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Chabari, Kimathi Emmanuel

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There are Many Ways of Being a Boy: Barbara Kimenye's Imagination of Boyhood Masculinities in Selected Storybooks from the *Moses* Series

Kimathi Emmanuel Chabari

A Research Report submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Johannesburg, 2009

Abstract

This study examines Barbara Kimenye's imagination of boyhood masculinities in the selected adventure stories from the *Moses* series. It is based on the understanding that gender is a social construct. The Research Report contributes to children's literature and gender scholarships. In particular, through textual analysis of primary texts and gender related theoretical framework, I highlight various categories of masculine behaviour based on boy characters' power, control and popularity at Mukibi Educational Institute – Kimenye's fictitious boarding school in *Moses* series. I tease out complexities of both individuals' and groups' notions of manliness and how they manifest in various locales. I argue that there are many ways of being a boy.

I also highlight how the author deploys satire to imagine a boarding school and how this space allows construction and performance of specific boyhood masculinities. In addition, I highlight Kimenye's depiction of corporal punishment and family relatives and how these also allow for construction and performance of particular man-like behaviour by her boy characters.

Kimenye's imagination of girlhood masculinities is also explored by examining boy characters' stereotypes on girls and how through Sekabanja – a girl character – the author manages to deconstruct this by portraying her [Sekabanja] as behaving as expected of a boy. In addition, I highlight Kimenye's representation of enactment of gender inequalities in a mixed sex school. I also underline how illustrations also participate in the imagination of girlhood masculinities. I argue that by portraying a girl – Sekabanja – as behaving as expected of boys if not better, Kimenye is highlighting gender as a social construct and participating in deconstruction of stereotypes on girls and women through a literary technique.

Keywords: Barbara Kimenye, the *Moses* series, boyhood masculinities, adventure, illustrations, boarding school, girlhood masculinities.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Kimathi Emmanuel Chabari Signature

....

(Name of candidate)

..... Day of ....., 2009

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I must admit from the word go that I am not accustomed to thanking people in writing. Having said that, I want to tender unreserved apologies in advance to those who may not be mentioned here and the possibility that my choice of words may lack intensity proportional to the gratitude that I owe many.

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Dedication

To Muthengi and Nyaga, wherever you are my heart still bleeds.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

This study examines the construction of boyhood masculinities in selected storybooks from Barbara Kimenye's *Moses* series. Although Barbara Kimenye has written several books focussing on varied themes, the study limits itself to four books as they specifically deal with Kimenye's construction of boyhood masculinities. The study concentrates on the following books: *Moses* (1968), *Moses and the Penpal* (1968) *Moses on the Move* (1971) and *Moses in a Muddle* (1976). I argue that the four selected highlights Kimenye's imagination of boyhood masculinities through adventure narratives. However there is a round female character, Juli Sekabanja, in *Moses in a Muddle* that brings to light Kimenye's imagination of girlhood masculinities which I argue is Kimenye's criticism of negative stereotypes on girls.

The *Moses* series comprises eleