision to adumbrate concepts of masculinity or sometimes draw analogies and allusions on the ritual for purposes of affirming certain stereotypes about masculinity. For instance in one of his performances Manguliechi introduced himself thus;

> *Nise Manguliechi oloma oyu, Omuneala owe Bamilele, owe Bamitungu, okhwa Namubuya, Nengo owe Kilachi, omusoleli arubaini nasita bona omusani Kinyikeu wema, waamba mutalia walota.*
>
> Translation
>
> It is me Manguliechi speaking, of the *Baneala* clan from *Bamilele*, of *Bamitungu* lineage; my mother is from the *Babuya* clan, of Nengo from Kilachi, I am the brave one circumcised in 1948 under the *Kinyikeu* age-set, the last cohort of *Waamba mutalia.*

In the elaborate introduction above, Manguliechi uses circumcision not just to praise himself but to underline the fact that the year of one's circumcision is a mark of cultural pride. However, this praise introduction by him ought to be understood in the context of how theBukusu, traditionally regard a man's circumcision age-set, cohort name and actual year in which the rite was undertaken with utmost reverence. Indeed at a public function or traditional event, elderly Bukusu men are known to subtly mention their circumcision age-set and cohort name, to not only remind younger men of their seniority but to assert their experiential superiority and silence anyone doubting or contesting their knowledge on specific cultural issues. In the community's world view age is linked to wisdom, and the older one is in terms of year of circumcision as a funeral performer,[38] the wiser. Thus when Manguliechi tactfully draws attention to his year of circumcision, he is not only laying claim to a superior knowledge of Bukusu cultural traditions but is deliberately challenging those in his audience to match up to his level of 'circumcised' hegemonic masculinity. As he continues with the rest of his narration, he certainly commands immense respect not just because of his good wise counsel but also because of his circumcision age-set and cohort name.

But to better appreciate the cultural significance of male circumcision as an index of Bukusu traditional masculinities, we need to put it into a psychoanalytic theoretical perspective. According to Sigmund Freud's figuration of the human unconscious, it is only through a realization of the absence or presence of the penis that girls and boys become aware of it as a signifier for sexual differentiation (c.f. Lacan 1995:271). For Jacques Lacan, the male sexual organ is more symbolic than biological hence his

[38] In an interview with Gail Presbey, Manguliechi confessed that during his early days as a funeral performer, he didn't command enough respect especially from older Bukusu elders who thought he was still too young and immature to possess the requisite wisdom. For more on this see also Presbey (1999).

reference to it as a 'phallus' (Lacan 1995:271-80). Lacan further argues that the reduction of sexual difference to the presence /absence of the 'phallus' is a 'symbolic law' - what he referred to as the *Law of the Father* – which is a product of patriarchy (1995: 271-81). In his view therefore, societal power relations are understood 'in the name of the father' who is the symbolic embodiment of patriarchal hegemony and the 'phallus' basically defines women in terms of 'lack of' and men in terms of 'possession of' phallic power.

Relating the idea of the phallus with Bukusu circumcision and masculinity, we can infer that just like Lacan's phallus, circumcision creates a 'privileged signifier' through which the circumcised male becomes fetishized and invested with multiple cultural functions and advantages. In a way, circumcision appears to create an illusion of power that is continuously fantasized by many men who have undergone the ritual. Yet real life experiences in many societies have proven that the 'phallus' – and circumcision in this case - (or sheer imagination of it) is meaningless even when it is associated with men's eternal search for dominance using their physicality. As Catherine Mackinnon reminds us, "sexuality in and of itself is at the heart of male dominance…[and] male sexual dominance is at the heart of all other power relations in society" (quoted in Segal 1994:208).

However Lynne Segal cautions that phallic powers in situations where men imagine they are in charge are often "embroiled in anxious vicissitudes of constantly striving to validate itself amid the changing social experiences" (1994:210). In the context of *kumuse* performance Manguliechi would constantly underline circumcision as an agency of heterosexual dominance. So important is circumcision in the context of *kumuse* that in many cases, the deceased man's age-set also determined if he was fit to be accorded the honour of being performed for. What this means is that even in death, circumcision remains a reference point in the definition of Bukusu masculine hierarchies. In fact the older one is in terms of

circumcision at the time of death; the more respectable one is regarded even in death.

Interestingly, death also has an influence on the naming and continuity of circumcision age-sets. As we mentioned earlier, Bukusu circumcision has eight age-set names (*Kolongolo, Kikwameti, Kananachi, Kinyikeu, Nyange, Maina, Chuma* and *Sawa*) and each age-set takes ten years to complete (except the *Bachuma* set which takes 12 years). On average, this means that a full cycle of all the eight age-sets takes about 84 years to complete. Estimating that Bukusu initiates are circumcised in their mid-teens, by the time a man who was circumcised more than 84 years back dies he will be more than 100 years old. Based on this logic, the Bukusu believe that it is only after all the men circumcised in a particular age-set have passed on that a particular age-set is re-introduced[39] in a new cycle. For this reason, circumcision and death have remained closely linked and remain important parameters of traditional Bukusu masculinity that are highlighted by the funeral reciter.

Arising from the legend of Mango, circumcision as a reference point of masculinity among the Bukusu has symbolically remained a mixed bag of pain and triumph; pain because of the physical cut but a triumph because of the original conquest that Mango

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[39] For example the *Kinyikeu* age-set that Manguliechi belongs to had initiates being circumcised in the years 1938, 1940, 1942, 1944 1946 and 1948. This means that for another cycle of *Bakinyikeu* to be introduced then Manguliechi and all his age mates who were circumcised in this age-set should have died. Manguliechi also explained to me that the *Bachuma* age-set came to have eight cohorts rather than six because of this reason. Sometime in 1884 when the next *Sawa* age-set was supposed to be introduced, it is claimed, it was discovered that two old men from the earlier age-set (*Makutukutu Omukhurarwa* and *Lukhalabanda enyama ya Ndosi*) were still alive. For this reason the *Bachuma* age-set was extended for two more cohorts up to 1886.

achieved by killing the dreaded serpent and the subsequent sexual dividends he earned when he was offered a *Sebei* bridesmaid as a wife. Moreso, the ritual appears to underline the patriarchal ideology of sexually objectifying women, which essentially means that circumcision is a stepping stone to achieving male virility. Indeed the ritual has overtime been revered, not so much because of the actual surgical operation and the assumed and imagined virility and fecundity, but more for the mental preparation it inculcates in the new initiates especially on how to face life with a mixture of resilience, patience and stoicism. The expectation for initiates to endure pain without flinching imputes that the rite is meant to instill among youngsters the confidence to overcome many obstacles in life.

In one of his narrations, Manguliechi actually attempts to unravel the same cultural meaning and significance of circumcision outlined above by arguing thus;

> *Omanya likhuwa bali, bali khukhwingila bakali nobola mulubukusu oli mbolele sifuno sye khukhwingila sebamanyile tawe.Obechanga omusinde bona wengila mubasani. Nio balanga bali khukhwingila! Oli wamala khukhwingila balanga bali omufulu, bakhufulile engubo eya mao! Oli wacha mwikombe wekombelamo ohonelemo! Oli weyalula balanga omutembete, mubasani waba tenbe!*

Translation

> You know the concept of 'entering' (circumcision), when you ask many people its meaning in *Lubukusu*, they do not understand. One is first uncircumcised (*omusinde*) and then 'enters' the club of the circumcised (*basani*). That is why they refer to it as 'entering'. But once circumcised, one is 'undressed' (*omufulu omufule*) meaning the mother's clothes are removed. In the initiates recuperation hut (*mwikombe*) one can only yearn for sex but can't have it until they heal. But as soon as they are fully recovered (*omutembete*) they become the most eligible bachelors among the club of the circumcised.

In the excerpt above, Manguliechi outlines and explains the different stages of being a man from a circumcision point of view. Beginning with '*omusinde*' (uncircumcised) '*omufulu'* (freshly circumcised), '*omutembete'* (newly healed) to '*omusani*' (mature circumcised), he explains that in all these stages the promise of enhanced virility and anticipated sexual gratification are dangled as incentives to the initiates imagination. By explaining all these stages that a boy goes through before becoming a man Manguliechi is underscoring the fact that circumcision is one of many institutions through which older men try to wield masculine power and control over young men. More importantly, the privilege of joining the club of real men and fatherhood is emphasized to and dangled before young uncircumcised boys every now and then, not just as a valid reason for undergoing circumcision but as a way of pushing them to tow the line of older men. In the Lacanian sense, the desire to be like the father and be less of the mother is usually repeatedly impressed on initiates. For instance, when the narrator refers to the newly-initiated (*omufulu*) as one who has been 'undressed' to remove his mother's clothes, he is merely affirming the Bukusu belief where femininity, in circumcision parlance, is symbolized by the foreskin (*lifunga*). Thus when it is chopped away, it is regarded as a way of turning the initiate from a 'mummy's boy' to a real man who can commune with other men in the public sphere.

The idea of male circumcision as a justification for virility and therefore masculinity has been examined by many other scholars especially in anthropology. For instance Eric Silverman argues that;

> Male circumcision in Africa is associated with symbolic themes such as enhancement of masculine virility, fecundity, arboreal fertility, complementary opposition between men and women, preparation for marriage and adult sexuality and the hardening of boys for warfare (1995:45).

Similar views are echoed by Makila who argues that for the Bukusu, the traditional male social-cultural recognition is pegged on circumcision and marriage (2004:116). Young

men, he adds, are particularly reminded that they have to first successfully undergo circumcision before proving their virility and fecundity by marrying and siring enough children especially boys (Makila 2004:117). In a sense, Bukusu male circumcision is not just a bodily symbol of masculinity, but is also an instrument of procreation which can only be complete upon siring of children. This is a view that Manguliechi as a funeral reciter keeps harping on in many of his narrations as we shall illustrate shortly.

However, while circumcision is meant to inspire young men to think and feel elevated to a special hierarchy of masculinity, experience in many societies has shown that the assumed virility and fertility are mere cultural imaginations and mirages that are often virtually non-achievable. Jacqueline Rose articulates this view by arguing that, "the assumption of identity in relation to the phallus is itself a loss and castration; an index of the precariousness of sexual identity" (1982:41). She further argues that, "the phallus stands at its own expense and male privilege erected upon it is an imposture" (ibid). Similarly, Silverman notes that "the rite plagues boys and adult men with unresolved anxieties surrounding the social significance of sexuality" (1995:5). Although the rite has phallic connotations, adds Silverman, it is also feminizing because on the one hand it "crafts a parturient phallus" yet there is always a lurking fear that circumcision leads to a denuded penis in the literal and figurative sense; an emasculated rather than an alternative masculinity (1995:5). Even though the Bukusu traditionally practice the ritual as a symbolic passage from dependent boyhood to independent and productive adulthood (*khukhwingila*), the intricacies of modern life have made it extremely difficult to achieve the requisite transitions from one economic status to another. The unfulfilled expectations of phallic masculinities associated with circumcision creates anxieties; anxieties which in this context are heightened when an elderly Bukusu man dies. And much as the funeral orator insists on depicting circumcision as a cultural benchmark of masculinity, death signals the loss of such signification and crumples such cultural benchmarks.

5.4 Metaphors of Sexuality and Male Virility

Apart from highlighting circumcision as an index of masculinity, the funeral reciter also employs sexual imagery to underscore enhanced male sexual prowess arising from circumcision. He uses common sexual imagery, allusions and innuendos to highlight male sexual power over women. In one instance Manguliechi is forthright in his praise of male sexual prowess when he uses a proverb that says, "*Nisioleka siokonia mao*" (The person you underrate most is in fact the one who sleeps with your mother). The proverb is used to warn and advise young people not to belittle their fathers however small or miserable they may look, because the truth is that they are the ones who slept with their mothers to sire them. At a deeper level the funeral reciter appears to be insinuating that however lowly a man may look, he is still a sexual conqueror by dint of being able to marry and to sire children. A similar meaning is conveyed by another proverb that Manguliechi uses which goes, "*Okhuchekhela niye okhuwa enda*" (The one who laughs with you will make you pregnant). Like in the previous proverb, the intention here is to potray men as sexually superior; almost like victors who will ride any challenge and employ any trick, including making a woman laugh, in order to impregnate them.

However, the Manguliechi acknowledges that sex and procreation is not always at the behest of the man, but is a mutual endeavor between a man and woman. In one illustration he uses the proverb, "*Litere lilala selira enda ta*!" (One finger cannot kill a louse) to explain the fact that sexual acts for purposes of procreation have to be mutually agreed between a man and his wife. Ordinarily, the proverb is used to illustrate the need for unity and collective purpose in achieving any social enterprise. However, in the context in which he applied it, he alludes to fact that the same collective purpose and consensus should be extended in sexual liaisons. In a sense the proverb is employed as a sexual metaphor to encourage consensual sexual liaisons between men and women.

Incidentally, the same spirit of consensual social interactions is also captured by most *Lubukusu* metaphors that are used in traditional marriage proposals and negotiations. Revisiting this issue in one of his narrations, Manguliechi explains that in

traditional Bukusu customs, if a young man wanted a maiden girl's hand in marriage his parents will visit the girl's parents. During introduction the boy's party will say something like this: "*Khubele nende embako khwichile ano khusaba kumwini*" (We have a hoe and we have come here today to borrow a hoe stick). In a polite manner, the girl's father/mother can decline by saying, "*Kumwini kwefwe kukhaangala tawe*" (The hoe stick we have is still too young). Persistently, the boy's party will plead, "*Kane khukulinde bulayi, khukukosie*" (We will take good care of it; we will give it tender care). Alternatively, if the woman under consideration is an old spinster, the groom's party would request her hand by saying; "*Khubele nende lukhendu khwichile khusaba emuka eye khusingila*" (Trans. We have a stick and came to borrow a gourd to stir). Clearly, the funeral narrator is highlighting the different images of sexuality that are applied in regular conversations. Whether it is the handle stick for a hoe or a gourd for the cleaning stick, *oswala kumuse* is pointing out common conversational metaphors that are loaded with sexual symbolism of a phallic nature. It is also imperative to note that the same metaphors acknowledge sexual liaisons as involving two consenting adults. Indeed for the traditional Bukusu a good marriage entailed negotiation and consultation between mutually consenting families that sought to foster good relations beyond the marital ties. For this reason, the negotiations were also punctuated with polite imagery which was nonetheless laden with sexual nuances.

However the sexual imagery and innuendos used by the funeral reciter are not just general but sometimes more specific to the contemporary setting of the audience. For instance when he was reciting at the late Vice-president Wamalwa Kijana's congregation, Manguliechi singled out for praise the politician's sexual prowess. In a tactful yet subtle way he lauded the politician for having had many wives and sired many children. He says:

> *Kumurwe mulala! Omundu owe sikhasi niye kumurwe mulala, ne ewe oli nende kimirwe kibili…. Nono koo, omanye omundu namenya buusa kumwaka nekuwa mala nacha nanyola owe sikhasi asalanga babana bamufwana. Sewabone epicha, soreba*

tawe! (Pointing to one of the late politician's sons called Jabali) ...*omulosi oyoyo owa Wamalwa? Heee. Oyoyo yesi owa Wamalwa? Okundi khane ali waena? Ali munchu* (a voice answers in the crowd). *Oooh. Nono Wamalwa nga nafwile ari, nono akasina! Okhaba no mukhasi mulala oli ese omusecha, aah, aaah!* (Thunderous applause from men in the crowd) …*Wibasia omundu khucha khurera omukhasi owengelekha nga oyu nali ari…aba kumwinyawe... Bakhabola bali Wamalwa Kijana kabukula babana wasikha walekha chingobi ta! Bakhoya babola bali kafwa sibuno ne kumurwe kuliyo!*

Translation

One head! It is only a woman who has one head, but you as a man you have two heads. Let me tell you now, when a man stays without sex for a whole year, when he later meets a woman, he sires children who look like him. You can see the looks for yourselves, you don't need to ask anybody (Pointing at Jabali one of the politician's sons in the crowd). Is that one of the late Wamalwa's wives? Heee (answers the audience). Even that one too? There is still another one I don't know where she has gone to? She is in the house (a voice answers in the crowd) Hoooh! Now that Wamalwa has passed on, let the truth be told! Don't have only one wife and boast that you are man. No! (Applause from crowd)…you can imagine the courage of seducing a white woman from abroad like the one seated here, it is not a joke! Let people not say that Wamalwa Kijana buried children and left the placentas! Rather they should say that his 'waist' died but his 'head' lives on.

In the extract above, the analogy of men having 'two heads' while women have only one alludes to sexual prowess and is an attempt to justify the patriarchal stereotype about women being intellectually inferior to men. Through such imagery, Manguliechi appears to lend credence to the Bukusu chauvinistic view that urges women to be subordinate to men because they are lesser thinkers. In the same extract above the narrator also appears to suggest that men are always in charge of all heterosexual liaisons and instruments of reproduction to a level where they, in fact, solely determine the physical looks of any offspring they sire. When he says, '*sewabone epicha, soreba tawe!'* (You can see the looks for yourselves; you don't need to ask anybody), he was insinuating that despite

Jabali, a son of Wamalwa, having been borne of a white mother he still had more of his late father's features than his mother's. For him Jabali's alleged physical resemblance with the late father was a clear testimony of the deceased man's superior genes and hence a dominant masculinity.

But in a tactical strategy that seems to sanction the traditional practice of polygamy, Manguliechi, in the same excerpt above, uses the occasion of *kumuse* to praise the late Wamalwa for having children with different women, a clear demonstration of his virility. When he quips, "*Okhaba nende omukhasi mulala oli ese omusecha ah aah*!" (Don't have only one wife and boast that you are a man, no!), he is taunting and ridiculing men who have only one wife. Incidentally, the Bukusu have a popular proverb on male virility that says, "A bull dies with grass in its mouth".[40] The meaning of this saying is that a real virile man continues to have the power to perform sexually even on his death bed. This sense of sexual prowess and dominance is often gauged by the number of wives one has. In the case of the late Wamalwa, the narrator was privy to the fact that just before his passing on, the politician had just married his last wife Yvonne Nambia; a marriage that had hardly lasted a year. Thus, like the 'proverbial bull' the deceased politician had 'died with grass in his mouth'. The narrator further amuses the audience when he praises the late politician for having the courage to seduce a white woman (a reference to Jabali's mother) - no mean feat - because of his rhetorical skills in English. Certainly, these are loaded metaphors that underscore the link between sexuality and masculinity.

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[40] This proverb has a lot of sexual connotations because it was originally used between men to gloat about sexual prowess in heterosexual interactions. However with the advent of HIV/AIDS the same proverb is still deployed to highlight risk-taking masculinities where men who suffer from the pandemic congratulate themselves for continuing to be virile despite the threat of death. The saying is generally used to impute that a real man shouldn't fear HIV/AIDS but should instead demonstrate a rare courage to even dare the pandemic.

But when he reminds the audience to remember that Wamalwa had died at the 'waist' but his 'head' lives on ('*kafwa sibuno ne kumurwe kusiliho'*) Manguliechi is making strong references and comparisons between the intellectual and corporeal/sexual abilities as signifiers of masculinity. The moral of such imagery is to entrench the view that intellectual legacies (which are considered masculine) live on after a man's death unlike bodily pleasures or 'matters below the waist' (considered sexual, ephemeral and feminine) which never count after death. In a way he is suggesting that although the politician's physical body was gone, his 'intellectual body' and legacy lives on. Thus through his dirge-like eulogization of Wamalwa's achievements, the narrator seeks to appease the soul of the deceased man by sublimely affirming the immortality of his accomplishments and urges the emulation of such forms of masculinity. By mentioning all his good deeds, Manguliechi certainly ensures that the late politician's memory as a hero remains engraved in the minds of the community and his personal characteristics continue to be examples that define Bukusu and Kenyan masculinity.

However, the funeral reciter's praise of masculine virility shouldn't be mistaken as a sanctioning of sexual licentiousness. Indeed in many of his narrations Manguliechi warned against promiscuity, adultery, and untethered sexual behaviour. Using a medley of sexual innuendos, allusions and imagery he never hesitated to urge his audience to shun sexually irresponsible behaviour. In the example below, he cautions the men in his audience against adultery.

> *Enywe basoleli mupa chikita ne bukhana, okhacha waoya omukhasi wabene alukongo tawe. Nooya omukhasi wabene aba wabialile sikhonde sikhaliwa ta, sikhonde sikhaliwa ta! Omanyile nooya omukhasi wabene, sinyoa khumanya aba enyanga, siakhabili khumanya aba bunyasi nibwo mukonaniakho, siakhataru kumusiru, siakhane chinyuni chie mundaa, sia kharano aba babandu.*

Translation

> Young men playing guitar, never seduce someone's wife in the neighbourhood. If you seduce someone's wife in the neighbourhood, you would have planted hatred that will never come to an end, hatred that will never come to an end, never do that. Do you know that if you seduce someone's wife, do you know that when you seduce someone's wife, the first thing to know about it is the sun, the second to know is the grass on which you sleep with her, the third the bushes, the fourth are birds of the air, the fifth are the people.

In a rather interesting but candid way, the funeral narrator is cautioning men against sleeping with other people's wives. Alluding to the fact that adultery, from the word go is an open secret that can never be discreet, he demonstrates how such a vice can be a cause of deep-seated hatred in a community. Ultimately, he is advocating for good morality by directly addressing men to take charge of their sexuality and avoid immoral practices like adultery.

In yet another narration he repeatedly reprimands men for reckless sexual behaviour by urging them thus:

> *Babukusu ndikhemubolela. Newenya kumutambo, newenya kumutambo, ewe omwana Omuchaluo, bona omenyile Ebung'oma. Newenya ofwe ne kumutambo, obukula litala wacha wombakha khumeno, obukule litala wombakha khumakusi, kane ofwe ne kumutambo. Okhabukula litala wombakha khumeno, okhabukala litala wombakha khumakusi! Heee, wamwene khubolela. Khabola khembola bali khendoma ndio babola bali khendoma chilomo chikhwe ta! Esese ndikhengambila, esese khembola*.

Translation

> You Babukusu, I am telling you. If you want poverty, if you want poverty, you son from the *Luo* tribe, now that you live in Bungoma town. If you want to die of poverty, take your family wealth and chew it (with your teeth), take your family

> wealth and squander it through illicit sex (literally loading it on your testicles), you will surely die poor! Don't ever chew your family wealth; don't ever squander your family wealth on illicit sexual liaisons. Heee, it is you I am telling this. Let me speak when I can speak some people will say I speak like that. Some peoplen will say, I am speaking vulgarities now! I'm only advising.

Using near musical and tonal repetition of the phrases '*newenya kumutambo'*, '*okhabukula litala'* and '*khabola khembola'* the narrator not only enhances the aesthetic beauty of his narrations but drums home the core message on morality. As he warns men not to squander their wealth through debauchery, he reminds them of the dire consequences of promiscuity which include death and abject poverty. His use of explicit sexual words and innuendos in reference to male genitalia serves to emphasize the seriousness of his counsel.

As chauvinistic as he might sound, Manguliechi was always up to date on contemporary sexual issues that affect people in a modern context. For instance, he was grimly aware of the scourge of HIV/AIDS, and took every opportunity during his narrations to consistently denounce sexual licentiousness that could lead to the contraction of the disease. He warns:

> *Silongo siera yalia, eyalia eng'ene niyo silongo sierra. Sesiranga ekindi tawe. Mwabene lola mulomaloma. Kamakhuwa kechile, ndikho nomela muWebuye, kumunandere kubolela wakulia! Kumunandere kubolela owakulia. Heee! Niyo ukimwi1 Nikwo Kumunandere, kulikho kulia, wamwene ochilekho niyo ukimwi yaamba. Mukhoya mwibaye kumunandere, kumunandere kwolile. Mwabene, mwabene mwiholelesie. Sibala sili engara.*

Translation

> The poisoned cattle lick kills the bull that licks from it, only the one that licks from it is the one that dies. It doesn't kill any other. Now listen to how you yourselves are talking. Times have changed; listen to me as I talk here in Webuye.

> The *kumunandere* tree warned whoever partook of its fruits. *Kumunandere* tree is still talking to whoever ate its fruits. Heee! That is HIV/AIDS! That is the kumunandere tree, it is eating people, and woe unto you if you climb it because HIV/AIDS will catch you. You all need to keep your distance from *kumunandere* tree, *kumunandere* tree has arrived. All be warned, be warned and humble yourselves. The world is round.

In the extract above, Manguliechi simultaneously deploys two proverbs namely; "The cow that feeds from a poisoned lick is the one that dies" and "*Kumunandere* tree told those who partook of its fruits, 'You brought yourself to me'". By using the two proverbs the narrator appropriates the role of wise sayings as vignettes of moral lessons to be drawn by listeners. Not only is he using the proverbs as sexual images that help his audience to understand HIV/AIDS but he also employs them as brain-teasers that can help them to easily relate their own sexual behavior with the warnings offered by the proverbs. By comparing HIV/AIDS with the proverbial '*kumunandere* tree' and 'poisoned cattle lick', Manguliechi reminds Bukusu circumcised men of the dangers of trying to prove their virility through irresponsible sexual behavior. The funeral reciter forewarns the men to be careful of HIV/AIDS if they wish to live long and leave a legacy as real men. In a subtle way he also seems to be insinuating that real male respectability is not just defined by sexual virility but by the ability to take charge of sexual passions and temptations. Indeed he discourages risky sexualized masculinities and advises men in his audience to be morally upright.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to outline how circumcision as a cultural symbol of Bukusu masculinity is thematically foregrounded and interrogated within the context of death and the after-burial oratory to illustrate masculine power discourses and anxious gender relations. We began by describing in brief how the practice of circumcision is traditionally carried out among the Bukusu. We then went on to give examples of how phallic symbols associated with circumcision are highlighted by the narrator. Using

extracts from recorded texts we collected, we noted that through *kumuse,* circumcision is configured as a transition to a higher level of masculinity. However, death appears to cause panic and disruption within the family and societal belief and hence leads to a crisis in the definition of masculinity based on male circumcision. Our analysis has also shown that although Manguliechi uses images of circumcision as a gateway to a superior masculinity the reality about the male privileges that are forfeited upon death negates this benchmark and causes anxious masculinities.

The chapter also examined how Manguliechi uses metaphors of sexuality and male virility to emphasize masculinity. Our analysis has shown that most of the imagery that the funeral reciter uses glorify the male gender and objectify the woman as a subject of male gaze and sexual dominance. However the section has also illustrated how the funeral orator uses his sessions to make a commentary on contemporary issues like HIV/AIDS. Employing his renowned flair for imagery, we noted how he recreates common proverbs, idioms and wise sayings into metaphors that are supposed to warn and advise society and men in particular to take charge of their sexuality and avoid engaging in risky sexual masculinities.

Chapter 6

Ethnic Consciousness and Masculinity: Narrativizing the Past, Affirming Bukusu Identities

6.1 Introduction

Ethnicity scholar Joan Nagel has argued that, "identity and culture are the building blocks of ethnicity… [and] it is through the construction of identity and culture that individuals and groups attempt to address the problematic of ethnic boundaries and meaning" (1994:152). Drawing from Nagel's views above alongside Derek Petersons' arguments on ethnic elites attempts to control movements of women and young men, this chapter seeks to examine the ways in which *kumuse* is not merely an instrument of narrating the past and present to galvanise Bukusu ethnic consciousness but is in fact an avenue of playing out masculinist stereotypes, offering ethnic meanings and territorializing Bukusu cultural identities. The chapter seeks to demonstrate how ethnic stereotypes play a part in shaping masculinities - both marginalised and hegemonic.The chapter also examines how past experiences and constructions of masculinity are deployed in Manguliechi's kumuse to entrench particular forms of Bukusu ethnic identities in order to discipline and wield control over young men, women and ethnic 'others'.

Appreciating the fact that ethnicity in itself is a fluid and complex concept, we follow the words of Benedict Anderson by drawing parallels between ethnicity and nationalism and suggesting that an ethnic group is indeed an 'imagined community'; a product of concerted efforts and negotiations; "a series of boundaries in time and space, dividing people and territory, and requiring active construction, maintenance and defense" (Tastsoglu 2004:2). In a nutshell the chapter interrogates the intersections between masculinities, ethnicity and folklore performance, but more specifically the role of

kumuse in narrativizing history, engendering and articulating Bukusu ethnic identities and boundaries.

6.2 'Lirango lie Enjofu': *kumuse* as a tool for Mobilizing an Ethno-masculine Bukusu Identity

Studying the intersection of ethnicity, masculinity and culture is not new in cultural and literary studies. Similarly, the idea of folklore performances as sites of foregrounding masculine power and ethnic identity has been examined by various scholars (Brah 1996, Enloe, 1990, Nagel 2000; 1998; 1994) and is therefore not peculiar to our current analysis of *kumuse*. In the context of *kumuse*, we are specifically interested in illustrating how the funeral reciter uses his rhetorical genius to designate and affirm particular criteria for ethnic naming but at the same time recognize how his different audiences attribute ethno-masculine meanings to his narrations. Relying on the views of various scholars who have repeatedly argued for the use of folklore and other forms of culture as ways of understanding how gender and ethnicity are closely intertwined, in this section we seek to illustrate how *kumuse* is in fact a forum for constructing and affirming cultural stereotypes on Bukusu identity albeit with masculine overtones. This line of argument is put forward by Nagel who defines ethnicity - while relating it with identity and culture - as:

> [A] dynamic constantly evolving property of both individual identity and group organization. The construction of ethnic identity and culture is a result of both structure and agency — a dialectic played out by ethnic groups and the larger society. Ethnicity is the product of actions undertaken by ethnic groups as they shape and reshape their self definition and culture; however ethnicity is also constructed by external social, economic, and political processes and actors as they shape and reshape ethnic categories and definitions (1994: 152).

Clearly, Nagel here points to ethnicity as a collectivising entity and a product of various individual identities that are assembled for unitary purposes. Yet as a socially

constructed phenomenon, ethnicity is a fluid, situational and volitional but dynamic process of identification, organization and action; a reference to ways in which ethnic boundaries, identities and cultures, are negotiated, defined and produced through social interaction inside and outside (Nagel 1994:152). More importantly, in Nagel's view, ethnicity increasingly appears to be the product of language, religion, culture, appearance, ancestry, or regionality. But the location and meaning of particular ethnic boundaries are continuously negotiated, revised and revitalized, both by ethnic group members themselves as well as by outside observers. This also raises questions about what Nagel calls 'ethnic boundaries' which determine who is a member and who is not. Another scholar Barth argues that ethnicity is a product of social ascriptions, a kind of labelling process engaged in by oneself and others; a composite of the view one has of oneself as well as the views held others about one's identity (1969). According to this perspective of ethnicity a cultural identity based on an ethnic group is the result of a "dialectical process involving internal and external opinions and processes, as well as the individual's self identification and outsiders' ethnic designation" (Nagel 1994:154).

In more recent contemporary scholarship on ethnicity and ethnic elites in East Africa, Derek Peterson examines how conversion to the East African Revival, a Christian conversion movement, was a political action that unsettled the alignments of colonial culture. Referring to cultural activists who opposed the Revivalist movements in East Africa as patriots, Peterson proceeds to describe how they fashioned themselves as ethnic elites, and "sons of the soil and natives of a particular territory…who were anxious to protect their honour against other men's insults" (2012b :15). The same ethnic elites, in Peterson's view, regarded themselves "as moral reformers set to work in creating institutions that would uphold women's discipline and protect their people's reputation" (ibid). Thus as ethnic puritans such patriots would try to control women and criminalize their migration to city. Peterson argues that part of what male ethnic elites do to reclaim their lost patriarchal power is to try to control women.

The above views are relevant to the study of ethnicity as articulated by Manguliechi in his funeral narrations. Like most communities, Bukusu consider their ethnic identity as revealed through their masculine ideals, to be superior to those of 'others', especially those held by other Kenyan ethnic groups that border them (personal interview with Manguliechi, 4 July 2008). In line with Manguliechi's argument, common-place Bukusu epithets that on the surface sound self-effacing are in fact subtle masculinised jibes that attain new cultural meanings and are calculated to construct cultural boundaries and foster ethnocentrism. Similarly, the numerous sayings, idioms and other oral genres that are used by the funeral narrator are often laced with tinges of ethnic chauvinism. A good example is the common Bukusu epithet '*lirango lie enjofu*' (Thigh of an Elephant), an axiom used to glorify the community's sense of strength in unity and patriotism. Historian Gunter Wagner once commented that:

> The readiness with which the *Vugusu* (same as *Bukusu*) assimilate outsiders into their clans is said to have led Chief Mumia of the neighbouring *Wanga* tribe to remark of them, 'The *Vugusu* are like the thighs of the elephants', meaning that their clans are as strong and self-assertive as the leg of an elephant, incorporating into their fold everybody who comes within their orbit (Wagner 1956:121).

Manguliechi's view on Bukusu ethnic identity is not different from Wagner's. More so, he argues that the unapologetic and sometimes recalcitrant attitude of the Bukusu towards people from other tribes in Kenya can be traced back to the rallying maxim of '*lirango lie enjofu*'. To many Bukusu the image of '*lirango lie enjofu*' rekindles memories of past suffering and collective victimhood that the community underwent when the British colonized Kenya in the late 19th century. Historian V.G. Simiyu echoes this view when he points out that past wars such as the *Chetambe* War of 1896 and other past hostilities with neighbouring tribes taught the Bukusu to passionately hold on to the meaning and importance of collective strength in unity (1990). Thus the 'thigh of an elephant' is not just a metaphor that rallies the ethnic consciousness of all Bukusu but also recalls past masculine war conquests and humiliations in which unity and strength

were key elements that ensured communal victory and resilience. When used by Manguliechi in the context of *kumuse* performances, this maxim reminds the audience of the community's tumultuous past and the various male heroes who fought to maintain the community's honour through sheer bravery, resilience and unity of purpose. The statement also entrenches the view that a real Bukusu man must not only possess physical strength (*kamani*) but be patriotic, brave (*omunyindafu*) and ready to defend his family and community's honour when need arises. Like the 'patriots' that Peterson discusses, the maxim of '*lirango lie enjofu'* makes Bukusu men and women feel like 'sons of the soil' and 'natives' of the Bukusu cultural territory.

Interestingly, the idea of oral genres as tools of mobilizing ethnicity and performing gender has been examined by several scholars. Joan Nagel argues that ethnicity just like gender is "both performed - where individuals and groups engage in ethnic presentations of self - and performative - where ethnic boundaries are constituted by day-to-day affirmations, reinforcements and enactments of ethnic differences" (2000:111). Nagel further adds that ethnicity is "dramaturgical, situational, changeable and emergent…[a] transaction in which the individual and others exchange views about the true nature and meaning of an individual's ethnicity" (2000:111). However the performativity of ethnicity just like gender is equally complex and fluid to the extent that it can only be fully understood in real life contexts. Thus the deployment of maxims like '*lirango lie enjofu'* and many others in *kumuse* narrations, is not just a way of performing Bukusu ethnic identities but also an avenue of foregrounding and territorializing Bukusu masculinities; what we might want to call *ethno-masculine* consciousness.

Furthermore, in the context of a male death and *kumuse* renditions, the 'thigh of an elephant' maxim helps both the individual and collective unit of Bukusu to seriously reflect on their personhood and state of ethnic consciousness. Therefore, every death of a Bukusu elder not only disrupts the community's ethnic soul but also necessitates a redefinition and reimagination of the masculine values that construct it. Koureas has argued elsewhere that "personal and collective identity can only ever be presumed,

claimed and reclaimed and as such it has to be reaffirmed especially in periods of uncertainty, turmoil and change" (2007:1). From Koureas's sentiments, it can also be argued that *kumuse* is ostensibly performed, not only to galvanize sentiments of ethnic belonging, but also to reflect on the normative and ever changing structures that define masculinity - particularly the type associated with times of turbulence such as wars and calamities.

More significantly, the maxim of '*lirango lie enjofu*' is not just a masculine enterprise but also raises pertinent issues on communal memory as a tool of sustaining ethnic nationalism. Cynthia Enloe echoes this view when she observes that, "nationalism has often typically sprung from mascculinised memory and masculinised hope" (1990:45). Nagel similarly posits that "the culture and ideology of hegemonic masculinity go hand in hand with the culture and ideology of hegemonic nationalism/ethnicity" (1998:249). Within the context of *kumuse* therefore, ethnic identities and masculine projects are evoked in the narrative processes of recalling and narrating the communal past. At the level of gender power relations, Manguliechi's rhetorical strategies and narrative processes of recalling and recounting past events are meant to mobilise sentiments of ethnic identity and nationalism. In the same breath, a statement like '*lirango lie enjofu*', has the capacity to open up a floodgate of past memories and historical events that are associated with it; memories of past events that can be both painful and nostalgic but unforgettable and instrumental in forging a Bukusu ethno-masculine identity.

6.3 Narrativizing the Masculine past: Manguliechi as a Bukusu Oral Cultural Historian

One function of the funeral reciter is his role as an archive of cultural history. For his part Manguliechi earned his cultural acclaim and respect largely due to his representations of Bukusu masculinities and ethnic consciousness and in particular his ability to recall, reconstruct, recreate and confirm various historical events, personalities

and cultural monuments with baffling precision. As a man of rare mnemonic skills, Manguliechi could easily remember and recount past events of Bukusu history with verve and enthusiasm. The ease with which he strings together facts, figures, characters/personalities and heroes, topical issues and specific dates in the past, even as he embellishes his narrations with flamboyant idiomatic expressions, witticisms and imagery, makes him a valuable source of Bukusu history. From his choice of cultural themes that he highlights in his performances, to the events, revered monuments, heroes and sacred places, Manguliechi always projected himself as a man on a mission to recapture the fading glimmer of the community's culture and history. Indeed, listening to him was always akin to listening to a living archive of cultural secrets and knowledge. But as he shouldered the burden of archiving, retrieving and presenting the community's history on behalf of his audience, he also bore the onerous duty of interpreting and offering informed perspectives and meanings on the issues and events he narrates about; an interpretation that sometimes combined facts and fiction, myths and legends, truths and fantasies. All the same, even as a cultural historian, Manguliechi still remained a proponent of the ethno-masculine agenda espoused by the whole process of funeral oratory. Though the veracity of what he says can sometimes be questioned by the audience, the funeral reciter retains the confidence of his listeners who remain awed with his renditions and look at him as a repertoire of cultural knowledges and history.

Various scholars have engaged with the challenges of using oral literature material as a source of history. The views from these studies can be very useful in appreciating *kumuse* as a source of of understanding Bukusu history. For instance, Jan Vansina argues that, "historians who study oral genres must confront the question of the validity of oral traditions as sources of history" (1971:442). E.J. Alagoa observes that there is always a disconnect between historians and oral tradition scholars because "oral literature poses peculiar problems for the historian…[and] many of the literary items that may be assessed as historically valuable do not treat of its subject in a direct and concrete

manner" (1968:235). He further adds that oral traditions' "treatment of historical events and personalities is often by allusion, in figurative or symbolic language" (235).

By and large, studies have shown that oral literature is in fact useful in "historical reconstruction" and especially in situations in which it casts "light on historical figures and events…distilling historical experiences and revealing traditional ideas concerning institutions" (Alagoa 1968:239). Yet, in Vansina's words, "reconstructing the past of oral societies cannot solely rely on the oral traditions" (1971:444); it requires "help from other sources such as archaeology, linguistics, ethnographic data, biological facts as well as written data" (444). It is also true that oral literature is instrumental in pointing the "way to insights over and above those possible from written sources alone or from formal historical traditions" (Alagoa, 1968). In a similar fashion, the Bukusu funeral reciter is, in many ways, a purveyor of the community's past masculine and ethnic experiences and contemporary expectations.

One way in way in which Manguliechi played a role as an oral historian was when he took time in his narrations to recapitulate the Bukusu community's genealogy including the origins of its various clans, the migration patterns of the community in the past, its heroes and the various sacred places and monuments that are regarded highly by all its members. For instance, in his oral accounts he claimed that the original progenitor of the Bukusu was a man called *Mundu* who lived at a place called *Misri* (present day Egypt) (Makila, 1978; Simiyu 1990, 1997). Renowned Bukusu historians Makila (1978) and, Simiyu (1990; 1997) concur with Manguliechi and argue that although many written historical accounts indicate that many Bantu speaking tribes of Africa originaly dispersed from a place in Cameroon in West Africa and later settled in various parts of present day eastern and southern Africa (Ogot, 1974, 1971; Were, 1967, Okoth, 1990), the Bukusu moved from northern part of Africa at some place in Egypt. In his narrations, Manguliechi corroborated the same view by claiming that the Bukusu originated from a place that is fondly referred to as *Esibakala* (a place of open meadows probably around River Nile in Egypt). From *Esibakala*, he claims the community moved towards the

source of the River Nile into Sudan arriving at a place called *Esirende*[41] (which is most probably the intersection between the Blue and White Nile) before finally entering present day Kenya from the northern part at a place called Lokitaung (Makila 1978:28; Simiyu 1990) near *Enyanja eya Nabibia* - the 'Lake of the Iron Mongers' which is the same as present day Lake Turkana.

In yet another extract Manguliechi names and lists almost all the places that the Bukusu migrated to and which have strong similarities with written historical accounts.

> *Efwe babandu khusalwa mulukoba bali Ebung'onelo, Ebukambilo, Wanyanga wanakhupa. Khwama Ebung'onelo, Ebukambilo wa Wanyanga wanakhupa khwecha abundu bali Esituluku, khwama Esituluku khwacha abundu balanga bali Esibakala. Khwama Esibakala khwacha abundu bali Musilikwa. Khwama Musilikwa khwacha Emuyekhe. Khwama Emuyekhe khwacha Munasaka. Khwama Munasaka, khwacha Mulokitang'a. Khwama Mulokitang'a khwacha musilongo sya Wabutubile. Khwacha musilongo sya Wabutubile khwakobola khwacha Musengeli.*

Translation

> We are a people who were born at a place called *Ebung'onelo* (the Cradle of Creation), *Ebukambilo* (the Place of Good counsel), *Wananyanga wanakhupa* (the Land of the hot sun). We came to place called *Esituluku* (Place of Anthills), from *Esituluku* we went to a place called *Esibakala* (Place of open meadows), from *Esibakala* we went to a place called *Silikwa*. From *Silikwa* we went to *Emuyekhe* place of sand. From *Emuyekhe* we went to *Munasaka*. From *Munasaka* we went to *Mulokitang'a*. We left *Mulokitang'a* and went to *Musilongo sya Wabutubile*

[41] According to Makila, Bukusu migrated to *Esirende* around 885 A.D. The veracity of this assertion couldn't be confirmed from oral accounts or other written records and therefore it remains only a guess. See also Makila (1978)

(*Wabutubile's* cattle lick). We went to *Wabutubile's* cattle lick and proceeded to *Musengeli*.

All the places mentioned by the narrator above have a historical significance and carry ethnic sentiment important to the collective origin of the Bukusu. Indeed a number of historians corroborate the migration patterns and places that Manguliechi mentions in his narration quoted above (Simiyu, 1997, 1990; Wandibba 1985; Nasimiyu 1981). Simiyu (1997) particularly singles out oral traditions like *kumuse* as a source that confirms the Bukusu sojourns in places like *Ebwayi* in present day Uganda and the ancestral relationship with the *Bagishu* (1997:1). Simiyu even estimates that the Bukusu and Bagishu, who are ancestral cousins, separated round about the 12th and 13th centuries (1997:1). Although Manguliechi is not always specific on dates, it is nonetheless worth noting that in his narrations he recounts such place-names as a way of rekindling nostalgia, collective pains and experiences suffered by past community heroes, who were men. While most of the names of the places mentioned are metaphorical images that sought to capture what the Bukusu thought were prevailing geographical and climatic features of each of the places they passed through (e. g 'The Land of the Hot sun' and the 'Place of Anthills'), the name *Ebung'onelo* (Cradle of Creation) is an allusion to the biblical creation story. The real meaning and significance of these places notwithstanding, they remain cultural hallmarks of constructing masculinity, ethnic identity and consciousness especially because they were not only named by men, but are 'mnemonic kernels' of masculine past experiences that have overtime been acknowledged as communal experiences that help bolster ethnic nationalism (Simiyu 1990).

Another good example of how past masculine experiences are remembered and retold by the funeral narrator as communal collectivities that have ethnic significance is contained in a popular Bukusu legend which tells of how the community's sojourned

around present day Lake Turkana (refered to in *Lubukusu* as '*Enyanja ya Nabibia*') through Lokitaung in Northern Kenya and encountered the 'people of *Nabibia'*[42] (iron-mongers believed to have been of Ethiopian descent) who are remembered as having been among the worst enemy invaders that the Bukusu encountered (Makila,1978:81;interview with Manguliechi, 3 June 2008). The 'people of *Nabibia*', Manguliechi claimed, pushed Bukusu away from Lokitaung towards present day western Kenya through bloody battles. Since that time, the Bukusu have continued to recall the humiliation that their men suffered in the battles with '*babandu be Nabibia'* (people of *Nabibia*) through a song that goes; '*Efwe wanaswa omusule, likwe bulilo, mumbo bulilo. Hasi bulilo, khwikulu bulilo. Khulitaling'a'*. (We pull out from here like termites in flight; we have no secure directions in which to fly; in the north there are enemies; in the south there are enemies; on the ground their are enemies, in the sky there are enemies. We have no choice but to move) (cf Makila 1978:82).

Within the context of *kumuse* performance Manguliechi does not sing this song only to reignite past memories but offers to allude to these events by reconstructing these past experiences using a narrative on the 'jinxed termite' - *wanaswa wakatawa* - (which we discussed earlier) whose fate is sealed whichever way it decides to go. By narrating afresh the story of *Wanakatawa* the termite, the funeral reciter alludes to the community's past experiences with the people of '*Nabibia'* while demonstrating how past traumas and humiliations caused by other ethnic groups can be retrieved and rekindled to shore feelings of ethnic collectivity. More importantly, these past memories of humiliation and trauma which are obviously masculine, are considered as collective communal humiliations that should never be allowed to happen again. The occasion of a

[42] '*Sibia'* in *Lubukusu* language means 'iron', '*bibia*' is a plural of iron. Therefore '*Nabibia*' literally means 'people associated with iron' or 'iron mongers'. '*Enyanja eya Nabibia'* (Lake Turkana) means the 'Lake of the Iron Mongers'. See also Makila (1976:81).

male death is certainly the right forum to commemorate such past memories and cultural history given the sobreity of such contexts and the emotions of grief and loss that pervade funeral occasions. Thus when Manguliechi narrates the story of '*Wanakatawa* the Termite' it is essentially an inciting signpost that invokes and teases out a series of historical events and memories of the past experiences that the Bukusu had with the 'People of *Nabibia*'.

But to even better appreciate how the Bukusu ethnic identities are closely intertwined with their masculinities and engraved in the community's collective memory about which Manguliechi keeps narrating, we need to re-examine and understand the origins and compositions of clan clusters and sub-clans. According to Makila, the "common destiny and solidarity of the Bukusu is based on the socio-political tenets of six main clan clusters" (*chibololi*) which form the 'thigh of an elephant' (1978:48). The six clusters are *Basilikwa*, *Bamalaba*, *Banabayi*, *Bamwalie*, *Baneala* and *Bakikayi*. Although the community has over 200 sub-clans (Simiyu, 1990, Wanakuta, 2011) which have kept increasing as the group interacts with other ethnic groups, each one of them is "either directly or indirectly related to one of the six clan clusters by way of patrilineal or matrilineal linkages, if not by association" (Makila 1976:48). Interestingly, adds Makila, every one of the clan clusters was not only started by a man but has its own peculiar historical experiences related to social aspects like "wars, adventures, migratory movements, calamities, place names, encounters with alien tribes, assimilation of strangers and their customs" (48). Similar views are underscored by Manguliechi who opines that although each Bukusu clan cluster and sub-clan is proud to be associated with the larger collective identity of '*lirango lie enjofu'*, members of each clan individually reminisce and pay homage to specific past conquests and defeats, heroes and villains and their past integrations and disintegrations from different ethnic groups (interview with Manguliechi, 6 June 2008).

As a way of carving out, not just a Bukusu identity but a clan identity, each clan cluster's past history, genealogies and memories are usually creatively engraved and

archived in their names. In addition the clan names also allude to the direction from which the clan cluster joined the rest of the Bukusu clans before moving to their present location. Like most oral accounts, exact dates for the formation of each clan cannot be independently ascertained although approximations can be made based on different oral sources that appear to corroborate certain dates. For example, Manguliechi observed that sub-clans in the *Basilikwa* cluster[43] claim to be descendants of *Silikwa*, a son of *Mubukusu* and grandson of *Mundu*, who is believed to have discovered fertile land in the Great Rift Valley (most probably near present day Eldoret town in the northern rift of Kenya). This same place was later named *Silikwa* in honour of him and all the clans that descended from him boast about their intermarriages and wars with Kalenjin tribes (*Barwa Bakinisu*) and Maasai (*Barwa Bamasai*) before finally joining the rest of the Bukusu and settling on the south eastern slopes of Mount Elgon on the Kenya-Uganda border.These oral accounts on past historical events are incidentally confirmed by many historians who have written about Bukusu (Makila, 1978; Simiyu, 1997, 1990; Baraza, 2011). Makila for instance estimates that the Bukusu moved and lived around *Silikwa* sometime in 925 AD (1976: 81) while Simiyu approximates that the community interacted and intermarried freely with Kalenjin subtribes in *Silikwa* more than a thousand years ago (Simiyu, 1997, 1990). Though both written and oral accounts about Bukusu migration patterns mentioned above are at best estimates, it is significant to note that Manguliechi's narrations about Bukusu past can also be relied on just like many written sources.

Within the context of *kumuse,* histories about clan identities are highlighted in the form of clan praise - names about the deceased, past heroes or any other male personalities that are revered and respected in the community. Ironically, while all

[43] Some of the *Basilikwa* clans include *Batukwiika, Bakimweyi, Babuulo, Bakiyabi, Basefu, Bachemayi, Bakolati, Babichachi, Babambo,* and *Batilu*.

Bukusu clans are believed to have been originated by men, their special oaths and praises (*bibilao* - noun from the verb *khukhwilaa*), which members invoke in their regular introductions, are heavily laced with maternal links. Like in many societies, the image of the female is an instrumental trope of mobilizing cultural emotions around Bukusu nationalism. As Elleke Boehmer reminds us, the iconography of most postcolonial nations demonstrates that they are "historically male constructed spaces...narrated into...self-consciousness by male leaders in which women are more often than not cast as symbols or totems, as bearers of traditions" (2000:45). Boehmer's views are certainly relevant in relation to the genealogy and early formations of Bukusu clan clusters which are often associated with feminine totems or mother symbols in order to install a sense of sacred legitimacy around them.

A good illustration of this was demonstrated by Manguliechi during his performance at the late Michael Wamalwa's funeral. Using the well known clan praises of *Baengele* and *Balunda* clan to which two prominent Bukusu politicians Mr.Wamalwa Kijana and Mr. Musikari Kombo belonged respectively, he illustrated a significant point on the importance of Bukusu ethnic peculiarities and clan identities. When he said, "*Wamalwa Kijana okhwa Nakitang'a wanakhombe, Batulo we kamachabe ke Webakutusi*" (You Wamalwa Kijana son of *Nakitang'a,* of *Nakhombe*, of the *Batulo* group that wears royal regalia), he is directly invoking the praise oath (*sisielao*) of the *Baengele* clan to which the politician belongs. He further recognises yet another politician Musikari Kombo when he praises him thus; "*Musikari Kombo Omulunda Nandika, nakhafumbi munyenyi*" (You Musikari Kombo of the *Balunda Nandika* clan, the teasers of clouds and rain drizzles). By repeatedly emphasizing the praises of each of the politicians' clan (*Baengele* and *Balunda* respectively) and female totems such as *Nandika* and *Nakhombe*, the funeral orator strokes the egos of the leaders by glorifying their clan identities within the larger 'thigh of an elephant' milieu. In the case of Wamalwa, Manguliechi is even more specific by praising him as son of *Nakitanga* — a reference to the *Batukwiika Bakitanga* clan to which his mother belongs.

The importance of clan female totems as symbols of Bukusu ethnic and clan identities can be better appreciated if we try to unpack the genesis of some of them. According to Makila, the Bukusu have a total of four clan oaths/praises that are associated with female/mother figures who command totemic significance within the community's cosmology. These are *Namurwa, Namunyole* (or *Munyole*), *Naluwa* and *Nawanga* (1976:53). The *Basilikwa* and *Bamwalie* clan clusters pledge their allegiance to the *Namurwa* totem, while *Baneala, Banabayi* and *Bamalaba* invoke *Munyole*. *Bakikayi* is the only cluster that praises itself using two female totems of *Naluwa* and *Nawanga*. All these female totems are linked to memories and historical events that recall the origin of each of these clans. For instance, *Namurwa* the mother figure that is mentioned by Bukusu members of the *Basilikwa* and *Bamwalie* clans is believed to have been the mother of *Mubukusu* and *Mukisu*, the sons of *Mundu* and the male originators of Bukusu and *Bagishu* (*Bamaasaba*) ethnic groups respectively (Makila 1978). In many Bukusu folklore stories, *Namurwa* is also widely believed to have been of Nilotic origin (probably of *Kalenjin* or *Maasai* extract hence the name *Namurwa* – literally meaning 'daughter of *Barwa'*). It should also be noted that historically Bukusu regarded *Barwa* people as 'invaders' or 'enemies' and the term has since been used to refer to all Nilotic tribes with *Kalenjin* or *Maasai* lineages.[44] Thus the glorification of the *Namurwa* female figure is not just an attempt to stake claim to Bukusu ethnic authenticity (by virtue of being linked with the eponymous matriarch of the Bukusu), but it is also an admission by many Bukusu clans that they have a huge Kalenjin/ Maasai influence. In the context of Wamalwa's *Baengele* clan mentioned by Manguliechi above, the mother figures of *Nandika* and *Nakhombe* are symbols of the clan's loyalty and sacred reverence of

[44] In response to the Bukusu moniker of '*Barwa'*, most Kalenjin and Maasai groups referred to Bukusu as *Ketoch* - which means enemy in many Kalenjin dialects. The *Basilikwa* and *Bamwalie* clans often claim that they interacted with *Barwa* at places like *Silikwa* and *Mbayi* and largely adopted and assimilated some of their cultural practices and mannerisms.

females as ‘mothers of the clan’. Indeed the clan praises of *Nandika* and *Nakhombe* are part of the clan member’s gestures of acknowledging that while it is men who are believed to be the originators of the Bukusu nation, it is women who symbolize its moral anchor and sense of reproduction and regeneration. Similarly, a traditional Bukusu man is wont to swear and praise himself by his mother’s name — women often sentimentalize their father’s lineage — since most Bukusu men (in the oedipal sense) regard their mothers with utmost respect, esteem and love. Ironically though, the fear of being ‘feminized by the mother’ is an attitude that is vehemently inculcated in the psyche of many Bukusu young men at the time of circumcision.

Essentially though, Bukusu identity is not just about mentioning one’s clan lineage but is about celebrating history by heaping praises on past clan conquests and peculiarities. In traditional Bukusu parlance, self–introduction at public forums entailed ‘*khukhwitacha*’ (declaration of one’s name and family/ clan lineage) and ‘*khukhwilaa*’ (praising and gloating about your affiliation to a particular clan). A Bukusu man is supposed to begin ‘*khukhwitacha*’ by mentioning his name, his parents’ names and their ancestries. He will then move on and begin ‘*khukhwilaa*’ by pronouncing platitudes about his paternal ancestry and bragging about the past achievements associated with his lineage and clan heroes (Makila 1978). For instance a man from the *Baengele* clan will praise himself thus: “*Ese Nambengele Nalukhamba, Nabulusya, Natulo owa Nakhombe, owaabina ne busiele. Tundwe Nasiloma, Mwalie owecha ne ekutusi*” (I am *Nambengele*, the Proud one, *Nabulusya*, son of *Natulo, Nakhombe*, the one who invades enemies at dawn. I am the stubborn one, the good orator of the *Mwalie* cluster, who came to Bukusu land with royal trappings). At the late vice president Wamalwa’s funeral, Manguliechi alludes to this clan praise when he calls the deceased man ‘son of *Natulo*, of *Nakhombe*’. For those in his audience who understand Bukusu clan oaths, the mere mention of *Natulo* and *Nakhombe* brings back memories of the past heroic feats associated with *Baengele* clan members. In the *Baengele* praise oath for instance, clan members boast about their haughty mannerisms, stubborn character and eloquence in speech. The clan’s royal roots

and bravery in war, especially their reknowned strategy of invading enemies at dawn, are also singled out for praise. At Wamalwa's funeral congregation, the funeral orator deftly drew parallels between the deceased's character and the clan's peculiarities, by praising him for having been 'the eyes of the Bukusu', a brave man who fought for the community's interests and strove to unite his people. In a nutshell, the clan praises that Manguliechi mentions or alludes to in his performances are not just engaged for personal self-aggrandizing braggadocio but are a part of the Bukusu practice of cementing ethnic and clan identities through the recapitulation of the community's past events.

By dint of the cultural significance attached to male circumcision, the Bukusu love to refer to themselves as the 'community of circumcised' (*bandu basani*). So critical is male circumcision as a cultural symbol of Bukusu identity that, in many instances, communities that don't practice the ritual are derogatorily 'feminized' using terms such as '*basinde*'. In the context of *kumuse* performances, the legend of *Mango* was often retold by Manguliechi as a nugget of history useful in summarizing ethnic sentiments and celebration of Mango as a communal hero. The legend of Mango also galvanizes ethnic nationalism and sentiments of cultural pride especially among men who collectively take pride as '*basani balinda embalu'* (men who braved the pain of the circumciser's knife). In the extract below Manguliechi actually celebrates the historical significance of circumcision as a mark of Bukusu ethnic identity by retelling the Mango story afresh.

> *Narakikha nende kimilukha kia babukusu. Namila khu Mango, ne Mango bamukheba bamwikhasia khundebe embukusu mala bachukhakho kamabele kamayu. Omukhebi wakheba bamulanga lisina liewe bali Olukayeti waba omukhebi wamukheba. Mala babandu bauka bali obele omwana omukekhe wengila bamukheba nefwe bakhulu ta! Nio babola bali aa! Omwana yuno nga kengila anano babandu nefwe aba kene khwingile nono.*

Translation

> Let me start with the Bukusu cultural practices. I begin with Mango, when Mango was circumcised he sat on a royal Bukusu stool on which fresh milk had been poured. The person who circumcised him was called *Olukayet*i. From then Mango's kinsmen wondered "If a young man like this one can get circumcised why not us who are older! No way! Since this young man has undergone circumcision, the rest of us the male folk will also be henceforth circumcised."

Apart from adumbrating the origin and role of circumcision as a marker of Bukusu ethnic identity and masculinity, Manguliechi in the extract above, appears to suggest that the practice started partly as a male contest in which a younger man Mango underwent the ritual and hence threw a challenge to older men who hadn't gone through it yet. As a way of proving their own bravery it was collectively decided that all men should be circumcised in solidarity with *Mango's* act of bravery of slaying a fiery python and accepting to be circumcised afterwards. Psychologically, every *Mubukusu* man feels inspired by this history on Mango's mythical bravery that is symbolically commemorated through continued practice of male circumcision. Mango's circumcision is thus collectively idolized as a crowning moment for a man of valour and since then, the whole Bukusu community has continued to regard him as a role model for many young men who wish to similarly prove their bravado by readily facing the circumcision knife.

But what is most pertinent is the fact that circumcision on its own is in fact an instrument of archiving history and performing Bukusu identities and masculinities.The community's past events and especially male achievements are deliberately embedded and engraved in the circumcision cohort names for the eight age-set clusters.[45] In his

[45] The eight age-set names are *Kolongolo, Kikwameti, Kananachi, Kinyikeu, Banyange, Bamaina, Bachuma* and *Basawa.*

narrations, Manguliechi often examined at length this phenomenon by naming and explaining the historical relevance and significance of each of the Bukusu circumcision cohort names from 1900 to the present. For example he explained that the first cohort was aptly named '*Kolongolo sya Khururwe owe Bwayi'* in recognition of Mango's feat of killing the python at a place called *Bwayi*.[46] Manguliechi himself belonged to *'Kinyikeu sya Waamba mutalia'*. He even explained that a more recent historical event in Kenya that is captured by the Bukusu circumcision age-set cohort names was the 1998 terrorist bomb attack. Because of the August 7th 1998 events in which suspected Al-Qaeda backed terrorists set off a bomb at the American Embassy in down town Nairobi killing over 200 people and injuring thousands, that year's circumcision cohort was appropriately named '*Sawa sye Epomu*' (*Sawa* of the Bomb Blast). To remember and honour all those who were affected by these devastating events, Manguliechi explained that theBukusu decided to recognise that tragic moment through the circumcision cohort name (interview in 4 December 2010). It suffices to add that circumcision cohort names are not just agreed upon for the sake of Bukusu identity and history but are instruments of masculine braggadocio especially where men use them to boast about their age and historical events associated with their year of circumcision.

Nonetheless Bukusu masculine identity and history is not just entrenched through circumcision but also through the valorization of past male heroes, prophets and warriors who are remembered for their extraordinary exploits. In one excerpt, Manguliechi

[46] According to some Bukusu historians, the reinvention of circumcision and the naming of Bukusu circumcision age-sets based on historical events began at the close of the 18th century or beginning of the 19th century. Some have actually estimated it to have begun in 1785. See also Wanakuta (2011).

mentions communal heroes like Elijah Masinde owa Nameme,[47] Mwanda owa Kibonge, Maina owa Nalukale and Munialo owa Mutonyi as some of the well known prophets and brave personalities who performed miracles and foretold the future. *Mwanda* son of *Kibonge* and *Munialo* son of *Mutonyi* were famous seers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries respectively, who are both believed to have prophesied the establishment and building of modern day *Bungoma* town and the two outstanding high schools in Bukusu land namely *Chesamis*i High School and Friends School *Kamusinga*. Manguliechi recounts in his narrations how *Munialo* and *Mwanda* had visions of 'white rooftops, black houses and red mountain-like features' which later turned out to be premonitions on the introduction of education and urbanization among the Bukusu in the form of mission schools and shopping complexes.

Overall, the community's past heroes that are foregrounded in *kumuse* performances are focal points of collective pride in past experiences. As a ritual, *kumuse* offers young members of the audience an opportunity to learn about their past heroes while at the same time creating myths about valour and conquest around such heroes. For example, the retelling of the magical and sometimes near-impossible successes of past heroes like Elijah Nameme, *Mwanda* and *Munialo*, serves to construct them as revered and larger-than-life cult figures who should be emulated by the young. In many ways, Manguliechi's sessions would offer the audience a chance to reimagine their identity and masculinity based on past heroes. As a result, the Bukusu society's ethnic identity is

[47] Elijah Masinde *okhwa* Nameme, who died in 1987 was the founder of *Dini ya Musambwa*- a pseudo-religious cum-political outfit, that almost single-handedly engaged and defied the British colonial administrators in western Kenya from as early as the 1940's until they were finally defeated and handed over independence to Kenya in 1963. Rumour also has it that he once performed a miracle by kicking a football that apparently disappeared into the sky never to come back. See also Simiyu (1997).

always inspired but also nourished by the funeral reciter's individual imagination even as he outlines the achievements of Bukusu heroes of the past whose feats help entrench the motif of '*lirango lie enjofu*'.

6.4 Ethnic Identities from without: The Recognition of non-Bukusu 'Others'

Contrary to what many cultural analysts might imagine, the Bukusu ethnic identity as reimagined by *oswala kumuse* is not always insular or inward looking. If anything, Manguliechi's performances always discounted the very idea that ethnicity and masculinity feed from the inside rather than from the outside. Manguliechi argued that traditional Bukusu ethnic identities were not always crafted through differentiation of them from 'others'. Instead as a community the Bukusu proudly refer to themselves as '*siyanja barende*' (those who love strangers) (Interview in 4 December 2010). In addition to being hospitable and peace-loving Manguliechi contended that the Bukusu also love to think of themselves as '*babayi*' - a term with several meanings in *Lubukusu* language. Popular folklore has it that the name must have emanated from neighbouring tribes in the past who envied the Bukusu for their ability 'to rear many cattle' (*khubaya*). But as a verb, the word '*khubaya*' also means to 'shepherd' or be able to lead others hence the reference to '*babayi*' - meaning shepherds or leaders. Echoing Manguliechi's view, Chris Wanjala confirms that the community members traditionally loved to refer to themselves as '*babayi*' because of their penchant to look after each other individually and communally (1985).

In an interesting anecdote that captures the idea of how Bukusu embrace members from other ethnic groups, Manguliechi recounted the genesis of the name '*Babukusu*'. According to him, the community's barter trade with the neighbouring *Basamia* earned them the name, 'Babukusu' - meaning people of *bukusi* (price of goods). Again popular community folklore has it that whenever the Basamia people took goods to sell to the Bukusu, they (Bukusu) were fond of inquiring and haggling about *bukusi* (price) and from then henceforth they were called '*babandu be bukusi'* (the people of price) hence

Bukusu. The idea of inter-community interactions overdetermining and constructing a community's identity is not peculiar to Bukusu. Barth Fredrik reminds us that ethnic identity is infact a naming and labelling process that is engaged by individuals from within and from outside ethnic boundaries which ultimately leads to a composite view of oneself (1969). The Bukusu clearly appreciate labels and names that strive to link their collective identity with other communities or cultural tags that remotely attempt to explain how they have related with other tribes in the past. Labels such as '*siyanja barende'* and '*babandu be bukusi*' are cultural tags and stereotypes that the Bukusu easily relate to and gracefully acknowledge from other members of other tribes. Thus although ethnic identity is more often deemed to be associated with parochial interests, Manguliechi used the after-burial narrations to underscore the fact that Bukusu are eternally appreciative of how other tribes have played a pivotal role in creating, recreating and negotiating what Joanne Nagel calls "their collective histories, membership boundaries... and the content and meaning of their ethnicity" (1994: 154).

Even during *kumuse* performances, Manguliechi would often appreciate the role and presence of people from other tribes and encourage the Bukusu to interact with members from other tribes not only to forge their own Bukusu identity but also to negotiate their national identity. In one instance he urged:

> *Babukusu nemuambane, khuambane nende chikholo chosi chosi. Khukhacha khwatumbulana, khwabola khuli oyu Omutesio, khuli oyu nanu tawe, muambane... khwaloba khuambana ta, Munyasia khekhubolele, busolo buli esiluya bwaluya. Omuchaluo noli anano, Omukamba noli anano, Omukikuyu noli anano, wakana Omusamia noli anano, Omumaraki noli anano, lusimo lulio lubola bali khusalane! Khukhoya khusalane mala khusomie babana. Khusomie babana lusimo lubola khusomie babana!*

Translation

> You Babukusu people unite! Let's unite with other tribes. We should not discriminate against one another, by calling referring to each as Teso or from such and such a tribe. We shouldn't do that, let's unite. Let's unite Munyasia because trouble awaits us out there if we don't unite! If a Luo person is here, if a *Mukamba* is present here today, if a Kikuyu is here, may be a Samia is also present, if a Marachi person is here today, there is a proverb that urges as to integrate and procreate, we need to procreate. We should also educate our children about the importance of inter-ethnic integration.

In the extract above, Manguliechi eschews ethnic insularities by openly welcoming members of his audience from other ethnic communities in Kenya. Well aware that Kenya is a multi-ethnic nation-state; the narrator is basically encouraging the Bukusu and non-Bukusu members in his audience to define their identity beyond their ethnic boundaries. Although his narrations are almost entirely rendered in *Lubukusu* (meaning he cannot be understood by many non-*Lubukusu* speaking foreigners) the mere gesture of recognizing the multiple ethnic composition of his audience as a microcosm of the cosmopolitan Kenyan nation-state is laudable. As *omuswali muse* he urges people from different ethnic groups to intermarry and bring forth to children. He also rallies his Bukusu kinsmen to integrate with other tribes for purposes of fostering a Kenyan collective identity. In a sense, he appears to appreciate and encourage interethnic marriages as instruments of smothering ethnic tensions and forging national unity. More importantly, Manguliechi also seems to suggest in his narrations that a Bukusu identity, just like masculinity, is not self-sufficient in a multi-ethnic national stage. Rather it is incumbent upon his audience to also embrace other ethnic groups in order to negotiate their cultural masculinities and identities at the national level.

In political terms, the Bukusu identity and masculinities were in many ways initially shaped by the coming of the British colonialists in Kenya in the late 19th century (Simiyu 1990). Although the Bukusu had their own political power structures and institutions that

were used to govern themselves, the coming of the white colonialists in Kenya and Africa in general heralded a disruption in the social cultural structures that had earlier on defined cultural chains of authority and consequently determined masculine power hierarchies (Ogot, 1974, 1971). After the 1884 Berlin conference at which European colonialists agreed on how to partition Africa into colonies, British colonialists took up reins in Kenya as one of its many colonies. For the Bukusu, the Chetambe war is often remembered as an epochal event that has forever been referenced as a historical landmark of epic proportions which continues to be invoked to emphasize Bukusu identity. Sir Charles Hobbley the colonial administrator who led his colonial soldiers in slaughtering Bukusu fighters in the 1894 war is regarded as a villain and enemy of the community. Another colonial administrator Sir Cotton, who reigned around the year 1960 and is popularly known as Bwana Kotoni is remembered for notoriously ordering all African natives in *Bungoma* district to plant sisal to demarcate their pieces of land (Wandibba, 1985, Simiyu 1990). Thus for many Bukusu, the mention of the notorious colonial administrators in Manguliechi's narrations, peels back history and reignites memories of the community's past at the hands of treacherous colonialists.

The collective traumatic past linked to colonialism is often invoked by Manguliechi in his oratories as a way of politically galvanising Bukusu ethnic pride based on past experiences of violence meted out to the community. The following two songs sung by Manguliechi in different *kumuse* performances best illustrate this point.

(a) *Basoleli mukhabanga* You young men who claim bravery,
Amanani kali elwanyi Ogres are out there waiting to maul you.
Wa Chetambe mukhabanga Young men of Chetambe who brag,
Amanani kali elwanyi Ogres are out there waiting to maul you.
Basawa mukhabanga, You young men of Basawa circumcision age-set,
Amanani kali elwanyi Ogres are out there waiting to maul you.

(b) *Basoleli khulietuba*, As warriors we shall soak,

Khulietuba. Oh yes we shall soak.

Basoleli khulietuba, As warriors we shall soak

Khulietuba mabanga nio khwelukha. We shall soak in blood before we surrender

The two songs above are historically renowned as war chants that were sung to embolden young Bukusu warriors during the Chetambe war of 1894. In the context of *kumuse* performance, the two songs are deployed by the narrator to simultaneously recall the community's memories of victimhood and battle gallantry during their wars with British colonialists. The same images of bravery and defeats in colonial wars are used by the narrator to construct and imagine militarized masculinities and ethnic identities based on battle heroism. Hyperboles like 'ogres are waiting to maul you' and 'warriors shall soak in blood before we surrender' are rallying calls of mobilizing ethnic identity that were not just relevant at the time they were first sang in the late 19th century but are deemed useful in dealing with modern day adversities especially occasioned by a male death. The songs also demarcate wars as a male domain that serves to unify and foster male solidarity and ethnic nationalism. As instruments of constructing Bukusu identity and masculinity, the same songs when sang during *kumuse* allude to the popular male pride relating to the colonial war experiences in which many Bukusu men remember and identify with the community's past through statements like: '*Efwe bewa Chetambe khwonga lumelela, khwetuba kamabanga nekhupana ne bakoloni*' (We are descendants of the Chetambe war, who stood our ground in war like red ants, soaked in blood as we fought with colonialists). The songs are deliberately sang in *kumuse* performances by the narrator not just to spice up his rendition but to also re-emphasize Bukusu traditional war masculinities and to underscore the ethno-cultural benchmarks of collective identity. In a sense, Bukusu acknowledge that part of what defines their ethnic identity is their history as demonstrated through past colonial experiences and especially the suffering, oppression and humiliation they underwent under British rule. The same colonial experiences have always remained an intergral factor in the ever changing definitions of modern Bukusu masculinities as we shall demonstrate shortly in out next chapter.

In post-independence Kenya though, Bukusu identity has expectedly, had to compete with other ethnic identities on the national stage. And since he is a man known to take keen interest in matters happening nationally, these competing ethnic and masculine interests easily become topics in Manguliechi's funeral oratories. In many of his sessions he would vividly narrate on contemporary historical events during and after the country's struggle for independence in 1963. He would even go further to mention the roles played by different Bukusu politicians' *viz-a-vis* other politicians. Leaders such as the late Kenya's first president Jomo Kenyatta, former first vice-president Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and the prominent pre- and post-independence Bukusu politician Masinde Muliro were frequently singled out by Manguliechi as political leaders whose role in the fight for Kenya's independence had an impact not just on Bukusu but the Kenyan nation as a whole. In such narrations, Manguliechi was known to sentimentalize Masinde Muliro's role in the fight for Kenya's independence by referring to him using his popular Bukusu pet name '*okhwa Makinia'* (son of Makinia); which was a way of praising him using his mother's name. By invoking the spirit of the politician's mother, *oswala kumuse* romanticised his maternal origins and identity and underlined the hegemonic masculinity and charisma that was exhibited by the politician during his fight for independence. Partly because of Masinde Muliro's early advocacy for a pro-federalism political dispensation (otherwise called *majimbo* in Swahili) through the pre-independence party called KADU (Kenya African Democratic Union), Manguliechi asserts that the Bukusu named the 1962 circumcision cohort '*Maina sya Majimbo'* (*Maina* age set of *majimbo*/ federalism). Coincidentally, when the same politician passed on in 1992, that particular year's circumcision cohort name was aptly named '*Sawa sya Masinde Muliro'* (*Sawa* age-set of Masinde Muliro) in honour and recognition of his role in Bukusu and Kenya in politics. Similarly, when Kenya became independent in 1963, the circumcision cohort name for 1964 was appropriately called '*Maina sya Uhuru*' (*Maina* of '*uhuru*', Swahili for independence) as a way of engraving such an epochal moment in the country's history in the Bukusu oral archives.

By the 1970's through to the 80's, the old Kenyatta regime in Kenya gave way to a new political regime led by Daniel Moi. This change of guard and the events of that period that many political pundits came to refer to as the *Nyayo* era (a reference to Moi's populist slogan of '*fuata nyayo'* - Swahili phrase meaning 'following in the footsteps' of his predecessor Kenyatta) are also vividly and animatedly recalled by *oswala kumuse* and juxtaposed with Bukusu identity formation and the historical imagination. For instance, 22nd August 1978, the day when Kenya's first president Jomo Kenyatta passed on is metaphorically remembered by Manguliechi as the moment of '*Namwatikhi*'; the time when the 'main pot broke'. The image of the broken pot rightly captured the eerie sense of devastation and collective loss that was felt across the country when the country's first president died. When Moi took over the reins of power, he immediately set out to reassure Kenyatta loyalists and the rest of the mourning country that he will follow in the 'footsteps' (*nyayo*) of his predecessor. But before long Moi's regime turned into the most repressive and intolerable state machinery as both politicians and citizens who dared express dissenting views, were ruthlessly silenced through torture, intimidation and death. In many ways, the Nyayo era was a protracted period of systematic and state-sanctioned political oppression and tyranny that led to many murders. In particular the 1st August 1982 coup attempt is regarded in Kenya as the turning point in Moi's rule. The attempt to topple him from power appears to have rattled him so much so that in the ensuing period there was a marked increase in state intolerance especially towards oppositional political figures, academics and activists who were falsely charged on trumped up charges like treason, were tortured and even murdered in attempts to clamp down on perceived perpetrators of unrest during the coup attempt and the period after. Even those who were remotely seen as potential critics of Moi's rule were not spared the wrath of the then dreaded Special Branch, a state intelligence outfit that was specifically formed to silence those who were opposed to the government. Indeed in the aftermath of the coup attempt, Moi's government initiated a constitutional amendment in parliament and introduced the infamous Section 2A clause in the constitution which outlawed

opposition parties and effectively turned Kenya into *de jure* one party state and KANU (Kenya African National Union) as the only legally recognized political party.

All these political events are apt illustrations of the different competing masculinities and ethnic interests on the national stage given the ethnically-biased brand of politics in Kenya then and even now. In fact during Moi's rule, certain ethnic groups (especially non-Kalenjin tribes including Kikuyu, Luo and Luhya and many others) whose members exercised any form of activism or dissension towards the ruling class were branded anti-establishment. This political situation definitely had a huge influence on the Bukusu collective mindset and sense of belonging to the Kenyan nation-state. For that reason, these same political issues easily became relevant topics in *kumuse* narrations. On one occasion Manguliechi not only alluded to Moi's repressive rule but went further to single out the 1982 failed coup in Kenya as a tragic period in Kenyan history by aptly referring to it as the moment of '*makhako*' - a moment of 'trials and tribulations'.[48] However he also circumspectly warns his audience to be wary of Moi-like despotic rulers when he compares and juxtaposes Moi's rule to the British colonial administration that was defied and confronted by Bukusu heroes like Elijah Masinde *owa* Nameme;

> *Okhoya orie serikali...akhaba luno luri, wema khusibala khuno wabola oli serikali elinda yino, ya Moi yino, Moi ache, ne bakhupa okwa. Okhoya wabola oli Moi yeng'ene.*

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[48] The coup attempt was planned by a small regiment of the Kenya Air force men who for some hours managed to control national broadcaster's radio studios (then called Voice of Kenya) and made an announcement in Swahili saying , '*serikali sasa iko kwa mikono ya raia'*- meaning 'the government is now in the hands of ordinary citizens'. The coup was later crushed by army forces loyal to Moi who overpowered the mutinous group. In the short time that the attempted coup lasted hundreds of hapless Kenyans were killed, property looted and destroyed especially in the country's capital Nairobi.

Translation

> You need to be wary of government machinery... even now if you were to stand on a platform and declare this current government, Moi's government, and even declare that Moi must go, you will courting your downfall! You are expected to say, "Only Moi can rule!"

Although the Bukusu pride themselves as the 'community of circumcised men' that survived the atrocities of colonialism during the Chetambe war, the funeral narrator in the extract above appears to be warning them that the post-independence oppressive regime of Moi is even more ruthless and they should be more careful when expressing their reservations about it. He is even more satirical in relation to Moi's politically oppressive system when he recalls how most Kenyans (some in his audience) had to feign submission and acquiescence to survive the brutal state apparatus that was deployed to silence dissension by ordinary citizens. However, he also tacitly encourages his Bukusu audience not lose face but draw on the bravery and resilience of past heroes like Elijah Masinde to fight modern autocratic leaderships.

Certainly, Manguliechi demonstrates that he is privy to past and present political events at the national level that have a strong bearing on the ethnic identity formation of the Bukusu. Most of his examples prove that he is conversant with contemporary political issues that have continued to impact on the community's traditional cultural space and shaped the community's stature within the national and global contexts. More importantly, in his narrations Manguliechi singles out the roles played by key Bukusu politicians such as Masinde Muliro, Wamalwa Kijana, Musikari Kombo and many others as rallying points for concretizing ethnic identity within the national imaginary and sense of national and ethnic history.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has been grappling with the idea of ethnicity and cultural identity as sites of masculinized contestation. From the beginning we set out to demonstrate how the

performance of *kumuse* is not just a masculine enterprise but a cultural tool of imagining and entrenching ethnic identity stereotypes in the community and at the national level. Using illustrations from Manguliechi's narrations we have also argued that the narrator is a cultural historian and a living archive whose acts of remembering and retelling certains events, persons and issues in the Bukusu past is in itself a way of constantly redefining the community's ethnic identity albeit as a masculine project. This chapter has also emphasized the fact that *kumuse* performances are sites of formulating different varieties of ethnic belonging. Whether it is through songs, narratives-within-the-grand narrative, proverbs or tongue-twisters or simple anecdotes that mention sacred places and past heroes, we have demonstrated that the narrator's purpose is to foreground certain historical facts, events and personalities for the sake of affirming a past identity, refashioning a new identity or sometimes even imagining a future and more idealized Bukusu identity.

Chapter 7

Changing Masculinities: *Kumuse* and the Changing Trajectories of Power Discourses and Gender Relations

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter we use examples from Manguliechi narrations to demonstrate how the Bukusu definition of masculinity has been changing from the pre-colonial period all the way to the modern times. In the chapter I argue that there is, strictly speaking, no monolithic type of masculinity that defines every Bukusu man but rather an assemblage of multiple masculinities that are influenced by specific moments of the community's history from the pre-colonial period to the present. And given that the funeral reciter narrates about different historical epochs of the community, the hegemonic views of Bukusu history are often highlighted while subordinate views are erased by the performer in his attempt to constantly keep reshaping histories to dovetail with existing hegemonic masculinity. The main thrust of my argument is that gender relations and masculinity anxieties are central in the different versions of Bukusu history that Manguliechi highlights in his narrations. I specifically single out how Manguliechi uses *kumuse* as a literary representation of the advent of colonialism, his romantic insistence on a story of the colonizer and the colonized and how this kind of narrative erases the stories of other men, women and young men who viewed colonialism in terms of the opportunities it offered. Manguliechi's narratives, we argue, represent an old traditional patriarchy that was not only under threat from colonialism but also suffered from anxiety occasioned by inability to control women and young men. Given that colonialism brought with it modernist aspects such as education, Christianity, employment in the capitalist market place and concepts of individualism, and money economies, our interest in this chapter is to interrogate how these concepts feature in the context of Manguliechi's narrations .

7.2 Colonialism and Changing Bukusu Masculinities: A Brief History

Traditionally, the major role of the after-burial performer was to retell the past events of the Bukusu with a view of invoking a strong sense of nostalgia not only for the community's past collective conquests but also past ways and traditional practices which were deemed to be slowly fading away and therefore needed to be retrieved before they completely disappear from the community's archives. As an oral historian, Manguliechi had a duty of narrating about the events, personalities and movements in different eras of the community's history which in one way or another have influenced the way individuals in the community collectively view themselves. Inadvertently, in the process of narrating the past, he would point out how Bukusu male identities and hegemonic views about history have been changing with the times and ultimately suggest new ways in which men can adopt new trajectories of redefining and re-asserting themselves within their past and the current changing social realities.

But to fully appreciate how these changes in masculinity within the Bukusu community's histories have continuously been negotiated and highlighted by Manguliechi, a brief historical overview of the events sorrounding the Bukusu community during the advent of colonialism is useful. While acknowledging that the colonial influence is perhaps not the only basis for analyzing the changing gender relations in any community, we nonetheless appreciate that it is a useful starting point. The colonial impact on the Bukusu culture is certainly a good starting for our analysis of changing masculinities partly because the colonial era represents one of the most radical epochs in the history of many African communities; an epoch that radically shook the cultural core of such communities. To rephrase Margaret Strobel's words, whether it is referred to as colonialism, capitalist penetration or, modernization or development, the fact remains that European contact with African people and its cultures represents a history that had far-reaching consequences; consequences that are evident in the way African societies continue to define themselves even after independence(cf Hunt 1989:361).

As we noted earlier, the pre-colonial history of the Bukusu nation formation, from both oral and written accounts, indicates that the community which pledges allegiance to its eponymous originator Mundu first lived at a place called Esibakala, a place believed to have been at present day southern Egypt (Makila 1976, Simiyu, 1987). Migrating downwards towards the source of the River Nile and then towards Lake Turkana in northern Kenya, more historians have claimed that Bukusu arrived in Kenya through Mount Maasaba (presently called Mount Elgon), and later moved to Uganda at a place called Embayi under the leadership of *Mubukusu* believed to be the father of Bukusu and Bagishu of Uganda (Were, 1967, Ogot 1967, Osogo 1966, Makila 1976). Makila in fact claims that between 1490 and 1706, Bukusu had already settled at Bukaya within the Tororo area (Makila 2004: 8-9). Under the leadership of Maina *owa* Nalukale a prophet-cum-leader, Bukusu moved out of Bukaya and settled near a hill which he christened *Sikulu sia Bukusu* (Bukusu Hill) (Makila 2004:9). At the time, Bukusu, were surrounded by hostile neighbors such as the Teso, Maasai and El Kony. The relationship between the Bukusu and their neighbors was always characterized by mistrust, suspicion, hostilities and fights over territorial land and cattle. Were and Ogot contend that even before the coming of the British colonialists to Western Kenya in the mid 1800's, there were already simmering and long running rivalries and conflicts among the African tribes. The perennial mistrust and suspicion often led to intermittent wars between different tribes in which lives were lost, cattle stolen and territories acquired and lost (Were 1967, Ogot 1967). However, the inter-ethnic suspicions, tensions and conflicts appeared to escalate with the arrival of Swahili and Arab traders and even more with the coming of the British colonialists.

According to Makila (2004) Bukusu began resistance to foreign aggression as far back as the late 1850's when Swahili and Arab traders started to frequently pass through their country on transit to Uganda in search of ivory and slaves. Although Bukusu constantly engaged in frequent skirmishes with these slave and ivory traders, occasionally harassing and snatching guns from them, they also suffered losses from the

traders who often attacked and plundered villages killing and maiming mostly innocent women and children in the process. All these atrocities visited by the Swahili and Arab traders on Bukusu were facilitated by Nabongo Shiundu of the Wanga kingdom who accommodated the slave traders by establishing a trade station at Kwa- Shiundu (later called Mumias). Between 1841 and 1882, prominent slave traders such as Sudi of Pangani and Abdulla bin Hamid from Mombasa used the trade station at Mumias to launch slave raids among neighbouring native communities (Makila 2004:191). Nonetheless, Bukusu always proved tough to subjugate and oppress and the traders had to constantly contend with fierce resistance every time they encountered them. Because of the regular raids by the traders, Bukusu certainly became more and more suspicious of strangers who entered their territory especially from the direction of Mumias (2004:191).

According to Manguliechi, Bukusu were already wary of foreigners even before the coming of the British colonialists who declared Kenya their colony in 1895. In the same period, community folklore has it that a renowned Bukusu prophet Mutonyi owa Nabukelembe prophesied that the future of the community would be full of tribulations. Mutonyi specifically predicted that in the days to come, a race of brown people (later confirmed to be white colonialists) would invade Bukusu land and commit the people to untold misery, penury and oppression and also humiliate them with menial jobs and shameful servitude (interview with Manguliechi 3 June 2008). Before that, claims Manguliechi, another Bukusu soothsayer and prophet Maina owa Nalukale had also predicted that the close of the 19th century would be a period of turbulence and troubles for the community (Makila 2004:192, interview with Manguliechi 4 July 2008). True to the predictions and prophecies of these Bukusu seers, by 1890's, the British administration under then Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEA) in Uganda was already taking steps to consolidate its presence in the Eastern Province of the Uganda Protectorate, which included Bukusu land (Makila 2004, Were 1967, Ogot, 1967, Osogo 1966). When the British government finally took over the administration of the Uganda Protectorate from the IBEA company in 1894, they started by taking up the Mumias

substation as a strategic administrative centre. This move signaled trouble for militant communities like Bukusu and when they finally clashed with British soldiers at the battle of Chetambe in 1895, many in the community felt the prophecy of their own seers had finally materialized.

The Chetambe war remains one of those historical events that left an indelible mark in the communal psyche of Bukusu. In particular the humiliation of Bukusu fighters by the British soldiers, who were under the command of the then imperial administrator Colonel Charles William Hobbley and Major William Grant, is remembered as one of the most traumatizing moments. In 1902 after the Chetambe war, the Eastern Province of Uganda which comprised of Bukusu land was transferred to the Protectorate of Kenya which was transformed into a colony by 1905. However, as early as 1899, the colonial government's introduction of the Hut Tax, coupled with the introduction of the monetary economy (the rupee was the new currency), the spread of literacy and establishment of market centres were deliberate measures to induce local African natives to do menial work. In fact the introduction of the infamous 'Master and Servants Ordinance' in 1910 further subjected all African labourers (including Bukusu) in the Kenya colony to strict rules of working on European farms under stringent contract periods (christened *kirimiti* in *Lubukusu*) with heavy penalties meted out to any violators (Makila 2004, Manguliechi 2008). In addition, many Africans suddenly realized that they were in need of jobs either as labourers on European farms or as casual workers on colonial Public Works in order to pay taxes or obtain luxury merchandise at market places. All in all, the Bukusu as a community remained virtually subdued by the British colonial rulers especially after Chetambe war. By the time Kenya became a full British colony in 1920; all militant tribes (including the Bukusu) had been pacified by the superior British administrators and colonial army regiments.

But apart from the political impact of British colonialism, various Christian missionaries were established in many parts of colonial Kenya. Most of the missionaries were sent from metropolitan countries in Europe or from places like the USA. In western

Kenya various mission schools were opened to teach Christianity and literacy. For instance the Friends African Mission (Quakers) opened a school at Lirhanda in 1905, Vihiga in 1906 and Lugulu in 1914. Several other churches, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) started mission schools at Maseno (1906) and Butere (1927); Church of God at Kima (1905-1907); Pentecostal Assembly at Nyangori (1924); Salvation Army at Malakisi (1936) and the Mill Hill Mission Catholics with schools and centres at Mumias (1904), Eregi (1912) and Kibabii (1931) (Makila 2004:213, Kweya 2009). In many ways, the Christian mission centers were not just administrative points for spreading religion and teaching literacy but slowly turned into epicentres of complimenting and reinforcing colonial policies.

Just as the colonial administrators suppressed and subjugated African natives, the Christian missions equally disrupted the African cultural way of life. Indeed according to Elijah Masinde the founder of the *Dini ya Musambwa* (DYM), the white colonialists and missionaries had replaced African religious and cultural practices with their own in order to oppress them. He often invoked the resilience of the heroes of the 1895 Chetambe War as gallant fighters who should forever inspire Bukusu to always fight any kind of oppression. In fact in 1934 he openly encouraged his adherents and Bukusu as a community to openly defy the colonialists by not accepting to be humiliated on European settler farms (Simiyu 1997). By 1943, Elijah Masinde openly urged his Bukusu kinsmen to move away from Christianity and join his *Dini ya Musambwa* (DYM). Throughout his life until Kenya gained independence in 1963, Elijah Masinde's ultimate aim was to drive the white colonialists out of Kenya as a way of fulfilling what he thought was the cherished desire of the soldiers who fought at Chetambe. For the Bukusu, the different activities of the DYM represented and ventilated the many grievances that the community had with the British colonialists; grievances that were only resolved when Kenya finally attained independence.

While it is true that the historical events outlined above, and a lot more other political experiences, are always in the public domain, the fact that they are re-narrated and re-

emphasized by the funeral narrator means that they have had far-reaching significance and consequences on the Bukusu way of life both in the past and the present. Thus when Manguliechi kept reiterating these events in his *kumuse* sessions, he was certainly drawing from them in order to not only explain how Bukusu masculinities, power discourses and gender relations have been shaped over time but to entrench certain hegemonic views of past history. Nonetheless, it is important to reiterate that it was not colonialism alone that disrupted the Bukusu cultural matrix. If anything, so many historical events, experiences and socio-political issues narrated by Manguliechi have continued to redefine the Bukusu worldview within the post-independence reality of the Kenyan nation-state. To echo the words of Belinda Bozzoli, colonialism and a lot many other social issues served to recreate 'a patchwork of patriarchies' in many African cultures (1983:149). It is these 'patchworks of patriarchy' that we wish to examine within the context of Manguliechi's *kumuse* narrations with a view of tracking the extent to which they have been influenced by different socio-historical and political realities in the contemporary modern Kenyan and Bukusu cultural context.

7.3 Tradition vs. Modernity: *kumuse* and the Disintegration of Traditional Bukusu Patriarchies/ Masculinities

In many African societies that were colonized by European imperialism, most cultural, social, economic and political institutions that gesture towards modernity are almost always linked with the colonial period. As Fredric Jameson argues, modernity as related to colonialism refers to "a unique kind of rhetorical effect and trope that is utterly different from the traditional figures catalogued since antiquity; a decisive break with the past" (1981: 34). However masculinity scholar Robert Morrell has argued that, "neither colonialism nor capitalism had a universal or uniform effect, nor were they experienced in the same way by all the colonized" (1998: 612). He acknowledges that colonialism in particular transformed the cultural forms, practices and social institutions of many African countries that underwent it (1998: 612). Other scholars have pointed out how European imperialism and modernity succeeded in bringing many cultures into contact,

obliterated many and marginalized most (Connell 1993:610), while at the same time "undermining the authority and power bases of senior men in African communities" (Lindsay & Meischer 2005:2). Colonialism dismantled old African patriarchies and replaced them with new younger Black masculinities based on capitalism and modernity.

As Derek Peterson argues, these embattled East African ethnic elites "positioned themselves as patriots, as sons of the soil and natives of a particular territory" and sought to control those who wanted to move (including women and young men who went to towns and cities in search of employment, Christians who joined unacceptable popular religions) (2012: 12). One way such traditional patriarchal elites sought to reclaim their clout is to try and territorialize ethnicity by pinning ethnic belonging and its subjects to a territory. This contrasted starkly with the stories of communal origin which prominently foregrounded migration stories. In many ways therefore, Manguliechi as a performer represents a similar Bukusu ethnic patriarchy that tries to use *kumuse* as a form of not only criminalizing the movement of women and young men in cities but of buttressing a particular hegemonic male point of view of history.

A good example of a cultural institution that Manguliechi uses to glorify masculinized histories is male circumcision. By dovetailing the circumcision legend of Mango into his *kumuse* narrations, he succeeds in projecting a hegemonic view of Bukusu history for purposes of narrative and ethnic territorialization. Bukusu circumcision was originally meant to prepare young men for, and orientate them towards matters of sexuality, marriage and procreation and family/clan obligations. By conscripting newly-initiated young men into circumcision age-sets, the community culturally foregrounded the male rite of passage as an indicator of bravery and hence warriorhood. The length of the initiation process was meant to give ample time for gauging a man's resilience and masculinity, while the actual pain of the circumcision tested his manliness and suitability for warriorhood. In a sense therefore, circumcision was meant to produce fierce men. Nonetheless, the Bukusu concept of male gender identity linked to circumcision and stressing military valour and warfare can historically be traced to the events that are often

recounted in the legend of Mango, the community's circumcision hero.The act of Mango accepting to be circumcised after killing the dreaded python is widely believed to have been the first gesture that finally linked circumcision with bravery, valour and warfare. Mango's feat of slaying the serpent was equated to a battle victory and since then, Bukusu have always regarded the rite as a measure of masculine bravery and warriorhood.

In the context of *kumuse*, Manguliechi enacts this aspect of Bukusu history as a way of emphasizing the culturally-sanctioned hegemonic view that acknowledges circumcision as a benchmark of Bukusu masculinity. Manguliechi is also implicitly pinning ethnic belonging to traditional male circumcision and in the process excluding all those who do not undergo the ritual in the same way Mango did. In terms of the content and form he is also designating the genre as the property of Bukusu ethnic polity. Put another way, circumcision represents a hegemonic masculinity that can only be earned by those who subscribe to Bukusu patriotism. However, when he re-narrates the legend of Mango in his sessions, Manguliechi is not only celebrating circumcision as the original definitive of masculinity, but he is equally apprehensive and anxious that modernity has taken away this social significance of the ritual. In a way this historical account on the origin of circumcision erases all those narratives of men (both young and old) who applauded colonialists for providing modern medicine that enabled them to undergo the ritual in hospital.

But apart from the legend of Mango which has continued to be invoked to define war masculinities, the historical events of the Chetambe war perhaps radically redefined circumcision as a cultural platform for mobilizing masculinity for military purposes. Although the Bukusu had had hostile relations with other African tribes before the coming of the British colonialists, the Chetambe war offered the opportunity for the community to rally all its circumcision age set groups to pick up arms and defend their community from foreign attack.This is best illustrated in the following song that Manguliechi sang in one of his *kumuse* performances.

Song	Translation
Basoleli mukhabanga,	You young men who brag,
Amanani kali elwanyi,	The war ogres are out there waiting for you,
Basoleli mukhabanga,	You young men who brag,
Amanani kali elwanyi,	The ogres of war are out there waiting for you,
Bamaina mukhabanga,	Young men of Maina age set,
Amanani kali elwanyi,	The ogres of war are out there waiting for you,
Wa Chetambe mukhabanga,	You young men of Chetambe who brag,
Amanani kali elwanyi,	The ogres of war are out there waiting for you,
Bachuma mukhabanga,	Young men of Chuma age set,
Amanani kali elwanyi,	Ogres of war are out there waiting for you,
Basawa mukhabanga,	Young men of Sawa age set,
Amanani kali elwanyi,	Ogres of war are out there waiting for you,
Heeeh mukhabanga,	Heeeh, you keep bragging,
Amanani kali elwanyi,	Ogres of war are out there waiting for you,
Basoleli mukhabanga,	You young men who brag
Amanani kali elwanyi.	Ogres of war are out there waiting for you.

In the above song, young men from all circumcision age sets are urged to take up arms and face the white colonial soldiers who had besieged Bukusu fighters at Chetambe Fort. In the same song each circumcision age set is specifically rallied to not only defend the community but defend the honour of their circumcision age group.The young men are challenged to use the military skills honed after circumcision to defend the community from the British colonialist foreigners who are metaphorically referred to as 'ogres'. Clearly, this song romanticizes the Bukusu soldiers' bravery while demonizing

the white man as a colonizing killer and 'ogre'. By urging the young warriors to confront the white 'ogres' who were bent on annihilating them, the song draws an analogy from a popular Bukusu folklore narrative in which a young hero slays an ogre and cuts its forefinger in order to free all his relatives who had been killed and swallowed by the ogre. In the context of *kumuse*, Manguliechi sings the song perhaps to underscore the fact that the Chetambe war experience like many social upheavals that faced Bukusu served to solidify the community's recalcitrance and collective masculine defiance against external aggression. In a way, he seems to be urging the young men to always defend the Bukusu ethnic interests and territory.

As an old patriarch Manguliechi is seemingly anxious about young men whose sense of patriotism to the Bukusu nation is questionable. He also sounds anxious about the fact that modernity has offered new avenues of performing masculinity other than circumcision and inter-tribe wars. Indeed the Bukusu definition of a masculine disposition based on a tenous link between circumcision and military/ war experiences is no longer tenable in contemporary Bukusu society.With the ever changing social and historical realities, the emphasis on militarized manhood based on circumcision age sets has gradually dissipated and lost relevance. Manguliechi himself is aware of the paradox of relying on circumcision to justify war-like violence. In one of his performances he says:

> *Aluno ari norangana omundu sirikari ekhuboha. Okhacha warangana omundu wabene, okhacha warekana nomundu ta. Aluno ari, khusera lelo busomi, ekalamu lelo niyo engabo ne lifumo*.

Translation

> Nowadays, if you fight an innocent person, the government machinery will catch up with you. Please desist from fighting other people, don't wrestle with anyone over nothing. Today the weapon for fighting is education; the pen is the modern shield and spear.

From his observation above, Manguliechi is certainly cognizant of changed social realities that have necessitated changes in the definition of the modern Bukusu man. Although historical circumstances like the Chetambe War of 1894 neccesitated the glorification of war and violence, he acknowledges the fact that a militaristic type of masculinity based on circumcision is no longer tenable in the contemporary world, with the advent of formal education. In the words of Wanakuta, the traditional practice of circumcision which was geared towards producing fierce and warlike men is no longer relevant because the modern society has little use for such men (2011: 17). Consequently, Manguliechi himself is inadvertently questioning the relevance of circumcision as a benchmark of producing militarized masculinities; masculinities that are no longer applicable in a changed modern context.

Quite apart from the waning cultural relevance of circumcision, Manguliechi also decries the way the practice of circumcision has slowly lost its traditional glamour largely because of modern influences. During narrations, Manguliechi repeatedly bemoaned the continued medicalization of this revered ritual. In his view the rite needs to continue being carried out in its original traditional way where the initiates were circumcised in the homestead by a traditional circumciser without the luxury of anesthesia. He is particularly critical of what he calls *chisindani* - a reference to anesthetic 'injection needles' used in circumcisions done at hospitals - which he thinks have not only 'watered down' (*a la* feminized) the ritual but effectively replaced 'real circumcision' with a Westernized cultural practice. Like Peterson's ethnic patriots and patriarchal elites who confronted the East African Revivalists, Manguliechi seems anxious and obsessed with protecting the honour and reputation of his people as he keeps "contrasting the discipline of the ancestors and the corruption of the contemporary times"

(2012: 15). He is particularly scathing to parents who take their sons to local clinics where they are allegedly circumcised by female nurses, an act considered culturally unacceptable because traditionally circumcisers are supposed to be men and not women. Traditionally, any boy who is circumcised in hospital is often derided for being effeminate. However when he was performing at the late Hon. Wamalwa's funeral congregation he praised the deceased politician, who despite his elite social status, still made sure that his sons underwent the ritual the traditional way.

Yet Manguliechi's anxiety and discomfiture with the changes in the practice of circumcision is much deeper than that. Seemingly, he believes that for many youngsters to be encouraged by their fathers to be circumcised in hospital literally speaks to a deliberate 'feminization' of the modern young generation. He argues that many young men have been turned into *bakhasi (*women) - alluding to the female nurses who circumcised boys in clinics - and are no longer tough and steely enough as required by tradition. On another level, Manguliechi's anxiety about the changing circumcision practice speaks volumes about the decreasing relevance of this rite of passage as a benchmark of traditional masculinity. By extension he seems worried about the diminishing role of *kumuse* as a ritual that affirms such traditional practices. Certainly, this presents a new dilemma in the definition of the Bukusu manhood.

But apart from circumcision, religion is also an important cultural institution that has continued to influence the shifting power discourses and gender relations among Bukusu since the pre-colonial times. As Wanakuta rightly observes, long before the advent of Islam and Christianity, Bukusu had their own traditional religious beliefs which were regarded as essential part of their lives in terms of how they promoted social stability and creative innovation; beliefs that were constantly invoked as a basis of culture, identity and moral values (2011:17). Indeed religion not only influenced the Bukusu way of life in the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods, but continues to be a basis from which masculinity is negotiated within the cultural structures of the community. Historically, this was best illustrated by Elijah Masinde owa Nameme whose outfit *Dini*

ya Musambwa (DYM) advocated defying Christianity and instead championed a return to Bukusu traditional religious beliefs. As he encouraged his adherents and Bukusu in general to take up arms and fight the white man from the early 1940's, Elijah stood for Bukusu cultural, religious and political liberation (Simiyu 1997).

Much like what Derek Peterson called the 'East African conservative reformers' of the 1940's and 1950's Elijah Masinde's *Dini ya Musambwa* adherents "claimed to be defenders of a particular *patria* that was under risk" (2012:15-16). They even sought to fix women as wives and daughters in respectable families by conducting anti-prostitution campaigns (Simiyu 1997). Clearly, DYM and Elijah Masinde represent an important aspect of Bukusu history during the colonial period. It is also the kind of history that Manguliechi used to retell with great enthusisiam and verve although he confirmed that he was never a DYM adherent (interview with Manguliechi 4 July 2008). In many ways, Elijah and DYM represented a Bukusu cultural reinnaisance in the 1940's and 1950's. Their views resonated with Bukusu men who were then fighting the British colonialists. Thus when Manguliechi fondly narrates about the experiences of this pseudo-religious group he is not only celebrating the political, cultural and religious relevance of the group but also acknowledges the significance that their hegemonic views had on the Bukusu society. Cognizant of the fact Christianity had penetrated many part of Bukusu land, the performer still celebrates DYM's cultural and moral reformism. He appears to tacitly approve the views of this group as one avenue of disciplining Bukusu women who were fond of migrating to towns and practicing prostitution. However, this particular version of history in which colonialism is blamed for corrupting and contaminating African customs and moral fabric deliberately ignores and erases the histories and experiences of Bukusu men, women and young men who saw colonialism and Christianity as an opportunity to get away from traditions and practices that had oppressive aspects.

Assuming the roles of *omukasa* (elder), *omukayi* (arbitrator/peacemaker) and *omukambisi* (wise counselor) Manguliechi seemingly uses the *kumuse* form to fix and

territorialize both the living and the dead. Although she acknowledges these important roles that Manguliechi plays, Gail Presbey notes that his influence on such matters has been waningin the context of changing social-cultural realities of the Bukusu. She notes how Manguliechi;

> [E]mbodies the subtle qualities necessary to make mediations and arbitrations successful. However the rural and village life that makes this kind of resolution possible is waning…the impersonality of neighbourhoods…[and] the rise of urban settings challenges the social network that kept both problems and their solutions local (1999:48)

Manguliechi's positions as a ritual oral artist, who also doubles as an arbitrator /cultural reservoir, are never easy to juggle in real life. In an oral interview with Presbey in 1994 he laments how he was not always accepted by the older men especially in his early years as performer. Manguliechi recounts how elderly men used to look down upon him as being too young and too inexperienced to understand the religious complexities of Bukusu cultural heritage associated with the office of the funeral performer (quoted in Presbey 1999:13).

For a long time, he had to endure the ignominy of always trying to convince cynics that he indeed was capable of bringing honour to the position of a funeral performer. But even though older members of the community have finally come round to respect his cultural role, the younger urbanized and educated ones do not fully recognize his importance. In an interview with me he decried the ignorance of younger generation in relation to cultural knowledge.

> Young men of today have forgotten how we used to do things. They claim to have gone to school and Christians but when I ask them about our people's science they can't answer me. What kind of education is that? Like you my son if I ask you about the science of a slaughtered cow's entrails will you tell me? No. Now you see, yet you teach at the university (interview with Manguliechi 4 July 2008).

Clearly the funeral narrator's traditional position as the definitive anchor of cultural and moral direction and arbitration is hard-earned. However his attempts to use the genre to culturally fix and territorialize Bukusu within certain belief systems and frameworks have remained elusive just like his attempts to territorialize the dead and his efforts in trying to pin down the open-ended and 'undisciplined' form of *kumuse*. The funeral performer's different roles have always come under threat from structures and institutions of modernity. With more and more people moving away from rural areas and living in urban areas fewer people appreciate the significance of Manguliechi as a cultural sage philosopher. Gradually his position as a cultural moral director and conciliator of people has been taken up by the Kenyan judicial and administration officials and institutions like courts, the police force and provincial administrators. On the religious front Christian church leaders have also taken up the spiritual roles of the funeral narrator. Again with more and more people converting to Christianity and Islam, the practice of *kumuse* has lost its 'territorializing influence' and the office of the funeral narrator no longer possesses the gerontocratic patriarchal power to 'fix' both the living and the dead. Clearly, the cultural antecedents that Manguliechi represents and the gender relations and power discourses he promulgates are clearly under siege and have changed with the times.

However the funeral performer's role as the ideal arbitrator in local disputes could still be relevant. When he was still alive, Manguliechi was regularly called upon to mediate between feuding Bukusu politicians and Members of Parliament such as the late Hon. Wamalwa, Hon. John Munyasia, Hon. Musikari Kombo and Hon. Mukhisa Kituyi. In their frequent battles for supremacy in the ethnically-determined Kenya politics these leaders would sometimes not see eye to eye because of intense rivalry. Recalling how he specifically struggled to bring together the late Hon.Wamalwa and Mukhisa Kituyi who had been feuding for a long time Manguliechi says:

Naulila bali Mukhisa nende Wamalwa sebenyana ta! Nepakho ndi beche bambone haba ta! Samwene nacha napa lukendo paka eNairobi ndi khenche mbolele murekodi bene baulilile eyo!

Translation

Recently I had heard that Wamalwa and Mukhisa do not see eye to eye. I tried without success to have them come to see me without success. I took it upon myself and made sojourn to Nairobi to tell them loud and clear like a record player for them to hear.

All in all Manguliechi is proud to have done his part in trying to reconcile the two politicians by urging them to unite and work together for the sake of the community and the nation at large. As a testimony of his diminishing influence he recounts the frustrations he had to go through trying to get the two politicians to sit together and iron out their differences. But during the late Wamalwa's death funeral he used a clever analogy by challenging Bukusu politicians who were present to prop each other up instead of behaving like 'hunters who after trapping game turn on each with spears instead of killing off the animal for it not to escape'. He particularly encourages Hon. Kombo to consider taking over the leadership mantle of FORD-Kenya, the party that was earlier headed by the late Wamalwa, in order to propel Bukusu to the national stage. In a way the funeral performer's arbitration skills are still instrumental and influential within the context of modern Kenyan politics. .

Even with the advent of modernity, Manguliechi's *kumuse* narrations still demonstrate that the main axis of gender relations among Bukusu is still hinged on patriarchy and male dominance. However, the normative order of Bukusu patriarchal masculinity, even in the traditional contexts was such that it ought to be propped up by material wealth and a respectable status in the community (Makila 2004:119). Like in many societies, originally the power of Bukusu masculinities over women was exercised within the family and society through possession of cattle and the number of women as

wives and through the role of the man as the bread winner, property owner and brave defender of women and children. According to Manguliechi, the different roles and definitions of being a man were particularly emphasized to young initiates through regular exaltations such as '*omusani kamani mukhumbo'* (meaning 'a circumcised man should always have energy in his elbows'), *omusecha bunyindafu*, (a man is as good as his bravery, physical ability) *omusecha okhoya walia ne babandu*, (a man should eat with others) (interview with Manguliechi, 4 December 2010). In particular the expectation 'to eat with others' alludes to generosity that arises from the economic strength of having plenty for your family, while 'bravery' and 'energy in the elbows' not only point towards 'sexual virility' but valour and the need for physical powers to protect and work hard to sustain the family. These, in a nutshell, were the traditional indices that defined the multiple ways in which a Bukusu man could exercise control over women and children.

In terms of material wealth, cattle were traditionally valued, not just for the economic returns associated with them but also because they were instrumental in sacrifices and the payment of dowry when boys married (Makila 2004:118). Indeed in Bukusu traditional economic terms, cows, goats, sheep (collectively referred to as *bibiayo*) and chicken were highly valued indicators of personal wealth. Nasimiyu underscores this view when she observes that "cattle were the traditional bank, the main form of wealth recognized by the Bukusu society as a measurement of wealth and a status symbol" (199:41). In addition the man as the bread winner was expected to ensure that granaries in his home were well stocked with cereal foods such as millet (*kamaemba*) sorghum (*bulo)* and maize. However it was the prerogative of women to ensure that other foods such as *kimioko* (cassava), *kamatore* (bananas), *kamapwondi* (sweet potatoes), *kamaondo* (pumpkins), *embama* (yams), *chinduma* (arrow roots) and many edible vegetables (*chinyenyi*) were always in abundance (Makila 2004: 117, Nasimiyu 1991). Overall, the Bukusu traditional context that the funeral orator celebrates is an agrarian rural economy that is often characterized by an egalitarian and subsistence economy. In terms of gender

hierarchy, men were always above the women by virtue of being the providers even though it is the women and children who performed most of the domestic and farm chores.

But with the advent of modernity and the emergence of capitalist structures of urbanization and the money economy especially after the coming of colonialists in Kenya, there have been significant changes in how men are defined within the Bukusu cultural milieu. More so, the social hierarchies of traditional masculinities have been subverted, contested and sometimes turned upside down by the Westernized cultural influences. In the words of Lindsay and Meischer, colonialism led to the transformation of older institutions of political authority culminating into new ones derived from expansion of wage labour and cash cropping, the introduction of mission oriented Christianity western education; the spread of religion as well as migration and urbanization (2005:2). Expectedly, even *omuswali kumuse* appreciates these changes and constantly highlights, affirms but also anxiously questions their validity alongside the Bukusu cultural traditions within his performances. While acknowledging funeral performers as progressive and dynamic people, Nangendo specifically singles out Manguliechi to support a similar view when he asserts that:

> Whilst in the past he (*oswala kumuse*) could extol the virtues of past warriors in Bukusu society, today he also has to preach about formal education, health care Christianity and the cash economy. (1994:103)

But in Manguliechi's view, the coming of the white man among Bukusu ushered in the emergence of the money economy and accumulation of financial wealth that was earlier on unbeknown to many traditionalists. In an interview, Manguliechi explained how the coming of the colonialists in the late 1800's appears to have heralded the emphasis on wage labour (*kirimiti* or forced labour), religious conversion, education and literacy, especially among young people who valued these modernist trends as symbols of social identity more than the traditional indicators such as cattle and food stuffs like millet,

sorghum and others (interview with Manguliechi 3 June 2008). He was also genuinely apprehensive of the fact that the white man's indicators of success have since undermined and challenged the political power and position of older men and given the younger men commercial opportunities and cash to assert their autonomy and disrespect their seniors. This, he added, probably explains why more and more young men today prefer to work and live in urban areas than the rural (interview with Manguliechi 4 December 2010). Certainly, for him, such issues are pertinent and worth highlighting in *kumuse* renditions.

Within the context of *kumuse*, Manguliechi recognizes and underscores how the cash economy has disrupted the chain of authority within the cultural set up especially in rural cultural spaces. While presiding over the late Wamalwa's funeral congregation, Manguliechi reprimanded both older and younger men who disrespect the cultural hierarchy especially at social functions where, younger men who are supposed to give way for older men to sit before they can sit are unduly given preference because of their economic status. He says, "*Aruno ari bali oli musikhasio omwana woho kamile echumo Narobi, obona omusakhulu nga esendi ali, "Papa, endebe eyisi", naye kemile, tawe! Aba okholoka omwana*!" (In recent times you can easily find an old man like me at a public gathering welcoming home his son who works in Nairobi, "My son, take this seat", while he is standing himself. That is wrong. If you do that you are cursing your own son). In the example above, he is specifically admonishing young men who by dint of having more money end up disrespecting themselves and their parents by sitting down at public functions while their elders stood. For him this is a sign of disrespect that invites a curse upon the young man and such instances shouldn't be allowed even in the name of modernity. He also urges youngsters to respect and take care of their elders (including the mothers, fathers, uncles, aunties and grandparents) or risk being cursed. At the same funeral, Manguliechi also urged one of the deceased politician's sons named Jabali who stays outside Kenya to ensure that his siblings don't suffer or want in his father's

absence. He almost fell short of directing him to consider taking up the challenge of vying for the vacant parliamentary seat left by his late father.

Clearly Manguliechi is an anxious man. As he directs his anger towards the young men who have developed arrogance because of their newly-found independence courtesy of money, property and capital wealth, he talks as a spokesman of distant ancestors and old patriarchies who were defined by their "devotion to egalitarian principles" (Peterson 2012: 15). By speaking in the name of the forefathers, Manguliechi carves himself into the position of "a moral reformer who claims the authority with which to impose discipline" on recalcitrant young men (Peterson 2012a: 15-16). Using *kumuse*, he lectures young men on the need to obey. His is a romantic story that "celebrates rural life as the foundation of moral virtue" (Peterson 2012a: 15) while demonizing and blaming colonialism and western culture for spoiling young men. He is also the voice of the old patriarchal order that feels helpless and disrespected by the new younger masculinities forged from a capitalist economy. It is a patriarchy that can no longer fix, territorialize or discipline the young men.

But apart from blaming modernity and capitalism for moral decadence among youngsters, Manguliechi also singles out capitalism and modernity as the root causes of the collapse of communal collectivities and social principles of egalitarianism. At Wamalwa's funeral, he mourned him both as a local and national elder statesman; as a surviving symbol of the remnants of Bukusu cultural knowledge of bygone eras. He also praised the late politician's generosity by fondly referring to him as '*omundu owe kumwoyo kumulayi'* - a man with a good heart. However, he also bemoaned the disappearing virtues of egalitarianism as demonstrated by the late politician and the older agnates of the community. In his performances, Manguliechi often urged men and politicians in particular to continue being the icons and pillars of the Bukusu communal spirit of egalitarianism - *khulia ne babandu* (Eating with people) - which he feared was on the wane largely because capricious selfishness and ruthless capitalism had taken root. He rallied politicians in his audiences to preach socialism in order to ensure, '*bandu*

bamenya muKenya nga Wele nekenya' (Citizens live and coexist in Kenya the way God wants). He advises against '*khuchekha batambi ne baleme'* (laughing at the poor and disabled) but instead encourages '*khukenda ne babandu, khulia ne babandu'* (walk with people, eat with people). He is also apprehensive at how the well-to-do members of the community in modern society easily forget the community's cardinal rule of always looking after the poor. As he lingers on this moral issue, Manguliechi, in a sense decries the decline of the virtue of generosity which is traditionally believed to be the definitive cornerstone of every Bukusu man.

More significantly though, Manguliechi also glorifies cosmopolitanism and interethnic coexistence as the new catchphrases that should define the modern Bukusu man. In fact he specifically rallies the Bukusu to collaborate with other tribes such as the Teso, Kikuyu, Luo and others to foster cross-ethnic and national cohesion, eradicate poverty and raise literacy levels through education. By openly urging Bukusu to join hands with members from other ethnic communities (*muambane nende chikholo chichindi* - unite with other ethnic groups), especially those that don't circumcise like the Luo and Teso, he appears to subtly deconstruct circumcision as the central signifier of the community's patriarchy and male identity. In a way he seems to appreciate the fact that there are new emerging and contemporary benchmarks of masculinity that endear the Bukusu to other ethnic communities in Kenya. At a national level he also seems to deliberately remind his audience not to be parochial and stereotypical about other ethnicities but instead to always strive to be open-minded and tolerant in order to be recognized by others nationally and even globally.

As we mentioned earlier in this chapter, Manguliechi's performances also depict education as another modernist frontier at which new masculinities are constructed and changes within Bukusu traditional masculinities negotiated. Manguliechi is quick to acknowledge the significance of education and literacy on the Bukusu social dispensation and its overarching influence on how men view themselves. But being the anxious patriarch, he also blames formal education for leading the younger generation

away from their community's *kimilukho* - traditional practices. Nonetheless, he appreciates how the literacy skills arising from formal education facilitate easier cultural transactions like in the case of modern marriage negotiations in which written documents are frequently used.

However he also condemns modern young men who under the guise of being educated use paperwork to hood wink in-laws and end up not paying dowry. He comments thus:

> *Kamakhuwa ke chikhafu kumi na tatu! Bali ye, kumi na tatu. Bali ya khochawe ekhola kumi na tatu. Bali cha rarawe kumi na mbili, ne chili? Ocha ne karatasi yong'ene. Yaba ewanga elabukhe. Yalabukha etabukhe. Nono chili? Khwikhale asi mala khuchikhafu mala khumanye nga balikho bakhwa.*

Translation

> The issue of thirteen cows for dowry! Traditionally the thirteenth, the thirteenth one is meant for the maternal uncle. Twelve cows are for the bride's father, but where are they? Nowadays grooms only go with a piece of paper. The once white piece of paper turns brown with time. After paling, it finally tears. Where are the cows? Let us sit back and reflect on how proper traditional dowry should be paid.

From his pronouncements above, it is evident that he is unhappy and critical to modernity and education and thinks they breed dishonesty among Bukusu young men who treat marriage and the practice of paying dowry in a cavalier manner. Again as the voice of the old Bukusu masculine order he seems to believe modernity and its cultural instruments such as education is responsible for the erosion of the age-old cultural custom of paying dowry which was a marker of a successful, honest, responsible and respected traditional masculinity. Employing a sarcastic tone in his words quoted above, he also deliberately lampoons modern men for replacing actual dowry cows with hollow promises contained in meaningless 'paper' agreements. In a way, Manguliechi seems to be arguing that although modernity and education has presented lucrative opportunities

for young men to be economically empowered, it has also turned them into cheats who do not respect cultural traditions like marriage and the payment of dowry.

All the same Manguliechi is solidly supportive of the centre stage that education certainly occupies in the community's cultural milieu and subsequently stimulates the social development of the Bukusu community. Drawing analogies from the historical war experiences such as the 1894 Chetambe War, he compares education to a weapon that in modern times can be better used to confront and conquer the enemy. He says, '*luno luri khusera khulio, nibwo busomi, nibwo khusera* (In the modern times the only tools of defeating your enemy is education, education is the modern warfront). While in the past Bukusu young men, especially the newly circumcised ones were traditionally encouraged to raid neighboring communities so as to amass wealth in terms of cattle, Manguliechi openly advocates for education as a modern substitute for past militarized masculinity when he says '*busomi bukhila liye'* (Education is better than war). He also reckons that in the contemporary society, 'a pen and a book are the most effective and efficient tools that can propel the younger generation to a successful stage economically, socially and politically' (interview with Manguliechi 4 July 2008).

During his performance at the late Wamalwa's funeral, he emphasized the importance of education by challenging parents to make sure their children study up to university level. He specifically encouraged parents to educate girls to higher levels to raise their social profile for them to avoid being courted by '*bafuri ngokho'* (a euphemism for oafs or charlatans whose only work is plucking feathers from slaughtered chicken) and '*banywi ba busa'* (cheap liquor drunks). He underscored the fact that women should be taken to school so that they are not always dependent on men for their livelihood but to also enable them to be more progressive in supporting themselves and men in social developmental matters. His reference to '*bafuri ngokho'* and '*banywi ba busaa'* is a subtle and sarcastic invective directed towards uneducated young men who idle and resort to drinking and doing mundane menial duties to earn a living.. By describing them in such a derogatory manner, Manguliechi challenges them to be real

men in the modern context of being able to work hard, go to school and earn a decent living. More importantly, his admonition should be understood in line with traditional older men trying to control and discipline young men ideologically.

On the theme of education, Manguliechi was also renowned for urging those in his audiences who were teachers and educators to be at the forefront in disseminating knowledge and encouraging the young to embrace formal education. Using the analogy of the hunter's dog that is valued more for its sniffing skills rather than its athleticism, he beseeched teachers to encourage their students to be like sniffer dogs rather than runner dogs in their quest for knowledge in subjects such as mathematics, geography and history. He says:

> *Mwabene babalimu musomia, babana basoma, lusimo olwolwo lubola bali embwa eunya yakhila endimi. Mwalimu wa sayansi, noli wesabu, noli wa geography, noli wa historia, yewuanyamo mala babana bosi beunyemo, mala aba nono babana bano babira kamakela, aba siabele sinaka aba wanywele ekilasi ekindi. Khusomie babana.*

Translation

> You teachers who teach, and learners who are taught, there is a proverb that says, a hunter dog that sniffs is better than one that runs. Whether you are a science teacher, or mathematics, geography or for history, once you smell out your subject and your learners follow suit, those learners will pass their exams, your knowledge is like a fountain of water that can be shared by many. Let's educate our children.

In summary, the funeral narrator likens education to a well that everyone should drink from for posterity and urges teachers to enable young learners to pass exams to secure their future. He praises the late politician Wamalwa Kijana for being a role model for the young people who were still seeking education. Manguliechi celebrates Wamalwa as a modern educated type of masculinity. In fact he refers to him as '*emoni ye Babukusu'* (The eyes of the Bukusu).

But Manguliechi's insistence on education as a tool of re-defining and understanding the new Bukusu man is not just for personal reasons. If anything he suggests that education should in fact help men to be better at wealth creation in the capitalistic sense. His views echo the words of Nigel and Wetherell who argue that "capitalist structures both reinforce and undermine patriarchal notions of masculinity" (102-103). Through his narrations, Manguliechi is particularly cognizant of how embracing capitalistic structures and tendencies can sustain and reinvent the traditional framing of the successful Bukusu man into the modern cash savvy entrepreneurial one. Referring to the four mathematical symbols of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication as analogies and metaphors of wealth creation he urges:

> *Basungu khuli ne khabi bakhuwa chi sapuchekti; bimanyisio bie chisabu bili binee. Mala pakali noreba oli mbolele bimanyisio bino bibola sina? Mbolela babandu bosi, ofuma omundu oli mu Kenya. Noli omubukusu, noli omujaluo, nanu nanu nanu! wesiwesi oli mu Kenya. Bimanyisio binee bikhubolela. Sie esabu sikhubolela bali sie khumara. Sie khutesa sikhubolela. Siekhurusia sikhubolela. Siekhukaba sikhubolela. Nono bana befwe babukusu, enywe nipo ndikhombolela nga mwikhale anano. Manya simanyisio sie ebweni, manya simanyisio sie khutesa. Sili ne elomo. Bukula kimiandu mutese khukindi, mukhanyoa mwakabana. Ewe onamala mwakabana kumukunda kwa rarao mwakabana, mwakumala aba mwarusia chieka. Silonda khueka nga murusisie, enoti. Nekhusiapa khurio aba khusiramanga ne noti. Khukabane kimiandu. Mala kimiandu nga khukabana, khuche, oyuno kombakha ano, oyo kombakha aoo, oyo kombakha aoo, oyo akula sino, oyo akula sino. Nio aba khwarurire*.

Translation

> We are lucky the white people gave us knowledge; mathematical signs are four. But for many I ask, "What is the philosophical meaning of this signs"? They don't know. I am telling all people who are in Kenya. If you are Bukusu, you are Luo, who and who and whoever! All those who are in Kenya. These four signs have relevance to us. The mathematical sign has meaning, the multiplication sign is

> meaningful. The addition sign tells us something. The subtraction symbol has its meaning. The division symbol tells us something. Now you *Babukusu* my people, you are the people I am telling now as you are seated here. Know the first symbol, the symbol of addition. It has relevance. Take wealth and add on others, don't begin by dividing amongst yourself. For example once you have subdivided your fathers land, you share it out and finish, you will have subtracted the acreage. What follows after finishing the acreage is cash. While we are still pondering about it we are still remaining with cash. Let's share wealth. But after sharing, we should move on and build properties, one here, another one there, yet another there, one buys this, another one buys that! That is when we will have progressed.

In the extract above, Manguliechi is clearly throwing a gauntlet at the feet of his audience by urging them to be more proactive in using their knowledge systems acquired from the whiteman to adopt capitalistic methods of creating wealth in modern ways. Recognising that many in his audience are literate and well schooled he deliberately challenges them to translate book knowledge into practical solutions of creating wealth and bettering their lives. In terms of gender power, he appears to be deliberately taunting the men listening to him to redefine themselves and their understanding of success within the new modern social and economic dispensation. He specifically challenges politicians when he quips; '*Luno khokenda olikhocha Amerika, oli Nairobi yefwe, mala ewe enchumo ta! Yenywe erie? Ta eyoo khebemo'* (Suppose today you are travelling going to America, you will tell people there that Nairobi is 'ours', and you have no work yourself! How is the city 'yours'. No, your own cow must be part of the herd first). Clearly, Manguliechi is chiding political leaders for bragging about their successes in foreign countries yet they are not doing enough to develop things in their own backyard. Alluding to the popular Bukusu proverb that says, '*Mwituli eyoo ekhoya yabamo'* (In a herd of cattle you need to have an animal of your own before you call it ours), he reminds these leaders to foster local development in their own communities in order to empower their own people at the national stage.

Even more interesting is when *oswala kumuse* directly encourages the men in the community to be dynamic enough to invest in other forms of creating wealth in addition to the traditional agrarian symbols of wealth such as chickens, goats, sheep, cows and agricultural farm produce. Drawing interesting parallelisms between the traditional symbols of wealth and the modern banking institutions in Kenya he says;

> *Enywe bana ba papa, sisindu sio khemubolela, khuambane, khube sindu silala. Lola bibindu bino Wele kakhuwelesia. Chipenki namakhumupolela. Efwe epenki ye bweni eli engokho, ekhola khabili likhese, ekhola khataru embusi. Ya khane ekhafu, ya kharano biakhulia! Bindu bino bili bibiefwe nibio. Engokho standard, likhese Commercial, embusi Barclays, ekhafu Eposta, biakhulia ishirika. Nicho chipenki chili chimbofu. Nechichindi chili engelekha. Bibindu bino nio Wele kakhuwelesia. Sebili bibiefwe tawe. Wele omwene kakhuwelesia.*

Translation

> You my kinsmen, one thing I am telling you, let's unite and be one. Look at these things that God gave us. Banks that I have told you about. For us the first bank is a chicken, the second is sheep, third is the goat. The forth is a cow, the fifth are farm produce! All these things are meant for us. A chicken is like Standard, sheep like Commercial, the goat is Barclays, a cow like Postbank, and farm produce like Cooperative.[49] These are our big banks. There are others overseas. These are things that God gave us. They are not ours. God Himself gave them to us.

From his narrations one can easily discern Manguliechi's endorsement of the cash economy as a way of negotiating cultural, social and political transactions in the modern society. Although he still glorifies the old way of benchmarking masculine wealth, in

[49] In Kenya today some the popular banks include Standard Chartered Bank, Barclays Bank, Kenya Commercial Bank and Post bank. The banks Manguliechi is listing are by no means the only one but the most popular and renowned.

terms of rearing chicken, sheep, goats and cows and tilling the land for farm produce, he is also appreciative of how modern banking institutions have changed the way things are done and hence how gender interactions have changed. To a large extent therefore *oswala kumuse* seems to be pointing to the fact that a succesful Bukusu man in the modern context is not just one who owns animals and foodstuffs in granaries, but one who can also boast of money in a number of the major banks straddled across the country. In more than one way he seems to be urging the Bukusu to balance between being traditional and modern men in terms of wealth creation and success. To some extent, he acknowledges that education and economic empowerment is the new frontier from which older men can strive to control, discipline and fix young men and women instead of the old traditional culture structures and institutions.

However he is careful to acknowledge that women need to be part of this process of creating wealth. He warns women to be supportive of their husbands and not be extravagant by 'scooping wealth using the front and hind legs'(*khutayila biambele nende bianyuma*). Instead he urges them to be protective of their husbands' hardwork and resources in order to help their families to prosper.

But even with his endorsement of entrepreneurship and the acumen to create wealth for communal good, *oswala kumuse* highly disapproves of individuals who go as far selling their ancestral land to get cash. Instead he encourages such men to strive to invest in real property in urban areas like Bungoma town and the city of Nairobi. He is particularly incensed by men who sell land in order to engage in debauchery because according to him such gestures are often recipes for poverty and disaster:

> *Babukukusu ndi khemubolela. Newenya kumutambo, newenya kumutambo, ewe omwana omuchaluo, bona omenyile Ebung'oma. Newenya ofwe ne kumutambo, obukula litala wacha wombakha khumeno, obukule litala wombakha khamakusi, kane ofwe ne kumutambo. Okhabukula litala wombakha khumeno, okhabukula litala wombakha khumakusi. Hee, wamwene khubolela. Khabola,*

khembola, bali khendoma ndio, babola bali khendoma chilomo chikhwe ta. Esese ndi khengambila, esese ndi khembola

Translation

Babukusu, it is you I am telling this. If you want poverty, if you ask for poverty, you Luo young man, now that you live in Bungoma. If you want to die from poverty, take your kraal's worth and 'build it on your teeth', take your kraal's worth and 'build it on your testicles', you will surely die of poverty. Don't take your earthly wealth and build on your teeth; don't take your earthly wealth and build it on testicles. Heee, I warn and tell you. Let me say, I say it again and when I say it like that and some people say I am speaking obscenities! I am only advising, I am only saying it as it is.

As the embodiment of moral forthrightness *oswala kumuse* appears to lead from the front in condemning licentiousness and promiscuous behaviour. He also doesn't hesitate to reprimand those men in the society who bring their families and the community at large into risk and disrepute through their casual sexual behaviour. In a very blunt way, he warns the men to be wary of the dreaded HIV/AIDS pandemic that appears to be the biggest threat to survival of modern society. Certainly, Manguliechi is aware of the dangers posed by HIV/AIDS and abhors risky behaviours that might lead to 'diseased' masculinities arising from the pandemic. He also appears to appreciate the fact that HIV/AIDS as a modern pandemic is largely responsible for the continued redefinition of contemporary sexuality and masculinity.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have attempted to trace the changes in the modern definition of Bukusu masculinities. Acknowledging that the Bukusu have been the targets of historical influences such as colonialism, emerging capitalism, education, literacy and religious influence their hegemonic views on manhood have had to also change with the historical times. Our analysis has also demonstrated how various cultural institutions and practices

such as circumcision, marriage and dowry payment were traditionally used as markers of masculinity and ways of disciplining young men and women. However modern influences heralded by colonialism such as education, monetary wealth and economic empowerment have fast taken over as social indicators of Bukusu manhood and offered women new ways of asserting themselves. Indeed it is has become increasingly evident that Bukusu men have to change with the modern social dynamics and especially in their roles as family bread winners given the advent of monetized economy. In his position as the moral arbiter, Manguliechi's narrations provide an insight into the dilemma, tensions and conflicts between old traditional masculinities and new emerging ones. It is also clear from our analysis that being a modern Bukusu man is no longer measured by violence, virility and circumcision, but through education and sexual restraint given the reality of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The chapter has shown that the definition of masculinity is not static, but is fluid and keeps changing for purposes of societal expediency.

Chapter 8

Conclusion and Final Observations

At the beginning of this research we set out to investigate the portrayal of masculinities, and specifically power discourses and gender relations in the Bukusu after-burial performance (*khuswala kumuse*). While appreciating the ritual properties of the genre and the existence of many traditional performers of this verbal art form, the study deliberately focused on one performer John Wanyonyi Manguliechi. The choice of Manguliechi's performances was deliberate and largely informed by what I considered to be his superior oral creativity and an outstanding medley of idiomatic genius evident in his performances. For purposes of objectivity, our analysis has used three different *kumuse* performances by the same narrator on different occasions. In the introduction and background of the study, we began by attempting to define the key terms that are at the core of the study. Terminologies such as text, power discourses, and masculinity and gender relations were explained in the context in which they are applied in the thesis. For example the idea of 'textualizing masculinity' as used in this thesis alludes to the various ways of being a man and how they are portrayed in the funeral oratory performance. The same concept of 'textualizing masculinity' as used in the title gestures towards the various ways in which Manguliechi as a performer, uses his oral narration to construct a cultural text that exhibits masculinist tendencies. Our presumption from the beginning was that *kumuse* which is both a ritual and creative performance has narratological properties that qualify it as an oral genre that can be subjected to a literary analysis.

On the other hand the framing of masculinity and gender power relations as discourse, in this study, consistently refers to the many ways in which social and cultural institutions highlight relations of authority, dominance and control of interaction patterns between men and women. Thus our analysis of *kumuse* as a masculine discourse on power and gender relations was premised on the understanding that it is "a situational

context of language use" (Fairclough, 1991) that consists of "units and forms of speech and interaction which can be part of everyday linguistic behaviour" (Brunner &Graefen 1993). In a nutshell, the definition of masculinity in this thesis borrows from Michel Foucault's assertion that all discourse seeks to attain power in order to control and manipulate it for cultural and ideological gains.

In an attempt to contextualize the meaning of *kumuse* in relation to the study objectives, the introduction also outlined a brief historical backround of the *Bukusu* sub tribe. We explored the ethnic composition of the Luhya community and revealed how Bukusu are in fact one of the more than seventeen subtribes. We also acknowledged the significant role that aspects of the community's history play in the interpretation and generation of meanings from *kumuse* renditions. For instance we observed that while *kumuse* in itself is a historical discourse on the community's origins, circumcision, clan praises and totems, traditional customs and practices and moral ethics are some of the significant pillars of the Bukusu culture that are highlighted by Manguliechi's recitations. In addition, we also established that *kumuse* as a historical narrative, in fact tracks the origin of Bukusu braggadocio based on circumcision and the famous maxim of '*lirango lie enjofu'* (thigh of an elephant) - an often invoked statement that is used to invoke Bukusu unity.

Apart from examining the Bukusu history as a background to the study, we also outlined some of the community's death practices in order to fully understand the ritualistic aspects of the genre and cultural requirements associated with the office of the funeral reciter. From our discussions on death practices, taboos and requirements of *kumuse* it emerged that the funeral oratory is usually performed to eulogize the life achievements of elderly men from specific clans of the community. Similarly, the office of the funeral performer, we established, is the preserve of specifically talented, spiritually-inclined and revered elders from special clans that are widely recognized for possessing such a calling. For example, we confirmed that Manguliechi belongs to

Bameme clan which has for a long time been traditionally recognized for producing funeral reciters.

Given the peculiar circumstances and requirements under which this genre is performed, our main fascination in this study was to examine the extent to which the genre brings to the fore gender nuances of a masculine nature. Indeed throughout the thesis, our main objective was to demonstrate how the genre's performance is a useful site of engaging with masculine power discourses and gender relations. However to achieve this objective, it was clear from the onset that we needed to justify the literary aspects of the genre. By virtue of its ritualistic elements, many scholars have often been torn between categorizing the genre as a pure ritual or a folklore genre that exhibits verbal creativity. Our initial review of literature revealed that not much has been studied in relation to the literary and gender elements of this genre. The few scholarly works on the genre we encountered were fortunately very elaborate by way of offering useful insights on the ritualistic aspects of the genre (Wanjala, 1985; 1986, Wandibba, 1996, Nangendo 1996; 1994, Mukhwana 2002). Wanjala (1986), Karani (1992) and Maelo (2009) for instance, are most outstanding in the ways in which they examine *kumuse* as an oral literary genre that can be analyzed to tease out multiple meanings. Wanjala (1986) is even more categorical in his literary critique when he argues that African oral genres like *kumuse* had a huge influence on thematic and stylistic concerns of pioneer African writers like Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe and Grace Ogot. Our further review of studies on African oral genres pointed to the fact that *kumuse* has huge similarities with many narrative genres in a number of African communities. For instance the study revealed that just like the Yoruba *oriki*, Zulu *izibongo,* the Limba funeral oratory and many others, *kumuse* is an oral narrative text that contains elevated idioms and flowery imagery bordering on hero worship and praise poetry. More importantly, the study has demonstrated that while Manguliechi nostalgically employs such elevated idioms and imagery to recapitulate and celebrate the community's past, the purpose of his narration is to glorify masculinity in order to help those who are bereaved

to come to grips with their loss. Using arguments by scholars such as Hofmeyr (2000, 1994), Benge (2007), Barber, (2009, 1994) and Finnegan (2009), chapter 2 demonstrated that *kumuse* like many other African oral genres has literary elements and deserves a gender-oriented analysis.

However to unravel how masculinity, power discourses and gender relations play out in *kumuse* renditions, it was imperative from the onset to unpack and engage with the theoretical constructs that we had chosen as our analytical tools. Proceeding on the premise that *kumuse* is a genre that is performed both for expiating grief and foregrounding male power hierarchies and relations, chapter 2 also focused on discussing masculinity/masculinities by delineating the key theoretical arguments of the thesis that were anchored on the assertion that masculinity is not merely about anatomy. Rather it is about social, cultural, political and economic construction of gender categories and imaginaries which result in peculiarly masculine ways of doing things, acting and speaking. Examining it as a cultural power discourse, in the study masculinity/ masculinities was framed as a product of gender relations hinged on patriarchy, dominance, power and authority. With the benefit of views by scholars like Connell (2000; 1995), Morell (2001), Segal (1990), Butler (1990) and Lindsay & Miescher (1995) we have argued that masculinity (African masculinity in particular) is a product of social orientations, performances and cultural realities that keep shifting in different social contexts. Specifically, Connell's concept (1995) of hegemonic masculinity *viz-a-vis* subordinate masculinity is examined as a useful tool that is useful in critically examining how cultural institutions and products like *kumuse* constantly highlight masculine gender nuances. The chapter concluded by theoretically underscoring the view that masculinity, like femininity, is a product of social forces and cultural exigencies that keep changing depending on the realities of the times and historical experiences that members of social groups go through.

The real analysis of *kumuse* performance as a tool of performing masculinity and power discourses began with a critical interrogation of the role played by the funeral

reciter in creating and recreating the structure, content, style and efficacy of every *kumuse* performance. Cognizant of the fact that any gender analysis of an oral text can't escape focusing on the character, personality and experiences of the oral artist, chapter 3 outlined the life history of John Wanyonyi Manguliechi. Much of what was discussed in this chapter was based on interviews I had conducted with him between 2008 and 2010. His life was that of the quintessential traditionalist, a polygamous man born in 1930 and circumcised in 1946; a religious man who worshipped in the local Catholic Church but was also a strong proponent of the Bukusu religious beliefs. In the context of *kumuse* performances, we noted that he is a man with a strong personality, cheerful, agreeable and charismatic; a man with a high sense of moral ethos (a cultural requirement for his calling) and humility. These virtues, we argued, are what earn Manguliechi a cultural status almost like that of an intellectual genius, communal high priest and a moral role model. By extension we also argued that such cultural respect ideally makes him the ultimate voice of Bukusu hegemonic masculinity.

After engaging with the role of *omuswali kumuse* as symbol of masculinity, the next challenge for this study was to grapple with the textual features of the genre. Indeed the main challenge was to demonstrate how the funeral oratory works as a text in an actual performance. In this study we noted that the *kumuse* performance is a genre of rhetoric whose effectuality depends on the narrator's art of persuasion. Most narrations are spontaneous, improvised and largely rely on the performer's discretion. In terms of style we also noted that *kumuse* draws a lot from the principle of poetic license. However the somber context of performance means those funeral narrations are more like eulogies, sad lamentations and sacred incantations that are used to mourn the death of Bukusu elder statesmen. Loaded with wise idioms (*chilomo*), allegories and conceited images that require a sharp intellectual mind to decipher, it is always the duty of the funeral reciter to break down the meanings of such imagery for the audience.

Just like its style of delivery, the structure of *kumuse* is equally fluid. This study revealed that *kumuse* is in fact a bricolage of many sub genres that are assembled

together into one grand narrative. Among the many sub genres that are creatively woven together into the funeral narrative include folktales, riddles, proverbs, analogies, puzzles, witticisms, anecdotes, puns, chants, tongue-twisters, lampoons, obscenities, axioms, myths, legends, metaphors and imagery. Unlike other kinds of narratives, we noted that the funeral oratory does have a conventional opening and closing formulae. The different ways in which Manguliechi began and ended his narrations was more of his own style which we gathered is not adhered to by other funeral narrators. In addition, our analysis revealed that the context and audience are important elements that have a huge impact on the style and structure of *kumuse* performance. For instance, it was observed that Manguliechi was fond of incorporating sections of his audience by sometimes acknowledging interjections from certain members or even addressing specific members of his audience in order illustrate a particular point or issue. On other occasions he will engage in banter and humorous exchanges with his audience as a way of loosening the tension or simply for purposes of creating light moments. All these techniques we argued contribute to the textual structure, style and aesthetic features of *kumuse.*

However in the course of our analysis of textuality it was evident that emphasis on the aesthetic aspects of an oral genre is not sufficient in understanding *kumuse*. From the transcribed and translated texts we had selected for analysis we easily picked out didactic themes such as the meaning of death, Bukusu history, customs and practices (including circumcision, marriage, etiquette, taboos, curses and moral codes of conduct), cultural sites and monuments and the community's migration patterns (*kimiatikho*). Although this study revealed that such themes are not only ones that are discussed within the funeral recitation, it was evident Manguliechi's choice of certain didactic themes always drew attention to his narrations as sources of vital cultural and moral lessons whose relevance was applicable across many social, cultural and political Kenyan contexts. In conclusion, our discussions on text and textuality of *kumuse* confirmed that both the oral artist and the specific social context play a huge role in shaping the structure, content and stylistic techniques employed in the funeral oratory.

Having established that the genre's textual characteristics entail stylistic techniques and didactic themes, our first challenge was to pick out key themes that cut across many of Manguliechi's narrations. One such theme is circumcision and its role defining sexuality in the context of *kumus*e. In chapter 5 we examined Bukusu male circumcision, sexuality and gender relations with reference to the after-burial oratory. With our key arguments pitched on the premise that circumcision in many African societies is a yardstick of gauging masculinity, we began by briefly outlining the genealogy of this ritual practice among Bukusu. In particular, this chapter foregrounded the legend of Mango and the naming of circumcision age-sets as some of the popular folklore that glorifies and idolizes circumcision as a mark of cultural pride and signal of superior masculinity. Our analysis demonstrated that, Manguliechi actually uses circumcision to justify and entrench the view that real men, whether dead or alive, are brave and virile men who have successfully undergone the ritual to demonstrate their valour and enhance their virility.

Nonetheless, Manguliechi was fully aware that circumcision cannot be the absolute benchmark of defining male hood. From his narrations we noted that he appreciated the fact that circumcision creates brave men who are also anxious about their status given their mortal reality. Using examples of sexual images deployed in his narrations, we demonstrated that circumcision creates sexually dominant men who objectify women, celebrate their virility but have to contend with modern vagaries like the HIV/AIDS pandemic. For example, we noted that while Manguliechi celebrates strong brave men who are products of circumcision, he cautions against adultery and promiscuity. Using illustrations from Manguliechi's narrations, this study has confirmed that applying circumcision as a basis of understanding Bukusu masculinity and gender power discourses is deconstructive in the sense that it subverts its own meanings.

This study also looked at ethnicity and ethnic consciousness as projected in the after-burial funeral oratory. Applying Joanne Nagel's views on the relationship between ethnicity, gender and identity, chapter 6 set out to critically examine how Manguliechi's

role as an oral cultural historian affords him an opportunity to use the funeral oratory to champion and reiterate certain ethnic stereotypes, maxims and folklore genres that deliberately seek to entrench the Bukusu ethnic identity. As he narrates various historical events that touch on the collective consciousness of Bukusu both at the local and national level, we argued that he also interrogates the ethno-masculine interests of the community. For example we noted that in most of his performances, he kept mentioning and harping on the maxim of 'lirango lie enjofu'- the thigh of an elephant - a popular communal statement that is commonly invoked to mobilize ethnic pride. Borrowing from Derek Peterson's views on ethnic elites we proceeded to unpack this maxim as part of Manguliechi's attempts to package Bukusu as 'patriots' 'sons of the soil' and natives of a particular territory. While this maxim is easily recognized by many Bukusu as a slogan that captures the community's essence on identity, we noted that Manguliechi uses it as a rallying call that embodies the community's sense of masculine accomplishment. The maxim of 'lirango lie enjofu', we noted, is a metaphor that rightly anticipates the consolidation of sentiments of pride, power and dominance over other ethnic groups. The statement also rekindles memories of the community's past suffering and collective experiences of victimhood which, expectedly, galvanized them in times of adversity. It is also a reminder of past conquests and humiliations which have since turned into sources of strength and unity. In the context of kumuse this study observed that the maxim of lirango lie enjofu is instrumental in helping the audience to recall similar emotions of bravery, strength and resilience in order to deal with contemporary adversities such as the loss of a Bukusu elder statesman.

But as an oral historian this study appreciated Manguliechi's strong memory and mnemonic skills that enable him to narrate about past events with a view of juxtaposing past and present community experiences. Although it was evident that on many occasions he couldn't give exact dates when certain events he narrates about took place, he was still a valuable repository and human archive of Bukusu history; an archive that is deliberately male-biased especially in terms of what he remembers and what he choses

to forget during his performances. For instance we noted that some of the past events he loved to talk about included the community's migration patterns, the genealogy of circumcision and Bukusu clan system, past wars (such as the Chetambe war) and heroes. However there were instances when Manguliechi would narrate about neighbouring communities and past colonial experiences that played a part in the construction of ethnic identity All these historical events, we argued, were highlighted in order to mobilize the Bukusu ethnic identity and interests albeit from a masculine point of view.

As a genre that is heavily steeped in the traditional Bukusu cultural way of life, the relevance of *kumuse* in the modern context is often downplayed. Partly because of its celebration of the cultural past and Manguliechi's frequent admonition of contemporary cultural miscreants, the genre is almost exclusively associated with the old or those who seek to glorify the moral ethics and practices of bygone eras. But a closer scrutiny of *kumuse* narrations revealed that the reciter is in fact very much cognizant of the changing social, political and economic realities which in many ways have an influence on the community's gender power discourses and relations. In chapter 7 we revisited examples of historical epochs and events in Bukusu community life which Manguliechi keeps highlighting in his attempts to demonstrate how modernity has consistently redefined masculinity. Beginning with a brief history of the Bukusu in the colonial period, we discussed how colonialism as an onerous period in the community's history signaled the first signs of modernity (in form of literacy, Christianity and money economy), has continued to influence the way the Bukusu define themselves. For instance, we noted that the coming of western education and capitalism drastically changed the way men define themselves and exercise gender power relations with women. These changes are aptly enunciated by the funeral narrator who as a moral, intellectual and cultural icon represents the interests of men and the community.

Our analysis in chapter 7 also revealed that the depiction of masculinity in Manguliechi always pits past traditions with modern western cultural values. The study has shown that the after-burial not only deals with modern contemporary themes such as

capitalism, the money economy and even HIV/AIDS, but he often juxtaposes and compares past and present cultural practices in order to pass across important moral lessons. In one instance, for example, he strongly urged his audience to continue practicing male circumcision for purposes of using the rite of passage to instill important virtues into lives of young initiates. However at the same time he cautions young men not to use the excuse of circumcision to be violent or promiscuous, because the modern world no longer sanctions warlike mannerisms or sexual licentiousness. Instead he encourages men to embrace education as the new yardstick of not only judging development but masculinity.

At the theoretical level this chapter tried to engage with *kumuse* in line with contemporary readings of how embattled African ethnic elites strove to reclaim partriachal power that were snatched from them by colonialist and Christian evangelists. Drawing a lot from the views of Derek Peterson's analysis of the East African Revivalist movement, this chapter interrogated the extent to which Manguliechi uses kumuse as a tool of territorializing, fixing and controlling the movement of women and young men. In the chapter we also noted that Manguliechi finds it difficult to territorialize both the dead and living, just the same way he finds it difficult to manage the amorphous, open-ended and 'indisciplined' form of *kumuse.* This challenges of pinning down and controlling women and young men, we argued, provides new trajectories of performing masculinities.

In general, this study has sought to make a contribution to the study of oral performances. Of particular note is how we engaged with the intersection between textualization and masculinity. While recognizing that by custom and tradition kumuse is inherently masculine, we nonetheless noted that unlike other oral genres it lacks textual unity and possesses anti-textual elements. Borrowing a leaf from the title of Karin Barber's book *I Could Speak Until Tommorrow,* this thesis pointed out the fact that *kumuse* like most oral forms of praise poetry has an amorphous, open-ended and indisciplined structure. We also pointed out that typical of praise poerty art forms,

kumuse is a bricolage of examples, anecdotes, commentaries, admonitions and many other subgenres that are all heaped together almost a hapharzard way with no definitive end or closure. As genre that praises a dead male elder and idolizes the Bukusu past history, we noted that the only form of unity is alluded to in relation to the dead man and the occasion on which the funeral narrator performs. Taking the logic of all forms of praise poerty, we concluded that kumuse's textuality is masculinized and unified by the dead man, the occasion and personal authority of the performer who has the leeway on when to end his narration. Thus the loose and open-ended *kumuse*, we argued, is only masculinized by associating its form to the dead man and the male performer. Indeed these are seminal views in terms of how analysis demonstrates that *kumuse* as a genre is a good illustration of how men (whether dead or alive) seek to colonize and control a community's intellectual forms.

All the same, this study signals the need for more research to be carried out on this genre that is fast fading. Some of the challenges I faced during my fieldwork was the lack of an opportunity to watch Manguliechi engaging with his audience in real time since such opportunities are rare. Because of time constraints and his physical condition I had to settle for recorded sessions of his performances which did not sufficiently offer enough evidence on the performance dynamics of the genres. A further problem was the fact that most his performances had been recorded in audio form and not well-archived for purposes of future reference. Apart from one video recording, I relied more on my past experiences of watching Manguliechi and interviews that I had conducted with him to clarify a few issues of performance. Nonetheless this study has shown that more needs to be done, not just on Manguliechi's recordings, but on other funeral performers. It would also be interesting to engage more with many people who have attended his renditions as audience to get a sense of their feedback in relation to the relevance of the genre after the death of Manguliechi. Content analysis of his narrations to flesh out more on the role of women, modern history and the archive would be a useful entry point on any future studies on *kumuse.*

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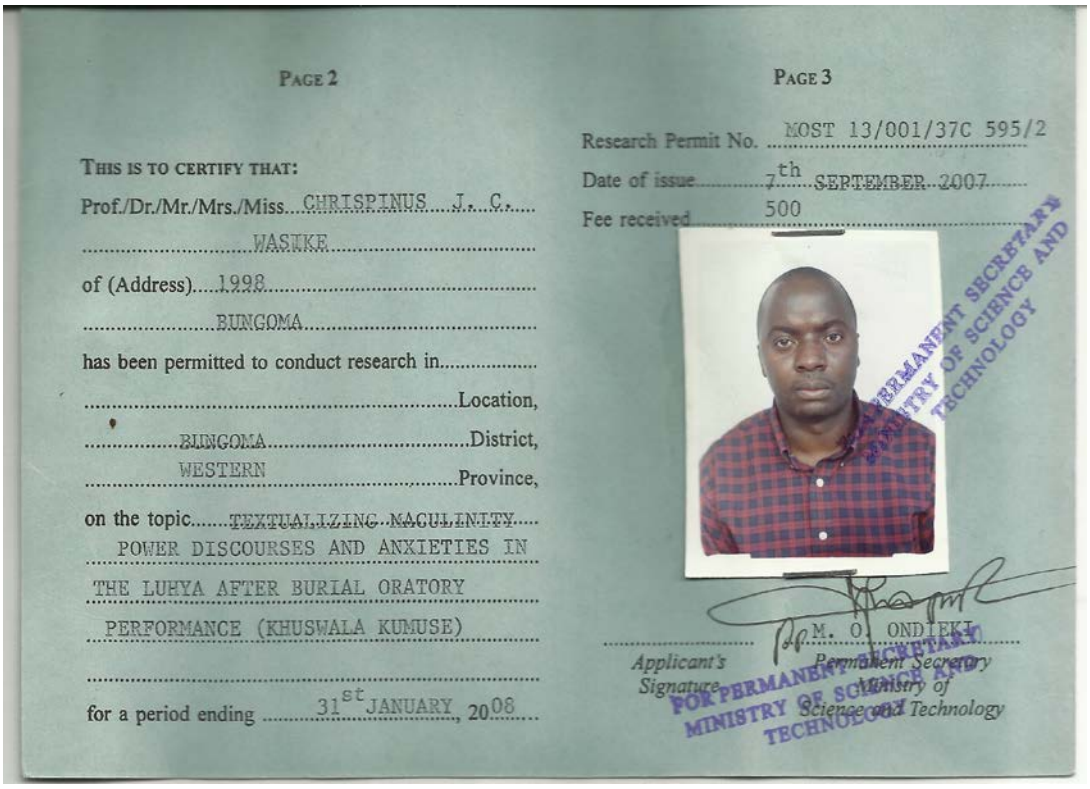
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Permit, Authorization Letter and Ethics Clearance Certificate



PAGE 2

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss. CHRISPINUS J. C. WASIKE

of (Address) 1998 BUNGOMA

has been permitted to conduct research in ..... Location,

BUNGOMA ..... District,

WESTERN ..... Province,

on the topic ~~TEXTUALIZING NAGULINITY~~ POWER DISCOURSES AND ANXIETIES IN THE LUHYA AFTER BURIAL ORATORY PERFORMANCE (KHUSWALA KUMUSE)

for a period ending 31st JANUARY, 2008

PAGE 3

Research Permit No. MOST 13/001/37C 595/2

Date of issue 7th SEPTEMBER 2007

Fee received 500

PERMANENT SECRETARY MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Applicant's Signature

M. O. ONDIEKI
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Science and Technology

FOR PERMANENT SECRETARY MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Telegrams: "SCIENCE TEC", Nairobi
Telephone: 02-318581
E-Mail:ps@scienceandtechnology.go.ke

JOGOO HOUSE "B"
HARAMBEE AVENUE,
P.O. Box 9583-00200
NAIROBI

When Replying please quote
Ref. MOST 13/001/ 37C 595/2

7th September 2007

Chrispinus J. C. Wasike
P.O. Box 1998
BUNGOMA

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on,' ***Textualizing Masculinity: Power Discourses and Anxieties in the Luhya After Burial Oratory Performance (Khuswala Kumuse)***

This is to inform you that you have been authorized to carry out Research in Bungoma District for a period ending 31st January 2008.

You are advised to report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer Bungoma District before embarking on your research.

On completion of your research, you are expected to submit two copies of your research report to this office.

M. O. ONDIEKI
FOR: PERMANENT SECRETARY

FOR PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Copy to:

The District Commissioner
Bungoma District

The District Education Officer
Bungoma District

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Division of the Deputy Registrar (Research)

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49/1 Wasike

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER H070803**
PROJECT	Textualizing masculinity: Power discourses and anxieties in the Luhya after burial oratory performance (Khuswala Kumuse)
INVESTIGATORS	Mr CJC Wasike
DEPARTMENT	School of Literature and Language Studies/African Language
DATE CONSIDERED	07.08.17
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE*	Approved Unconditionally

NOTE:

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE 07.10.05 **CHAIRPERSON** .....
(Professor M Vorster)

cc: Supervisor : Prof I Hofmeyr
School of Literature and Language S

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to a completion of a yearly progress report.**

Signature

This ethical clearance is valid for two years from date of approval.
PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix 2: Audio and Video Tape Transcriptions and Translations

Audio Tape 1 Side A (*Lubukusu*)

1. Narakikha nende historia ya babukusu, nga Wele kaumba sibala. Ne bakhalanga Wele ta, ewe, bakhulanga bali Khabumbi, wamwene weumba. Ewe niwe omung'osi we bweni, soli ne mao ta, soli ne rarao ta, soli ne omwana tawe, ewe niwe khabumbi. Ne bung'osi bwo wang'ola bwe bweni waumba likulu khwabona ne chimoni chefwe. Sia khabili wang'ola, waumba liloba khwabona ne chimoni chefwe. Sia khataru wang'ola waumba sibala khwabona ne chimoni chefwe. Sie khane wang'ola waumba sisialo khwabona ne chimoni chefwe. Sia sita wang'ola waumba bikulu khwabona ne chimoni chefwe.

2. Wanakatawa nga wakwa wacha khwikulu enyuni yakilia. Wacha khungaki omundu wakilia. Nga wacha mwiloba walunabe wamulia. Bona eswa yalila eli nenja khwikulu bulilo, bona eswa yalila eli nenja khungaki, bulilo, bona omundu anandia. Bona eswa yalila nenja mwiloba bulilo, wanalunenge andia. Bona embilo nio eswa yalila, bona embilo nio eswa yalila. Bana ba papa eswa ebolela enywe – newira omundu wabene kumulilo mwikulu kwakhulinda. Munyasia lola wekhale, newira owasio kumulilo kwakhulinda. Wamalwa Kijana khwa nakitang'a Wanakhombe Batulo we kamachabe ke Webakitusi, ne wira omundu wabene kumulilo kwakhulinda. Ewe Musikari Kombo, Omulunda Nandika nakhafumbi munyenyi, newira omundu wabene kumulilo kwakhulinda. Okwa Nakitang'ali we Ebungoma newira omundu wabene kumulilo kwakhulinda. Ewe Kituyi ne wira omundu wabene kumulilo kwakhulinda. Ewe Kituyi newira omundu wabene kumulilo kwakhulinda. Ewe Kapten newira omundu wabene kumulilo kwakhulinda, Nga eswa yalila eli khwikulu bulilo. Nocha kamatala kabene, nocha bwiki bwabene, newira, bona echela yakhulinda, nga eswa neyalila.

3. Likhuwa liechela mung'eni, eng'eni endaayi nio Wele kanyoa kaumbara mumechi bakilanga bali nambale. Omutai wekhoyela nambale. Omutai wekhoyela nambale,

womia nambale. Khalosi khalunga nambale, kumunyu kwang'ona, oli nambale, bali silayi munambale kumunyu. Nambale walila ali Wele wakana wandamo kamakumba. Sekaba nambale ta, seyaba eng'eni ta, silayi munambale kumunyu. Ewe Munyasia bulayi munambale kumunyu. Nolia ne babandu, newikhala ne babandu, Wamalwa newikhala ne babandu, Musikari Kombo.

4. Enywe babandu ba Kenya. Muchaluo noli anano, omunandi noliano, omumia noliano. Efwe khumanyile sifuno sia Kenya, menya Mukenya nga Wele nekenya, Linda Kenya nga Wele nekenya. Wamalwa Linda Kenya nga Wele nekenya. Mukhisa Linda Kenya nga Wele nekenya, Munyasia Linda Kenya nga Wele nekenya. Bona Wele kenyile semutetea, bona Wele wenyile semulinda, semulinda sibala. 5. Kumunaii kulondakho. Kukhu khakupa kumunaii

   Ali "namunaii", ali "namunaii"

   Ndi "khokwiche!"

   Ali "mbona mbango sembona basesi."

   Ndi "kukhu senyala ta."

   Ali "mbe nje ndie"

   Ndi "chaupe cha Chemia Kukubo."Ali "nachipa chabuyabuya. Nga mbolile ndi mbona mbango sembona basesi – mbona kamaru ne sembona litore ta."

6. Bakhabona bali Bakikuyu mutambe basoma. Nyo mbona mbako sembona basesi. Semusomia banana. Bali bachaluo mutambe basoma, khabona bali Bameru mutambe basoma, mukhabona bali Babukusu mutambe basoma. Bakhabona bali Bakikuyu mutamba basoma. Nyo mbona mbako sembona basesi. Semusomia babana.

7. Kumunaii kucha khulondakho, kukhu kapa,

Ali “namunaii”, ali “namunaii”

Ndi “khokwiche!”

Ali “khuyukhuyu paa!”

Ndi “kukhu senyala ta”

Ali “mbe nje ndie”

Ndi “chaupe cha Tendete.”

Ali “nachipa chabuyabuya. Nga mbolile ndi khuyukhuyu paa, ali embusi khulukoba.”Kino kiminaii kiefwe nikio balomaloma.

8. Chingano nicho bakana. Khengane chingano chitaru. Lukano lukila orie sirikali ya sibala. Okhafwochola sirikali ya sibala. Okhafwochola babami be sibala. Kukhu kakana lukano ali omwami we chinyuni wafwa, lukukulo lukwa, omwami wafwile. Enyuni yanyoa yolao yaba kisilili. Kisilili nga kola ali kachululukha. Kisilili nga kola ali kachululukha. Bali omwami kafwile walila oriena! Siruchu siola sili andi ndile khale. Siruchu siola sili andi ndile khale. Ngoli wola

ali iii…iii…iii!

omwami afwile

iii...iii...iii

omwami afwile

Bali sina omanyile khulila. Namuriri khola khamokela mubufumbo, khali ah! Bakhaloma bali omwami afwile, khali omwami afwile makacho.

Namuriri ndalila ano

tia tia tia.

Namuriri ndalila ano

Tia tia tia

Namuriri kharekukha. Bakhwakhwasia chinyuni bachilia. Niko kamakhuwa Kakenya.

9. Lukano lukhola khabili, lubola enywe babukusu nga nemwikhale, mbolela babandu ba Kenya nga mwikhale. Kukhu kakana lukano. Kukhu kakana lukano. Ali chisang'i chabao khale, bali eyino bakilanga bali wanakhamuna, neyino bacha bakilanga bali engwe. Biamenya biombi munju endala. Engwe yacha yabolela namunyu, wanakhamuna wacha khabolela wanangwe, khali wanangwe! Khali efwefwe bakhasi, balakhubeanga busa. Khali nekhwola engo khuche khubape, khali luno khubape busa chirungu khubamalile asi.

10. Oli bacha bola engo wanakhamuna khacha khabukula liafu khapa khali mukhasi okhanjira tawe, oyo ali musecha okhanjira ta! Wanakhamuna khaloma. Engwe yabukula yapa omukhasi yenga khwira. Wabona kamakhuwa ke bandu bakesi. Wanakhamuna khapa liafu, engwe yiipa omukhasi. Omukhasi wa wangwe karina kacha ewabwe. Nga kola ewabwe, kakonayo chindalo chibili. Wanakhamuna kaloma ali khurekukhe kene bakhubukule omukhasi khurekukhe khuche! Oli bacha bolayo, khabecha khulola omukhasi, mala khabola khali wanangwe waulile. Khali ndikho khekhuwa kamakhuwa kane. Likhuwa liebweni, nebakhuwa endebe loba, okhekhala khundebe ta, sebakhuwa omukhasi ta. Wikhala khumwanda kwe siaki. Lia khabili, nebakhukhesia loba. Lia khataru, nebakhuwa busuma loba, liakhane wira embusi musilo esala chikhwana mala ochukhe kamalasile munju kosi kosi. Mala balome bali oyuno omukhana wefwe kamenya ano alakhumalila bibiayo. Oli kolayo, engwe bali bakikhesia yaloba, bakiwa endebe yaloba, bakiwa busuma yaloba. Musilo yachukha kamalasile. Nga balikho khabecha bari, bali mukhwasi muriena. Khali kamakhuwa

kali muno! Makhuwa sina! Icha mubone, embusi esalanga chikhwana esiko selio ta. Bacha banyola embusi yakwile, esalanga chikhwana. Mala khali enywe, khali mukhwasi, ese nikonele bulayi busa. Mukhwewenywe yuno engo kakhuluya. Kera bibiayo befwe kakhumalila. Ese omulayi busa, mbelesie omukhasi ese nichile naye. Lola babandu bakesikesi, akhunuula omukhasi mala ochichanga nonywayo. Kamakhuwa ka wanakhamuna. Omundu akhaloma ali wanakhamuna bawa ta! Lelo wanakhamuna bakhila! Munyasia kenako nako kali kakenywe, wanakhamuna lelo bakhila. Akhuchwanchwana, akhuchwanchwana mala kakhuwa kamabi, mala kamubirania. Wanakhamuna omukesi kakhila.

11. Wanakhamuna khacha khanyola, khanyola enjofu yachao, efubu yachao. Mala khabolela efubu khali wanafubi, khali ewewe obolanga oli ese ndi nekamani. Khali ese ndakhukhwesa khupe khulukongo. Ali newewe nawe wananjofu obolanga mbo ese ndi nekamani. Ndakhukhwesa ne khupe mumechi. Enjofu eli ewe wamelile. Khali ese Wamukhayo okhubolela. Efubu eli ewe wamelile. Khali ese Wamukhayo okhubolela. Khakusa kumukoye tata tata. Mala khacha khaboa, khaboa enjofu tatata tatata, khali kanembe bali khupa lulala, khupa. Luakhabili, fwa ofwile elala nono. Khacha mumechi khaboa efubu, bali khacha khusikingi mala khapa lulala, mala chisang'i cha… chainga. Oli bali khapakho mala chakhula. Khapakho cherechanakho. Khacha khema khusili binama bietakho, khali ese kamakesi kalinjira, khali omwana Wamukhayo. Yemumechi nga ekhwesa yarerera. Wanakhamuna yema khusikingi chela charebana. Chili ne nanu okhurerekho? Ndi wanakhamuna! Nakhamuna! Nono omukesi akhubirania ewe nende omukhasi wowo. Omukesi akhubiriana ne wandayo, omukesi akhubiriana ne rarao. Bona bandu nga bakesiya, khusibala khuno waba wanakhamuna. Omundu anyala waselukha busa anano. Abolela Munyasia ali Wamalwa sakhwenya ta. Nono Wamalwa bali abona Munyasia ali ah! Oyuno omubi, neyo Munyasia bali abona Wamalwa ali yuno omubi, ka wanakhamuna. Niko kali khusibala khuno. Kanania bandu, kabirania babandu. Nga

khane kamakali kama khunakhamuna! Mwana mukubilia ka wanakhamuna kali kamabi mwikhala busa, mukendela alala nga kamake, mala musimane nga kamake.

12. Efwe bandu khusalwa mulukoba bali Ebung'onelo, Ebukambilo, Wananyanga wanakhupa khwama Ebung'onelo, Ebukambilo wa Wananyanga Wanakhupa. Khwecha abundu bali Esituluku, khwama Esituluku khwacha abundu balanga bali Esibakala. Khwama Esibakala khwacha abundu bali Musilikwa. Khwama Musilikwa khwacha Emuyekhe. Khwama Emuyekhe khwacha Munasaka. Khwama Munasaka khwacha Mulokitang'a. Khwama Mulokitang'a khwacha Musilongo sia Butubile. Khwacha Musilongo sia Butubile khwakobola khwacha Musiengele. Khwama Musiengele khwacha Muliukha. Khwama Muliukha khwacha Mukikubai. Khwama Munabiswa, khwama Munabiswa khwacha Munang'eng'e khwacha Munandere, khwama Ematuru, khwama Ematuru khwacha Katacheng'ole, khwama Ekatacheng'ole, khwama Ekatacheng'ole khwakobola, khwacha abundu bali Mubwake. Khwama Mubwake khwacha abundu bali Musibi. Khwama Musibi, Musimo, Khwama Musimo khwacha Muyombe. Khwacha Muyombe khwacha Munalondo. Khwama Nalondo khwacha Nabukimbi, khwama Nabukimbi khwacha Musolokho. Khwama khwacha Emafuta. Khwama Emafuta khwacha Namarare. Khwama Namarare khwacha Munangilima. Khwama Munangilima khwacha Munabongo. Khwama Munabongo khwacha Mumbale. Khwama Mumbale khwacha Ebukayi.

13. Bakhulanga bali babayi. Sekhuli Babukusu ta! Khulia ne babandu, khubaya babandu, khusima babandu. Basamia ba ng'alia omundu bali Etolobi wabasa chimbako, warera ne kimwini. Malaba wamureba ali makusi sina, ali mboele ekhafu. Wamuboela wacha. Oyo wacha wabolela basamia basie. Omundu bali Wabwile, Wabwile wabasa Walera, Malaba wamureba ali makusi sina! Ali mboele chikhafu chibili. Nio balanga bali babukusu, babandu be bukusi. Mulukoba bali Ebukeya nocha Ebukanda kumukhono kumukhasi Basoka, kumukhono kumusecha, Bakwe.

14. Bekana liloko. Lilaka lia sita. Okharakho omwana wowasio sia akhakholile ta. Lilaka lia saba siabene siamoni, nesitamba walera. Lekha kamatala kabene. Lekha bibiaki biabene, lekha chipenki cha bene, mufuna chasina. Lilaka lia munane, okhachekha omwana wo wasio ta. Okhachekha batambi ne bamanani ta! Lilaka lia sita kumwikale kwabene, kumwikule kukwoo.Nio babana basoleli balekhile babana bakhana bechule khuno batimila balosi bong'ene. Khane namunyu kabiila eikila. Likonjo likwa khusikele nio chisi chalondakho. Nio baundilekho balosi bong'ene. Mukholile muriena basoleli?

15. Malaba wakwa, Malaba nga kakwa baramo Maina, Maina wakesia babandu. Maina nga kakesia babandu, waila abandu bali balanga mulukhonge. Wamisia bandu mulukhonge, kabaila mubukusu. Nga bola mubukusu bekamaya nende bang'osi babamo babandu bataru. Babandu bataru bano mu lala ali ne bung'osi ne kamaya. Okundi ne bung'osi ne kamaya. Okundi ne bung'osi ne kamaya. Kamasina kabwe, omundu bali Maina, Omukitang'a kaba ne bung'osi ne kamaya. Omundu bali Welembe omwana omuala kaba ne bung'osi ne kamaya. Omundu bali Watiekele Mulunda kaba ne bung'osi ne kamaya.

16. Newenya wolele Wele, nono lilaka lie dini, newenya wolele Wele, Wele akhumanyeali ewewe omulayi, ria Wele, orie serikali, orie kamalaka kekholo yenywe.

17. Bulayi bulio, babana bano, nakhabona omwana omusimisi, omungami nakitembwa kakhaloma elomo, likhuwa anano elubeka we kimisambwa. Efwe babukusu khuli nende kimisambwa ekhumi. Narebire chikholo chosi. Sechili nende kimisambwa kimikali ta. Khaba ne muliano muri, ata wakana Khaemba, wareba omwana mukikuyu yuno kimisambwa kiabwe wakala sekiola kine ta. Efwe babukusu khuli nende kimisambwa ekhumi! Kumusambwa kwebeni, bung'osi, kwa khabili kamaya, kwa khataru bufumu, kwa khane bubasi, kwa kharano bukhebi, kwa sita bukimba, kwa saba buliuli, kwa munane kumuse, kwa tisa buliche, kumi khukhupa bufumu. Kana mulala wakana onyala bali okenda, nga omukhana

omumeme yuno, ali wo! Ndi papa Manguliechi kabea busa ali kumusambwa balekhile bubini.

18. Ndi khengobolayo, bana ba papa, efwe khuli nende babandu bataru. Oyuno papa, oyuno mayi, oyuno papa, oyuno mao, oyuno kuka. Bechakho babandu lundi babili lundi. Oyuno kukhu, oyuno senge. Kechakho lundi omundu mulala, oyuno khocha. Babandu bano nibo basuta kimisambwa kienywe. Babandu bano nibo babita enywenywe. Okhebilila wasindikha sengeo ta.

19. Mayi Neala wekhale aao, Khaemba wekhale aao. Munyasia wekhale aao. Enywe nio khembolela. Wele kakesiya. Omundu we sikhasi, mayi Naela ewewe, khukhula kimirongoro kichuba omwana wowo. Kimirongoro kinee. Kimirongoro kinee kichuba omwana wowo. Ne omundu we sisecha, kimirongoro kirano kichubaomwana wewe. Khaemba nga ewe noli ori, kimirongoro kirano ochubila babana boo.Ne Neala naye kimirongoro kine. Kimirongoro kine, kimirongoro kichuba babana. Okhasindikha rarao kakwa ta, nomusindikha kakwa, rarao omusindikhe kepasi ali pa! Mala kape kumukongo ali ngeba sekaamba kumogongo oku kasalwa, oku kasalwa aba wamayana. Kumurongoro ukundi kukhola khabili, omusindikhe kape lirango ali ngeba lirango elili selili nilio mawe kakonakho kasalwa ta! Ewe wamayana! Kumurongoro kukhola khataru. Kape enda ali ngeba eyi yi yi yii seli nio kamamo ta! Eh, bali acha khumaratani basi ewe wonekhela elala. Nono mumbele mayi niye we kimirongoro kirano. Nosindikha mao nakwa, kape kumukongo ali rarao sekeemba okhu. Kabe sikele ali ngeba ese, kape enda ali ngeba sekama omumu, kape lituru ali ngeba selili elili liamununia. Oli acha khusiboto ewe wonekha. Bona kimirongoro kimienekio. Mao ne rarao, ne kukhuo, ne kukao sebacha bera kamalesi mundaa ta. Nekhochao, ne sengeo, nono babandu bano nibo balebe boo ng'aling'ali. Okhacha wacha khubandu babandi tawe. Mukhebilila mwasindikha babandu ababo ta, mukhasindikha ta, okhasindikha rarao ta, okhasindikha mao ta, okhasindikha kukhuo ta, okhasindikha kukao ta, okhasindikha khochao ta, okhasindikha sengeo niye osuta kamalaka kakhulinda. Khochao niye osuta kamalaka kakhulinda.

20. Efwe khuli ne chisimbo chirano. Esimbo ekhabaya chikhafu!

21. Efwe khuli ne khusoma, omwana we sikhasi nga Wele namuwa, wesisecha nga Wele namuwa, ewe wesisecha osome, efwe khuli ne bitabu. Osome engokho, wasoma likhese, wasoma embusi, wasoma ne khafu. Ne omukhasi niye, niye osoma biakhulia. Nali otayila bie mbele ne bietakho mungo semurunda tawe. Oyo sali omulayi ta. Nga nembele khumwana we sikhasi ndi otayila bia mbele ne bietekho, semunyola kimiandu ta. Omukhasi niye olinda biakhulia mungo. Ne omusecha ewe khosoma ekhafu.

22. Enywe bana ba papa, sisindu sio khemubolela, khuambane, khube sindu silala. Lola bibindu bino Wele kakhuwelesia. Chipenki namakhumubolela. Efwe epenki ye bweni eli likhese, ekhola khataru embusi. Ya khane ekhafu, ya kharano biakhulia! Bindu bino bili bibiefwe nibio. Engokho standard, likhese Commercial, embusi Barclays, ekhafu Eposta, biakhulia ishirika. Nicho chipenki chili chimbofu. Nechichindi chili engelekha. Bibindu bino nio Wele kakhuwelesia. Sebili bibiefwe tawe. Wele omwene kakhuwelesia.

23. Omukhasi omulimi, nio okhuwa kimiandu. Omukhasi omulimi nio ong'ona kimiandu mungo. Ewe omusecha niwe wesi nio ang'ona kimiandu mungo.

Audio Tape 1 Side B (*Lubukusu*)

24. Ndarakikhila khumwene nono. Ndeba papa wele! Ndi wele we enje! Ne wele mwana! Ne wele murumwa, ne kuka wele mukhobe, omwene wakaba! waana lifwa! mala wacha wabola oli, oli lifwa nilio ndikhembana. Oli ebongeya, oli engelelo ekindi yakelao yaya. Oli chiselukho chiunananga. Oli ne kubili kukelanga kwakwa kukundi kwelao kwakwa. Oli nemuselekho naramo likhuwa na ndaliana, oli murianana nio mwamenya, murianana nio mwasabana.

25. Warera lifwa! wareramo bindu binee. Oli lola omutayi nio khuumbile nakhuumba khwiloba lifwa nilio ndikho khuwelesia. Wamuelesia omwana wasalwa ne ngobi. Nga ne wasalwa ne engobi, mala engobi yayukhilakho, oli wakwa mala engobi yayukhilakho. Engobi yakwa basikha engobi. Engobi likobi! Wabukula lifwa! warema munyama cha umundu, walanga oli kamafuki, nga nokendange ne kamafuki. Kamafuki kamafu niko! Wabukula siakhulia waelesia omundu, walia. Kabele kamaindi, nanwe bubele bulo. Ngawasia, mala bwekhola bufu nga nolichanga bufu, mala ewe omufu! wabukula omundu wamuelesia lifwa likhola khane. Nganokonanga lilo obechanga, obechanga mwiloo! Bibindu ebio bikhubolela bali olifwa; nga nolikonanga lilo aba oli mwiloo nilio. Mala bibindu bino bili bibiefwe nibio khukendanga nenabio, sekhubilekhanga enyuma ta. Mala wabola oli, nosalile omwana, mala keche akhutiukhe, nga nakhutiukha aba wetiukhile lifwa! Notiukha omwana aba watiukhile lifwa sikila watiukhile omundu wafwa khale! Bana ba papa ngabnemwikhale muri, ebindu bino bili bibiefwe nibio.

26. Nacha kamae, nacha kamae kefwe. Efwe khwerana ne chikholo. Khubela khwaba ne kimiandu. Khwerana na bamia. Lukoba lwa khwerana ne bamia. Khwerana ebulangasi, khwerana na bamia enyanga yakwa! Muburangasi, kwerana na bamia enyanga yakwa! Mubitobo khwerana na bamia enyanga yakwa! Mala natima! bona kumoyo natima nacha nola abundu nio balanga bali Emabusi; khwerana ne Omunandi, nomulumbwa, ne Omutungen, khwerana enyanga yakwa, khubela khwafunananga kimiandu. Bana pa papa kimiandu kili kikiefwe.

27. Babukusu nemuambane. Khuambane ne chikholo chosi chosi. Khukhacha khwatumbulana! Khwabola khuli oyu Omutesio, khuli oyu nanu tawe, muambane. Munyasia muambane bandu bosibosi. Khwaloba khuambana ta, Munyasia khekhubolele, busolo buli esiluya bwaluya.

28. Mwaloba khuambana ta, busolo buli esiluya wa Mwangale khunasianda; busolo buli esiluya baluyia, wa Mwangale khunasianda khane omukesi sekebeka, andi Mwangale

webeka! Ali ese nabayi we Baluuso. Mwangale watima! wacha khu Wesonga wa Namulobi, Omusimisi Omungani Nekitembwa.

29. Lukoba lwa Opilo. Opilo omwene sakaba omwene lukoba ta, Wambulwa omwene lukoba. Opilo kecha, Opilo nge nekecha, khwecha Mulumboka, khwerana ne Opilo. Mwabene mulanga muli "Hoppy", nefwe khuli Opilo. Mulumboka lukoba lwaba lwo Mulunda. Khwerana ne Basungu enyanga yakwa. Khwerana enyanga yakwa.

30. Opilo waruraa…!! bandu barura, Opilo warura! Bandu nge nebarura, khwacha wa Chetambe, nge ne khwola wa Chetambe, bachile ne kumunyalasia. Enche balikho baikikhe, enje baikikhe kumunyalasia. Ne mungo balikho bakhina. Baikikhe ne balikho bakhina. Omukhasi we chinyincha chinukulila. Wachuba basoreri, we chinyincha chinukulila, wachuba basoreri;

ali basoleli mukhabanga

elinani lili elwanyi

basoleli mukhabanga

elinani lili elwanyi

basoleli mukhabanga

elinani lili elwanyi

omumaina mukhabanga

elinani lili elwanyi

omuchuma muokhabanga

elinani lili elwanyi

omusawa mukhabanga

elinani lili elwanyi.

31. Bali churiani wenyokha khuchupa pasoleli khaperana.Nga nali khachupa basoleli;

basoleli khulietuba,

khulietuba.

basoleli khulietuba,

khulietuba mabanga nio khwelukha.

Enche kwabalukha! basoleli bakwa. Bona embilo nio mwabona. Akano kali kakeywe niko, sekali kakange ta. Khwerana ne chikholo, chikholo chakhuundangakho. Bibala bienywe, bibala bienywe.

32. Oli mia tisa ishirini na mbili, bulwale bwecha. Bwapa basoleli bakwa. Batiukha bali mabachi. Batiukha bali mabachi. Bali namikhinga. Oli ishirini na inee, bali murutu nabibia, Mukananachi murutu nabibia. Lubia luamila waena? Luamila Mombasa, lwola Ekisumo. Bali murutu nabibia. Ishirini na sita, silima. Ishirini na nane, sia Machengo. Salasini, Fwesa Nasike Nakhweru. Salasini na mbili, buchunchu. Salasini na inee, sia matanda. Kinyikeu osimikha, lola sie endeke. Wa khabili Musolini, wakhataru Hitler, wa khanee sia panyakoo, wakharano sia ngwekwee. Wa sita siamba mutalia walota. Sia sita siamba mutalia walota. Arubaini na nane Nyange wasimikha sia Musambwa. Khamusini, sia Henry wa Mutenyo. Khamusini na mbili sia matisi. Khamusini na inee sia cheti. Khamusini na sita Elgon Nyanza. Khamusini na nane Kasikoni. Sitini bema ba Maina, Sitini bema ba Maina. Sitini bema ba Maina. Bwana Kotoni ali Ebung'oma. Omusungu bwana Kotoni ali

Ebung'oma. Ali kamakongwe nio batiukha bali Omumaina sia bwana Kotoni. Sitini na mbili ka Majimbo. Sitini na mbili khwa makinia waloma; ali Uganda yeyamile, Tanganyika yeyamile, efwe khulanga khuli majimbo. Sitini na mbili sia Majimbo. Sitini na inee sia Uhuru. Sitini na sita Sikimo. Sitini na nane Siarenga, sabini Namukhalaki,wakhalaka sisingilo. Wakhalaka ne chiratiri. Sabini na mbili lola omuchuma wema. Sia bwana Kilo. Omuchuma wema sia Kilo. Sabini na ine sia kamakongwe. Sabini na sita chebukube. Sabini na nane sia Namwatikhi. President wa Kenya, President wa Kenya Jomo Kenyatta koma, kola na Mombasa, kumuulo kwakwa kwola eno. Bali omwami wakwile,khane Namwatikhi. Oli samanini, Nyayo President Daniel Arap Moi. Samanini na mbili sia Makhako; bakhaka khupendua Kenya. Mala wele waloba. Wanambisi ne Mauko bemayo wausa, bekhola esimbo yekongo. Samanini na mbili kumwesi kwa munane tarehe moja enyanga ya Jumapili. Oli samanini na inee, oli samanini na inee omuchuma sia Korokoro. Samanini na inee omuchuma sia Korokoro. Samanini na sita omuchuma Sieng'eniesi, lumuli nying'inyi. Sieng'eniesi lumuli nying'inyi. Samanini na nane, lola Omusawa wema, samanini na nane, lola Omusawa wema sia Elija Masinde, wakwa Emaeni. Lola Omusawa wema. Sia Elijah Masinde omusawa wakwa Emaeni. Tisaine omusawa okhola khabili. Tisaine omusawa okhola khabili. Tisaini kumwesi kwa khane tare kumi na tisa, enyanga ya Jumamosi, saa kumi na moja chabusia. Sibala siarenga, khwacha khwatiukha khuli Siarenga. Oli tarehe ishirini na ine, enyanga ya aramisi, saa tatu cha silo, sibala siarenga. Nio khwatiukha khuli Siarenga, oyoyo bali Siarenga. Tisaini na mbili, tisaini na mbili kumwesi kwa munane tarehe kumi na ine,enyanga ya Ijumaa, kamakhuwa kama Embakasi. Kakwengo bali khwa Makinia kakwile. Tisaini na mbili lola Omusawa, sia Masinde wa Makinia. Lola Omusawa, sia Masinde wa Makinia. Tisaini na ine Omusawa babukusu bekhala. Tisaini babukusu bekhala sia Wamalwa Kijana, Sinde wa Nakitang'a. Sinde wa Nakhombe Wanakitulo, Wamalwa khunyola bu chamani mu Kenya. Tisaini na sita khukhatiukha. Tisaini na nane khukhatiukha bakhanderera ta.

33. Kamakhuwa ke chikhafu kumi na tatu! Bali ye, kumi na tatu. Bali ya khochawe ekhola kumi na tatu. Bali cha rarawe kumi na mbili, ne chili? Ocha ne karatasi yong'ene. Yaba ewanga elabukhe. Yalabukha etabukhe. Nono chili? Khwikhale asi mala khuchikhafu mala khumanye nga balikho bakhwa. Khukobosie bibindu pino. Bikobole abwene ne abwene.

34. Enywenywe mubolela busa likwe mumbo newanaswa, mubolele babandu. Basungu khuli ne khabi bakhuwa chi subject; bimanyisio pie chisabu bili binee. Mala pakali noreba oli mbolele bimanyisio bino bibola sina? Mbolela babandu bosi, ofuma omundu oli mu Kenya. Noli omubukusu, noli omujaluo, nanu nanu nanu! wesiwesi oli mu Kenya. Bimanyisio binee bikhubolela. Sie esabu sikhubolela bali sie khumara. Sie khutesa sikhubolela. Siekhurusia sikhubolela. Siekhukaba sikhubolela. Nono bana pefwe babukusu, enywe nipo ndikhombolela nga mwikhale anano. Manya simanyisio sie ebweni, manya simanyisio sie khutesa. Sili ne elomo. Bukula kimiandu mutese khukindi, mukhanyoa mwakabana. Ewe onamala mwakabana kumukunda kwa rarao mwakabana, mwakumala aba mwarusia chieka. Silonda khueka nga murusisie, enoti. Nekhusiapa khurio aba khusiramanga ne noti. Khukabane kimiandu. Mala kimiandu nga khukabana, khuche, oyuno kombakha ano, oyo kombakha aoo, oyo kombakha aoo, oyo akula sino, oyo akula sino. Nio aba khwarurire.

35. Sitisieni sie Ebung'oma, lukoba nga luno luri, khanamile mulukoba luno. Okhabona Khaemba, okhabona Munyasia,Wamalwa kana oche omubolele. Sifuna kana omubolele. Luno khokenda olikhocha Amerika, oli Nairobi yefwe, mala ewe enchumo ta! Yenywe erie? Ta eyoo khebemo.

36. Okhabona che balepe chilikho chicha, mala obole oli chichefwe chabira ta;eyoo khebemo. Ebung'oma, okhabola oli Bungoma yefwe ta, eyoo khebemo. Khaemba yombakhayo. Munyasia yombakhayo. Nio obole oli Bungoma yefwe.Enywe basoleli be mubunge, ese ndomela khwinywe luno, ese ndomela khwinywe luno. Enywe

basoleli be bunge, engo busa yatakha embwa, ekhoya babechukhulu bakhwakala, ekhoya bakhwakala. Ewe munyasia ne sewakala, Wamalwa sewakala, Kapteni sewakala, Kituyi sewakala. Enywe semwiyakala, enywe semwiyakala, enywe bana ba papa semwiyakala, ngoso yatakha mbwa. Batayi bacha baloma "Biiba mbo biaamba biabundu biliamba ne ndemu, biiba mbo biamba bia bundu biliamba ne ndemu. Kumubano kwa baka ya bundu kulibaka ne ndemu. Sisieboela mba busiro.

Audio Tape 1 Side A (English Translation

1. I begin by narrating the history of Babukusu, the way God created this world. In the beginning God created this world. In the beginning before you were known as *Wele (GOD),* you were called *Khabumbi (Creator),* you created yourself. You are the first of all prophets, you have no mother, you have no father, you have no child, you are *Khabumbi.* And the first work of miracle you did, the first, you created the heavens, which we can see with our own eyes. The second you prophesied, you created the earth which we can see with our own eyes. The third thing, you prophesied, you created the universe which we have seen with our own eyes. The sixth, you prophesied, you created the mountains which we can see with our own eyes.

2. Wanakatawa came out of the earth, when Wanakatawa got out of the earth, he flew up in the sky and was caught and eaten by the birds. When Wanakatawa crawled on the earth, man picked and ate him. When Wanakatawa went back into the earth he was eaten by red ants. As a result, it lamented saying, "when I fly in the sky, there is danger", See the white ant lamenting, "When I crawl on earth, see man will eat me up"' See the white ant crying, "when I go back into the earth,red ants will eat me up". See the danger that the white ant faced, see the danger the white ant faced. My dear brothers, this has a lesson for you. If you kill, there is hell fire waiting for you, for

instance, you Munyasia seated here, if you kill a fellow man, there is hell-fire waiting for you. You Wamalwa Kijana *Okhwa* Nakitang'a Wanakhombe, *we* Batulo, *we* Kamachabe, *we* Webakutusi, if you kill hell-fire is waiting for you. You Musikari Kombo, Omulunda Nandika Nakhabumbi Munyenyi, if you kill, hell-fire is waiting for you. *Okhwa* Nakitang'a at Bungoma, if you kill, hell-fire is waiting for you. You Kituyi if you kill, hell-fire awaits you, you Kituyi if you kill hell-fire awaits for you. You Kapten, if you kill, hell-fire awaits for you, the way the white ant lamented, "even in the sky, there is danger". If you raid people's kraals, if you break into people's granaries, if you kill, see prison awaits you, the same way, the white ant lamented.

3. There is a lesson we can learn from a good fish that was the first to be created by God and placed in the water, He called it Nambale. One old man loved Namable, he tried it up, and his old wife cooked Nambale. The soup tasted so sweet. After eating Nambale, they commented, "the good thing in Nambale is its soup, the good thing in Nambale its soup. Nambale then lamented that God was unfair to him for creating him bony! The story was not about fish, "the good thing about Nambale is its soup" Hee! Eh! Munyasia, the good thing in Nambale is its soup. When you eat with people, when you sit with people, Wamalwa when you sit with people, Musikari Kombo when you sit with people, when you eat with people, Sifuna when you eat with people, Kituyi when you eat with people, Kapten when you s*it wit*h people, you eat with *peo*ple a g*ood* thing in Na*mba*le is its soup. When you eat with people, you love people, that is what is referred to as a good thing in Nambale is its soup. That is what the white ant *and Na*mbale said.

4. You people of Kenya, a Luo if you are here, a Nandi if you are here, a Kikuyu if you are here, a Meru if you are here, Embu people if you are here present, Digo people if you are here present, Giriama people if you are here present, Masaba if you are here present, a Teso if you are here present. It is us who know the meaning of Kenya.

Stay in Kenya according to the will of God, love Kenya according to the will of God, and protect Kenya according to the will of God. Munyasia protect Kenya according to the will of God; defend Kenya according to the will of God. Why don't you defend, see its God's will that you should lead, that you should lead, that it is God's will, why don't you lead the country. 5. The following riddle tells you to educate your children. There are so many universities in the country, so many secondary schools in the country. My grandmother posed a riddle saying;

"Namunaii"

"Kwiche," I responded.

She said mbona mbango sembona basesi.

She said, I can see (Banana fruit but cannot see its leaves)

"I don't know" I responded.

"Give me and let me eat", she challenged.

"Go and take Namutola's cows" I responded. "I beat and drove them crazy" she said. What I meant by *sayi*ng (*"mbona mbango sembona basesi").* I can see banana fruit yet I cannot see its leaves! Let it not be said that the Luo did not educate their children, let it not be said that the Merus did not educate their children, let it not be said that Bukusu did not take their children to school, let it not be said that Kikuyu did not educate their children. That is the meaning of the *mbona mbango sembona basesi*. Why don't you educate your children?

6. The third riddle, my grandmother posed a riddle, she said;

"*Namunaii*" (Riddle)

"*Kwiche"* (Come) *I responded.*

"Khuyukhuyu paa" she challenged.

"I don't know," I responded.

"*Give me and let me eat," she challenged.*

"*Go and take Kukubo's animals", I responded.*

"I beat drove them crazy" she said.

"*Khuyukhuyu paa is a he-goat mounting a she goat.*

The Nation of Kenya needs strong men to protect it, the nation of Kenya needs strong men to defend it. That is what is meant by *"khuyukhuyu paa* – a he-goat mounting a she-goat. It is your country. Munyasia, give heed, son of Omukhurarwa give heed, son of Kubilia gave heed. You should walk together like ants.

7. Tales that were narrated. Let me narrate three tales. A tale that teaches you to fear the government. You should not ridicule your government of the day. Do not ridicule the leaders in the government. My grandmother told me a story. That once upon a time, birds were ruled by a king. One day news went round that the king was dead. The first bird to arrive at the scene was *kisilili* (hawk). When he arrived, he salivated for food, when *kisilili* arrived, he salivated for food. The others said, "The king is dead, how do you dare mourn so?" *Siruchu* arrived and demanded to eat the soonest. The crane arrived and mourned;

iii…..iii….iii

The king is dead

iii…iii…iii

The king is dead

The others commended, and said "see he who knows how to mourn a king". Namuriri arrived, beeping through his eye lashes, he exclaimed, ah! Even if they claim that the king is dead, he has died in a strange way, the king's death is strange. He sung,

Namuriri ndalila ano tia tia tia	Namuriri I mourn form here tia tia tia.
Ndi namuriri ndalila ano, tia tia tia	I say Namuriri I mourn from here tia tia tia.
Ndi namuriri ndalila ano, tia tia tia	I say Namuriri I mourn from here tia tia tia.

Namuriri soon melted away; the other birds were rounded up and killed! See the ways of the government of Kenya!

8. The second narrative, it tells you *Babukusu* present here, it also tells all Kenyans. My grandmother narrated to me a story. She said, once upon a time, there lived two animals. One of the animals was called *Wanakhamuna* (Hare), the other was called *Engwe* (Leopard). These two animals live in one house. One day, the leopard told hyena, *Wanakhamuna* (Hare) went and told *Wanangwe* (Leopard). The Hare told the Leopard that their wives were fooling them around and therefore when they got to their homes, they should discipline them. He told the leopard, "Today we should clobber them so hard to the point of death". When they reached home, the hare took a dry hide and started lashing it at the same time pleading with his wife not to beat him to death. On the other hand, the wife of the hare was pleading with him not to kill her! Yet it was the hare speaking. The leopard, on the other hand clobbered the wife to the point of death. See the ways of tricky people! The hare lashing at the hide, the leopard clobbering the wife! The following morning the wife ran away back to her people. She was away for two days when the hare convinced the leopard to go after wife before she is married off to another man. "Lets go!" he urged the leopard. When they arrived at the wife's place, seeking to be allowed to take the wife back, the hare gave the leopard four pieces of advice. He told the leopard, "The first advice is that when you are offered a seat, decline, do not sit on a chair, if you do, they won't give

your wife back. You should sit on the edge of the granary. The second thing, do not respond to the greetings. The third point, when offered ugali, do not accept. Then pour its blood all over the house. So that they will say that if our daughter continued staying here, this man will eat all of our cattle".

9. On their arrival, the leopard was greeted by his wife's people but refused to respond to the greetings. He was offered a seat but rejected the offer, was offered ugali but declined, during the night, he killed the goat and poured blood all over the house. In the morning when the hosts came over where they slept to salute them, saying, "How are you our in-laws?" The hare immediately raised an alarm saying;

"Bad things have happened here!"

"What has happened," the hosts asked

"Come and see," the hare answered

"the goat that gives birth to twins is no more!"

When they came closer, hey discovered that their favourite goat that used to give birth to twins has been killed, it was gone! Then the *Wanakhamuna* spoke and said, "Look here my in-laws, I slept peacefully, but this, your son in-law, even at home, and we are fed up with him. He has killed all our cattle leaving us with nothing. As far as I am concerned, I am just a good man, give me your daughter I go away with her!"See sly people, he will snatch away your wife yet you drink at his place. See the ways of the *Wanakhamuna;* let none claim that there are no more *Wanakhamunas* nowadays. Indeed today, there are so many *Wanakhamunas.* Munyasia, these things concern you, nowadays there are so many *Wanakhamunas.* He will set people against each other, blackmail and then antagonize people. The *Wanakhamuna* is so sly.

10. The *Wanakhamuna* once met an elephant that was so big, a Hippopotamus that was so big. He spoke to the Hippopotamus and said, "You normally claim that you are so

powerful, “I will pull you out of the water and put you on dry land”. He challenged him. Then he spoke to the elephant, “And you Elephant, you normally claim that you are so powerful, today I will pull you and drop you into the sea.”‘Are you drunk?” The Elephant retorted.

“I am the son of Mukhayo speaking” he asserted.

“Are you drunk?” the hippo retorted

“I am the son of Mukhayo speaking.” *Wanakhamuma* retorted.

Wanakhamuna made a strong rope. He then tied the elephant tightly. He then told him that tone he calls out, the elephant should be ready. The second time he calls out, he should pull with all his strength. The hare then went into the sea and tied the hippo on other end of the rope. The hare then went and stood on a hill. He then called out and the two animals stood ready. When he called out the second time, they started pulling. When he called out again, they were dying pulling each other. He went and stood on his hind legs on a hill and watched the duel. He mused saying, “I am too clever, I son of *Wamukhayo*”. Meanwhile, the one in the water, as he pulled, began sliding. They then stood face to face on the banks and asked each other, “who set us against each other?”“It is *Wanakhamuna, Wanakhamuna*!” They chorused.

11. Thus a sly person will cause a rift between you and your wife, a sly person causes a rift between you and your brother, a sly person will cause a rift between you and your father. See how people are so cunning in this world, just like *Wanakhamuna*. A person can simply emerge from here, to go and tell lies to Munyasia that, “Wamalwa does not like you.” Hence when Wamalwa meets Munyasia, he imagines that Munyasia is a bad person. On the other hand, when Munyasia meets, Wamalwa, he thinks that Wamalwa is a bad person. Those are *Wanakhamuna’s* tricks. That is what is happening in our world today. They cause trouble, they antagonize people. When people quarrel, it is a result of the tricks of the *Wanakhamuna*! Son of Mukubili, the

tricks of the *Wanakhamuna* are many, you should live in harmony, you should walk together like ants, you should love one another like ants.

12. We Babukusu originated from the land called Ebung'onelo, Ebukabilo, the land of Wananyanga Wanakhupa, we came from Ebung'onelo, ebukabilo wa Wananyanga Wanakhupa. We then came to a place called Esitukulu, from Esitukulu we then moved to a place called Sibakala. We left Sibakala and then moved to a place called Musilikwa, from Musilikwa we moved to a place called Emuyekhe, from Emuyekhe, we moved to Munasaka, from Munasaka we moved to Mulongitang'a, from Mulongitang'a we moved to Musilongo salt-lick of Wabutubile, we moved to Muliukha. From the salt-lick of Wabutubile we moved to Muliukha. From Muliuka we moved to Mukikubai. From Muliukha we moved to Mukikubai. From Mukikubai, we moved to Munabiswa. Form Munabiswa we moved to Mung'eng'e, then we went to Mundari. From Ematuru, from Ematuru we went to Katachengwala, we left Katachengwala; we then went to a place called Bwake. We left Bwake and moved to a place called Musibi. We left Musibi to Musimo; we left Musimo and went to Muyembe. From Muyembe we went to Nalondo. From Nalondo we went to Nabukimbi, from Nabukimbi we went to Musolokho. Then we went to Emufutu. From Emufutu, we went to Namarare. From Namarare, we went to Munangilima. From Munangilima we went to Munalongo. From Munalongo we went to Mumbale.

13. From Mumbale, we went to Ebukayi. We were named *Babayi* (shepherds). We are not known as Bukusu at all. We eat with people, we look after people, we love to be with people. Among Samia people of Bang'alia, there was a man called Etolobi, a blacksmith, who used to make hoes, he came to sell them along with *kimini* (hoe handles). Malaba asked him how much they cost; he told him they cost a cow. He gave him a cow and he (Etolobi) went back. He went back and told his fellow tribesmen. A man called Wabwile; Wabwile made some more hoes and brought to sell. Malaba again asked him how much they cost. He told him they cost two cows. That is how they came to name us Babukusu, people of "price". In a land called

Ebukaya, on your way to Uganda, on the left hand side are Basoka people, on the right hand side, are Bakwe people.

14. They denounce witchcraft. The sixth rule states that do not falsely accuse your neighbour's child over crimes not committed. Keep off people's kraals, keep off people's granaries, keep off people's banks, why break into them? The eighth rule, "Do not deride the poor and the needy". The ninth rule states that the closed door does not belong to you; the open door belongs to you.

15. These days, young men have shied away from their fellow youth (girls). They instead ran after old women! Surely, a hyena targets the limping one!13. Flies are attracted to an open wound! They are glued to old women. What is happening to you young men?

16. Malaba died, after the death of Malaba, he was succeeded by Maina. Maina led this people. As he led them, he took them to a place called Mulukhonge. He then led them from there and took them to Mubukusu. When they arrived at Mubukusu, among them were three magicians and diviners. Of the three people, one had the gift of magic and prophecy, the other with gift of magic and prophecy. Their names are as follows: a man called Walembe son of Baala had the gift of prophecy and magic. Am called Watiekele of Balunda clan had the gift of prophecy and magic.

17. I have three more to tell. If you desire to see God, this is a Christian commandment, if you desire to see God, to be righteous before God ,fear God, fear the authority, respect the rules laid down by your clan. The good thing about these young people … I have seen a young man, son of Musimisi, Omungami Nakitembwa. He has said something about the spirits. Even among those gathered here, if you Khaemba, in case you ask a Kikuyu person about their spirits, they may not amount to four in number. We Bukusu people have ten! The first is prophesy, the second is magic, the third divination, the fourth blacksmith, the fifth circumcision, the sixth rainmaking,

the seventh is *buliuli,* the eighth is *kumuse* (funeral oratory), the ninth is *buliche* (post-circumcision ceremony), the tenth is *khukhupa bufumu.* It can happen that one, for example this daughter of Bameme clan, might say that Manguliechi did not tell the whole truth about our *kimisambwa* (spirits), that night-running is also a spirit.

18. I wish to refer back to what I said earlier on, my dear brother. We have three very important persons. The first one is the father, the second is the mother, this is father, this is mother, and these are grandparents. In addition, we have two more people. These are grandparents, this is the aunt. In addition, we have one more person, this is the uncle. These people are the custodians of your spirits. These are the people who have the power to bless or curse you. You should never antagonize your aunt, you should never antagonize your uncle, you should never antagonize your mother, you should never antagonize your father.

19. See mother Neala, you are seated here, Khaemba you are seated there, Munyasia you are seated there. It is you people I am talking to. God is wise, a woman like you, mother Neala, God gave you the power to curse your own children, He gave you four "trees". Four "trees" to curse your own child. For a man, he gave five "trees" to curse his own child. For instance the way you are Khaemba, you possess five 'trees'. And for Neala she has four 'trees', four 'trees', four 'trees' that one uses to curse children. Never, never antagonize your father, never push your father to the ground, if you happen to push him to the ground and falls down pa! And then in anger he hits his back saying. 'unless I did not hold this back to sire him!' you will remain cursed. The second 'tree', if you happen to push him and he falls on the ground and he slaps his thigh saying, 'unless this is not the thigh your mother slept on as I sired you!' You will be ruined. The third 'tree', if he slaps his belly saying, 'unless this is not the stomach that brought him into this world!' Worse still when he touches the genitals, then you are totally ruined beyond repair! Pardon me! It is the mother who has five 'trees'. If you push your mother to the ground and then she holds her back saying, 'unless your father did not hold on this back to sire you', she then slaps on her thigh

saying unless... Then slaps her stomach saying, 'unless this stomach did not bore you', she slaps her breast saying, 'unless he did not suckle this!' When she moves to the genitalia, you will be totally ruined. See the power of these 'trees'. Your own mother, your father, and your grandfather and grandmother, once they curse you, the consequences of the act cannot be revered by whatever form of medicine. The same for your uncle, your aunt. Hence these people are your real relatives. They are not like other people. You should never antagonize them. Never antagonize your father, never antagonize your mother, never antagonize your grandfather, never antagonize your uncle, never antagonize your aunt, she is the custodian of the rules that guides you; your uncle is the custodian of the rules that guides you.

20. We Bukusu people have five types of walking sticks. A stick that you cannot use to herd cattle is called *endare*. Never give a herd's boy that type of stick to use to look after animals, *endare* scatters. Give him one called *esitati*, it is the one to be used to look after cattle, the herd will grow in number. It is the stick that is used to herd cattle. *Engokhakokhe* is the stick that enables you to increase your herd in your homestead. To do business you need *embuyabu.* It is the stick to carry when going to check on your cattle grazing in the fields. It also repels evil powers that might invade your homestead *kumwilima.* It creates darkness in the home so that whoever wanted to steal your cattle, for example from Khaemba, darkness will engulf the homestead. Never use e*ndare* to herd your cattle, never use *endare* among the five sticks. You use these sticks to herd your cattle. They are the ones that will enable you to get more wealth.

21. We Bukusu people have different forms of education. God has given a woman as well as a man all forms of learning. A man must learn, for we have books for learning. A man must learn how to rear chicken, how to rear sheep, how to rear goat, how to rear cow. On the other hand, a woman should learn how to take care of food stuffs. In case she squanders using both hind and front heels, you will never prosper. Such one is no good wife. As I was saying about a wife who squanders using hind and

front heels; that you can never prosper. It is a wife who should ensure food security in the home and the husband to rear cattle.

22. You my dear brothers, the more important thing I am telling you is that we should be united, we should be one thing. See all these wealth that God has blessed us with! I have talked about banks. For us, our first and most important bank is a hen, the second is sheep, the third is a goat, the fourth is a cow, the fifth is foodstuff. These things are important to us. A hen can be compared to Standard Bank, sheep to Commercial Bank, and foodstuffs to Ushirika Bank. These are some of the big banks. Others are in foreign countries. This is the wealth God gave us. In the same way that we have five fingers, and because we have five fingers, and then we have five banks, hence it goes that these things belong to use, we walk with them we sit with them. An industrious wife is the one who can create wealth for the family. An industrious wife is the one which can create wealth in the home. A man should also create wealth for the family.

Audio Tape 1 Side B (English Translation)

23. I will begin by giving honor to God. I beseech God our Father, that *Wele* W*enje* (God of the universe), God the Son, God our prophet, God of our forefathers. It is you, who gives everything. You gave death and then declared that it is death that you were giving to mankind. You said that *ebonga eya oliyakila ekindi yaya (*a burning bush causes another to burn). You said that *chiselukho chiunanaga* (age-sets do fight). You said *kubili kukilanga kikundi kwakwa* (confusion can cause a worse things to happen).

24. You brought death; it was to be manifested in four forms/ways. You created man out of dust and you said that to dust he shall return. A child is born with a placenta. And since it is born with a placenta, and the placenta is soon buried, the child is born and

the placenta is soon buried, the placenta is pushed out of the womb and is buried, the placenta s a debt! You took death! You put it in the flesh of a person. You called it blood. Man live because of blood flowing in his veins, blood is death! You took food and gave it to man to eat; be it maize, be it millet, once grounded into flour, and since man consumes flour, flour is death! Man is a walking corpse. You remind man about his death through a fourth 'sign'. When man lies down and get asleep, when he is asleep, he is in a hole! These things remind man that he will one day die. When one sleeps, he is normally in a hole. And all these things remind us all, we live with them, we cannot afford to forget them. Then you said, when you have a child, who will sire a child and name him after you, once he names his child after you (dead father), then it is that he has put death upon the head of the named child. Once you name a child, you will have put death upon him, since you have named him after a dead person. My dear brothers, as you are assembled here, these things concerns us all, they belong to us.

25. I now turn to wars; I now turn to our wars. We fought with several tribes. We fought these wars because we had a lot of wealth. We fought *bamia* (Tesos), in the Fort, we fought with *Bamia.* We fought at Eburangasi; we battled with Tesos till dusk! At Mubitobo we battled with Tesos till dusk. Now I ran in time and space, see my spirit ran till I reach a place called Emabusi. We fought with Nandis, Mulumbwa and Turgens; we battled them the whole day till dusk.

26. *Babukusu* people, unite! Let us unite with all tribes. We should not discriminate one against the other. We should not say that one is a *Muteso,* that one is so and so, we should not do that, you must unite. Munyasia you should unite all people. If we do not unite, Munyasia I am telling you, there is likely to be misunderstanding in Luhya land. If you do not unite, there will be misunderstanding in Luhya land.

27. Mwangale met his match at Nasianda. Surely, a clever person cannot shave himself, if it was not so, Mwangale would have shaved himself. He boasted that he was from

Baluso clan. Mwangale ran, he went to see Wesonga wa Namulobi, who is a beloved son of *Omungani Nekitembwa.*

28. The Fort of Hoppilo. Hoppilo was not the owner of the Fort, the owner of the Fort was Wambulwa. Hoppilo was an intruder, when he came, he invaded *Mulukoba* (land), and we battled with Hopillo. You call him 'Hoppy', but we call him 'Opilo'.*Mulumboka* was *lukoba* (fort) of Mulunda. We battled with the white people till dusk, we fought till sunset.

29. Opilo came out! People came out! When people came out, we went up to Chetambe, when we arrived at Chetambe, many people had been killed by *kumunyalasia* (machine guns). Outside the Fort, the white army was getting ready to attack the Bukusu people in the Fort; outside they were setting the machine guns. And in the Fort, the Bukusu warriors were dancing, psyching up for war. They were besieged, and still they danced. A woman with *chinyincha chinukulia,* (A woman who had been performed all marriage rituals) fired up the warriors, singing

Basoleli mukhabanga	Young men you spoil for war
Elinani lili elwanyi	the ogre is outside
Basoleli mukhabanga	Young men you spoil for war
Elinani lili elwanyi	the ogre is outside
Basoleli mukhabanga	Young men you spoil for war
Elinani lili elwanyi	the ogre is outside
Omumaina mukhabanga	Young men you spoil for war
Elinani lili elwanyi	the ogre is outside

Omuchuma mukhabanga Young men you spoil for war

Elinani lili elwanyi the ogre is outside

Omusawa mukhabanga Young men you spoil for war

Elinani lili elwanyi the ogre is outside

Then Churiana stood up. He fired the young men into fighting mood; he fired the young men singing;

Basoleli khulietuba Young men we shall shed blood.

Khulietuba We shall shed blood.

Basoleli khulietuba Young men we shall shed blood.

Khulietuba mabanga nio khwelukha We shall shed blood before we flee.

By day break, many young men had been killed. See the race that ensued! These things are well known by you, they are not my invention. We fought with many tribes, many tribes rose against us. Your lands; the lands that belong to you.

30. In the year 1922, an epidemic broke out, it killed many young people. They named it (age-set) *Mabachi*, they named it *Mabachi*, called it *Namukhinga*. In the year 1924, they named it *Murutu Nabibia*, *Mukananachi Murutu Nabibia*. Where did the metallic line come from? 1926 was named *Silima*, 1928, named *Machengo*. 1930, was named *Fwesa Nasike Nakhweru*. 1932 was named *Buchunju*. 1934 was named *Matanda*.Then *Kinyikeu* the first, named *Endeke*. *Kinyikeu* the second was named *Musolini*, *Kinyikeu* the second was name Hitler, the fourth was named Panyakoo, and the fifth was named *Ngwekwee*. The sixth was named *Siamba Mutalia Walota*, the sixth *Siamba Mutalia Walota*. 1948, Nyange the first was named Musambwa. 1950, was named Henry owa Mutenyo. 1952 was named Matisi. 1954 was named Cheti.

1956 named Elgon Nyanza. 1958 Kaskoni, 1960 named Maina, 1960 Maina, 1960 Maina. Sir Cotton was the colonial representative in Bungoma, a white man called Cotton was in Bungoma. He said *kamakongwe* (sisal) that is why it was named *omumaina* Sir Cotton. 1962 named *Majimbo,* 1962 *okhwa* (son of) Makinia spoke and said, Uganda is independent; Tanzania is independent, for us we stand for *Majimbo*, 1962 named *uhuru*. 1966 named Scheme, 1968 there was an earthquake, 1970, named *Namukhalaki*, it marked the end of that age-set. And that was the time weighing machines were introduced. 1972, named *Omuchuma sia Kilo* (Chuma of the Kilo) kilo (*omuchuma sia kilo).* 1974 *sia Kamakongwe* (Chuma of Sisal), 1974 *sia Chebukube* (Chuma of Chepkube Market). 1978 *sia Namwatikhi* (Chuma of the Broken Pot).The president of Kenya, the president of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta passed away, he died in Mombasa, and the news of his demise reverberated throughout the land. The news that the ruler has died thus was named *Namwatikhi*. In the year 1980, it was named Nyayo, after President Daniel Arap Moi. 1982, the attempted coup, they attempted to topple the government of Kenya. But God did not allow it to succeed. Wanambisi and Mauka fought on the side of the government, they acted as a secret weapon. That was the 1st August, 1982 on a Sunday.

31. Then in 1984, 1984 was named *Omuchuma sia Korokoro*, 1984 *Omuchuma sia Korokoro*, 1984 *Omuchuma sia Korokoro*. 1986 *Omuchuma Sieng'eniesi. Lumuli Nying'inyi, Sieng'eniesi*. *Lumuli Nying'inyi.* 1988, named *Omusawa*, 1988 named *Omusawa sia* Elijah Masinde who died at Maeni. *Omusawa* was circumcised. Was named Elijah Masinde Omusawa who died at Maeni. 1990, *Omusawa* the second. 1990 *Omusawa* the second. 19 April, 1990 on Saturday, at 5 a.m, there occurred an earthquake; the age-set was named *Siarenga* that is when we named it *Siarenga*. On 24 Thursday, at 9 p.m, there occurred again another earthquake. The more reason it was named *Siarenga*, it was named Siarenga.On 14 August, 1990 – Friday, news broke out for Embakasi, the news reaching us indicated that *Okhwa* Makinia has died. 1992, was named *Omusawa sia* Masinde *owa* Makinia.1994 named Omusawa,

Bukusu people came together. 1994, Bukusu came together and named *sia* Wamalwa Kijana, *sinde owa Nakitang'a. Sinde wa* Nakhombe, Wanakitulo, Wamalwa was made the chairman of Ford Kenya, the official leader of the opposition in parliament.

32. Nowdays, the number of animals to be paid as dowry should be what *Kilongolo* paid then. The issue of thirteen heads of animals, that the thirteenth one, that the one to be given to the uncle makes the total number to be thirteen. That the twelve belonged to the girl's father, but where are they? You simply carry a paper, it turns out that what was white paper turns brown, form being brown with dust, it tears away. But where are they? Let us put our heads together over the issue of thirteen animals and come up with an acceptable solution bring back these values, bring them back to where they were.

33. I am telling all people of all walks of life, so long as one is in Kenya. You being Bukusu, you being a Luo, be of any tribe. Whoever is in Kenya? The four signs have meanings to us. In mathematics are told to multiply. This is a message for us. There is one for addition, has a message for us. There is one for subtraction, it has message for us, has message for us. Hence my dear brothers, it is you I am advising, as you are seated here.Know the meaning of the first sign; know the meaning of the sign for addition. It has an important message. Strive to add wealth to wealth to create more wealth. Do not rush to divide up what you have. Once you divide up what you have for instance, the given by your father, once you divide it up, then you would reduce the acreage. What follows the acreage is money, we will be left holding money, when we divide up our wealth, and once we share up, what we have, one builds in one piece, another one at a given point, the other at the other point, one buys one thing, he other buys another, that is how we shall come up.

34. Bungoma town, a place like this, let me start form this homestead, do not claim Khaemba, do not see Munyasia, you will go and tell Wamalwa the same. Sifuna you will also tell him. I do not see them here, you may be going to America.Then you

boast that Nairobi is ours. But then you have no single house in it. How can it be yours? Do not see your relatives' herd passing by and then boast that 'our' herd is passing! You must own, even if a single animal in the herd to claim that they belong to you. Bungoma, do not claim that Bungoma belongs to you! You must have a building in it. Khaemba, invest in it. Munyasia, invest in it, and then you can rightly claim that Bungoma belongs to you.

35. See the ways of the government of Kenya. When a word comes from the president, to PC, from PC to DC, to DO, from DO to Chief, from the Chief to Sub-chief, down to the village headman. Once you receive such information, do not dismiss it as lies. It would be like the ways of Namuriri.You Munyasia why can't you assist? Why can't you assist? Wamalwa why can't you assist? Kapten why can't you assist? Kituyi why can't you assist? You people why can't you assist, can't you assist. You my dear brothers, why can't you assist. Our forefathers said "*biamba biakhaya ya putu, bibaambamo endamu*" (trans. The knife that skins an anthrax infected cow will also skin a healthy one).

36. I now want to counsel, I now turn to counseling my dear brothers. We should never disregard our Bukusu culture, I talk about our values. When your father is still alive, when your father is still alive, never forget your father, for instance, you Khaemba, never, never surrenders a seat to your own child, even if the child has riches upon riches. Your father shall never surrender a seat to his own child. That would amount to a curse, bad manners have cropped up. Your father should never surrender a seat to you. It is the child who should surrender a seat to his father; your father should never surrender a seat to you. Bad manners have cropped up.

Audio Tape 2 Side A (*Lubukusu*)

1. Narakikha nende kimilukha kia babukusu. Namila khu Mango, ne Mango bamukheba bamwikhasia khundebe embukusu mala bachukhakho kamabele kamayu. Omukhebi wakheba bamulanga lisina liewe bali Olukayeti waba omukhebi wamukheba. Mala babandu bauka bali obele omwana omukekhe wengila bamukheba nefwe bakhulu ta! Nio babola bali aa! omwana yuno nga kengila anano babandu nefwe aba kene khwingile nono.

2. Nio babandu nga balomaloma bario, endemu nga emalile yafwa, mala Namunyu abira, wanyola balikho balomaloma nio Namunyu waramo sioyayo mbo,

….haa ha haa haaa……..!

….haa ha haa haaa……..!

Siechaana wamunyola wa Mango!

….haa ha haa haaa……..!

Siechaana

Mala bamala bario. Nebwila sioyaye babukusu ne bembanga siamila khu Mango. Nio wanyoa waramo sioyaye kaba Namunyu.

3. Sili khumilukha kie babukusu kiong'ene nikio ndikho, senchaakhulomaloma khu kandi ta. Efwefwe babukusu omundu kakhula mala karera omukasi mala sebamukheba tawe kumwima kwe babukusu bamukheba. Mala nga bamukheba, nali ne babana bewe sisingilo sio kengililamo esesio bamurusiamo bamura mu sisingilo sisindi sienyuma muselukho yewe nio kasalwa nabo nga ne bengila.Kumulukha kukhola khataru kaba bali omundu omusinde mala sekasala, babana tawe, mala

kafwile nali omusinde, bamukhebela mung'ani. Ne omukhebi omukhepa oyoyo salikhebakho lundi tawe.

4. Lusimo lukhola khabili, nimwo emboko yaambukhila eng'ana yaambukhilamo. Babukusu nimwo emboko yaambukhila nio eng'ana yaambukhila. Kimima kienywe kie babukusu, nikio batayi balomaloma mukhoye mube mumima kimiene ne kimiene ne kimiene, mukhalekha kimima ekio tawe. Bibingilo bitila kimima ekio kaba omusawa, omukolongolo, omukikwameti,omukananachi, omukinyikeu, nomunyange, nomumaina no muchuma.Sebamwata kimima ekio ta! Luno khwamwatile kimima. Nio batayi baloma bali nimwo emboko yambukhila nio eng'ana yambukhila!

5. Kheniche nende lusimo nge babukusu balomaloma chingokho chibili nga Wele ne kaumba chingokho chibili. Ya mundaa bakilanga bali likhanga, ya mungo bakilanga bali engokho. Nio babukuu babola bali, afungila likhanga, wafingila nende engokho. Okhafungilanga likhanga liong'ene tawe, kane nyanga ya mundaa ebole eli swiswi, elino lili swiswi ne liba mundaa.

6. Ndikho sili khwisaye. Omundu kabao mulala. Kasala babana bewe bakhwana, babana babili. Mulala bamulanga bali Mukhwana, okundi bali Mulongo. Bukhwana buno, mulala alio kasala babana babili bano, balala bechela khungobi ndala yong'ene. Na alio okundi, buli omwana ne engobi yewe. Obira ne ngobi yewe. Babana basalwa buli obira ne engobi yewe, sebananianga ta. Sebalimo kamatekhele kamakali ta! Ne omwana osalwa, nabo basalwa babili mungopi ndala yong'ene bali nende kamatekhele kamakali. Nokula enyama, nebalia balila khusibumba silala, nebalia, balila khundubi ndala. Nokula chingubo chabwe okula chifwanana. Bandu bano obatembelesia nio bakhula. Khukhwikula! Khukkhwikula! Nga nebekulanga. Yaba omulebe, yaba omulebe, yaba kecha kekula omulebe wabwe ne lundi baanga omukhana wabwe bosi becha khukhwikula omwana. Ne nganebacha bario, bakhinanga eng'oma, bakhinanga eng'oma bali yebpukhwana. Bekamani ne balio, banga mukhana ne bali ne kamani, banga musolelib ne kamani barekanila amuliango

aao. Balikho bakelesia nga babandu basalananga. Sekene nche mbole kali kamakali ta. Kamakhuwa kasili enyuma kali kamakali. Bukhwana bekulanga, rarawe yo mukhana, rarawe yo omusoleli. Banga omusoleli bekulanga omusoleli wabwe, banga mukhana bekula omukhana wabwe. Kobosia kimima kikobole.

7. Sili anano, omwana yuno nge kechile kanderera omwana omukhana kakhobwanga mala aba yesi kachile khuselela, omukhana kakhobwanga aba kachile khusera. Babana bakhana bosi basiranga, ngakhusera khwabwe, aba acha khukhwalikha aba waserire. Khwaba nende omwana omukhana, kaba mungo mwabwe, mala kalolelela sisindu sali nende ekhafu mungo mwabwe ekhafu mo ta, sindu mo ta. Wabolela bawandaye basoleli, ali enywe ngeba mwarire. Ali khamumbelesia engabo. Pamuwa engabo wacha wachesera, ebuyabila, wacha wachilotia omwana omukhana, bosi baseranga. Luno sebalio baluno ari ta. Babukusu kimima kie babukusu ekiekio nacha natilio ndio.

8. Busomi, nacha khubusomi lusimo lubola luli musomie bali busomi, Omuchaluo noli anano, Mukamba noli ano ,Omukikuyu noli anano , wakana Omusamia noli anano, Omumaraki noli anano, lusimu lulio lubola bali khusalane, khukhoya kwasalana. Mala khwasomia babana, khusomia babana lusimo lubola khusomie babana . Embunyi yakhila endimi . Nobaya embwa baya embwa eunya, okhabaya kubwa kutima ta. Bona kamakhuwa kechile kumwaka kwa elfu moja na mia nane, kamakhuwa kaba khusibala, babandu baba ne basoleli babwe bacha basera. Luno luri khusera khulio, nibwo busomi, nibwo khusera. Mwabene babalimu wasomia, babana basomia, lusimo olwolwo lubola bali embwa eunya yakhila endimi. Mwalimu wa sayansi, noli wesabu, noli wa geography, noli wa historia, yewuanyamo mala babana bosi benyemo, mala aba nono babana bano babira kamakela, aba siabele sinaka aba wanywele ekilasi ekindi. Khusomie babana.

9. Silongo siera yalia, yalia eng'ene nio silongo siera. Sesiranga ekindi tawe.Mwabene lola mulomaloma. Kamakhuwa kechile, ndikho ndomela Muwebuye, kumunandere

kubolela wakulia! Kumunandere kubolela wakulia. Hee! Niyo ukimwi! Nikwo kumunandere, kulikho kulia, omwene ochilekho nio ukimwi yaamba. Mukhoye mwibaye kumunandere, kumunandere kwolile. Mwabene, mwabene mwiolelesie. Sibala sili engara!

10. Likhuwa elielio libolela babana, omwana we kamaya, onywa kamalwa nekabana, wekamaya, omwana we kamaya oweulila babasie, omwana we kamaya owebulila babami be sibala. Bona enjofu yacha yakania, chinjofu chakenda chibili, mala chacha chola mumusiru. Yekamaya yabukula kumusanga yacha yapa khumusala kwakhalikha. Etamba kamaya, mala yalotia kumusanga. Nio batayi bacha baloma bali, bali enjofu ye bubwayaya sekhusia kumusanga tawe. Khukhaba ne kumusanga, khukhabukula kimisanga kiefwe khwapa khumirongoro kiatikha tawe! Khumirongoro ne kiatikha ta! Likhuwa elielio likhukania.

11. Kamalaka ke babukusu, balomaloma kamalaka sita! Babolela babandu be sibala, kamalaka sita. Omwana okhamwata lilaka lilala tawe! Kumwikale kwabene, kumwikule kukwoo. Babana balekhile babana bechule busa khusibala sino sayi batimile busa khubalosi bong'ene, batimile bikoko biong'ene nio khebatimilakho, nio batayi bacha baloma bali kumwikale kwabene, kumwikule kukwoo. Kumwikale omukhasi wabene, kumwikule omwana omukhana busa.

12. Mukhoya mwaria bibindu nio mwekana. Okhacha wekhala muchamu ye khukhwiba bibindu biabene ta. Nakitumba khacha khaloma khali siabene siamoni, bakhuwela kumukhono mulala nawe wasilia wamanya echamu. Mukhacha kamatala kabene ta. Okhakhalakila omwana wowasio niko akhakholile ta, okhachakha batambi, okhachekha bamanani, okhachekha bamanani, okhachekha bayiya, okhachekha bafubi. Bona batayi bacha bakania, mwabene.

13. Kamalaka! Wele karera kamalaka kataru! Wele karera kamalaka kataru. Okhoya orie, orie serikali elinda, elinda sibala. Orie kamalaka kekholo yenywe. Orie kamalaka

kawele. Wele bali akhunyola ewe omulayi, serikali ekhunyola ewe omulayi, ekholo yoo ekhunyola ewe omulayi, aba ewe oli omulayi. Aba ewe soli omubi ta. Okhaleka serikali elinda sibala ta. Okhaleka kamalaka ke basakhulu. Efwe bibindu bino bili bibiefwe nibio, sekhubimwata ta, sekhukhoya khwabimwata ta.

14. Ndikhonja lundi khwikhuwa lilindi. Nacha khuminaii kibili kiong'ene. Kumutayi nikwo khenjakho. Kukhu kakhupa kumunaii.

Ali "namunaii"

Ndi "khokwiche!"

Ali "tondo wafwa tondo wakobola."

Ndi "kukhu senyala ta."

Ali "mbe nche ndie."

Ndi "cheupe cha Namutala."

Ali "nachipa chabuyabuya. Nga mbolile ndi tondo wafwa tondo wakobola, ndi endombela ye lipwondi."

Audio Tape 2 Side B (*Lubukusu*)

15. Omundu okhola khataru, waukhana mukhusikha, nio likulu liera. Sebafwanananga nga babandu ta! Sikila oyo babola bali bera sisiayo mala, bacha bamung'ola, mala bali sebamutiukha ta. Bali akana babandu becha babandi likulu liera. Likulu nio lilire, omundu okwile mumechi, omundu wimikile, bandu bano baukhananga! Sebafwanana nende babandu babandi ta. Efwe bababusu yaba kamechi nekerire omundu, sebamusikhanga eluchi tawe! Efwe bamusikhanga engo. Nekaukhana lufu lwewe

lwaukhana. Nge ese oswala kumuse, omundu nga omwenoyo bakhandanga sencha naloma kumuse kwewe ta. Owimikile, bakhandanga,sencha naloma kumuse kwewe ta, nio likulu lirire , bakhandanga sencha naloma kumuse kwe ta.

16. Ndikhoncha aba khumwima kukundi. Kumwima nikwo khenchakho kukwefwe kukhali kwe babandu babandi tawe. Ndikhendoma busa lubukusu lwongene. Eeh! bibindu bino bili bibiefwe nibio. Sebili bie sindu sina nisio tawe. Omundu nasili omusinde, kakhasala, khwifwe babakusu, sebamutiukha ta! Bamukheba nio bamutiukha. Nono sikila nembola bali, ne bamulanga bali musani. Bindu bino bili bibiefwe nibio. Sebili bialuno ta, biefwe bikhale, khukendanga nenabio.18. Efwe yaba batayi ekhisi yakoba bali alikharura, mala ekhisi yamukhala, sacha tawe, akobola engo. Likhanga liamukhala, sacha ta, akobola engo! Kino kili kimima kefwe. Bibindu bino bili bibiefwe nibio.19.Ne babukusu ndikho khembolela, mwabene kamakhuwa kano kali kakenywe niko, sekali kakange tawe. Wele omwene wambelesia. Nacha mudini, omundu akhabola ali basungu bechile nio babandu bamanya edini ta. Efwe abele wele kakhwokesia khwamanya edini khukhwama khale. Edini nga ne wele kalomaloma ali, ali kamalaka, ali kamalaka ekhumi. Chinjala chirano nicho chikila, oyu chirano oyu chirana nga mukhesiana kamalaka kaba ekhumi Nacha embolosi, nacha embolosi ye babukusu.Yaba wakhwa chikhafu chacha mala omukhana, wecha wakhayana ne omukhasi, bachichanga ne babolola. Sebalinga baluno ari ta, mala bamukhailakho, bakhayile khumukhana mala bakhayile ne khukhafu. Embolosi yabechangao khukhwama khale.

20. Efwe khulinende biakhulia. Biakhulia ekhumi. Biakhulia bino nibio bili biakhulia bilayi., biakhulia ekhumi. Siakhulia sikila wanyola bubwami sikhola kumi na moja. Siakhulia sikila wanyola bubwami sikhola kumi na moja. Siakhulia bikila wanyola bubwami sikhola kumi na moja. Kamasina ke biakhulia: Bulo, esio siakhulia, kamaemba, kamapwondi, kamakanda, embama, kamaondo, chimbaasia, biakhulia bino bili bibiefwe nibio. Biakhulia biaba kumi na moja.

21. Babukusu ndi khemubolela. Newenya kumutambo, newenya kumutambo, ewe omwana omuchaluo, bona omenyile Ebung'oma. Newenya ofwe ne kumutambo, obukula litala wacha wombakha khumeno, obukule litala wombakha khamakusi, kane ofwe ne kumutambo. Okhabukula litala wombakha khumeno, okhabukula litala wombakha khumakusi. Hee, wamwene khubolela. Khabola, khembola, bali khendoma ndio, babola bali khendoma chilomo chikhwe ta. Esese ndi khengambila, esese ndi khembola.

22. Omundu wang'ola sitesieni sie Ebung'oma, mwanda Wakibonge. Wang'ola sitesieni sie Ebung'oma, Mwanda wa Kibonge. Ali bona chinchu chimbesemu. Lola chinchu chimali, ali bona chinchu chiwanga, kang'olela Khusiritanyi, kang'olela khumwanda, kang'olela khubiliso.

23. Wang'ola sikuli sie Chesamisi, wang'ola sikuli sie Kamusinga. Munialo wa Mutonyi, Munialo wa Mutonyi niye wabona sikuli sie Kamusinga. Wabona sikuli sie Chesamisi. Ali bona chinchu chimbesemu, ali bona bikulu bimali, ali bona bikulu biwanga. Mwanda wa Kibonge, wang'ola sitieseni, ne Munialo wang'ola bikuli. Abo baba bang'osi, babang'ola sibala sino, bang'ola sibala sino.

24. Elija, Elija wa Neala, Namame mawe omukhana mumeme ne omwana omubichachi kalomela Emaeni. Ne bung'osi bwa Elija nga burakikha khuba muniye. Bung'osi bwewe bwaba buri, bwama khumundu bali Khakula, mala Khakula yuno mawe ya Elija alanga Khakula ali kuka. Nono kaba bali bachile, yaba bali alikho bali arakikha, kaba bali kengila karakikha kumupira, kapa kumupira kwacha kwaanda khungaki.

25. Mala Lundi nga kapa ario, kacha kaonia sibala sino. Yaba babami babukulanga chinyama che babandu. Yaba newirire ekhafu mungo, obukula ebechwa, namwe sinama wayila womwami. Elijah Waloba, chinyama khucha ta. Baambanga chikhafu bali panyako. Elijah Waloba chikhafu khucha ta. Baambanga babandu bali panyako, Elijah Waloba, babandu khucha ta. Nono babandu babarusia khuno, babanyoa siasa

ye khusibala khuno, parera likhuwa lia misambwa baba babandu bataru. Elijah kaba omukananachi, Siraeli Khaoya kaba omukananachi, Walumoli kaba omukananachi. Babandu bano nibo baamba lichabungwe lialuluwa. Siraeli Khaoya kalomela Musibanga wa wekhoela muchekwanda Kimilili anano. Oyo naye kalomela Khusichei. Elijah yuno bung'osi bwewe kamisia munchu mwa mayi wewe. Mawe kaba bali Nameme, ne kukawe kaba bali Khakula, Khakula oyo kaba omung'osi. Bung'osi bwa Elijah bwaba burio.

26. Akhaba luno luri, wema khusibala khuno wabola oli serikali elinda yino, ya Moi yino, Moi ache, ne bakhupa okwa. Okhoya wabola oli Moi yeng'ene. Ne lola munyanga echecho serikali yaba ye basungu, bong'ene bali khusibala. Mala babandu bano beng'era, mala balera misambwa, barera bung'osi mala nio babandu bano bacha. Akano ka Elijah sekhencha kamakali tawe. 27. Niko khemubolela kano,…ee! Babandu bano, eee nakobolayo, ee bona omwana muchaluo kekhale anano. Luno luri, sisindu sio khekubolela. Nomalile wakobola engo, khusimane khube sindu silala. Mala khukendele alala. Nabone kumwaka kwa elfu mbili, na mbili kwolile. Okhoya okobole engo mala obolele babandu boo. Mala khusimane, mala khukendele alala. Sesili siasa ta, akako nacha natilao ndio. Kenembe bali mbola ndio bali wabola kamakhuwa kasiasa. Khukhabirana ta.

<u>Audio Tape 2 Side A (English Translation)</u>

1. I begin by narrating Bukusu traditional practices. I start with Mango ,Mango of Meme clan .Mango was circumcised and made to sit on *endebe embukusu* (traditional stool) on which they sprinkled fresh milk. A man who circumcised Mango was called Olukayeti; he was the one who circumcised him. Then the people wondered how a small child can be circumcised yet they were not. It was then they said no! "Since

this child has been circumcised, it is proper that we also be circumcised from now henceforth".

2. When people spoke like that, and the serpent having been killed, hyena passed by, he heard people conversing, it was then that the hyena sung *sioyaye* (a song for escorting the initiate from the river);

Song	Translation
….haa ha haa haaa……..!	….haa ha haa haaa……..!
….haa ha haa haaa……..!	….haa ha haa haaa……..!
Siechaana wamunyola wa Mango!	….. It's going to happen like what Happened at Mango's place.
….haa ha haa haaa……..!	….haa ha haa haaa……..!
Siechaana	….. it's going to happen.

That is how we began. That is why today, when Bukusu sing *sioyaye*, it all began with Mango. It was first sung by hyena. Mango grew up and married a wife.

3. I am still talking about Bukusu traditional practices. It is what I am dwelling on, I will not talk about other issues. We, Bukusu people, when a man comes of age, marries a wife and then it is discovered that he is uncircumcised, the culture of Bukusu people demands that that person be circumcised. Then after being circumcised, and if he has his own children, he will be shifted from the present circumcised age-set to the previous one. Otherwise, it would be a taboo for such a person to belong to the same age set with children, younger than he. A third practice, it was that when an uncircumcised person died and had sired his own children; if he

had died when uncut, such a person was circumcised inside his grave. And the circumciser who cuts him shall never again circumcise any other person.

4. The second proverb says where *emboko* (buffalo) crosses a stream; it is the same place that is young ones will cross over. Bukusu people, where *emboko* (buffalo) crosses a stream, it is the same place its young ones will cross over. It was about our traditions that our forefathers were alluding to. You should hold fast on our traditions, keep them as they were, do not disregard them. The age-sets that observed our traditions were *Omusawa, Omukolongolo, Omukikwameti, Omukananachi, Omukinyikeu, Omunyange, Omumaina and Omuchuma*. They have not parted from our traditions. But today we have disregarded our traditions. That is why our forefathers say where the buffalo crosses a stream, that is where its young ones will also cross.

5. Let me highlight a proverb by Bukusu people about two birds, how God created two birds. The one in the wild, he called it guinea fowl, the domesticated one, He called it chicken. That is why Bukusu say it is wise to rear both the guinea fowl and chicken. Do not just rear guinea fowl alone. This is so because one day, it might hear sounds of its kind calling form the wild, *suswi, suswi.* It will then answer back *suswi* and then fly away to join them in the wild.

6. I am still talking about procreation. Once upon a time, there was one man, he sired twins; one was called Mukhwana, another one was called Mulongo. It happens with twins that some will be identical twins and the others might not be-each one comes along in its own placenta. Those that are not identical twins cause less trouble. They are not weaklings. The identical twins have so many complications, they are weaklings. When you buy them meat, they eat from the same place, you buy them clothes, you must buy of same colour. These people, you must take good care, so that they can grow up. To release them from seclusion, to release them from seclusion, the way they used to do it. It was that a relative, it was that a relative, he used to

come to release them from seclusion. Again the girl's people would come to release the girl from seclusion. When they came, they used to do a special dance; they used to dance a dance called *yebukhwana* (of twins). The strong men present, the girls people strong enough strong, men from the man's side, would wrestle in front of the house, gesticulating the act of procreating children. I will not dwell on that. There is a lot to be said that I am going to talk about. Twins were normally performed a ceremony, the girl's father, the boy's father. The boy's people perform for their son; the girl's people perform for their girl. Bring back these practices.

7. A girl was paid for (dowry), it would be that she has also gone on raid, when a girl is paid for, it would be that she has gone on raid. Girls also went on raid, this is how their raid was viewed; when she got married, it would be that she has also gone to raid. Once upon a time, there was a girl, she used to be the only child in her home. She looked around and saw that they did not have even a single cow in the homestead; there was nothing in the home. She spoke to her brothers, telling them that may be, they were cowards, she told them to give her a shield. She was given a shield and she went and raided at a place called E*buyabila*, she went and brought them home, a girl, they also raid. Today, there are no more such brave ones. About traditions, that is the much I can talk about them for now.

8. Education, I now turn to education. I highlight a saying that encourages us to educate our children. If a Luo person is here present, if a *Mukamba* person is here present, if Kikuyu person is here present, if a *Samia* person is here present, if *Maraki* person is here present, the proverb exhorts us to procreate, and indeed we need to procreate. We should then educate our children, we should educate our children, and the proverb urges us to educate our children. A hunting dog is better than a farming one. If you were to keep a dog, keep one that sniffs, not one that runs aimlessly. See what used to happen in the 1800s.hings that used to happen, the young men used to raid. Even today, there is raiding, it is education, that is what raiding is all about. It is about you teachers, who teach our children, that proverb says that a sniffing dog is better than

one that runs aimlessly. If you are a science teacher, if you are a mathematics teacher, if you are a geography teacher, if you are a history teacher, sniff into your subject and let the students do the same. And when your students pass their examination, it would be that they have 'smokes' into the next class. We should educate our children.

9. A salt-lick killed the one who licked from it; the one that licked is the one that it kills. It does not kill the one that has not licked it. See you have yourselves said it, strange things are happening. I am speaking from Webuye, *kumunandere kubula wakulia.* (a deed done in secrecy will always come into the open).Heed to what is being said, *kumunandere kubula wakulia* (a deed done in secrecy will always come into the open).Hee! It's referring to HIV/AIDS! It is what is being referred to as *kumunandere*; it exposes whoever eats from it. Whoever tastes it, it is him who HIV/AIDS attacks. You should shun *kumunandere (HIV/AIDS), kumunandere* is with us. You should be careful, the world is round. Our forefathers said that the world is round.

10. These words appeal to the young people, a child that like picking fights, one who after taking beer fights others, a violent child, a child who likes fighting others, a violent child who has no regard for the leaders of the land. See the elephant advises against. Once upon a time, there were two elephants that went for a walk into the forest. The violent one hit its tusk on a tree and broke it. The peaceful one went back home with its tusk intact. That is why our forefathers said that the task of a too aggressive elephant never grows long. We should take care of our tusks, we shall not take our tusks, hitting them on trees and breaking them, on trees and breaking them. That proverb advises us against hitting our tusks on trees.

11. The rules that govern Bukusu people, they are six in number. They guide the people of this world, six rules. No child should disobey even one of them. The closed door does not belong to you; the open one is a young unmarried girl. The next rule is, fear your own mother so that you can fear other people's mothers. Today, young people

have no respect for parents of their age mates. Such behavior is forbidden; even the buffalo spoke against it.

12. You should avoid doing things you have vowed never to do. You should never sit in the council of evil doers, planning to steal from other people' property. *Nakitumba* (bird) observed that what belong to other people, you can only admire with your eyes, when given by one hand, accept and appreciate. Never break into people' kraals, do not bear false witness to your neighbour's child, do not laugh at the poor, do not laugh at the poor, do not laugh at *bayiya* (the homeless) do not laugh at the orphans, our forefathers forbade it, it is upon you!

13. Rules, God gave us three cardinal rules. God gave us three Cardinal rules. You should respect, you should respect the government of the day, the government of the day. You should honor the rules given by your clan, fear God's commandments. So as you will be righteous in the eyes of God, be a good citizen of the nation, be found to e a good person by your clan. You will be then called a good person; you will not be called a bad person. Do not ridicule the government in power; do not despise the counsel of the elders. These things are important to us, we do not disregard the, we should never disregard them.

14. I now want to talk about another thing; I want to mention only two riddles. A riddle that I want to highlight. My grandmother posed a riddle, she said,

'*Namunaii'* she posed

'Let it come!' I responded

Tondo dies *Tondo* comes back to life' she challenged

'I do not know the answer', I responded.

'Give me I eat', she said

‘Go take Namutala’s cows,’ I said

‘I drove them into frenzy’ she said.

What I meant by saying *tondo* dies tondo comes back to life is the shoot of sweet potato.

Audio Tape 2 Side B (English Translation)

15. The third person whose funeral ceremony is different from the way other people are buried is the one who has been killed by lightening. Such a person is not buried in the same way others are buried. This is because, such a person, an animal (sheep) is killed, and then a diviner is consulted to do divination. Such a person is not named after. It is believed by Bukusu society that if he is named, other people will also die by being struck by lightning. That was what to be done for such persons.

16. A person killed by lightening, a person who dies by drowning , a person who hangs himself, these people’s funeral ceremonies were different from other peoples’ . They are not performed the same way as for those who die of natural causes. We Bukusu people, when a person dies by drowning, such a person was not buried at the river, such a person was buried in the homestead. However, his funeral was performed differently from ordinary funeral. For instance, I , who performs *kumuse*, even if I am approached to perform for such a person, I will not accept such an invitation. I cannot perform at the funeral of a person who has hanged himself at all, I cannot perform at a funeral of one killed by lightening, even if I am may be invited to do so.

17. I am now going to talk about other cultural practices. What I am going to talk about is cultural practices not of other peoples’; I am talking specifically about Bukusu culture. Eh! These things belongs to us, they are not strange to us. We Bukusu people, uncircumcised person, even if he has sired children such a person is not named after,

Such a person can only be named after being circumcised . He can now be named because he is now mature person. These things belong to us. They did not, they have not been invented today, they have been in existence since time immemorial, and we live with them.

18. We Bukusu people, when an old man sets off on a journey and an antelope crosses his path, he will abandon the journey, he will go back home. If a guinea fowl crosses his path, he will not proceed with the journey, he will go back home. These are our beliefs.

19. It is you Bukusu people I am telling these things, they are about you, they are not my own words, it is God who revealed them to me I now talk about religion. Let nobody claim that it was the white men who brought us religion, God revealed to us the knowledge of religion from time immemorial. According to Christian teaching, God gave mankind ten commandments. A person has five fingers on one hand; the other person has also five fingers. So when they shake hands, the fingers add to ten.

20. I now talk about divorce among the Bukusu people. It used to be that of a man marries, and pays dowry, and then it happens that the marriage breaks-up, divorce was allowed but the bride wealth was taken back to the man's family. They were not like today's people; they will take away their daughter and then refuse to refund the bride wealth. Divorce has been there since time immemorial. It's not a recent phenomenon; it has been there since time immemorial.

21. We have foodstuffs, ten types of foodstuffs. These foodstuffs are the ones that are good for health, ten types of foodstuffs. The foodstuff that will make you eligible for leadership position is the eleventh one; the foodstuffs that make you eligible for leadership position is the eleventh one. The names of these foodstuffs are: millet, sorghum, sweet potato, beans, nuts, pumpkin, *chimbaasia*. These are our indigenous foodstuffs. Our foodstuffs are ten in number.

22. It is you Bukusu people I am talking to. If you want to be poor, if you want to be poor … you son of Lou people …look you happen to reside in Bungoma, if you want to die poor, you take your kraal and tie it on your teeth, you take your kraal and tie it on your genitals! You will be sure to die a poor man. Never take your kraal and tie it on your teeth, never take your kraal and tie on your genitals! Eh I am telling you, I am simply counseling,. Some may claim that I am being obscene, I am simply counseling, I am simply saying the truth.

23. A man who prophesized Bungoma town/station was called Mwanda Wakibonge. The one who prophesized about the emergence of Bungoma town was called Mwanda Wakibonge. He had a vision of red houses. He said, "I see red houses". He said, "I see black houses". He said, "I see white houses". He prophesized at Siritanyi. He prophesized at Khumwanda, he prophesized at Khubiliso.

24. The man who prophesized Chesamisi school, the one who prophesized Kamusinga school, was Munialo *wa* Mutonyi, Munialo *wa* Mutonyi is the one who prophesized Kamusinga school, he prophesized Chesamisi school. He said "see red house, black hills, white hills'. Mwanda *wa* Kibonge prophesized about the town, and Munialo prophesized about the schools. Those were the seers, who prophesized in this land, they prophesized in this land. So many tales have been composed about these three people; tales upon tales go composed about the three people.

25. Elijah *wa* Nameme, his mother was a daughter of Meme clan and he himself was *omwana omubichachi*, he spoke at Maeni, and the gift of prophecy was in him. His prophetic powers were acquired as follows; He inherited it from a man called Khakula, Khakula was a grandfather to Elijah's mother. It was that, when he begun, after his circumcision, he began playing football. He kicked the ball into the sky and it never came down on earth again. And it came to pass that after kicking the ball it got lost in the sky.

26. He came to save this land. It used to be that the rulers of the land used to demand for meat. It was that when you slaughtered an animal in the home, you were to take *ebechwa* (the hind leg) and give it to these rulers. Elijah incited people against doing so and the practice stopped. They also used to confisticate people's cattle for trespassing. Elijah agitated, protested and this practice also stopped. They used to arrest people for trespassing, Elijah protested and no more arrests were carried out. Hence the most prominent people, who got involved in the politics of this land, those who began a movement of *misambwa* were three people. Elijah was of *kananachi* age set. Israel Khaoya was of *kananachi* age set. These are the people who brought some fire into leadership of the land. Israel Khaoya spoke at Musibanga wa Wekoela at Kimilili, the other spoke at Chekwanda, a Musisisi spoke at Sichei Walumoli. Elijah picked his gift of prophecy from his maternal side. His mother was called Nameme; his grandmother was called Khakula who used to be a seer. That is how Elijah prophecy came into being.

27. Even today, if you stand up and claim that this government of Moi, that Moi must go, you will beaten into smithereens! You must always say Moi is the best! And remember those days the country was under colonial rule. But then it was these men who began the movement of *misambwa*, they brought the prophecy and that are why the colonialists left this country. I would not say much about Elijah.

28. What I am telling you about … eh! These people, eh! Let me recast, when you go back, see this son of Luo people is seated here. As for now, the thing I want to tell, once you go back home, we should love one another and be a one thing. We should then walk together. I can see the year two thousand and two is around the corner. You should go back home and tell your people, we should love one another, we should walk together. I am not talking politics! That is the much I can talk about that issue. It might be misconstrued that I am talking politics; we should not misunderstand each other.

Video Tape (Lubukusu)

1. Mwikhalilikha… mwikhalilikha, muluma! Ese semanyile elomo ta, khendebe wang'ali, khendebe Wele Wenche, Wele Mwana, Wele Kuka, Wele Mukhobe, ne kukhu Namakanda! Baengele mwikhalilikha, lifwa likhale, kumutambo kumukhale… khukendanga ne lifwa, khukendanga ne kumutambo, sekuli kwaluno ta…!

2. Mayi ewe omwana we mungo muno? Nawe papa…? Ewe wabonakho Wele? (Laughter from the audience). Ewe papa wabonakho Wele? Luno tare sina? (Tare tisa – audience responds).Tare tisa? (Yee – Audience responds) Luno khemwekesia Wele mumubone. Mufukilila mubone Wele (Eeeeeh– audience responds).Mukhalomanga busa muli mumanyile Wele mala mukhamubonakho tawe. Ano saa tatu ne chitakika ... luno mubona busa Wele tarehe tisa. Okhakendanga busa ne okhabona Wele ta. Kila omundu kame anano naloma ali Manguliechi akhwokesie Wele khwamubona.

3. Khane kamalaka kawele kali Kenga? (Kali kumi – audience responds)Sikila sii? Mwakamanya sikila? (Tawe – audience responds). Kamalaka kawele kali kumi. Awe chinjala chirano oyu chirano, notesa alala mwakhesiana. Wele kenya kumulembe sekenya bulomani taa ... niko kamalaka kumi.

4. Kanakana omusoleli yuno nga nekakhula, kakhula arie? Mala kanakana niye kolile nono! Ekhafu nebakhurerekho, ekhafu eyo omwana likhoni bali baka, obake. Oli wamala orusie lisombo. Khalosi khakhecha khali papa ngobolelekho kumunawa ta! Kane obe oli okobolela kumunawa pebe ne lisombo lilikho lirundukha bali akhoo! Sobona! Bali, "Ekiniali yanula lisombo!" Sobona wamwene okinialile? Bakhurekho likhese! Lola kamakhuwa mena akako! Sibala.

5. Ndikho mbolakho makekhe oli engubo eya nasonye, sendikho mbola kamene tawe. Makekhe nga engubo eya nasonye. Sibala sino sisiefwe nisio. Mutonyi owa Nabukelembe. Maina wang'ola. Bakikuyu.Nga nemuli ano Bakikuyu balikhano?

Sebatiukha lisina lia Maina? Sikila sina? Eeeeh, efwefwe omung'osi owe Babukusu Maina omwana owa Kuloba. Maina sekhuli nende eng'ani yewe ta! Maina kakwa muba Kikuyu. Ngane ne kakwa eyo eyo pebe, bosi banyola lisina lia Maina! Nga nobona nebatiukha Maina bario. Owefwe niye! Aluno ari oyo wang'ola. Okhola khabili Welemba omwana muhala wangola! Okhola khataru Watiekele omulunda, wangola! Mani omwana mukalasi, wangola! Ali chinyanga chilicha, ali omwana acha khusalwa ebukwe akhang'ole kandume esese. Khane ang'ola Mutonyi owa Nabukelembe omusinde owa Nakhumwa! Okundi kecha kang'ola bali Wakhisi, omukimba omuwabini wacha wang'olela ebukhonde! Namauma owa Namasindakusi, omutemulani! Khaleke ne Kitoo, Wasike owa Butebu omwana mulabu wela khuKituni khulwanda. Mutonyi owa Bukelembe owang'olela mumikhonge emiluli! Enywenywe! Siundu owa Wasiende Omubichachi wabolela Bawanga ali "Murunga mulikho mupa Omunyange". Ali, "Murunga mulikho mupa Omumaina, Murunga mulikho mupa Omuchuma nende Omusawa. Semukhape omwana owo Omukolongolo ta!" Murunga waloma ali, "Mwate, Siundu osunga orie?" Niko akasina! Murunga kamakhuwa ali katikha, ne Walucho batikha. Oli bacha bola Ebuwanga Murunga walila! Ali, " Enjala Ebuwanga!" Walucho walila ali, "Nalekha kimiti kiange!" Kakaba khusibala sino. Babandu ababa.

6. Khwerana ne bakali sekhwerana ne bandu bakekhe tawe! Babanyange nabira necha Bamaina. Bamaina babili babaloma elomo. Bamaina. Omwana mukitang'a, omwana mukitwiika, omwana mukitang'a mukitwiika. Enywenywe. Bamaina sili mba Kolongolo. Nabiswa omwana owa Wachiye owalomela Emiendo. Abanga bali okhobola andi Nabiswa wapaho khabili!. Bakikwameti nabira necha Bakananachi. Basoleli bapa lichabungwe lia luluwa! Basoleli bapa lichabungwe lialuluwa. Basoleli bataru, Elijah owa Neala owalomela Emaeni, oyo Omukananachi niye. Ishirini na nane omusani wema mawe Nameme, mawe Neala, mawe Bamilele Bamitungu! Sili mubakananachi, Israeli Khaoya! Israeli Khaoya. Bacha bababoha Ekibisi. Chaba munyanga echecho. Ata aluno ari yama mungo mwa Wamalwa Kijana okhwa

Nakitang’a yuno olikho ocha oli. Mala orakikha khubola oli Mwai Kibaki chini! Bumekele bukhoya babechukhulu bakhurorera! Busuma bukhakasu bumala chinyanyi muningilo!

7. Kumurwe mulala (suggests an old man’s voice from the crowd). Kumurwe mulala? Omundu owe sikhasi niye owe kumurwe mulala. Ne ewewe oli ne kimirwe kibili. Nono koo, omanye omundu namenya buusa kumwaka nekuwa mala nacha nanyola omundu owe sikhasi, asala babana bamufwana. Sewabone? Lola epicha soreba tawe. Sili sibofu aluno ari kane niche khubana bano. Ooooh! Tawe, khabe. Esese nachia Enairobi. Sisiakila nachia Enairobi khembole nono kang’ali. Siasikila nachia Enairobi kumwaka kukwawa okwokwo, naulila bali Mukhisa ne Wamalwa sebenyana ta. Bali khane nanu sebenyana ta, bali khane nanu sebenyana ta. Nepakho ndi mbalange, mbo ndoma sebecha ta. Ndi nono khenche nomele sa murekodi. Nacha naloma loma, senabola omundu yesi yesi namwe lisina liase ta. Nabola ndi Musikari Kombo, ndi Wamalwa Kijana, nanu Mukhisa, nanu Munyasia, ndi musimane. Mukendele alala nga kamake. Licha khulondakho nabola ndi mukhalanga Nairobi muli eyefwe ne eyefwe etambemo ta! Nono muNairobi nekhukhola khuri abele khwanyolile Wamalwa alimo. Kakhaba nga nafwile ehofisi babola sa owakikula lebe. Babukusu semuli anano? Esababu eya NARC si? (Lubasi). Lubasi. Basi, omunake mala akwe! Ore khwisikamo) Eeeh!

8. Omulosi oyuyu owa Wamalwa? Oyo owa wamalwa? Okundi khane ali waena? (Ali enyuma eyeyo). Ali munchu? (Eeeh ali munchu). Osala omusoleli oyu? (Eeeh). Oooh. Nono akasina! Omundu nga Wamalwa nga namalile kafwa ari, okhaba ne omukhasi mulala oli ese omusecha aah, aah! Baukhasianga.

9. Omwana omukhana nga asili mungo mwabwe, omwana omukhana asiekhana chabene; asiekhana, omukhana kekhana! Oli kacha pebe, oli kakhwalikha kelasi kekhola omukoko wachikokela elala! Nakhakhwalikha omukhana mungo mwabwe. Omusinde

kesindikha mungo mwabwe. Omusoleli kecha nio wasola bindu bie khusibala! Wasola mungo mwabwe.

10. Aluno ari, Musikari Kombo, sewekhale abwenao? Ewe soli omulunda wase? Bulayi bwoo wakenda ne Muliro! Bulayi bwoo wakenda ne Wamalwa! Takha mulume engubo andi FORDKENYA selikho ta. Mbo bayusia bali bayusia bali oooh Musikari Kombo bakhayile busa mu FORD KENYA yabwe, ne lola Raila wachenchile mala wacha mu KANU,basio balikho banyola kimiandu! Mwesi mwakhayila muwenomo basi, Raila wakobola lundi wamuundakho. Khembole ndio bakhabola bali ndomile siasa niyo ta. Babandu bamanyile sifuno sia Kenya, Musikari Kombo, enywe mumanyile sifuno! Menya muKenya nga Wele nekenya. Bifuno biene ebiebio. Mwabene ndibo ndikho mbolela ababo.

11. Luno luri mukhoya mwabene muambane, musimane, muambane mukosiane, muambane mube sisindu silala. Lola emoni yacha! Wamalwa ngana nacha ari abele niye emoni yefwe. Nono luno luri efwe khwalolile enywe. Mukhwasi (referring to Musikari Kombo) obukule lurimba mulikho mucha khuaya chisang'i. Mala ewewe nende Noah Wekesa, khembole babandu babili bano, mulikho mucha khuaya chisang'i. Namwe ne Mukhisa mucha khuaya chisang'i. Nga esang'i embongo yakwa mulurimba pebe, basi enywe mwabukula, mwabukula nono kamafumo nono mwarakikha mwabene mulikho muhunana. Kane esang'i mukire? (Tawe! Audience responds) (Toboa! Toboa!). Akano niko mbola kano kali kakenywe niko, sekali kakange ta! Mwabene musimane mala mukendele alala. Wakhasia lola nisio ndikho mubolela omusakhulu bona wanjeta, mukhoya mwasimana. Nono esisina! Bona lulwoba eparapara bakilima mala bachukha murram. Mala lulwoba kane lwame khumabuyani asi anano mala lurure, basi oli lwola khungaki. Lulwoba selukanjukha kumusi ta, silo. Oli musilo lwakanjukha, oli busia nio pebe lwalola eyi lwalola eyi pebe, nio lwarura nono. Lwakanjukha! Semukanjukha?

12. Sili sibofu! Nokhwesa siuna okhwesa nendakala. Okholayo nga nemwachile enairobi mala mwarakikha khubola muli “Oooh efwe Babukusu nifwe fweng’ene ... nono efwe fweng’ene”. Tawe! Ambana ne babandu! Nio Wamalwa takha aambane ne babandu abele anyala? Newibasia omundu khurera omukhasi owe ngelekha nga nali ari… (Laughter and applause from crowd). Nono enywenywe aluno ari omundu kama engaki khuswani khucha paka emwalo eyeyo. Khukhwama sap aka khulwakhakha eyo. Aluno ari babandu ba Siboti … Siboti mulikho ano? Semuliyo bakali busa? (Eeeeh – audience answers.) Nono enjela elala, mala mukhuwelesie omundu abele oli nga Wamalwa omwene. Mala muenchemo muenchemo muenchele elala munyole sa omundu abele nga Wamalwa omwene. Luno luri sisiama sia FORD KENYA luno siarama busa. Encha omundu oli nga abele Wamalwa ache abe Chairman wa siama sia FORD KENYA. Mala omundu mwene oyoyo nali omulayi, kane okhebulile bamukhola khuba Chairman wa NARC. Musikari Kombo nekhola ndi aba ndikho khekhubolela ewewe. (Audience claps but are censored. They should not clap).

13. Ewe osoma mukilasi si? Form Four? (Form two- one of the children of the deceased responds). Eeeeh! Ewe osoma namwe wamala? Mayi ne ewewe bona wekhale khulubaso nga namulekhwa, wekhale khulubaso nga namulekhwa! Sikila lisina lia namulekhwa musecha wakhulekhile. Enchu yoo eli wae? Nono khembolele elala nga Musundi wa Mwoni. Maayi kukhono kwoo kumulayi. Omulosi yuno nise owakhaka mbo Wamalwa acha ari, acha ari paka kecha mungo muno. Mala nabolela Wamalwa ndi omusoleli yuno nokheba okhebele mungo muno. Omwana omusoleli yuno sekema mungo muno? Luliki selwama Namanjalala? Sinesi yuno niye omubukusu! Luliki lwama eyi, ekhafu yasuna asi! Mala omwana sebapa chisindani ta! Balonga becha wema busa basi bakheba. Omusinde nono wengila mubasani. Omanye likhuwa bali khukhwingila, bakali noreba mulubukusu oli sifuno sie khukhwingila sebanyile ta. Obechanga omusinde bona wengila mubasani. Nio balanga bali khukhwingila. Oli wamala khukhwingila balanga bali omufulu bakhufulile engubo ya mao! Wacha

mwikombe wikombelamo ohonelemo! Oli weyalula balanga bali omutembete mubasani waba tembe!

14. Aluno ari omwana yuno asili omukekhe.Sili sibofu enywenywe bana ba Wamalwa, musime bararawenywe baramile, musime bawandayo bali bakhulu bano. Musimane, mubakosie mube sisindu silala. Engubo sekonelanga endwasi ta! Ewe newacha kaba bali ochumanga engelekha papa, manya engo eneno efwana erie! (Addressing Jabali) (Orio orio, mubolele- The audience urges him on to tell Jabali the truth). Ewewe newama engelekha newicha, wiche busa mungo mwenywe muno, okhaba omufuringokho ta! Manya engo efwana erie (Eeeh, mubolele- shouts the crowd). Bakhabola bali Wamalwa Kijana kabukula babana wasikha walekha chingobi ta! Bakhoyele babole bali kafwa sibuno ne kumurwe kuliyo! Khaba yaba ekhabi endayi nembona lukondo lwoho luno mubaengele bano, nendulolelesiana, namenyelesia, mubaengele bano khunyolamo omundu olinda sibala sia Siboti sakhinda khubamo ta! Rarao kaba busa bali kemile busa muno musiboti, khunga sa chisilingi khukhwama engelekha omuyete. Mala mube esebele nio banywamo kamechi chimbeka ne chimbeka.

15. Esese Baengele bona muli anano omwana kechile kandanga aliwaena? Omwana wechile kandanga.Orioo. Papa nilio ndikho khubolela, babana bano nakhulekhele. Olinde babana bano, osomie babana bano. Akhaba oyoyo, omwana omukhana oyoyo, khaka sa kamani, mukhake kamani. Musikari Kombo, Wakoli mukhake kamani omwana yuno mumuyile mu-University. Omwana omukhana oyuyu, lukondo luno lukhatibila busa muno tawe.Sikila anamala kacha mu-university, aba kanikhile nono, kanikhile bukesi lundi omwene aba khukokwa nono bamwenya bakhila. Bamwenya aba sebali bafuri ngokho busa tawe! Omundu napara khumuhoya kepakho ali, “Aaah yuno khalomele khena”! . Ne busa nga nali ari mundu kama busa yakhaba mubusaa pebe,, ali kumoyo kwakhusimile, mala wa mubusaa.

16. Esese nga nama anano nga ndikho ncha mukhakhinga tawe! (Interjection from the crowd- Omwana keranga mawe). Ndi nga nekhola ndi ndikho nicha. Karamiremo busa kabili kong'ene mukhakhindia ta. Bona be chisimbo khuli anano, Yohana Namuli kekhale eyiyi. Omundu yuno omukali niye mumuwa busa chinjala chirano chimbofu.Ese nga nama anano, sisindu nisio ndikho mulekhela, omulosi Nakitang'a mbulila bali alikho alwala. Omulosi Nakitang'a, Nakitang'a, Nakitang'a! Baengele ne mumwombakhile enchu anano. William Wambwa akhaulila ario wacha wanjekhina khungila ali ambukule omukhasi tawe!

17. Endebe ya Kenya, endebe ya bibala biosibiosi.Wesi omuelesie endebe endayi mala fwesi khulimunyola nekekhale mubwami bwa mindali na mindali, bubwami bukhaliwayo tawe. Oli kumuliango kwase! Olikhong'onda ndimwikulila, Baba Wele nakhong'onda khumuliango, yikula kumuliango kube khwasie.

Luyali lwa Wamalwa, luyali lwa Wamalwa,

Kumwoyo kwa Wamalwa, kumwoyo kwa Maiko,

Kuronye wa Baba Wele.

Okhwanakhombe, aronye wa Baba Wele.

Okhwa Natulo, aronye wa Papa Wele.

Wamalwa Kijana oyu, aronye wa Baba Wele.

Onabona engokho etima ne kamala ke eyasie yosi balitima ne kamala kayo. Chikhafu nechipana olabona ndala yipakilisia kumukhinga aba ekana khwakukhakho. Khulile omwana wefwe!

Video Tape (English Translation)

1. Take courage … take courage, be strong. I don't have the words to speak. Let me ask the most powerful, let me ask God of the Universe, God the son, God of our ancestors, the Good God…. Baengele, take courage, death is as old, poverty/calamity/misfortunes are as old … we live with death, we live with misfortunes, it is not something new.

2. Hey you daughter, are you a child to this home? What about son? Have you ever seen God? (Laughter form audience) You son, have you ever seen God? What is the date today? (9^{th} – the audience responds. The date is 9^{th}? (Yes – the audience affirms). Today I am showing you God so that you can be able to see Him. Do you accept to see God? (Yes – the audience responds). Don't just be claiming that you know God yet you have never seen Him. The time now is some minutes past nine… Today (ninth) you are going to see God. Do not just exist without having seen God. Everybody should leave this place saying "Manguliechi has shown us God…"

3. By the way, how many are God's commandments? (They are ten – the audience responds). What is their meaning? Do you know its meaning? (No, we don't know – the audience responds). God's commandments are ten. You have got five fingers, the other person has got five fingers when you put them together when you greet each other, and they add up to ten. God wants peace; he does not want enemity… those are God's Ten Commandments.

4. As for now, Musikari Kombo, for I can see you are seated over there, aren't you my (*omulunda*) clans mate? The good thing about you is that you were so close to Muliro; the good thing about you is that you were so close to Wamalwa. Had it not been for your resilience, FORD-KENYA party would not be in existence. Your detractors criticized you claiming you Musikari Kombo had stuck to their FORD

KENYA party, yet other (other parties) had joined KANU and were being rewarded with cash and other goodies.

5. You people, you should be united, you should love one another, you should be united and treat each other with consideration. You should be united and be one thing. See, our only eye is gone, Wamalwa is now gone for he was our eye. As for now, we are looking up to you… Mukhwasi (brother-in-law) consider this:- you arm yourself with traps and set off to hunt wild animals. Let say you and Noah Wekasa, let me use you two as an example. You are going to hunt wild animals, or let us say going to hunt soon as a buffalo stumbles on the trap and gets trapped, then you take up, you take up spears and start fighting each other, spearing each other. Will you then kill the animal? No! (The audience responds). Toboa! Toboa! (The audience encourages the performer). These things are not my own inventions. They concern you (say it, tell them – the audience encourages him on). These things are not my own invention, they concern you. You should love one another; you should work together as a one people.

7. When you uproot a stump, you uproot with its roots. Let it not be that once you are in Nairobi, you then start boasting that "we Bukusu can make it alone, that we can make it alone." That should not be the case; you must unite with other people. If Wamalwa did not unite with other people…how far will he have gone?

8. As for now, the people of Sabaot … Are people of Sabaot (constituency) present here? (Yess… audience responds) Now you must search properly, and then give us one good person, as good as the late Wamalwa. Then we shall search, search him, search him, search him, search him thoroughly … Find a good man, as good as the late Wamalwa.

9. As for now, FORD KENYA party has no leader. Search for a person who is as able as Wamalwa was – to be made the Chairman of FORD KENYA. And if that person

is able enough, he will be made the Chairman of NARC. Musikari Kombo, I am alluding to you. (Audience claps but are censored).

10. Hey you, in which class are you? (Form two – one of the children of the deceased responds.)And what about you, are you still in school or you completed? What about you my daughter?

11. It is that the initiate is not given pain killing injection, he is simply taken to the river in the morning, smeared with mud and then comes home and he is cut. It is at this moment that the uncircumcised joins the circumcised, I is now a man. Do you know the meaning of being circumcised? The significance of being circumcised? Many people have asked men the significance of circumcision among Bukusu people. It is that the initiate is *omusinde* (uncircumcised) he then joins the *basani* (the circumcised /men). That is what is referred to as circumcision.

12. The most important thing to you children of the late Wamalwa, you should respect your paternal uncles who have been left behind, you should love and respect your elder brothers, you should love one another.Treat one another with consideration, be one thing. *Engubo sekonelanga endwasi ta!* The cloth does not sleep on a wound.When yougo back to Europe where you work, my son (referring to Wamalwa's eldest son named Jabali) remember this home and assist your relatives. (Bravo! Bravos... tell him! Tell him! Shouts the audience).When you visit this home from abroad, do so with all your heart, do not be mean! Assist this home where necessary (yee – tell him). Let it not be said that Wamalwa Kijana buried the children instead of the umbilical cord. Let it be said that though he is dead, he left behind sensible children. You should be like a well from which people from all corners of the world will come to draw water from.

13. See I am here today among *Baengele* …where is the person who came to call me? Where is he? Thanks. I bequeath these children to you, look after these children, and

educate these children. Even that girl over here, do all within your means, put your efforts together. Wakoli and Musikari Kombo put your efforts together and enable that girl to study upto university level, the girl over here. Do not let her beauty get wasted here in the village. Once she joins university, she would be able to expose her potential at the same time expose herself to many potential suitors. Such suitors will not be the common lot, no! no! No! The potential suitor will be initially at loss on how to approach her. But when she is here in the village, even village drunkards will approach her claiming to be in love with her (laughter from the audience). He will declare his love for her yet he is a known partaker of *busaa*.

Appendix 3 – Selected Photographs



Photo 1. Manguliechi in full performance regalia poses with his two wives.



Photo 2. Author with (from left), Joseph, Manguliechi, Julie Mayieku and Dr. Mbori after an interview on 3rd June 2008.



Photo 3. Manguliechi together with his son Joseph and the author.



Photo 4. Manguliechi at home with (from left), his son Joseph Wanyonyi a pastor, Kimingichi Wabende and the author after an interview in his homestead on 3rd June 2008.



Photo 5. In this photo taken in his house Manguliechi explains a point on *kumuse*-related taboos of the Bukusu



Photo 6. Manguliechi demonstrating how the traditional ivory armlet (*epokoto*) is worn.



Photograph. 7 Manguliechi in full performance robes, complete with a stick and fly whisk

Appendix 4: Brief Biographical Details of Key informants

Ben Lubisia: Born in 1940, in the former Bungoma District, Mwalimu Lubisia was a primary school teacher. He retired in 1995 after more than 30 years of professional to the Teachers Service Commission of Kenya. As a teacher his favourite subjects were Christian Religious studies and history.He is an avid cultural expert on matters of Bukusu religion, cultural traditions and practices and history and the funeral oratory performance.

Bob Wekesa: A graduate of English and Literature from the University of Nairobi, Bob Wekesa is a well known political analyst, journalist and media researcher who has published a number of books on Bukusu politics, politicians and cultural traditions. Among his most famous publication is the pioneering biography on the late Michael Wamalwa, The Road not Taken: A biography of Michael Wamalwa Kijana. His research interests are in media, politics and African socio-cultural issues. He is currently pursuing a PhD programme in media studies at The Communications University of China.

Charles Katiambo: He is a retired former primary school head teacher. Born in 1939, and circumcised in 1952, a cohort that is fondly referred as *Nyange sya Mau mau*; he also served as County ward representative for Kabula area from 1974 to 1979. He is also a highly respected elder and advisor and Bukusu cultural matters. He has also served as the Bungoma District chairman of the Bakhone clan for more than 10 years. His insights on Bukusu traditional structures of leadership and history were particularly illuminating.

Joseph S.W. Wanjala: A retired and respected former District Magistrate, Mzee Wanjala was born in 1938, in Milani, Bokoli Division, in Bungoma. He started working as a magistrate with specialization in African Traditional Law and Customs in 1967.Moving and working at different stations throughout from Kimilili in Bungoma, Funyula in Busia, Murang'a, Kabarnet and Mt. Elgon, Mzee Wanjala earned the trust of many traditional leaders among the Teso, Bukusu and Sabaot ethnic because of landmark rulings that often demonstrated his good grasp of African Customary Laws on Marriage, Dowry and many other issues.

Julius Charles Wasike: He is my father and a former primary school head teacher. Born in 1939, he happens to possess immense and well archived records of Bukusu history, traditions and rituals. His late father and my grandfather Kanisio Wafula, who worked as a clerk in the office of the late Paramount Chief of the colonial times Sudi Namachanja, bequeathed to him a lot of records on Bukusu history, politics and cultural

rites. Those records were very useful in helping me understand the Bukusu history in colonial, pre-colonial and postcolonial periods.

Kimingichi Wabende: He is a drama lecturer at the Department of Literature, University of Nairobi. He has written, directed, produced and performed several plays under the University's Free Travelling Theatre. His interests in kumuse as a traditional dramatic performance, has inspired him to do so many audio and video recordings of the ritual performance for both orality and drama studies.

Wanyonyi John Manguliechi: He was the main respondent and chief oral artist. Although, he has since passed on my interviews with him elicited a lot of discussions contained in my analysis. More information on his biography is contained in chapter three of the thesis.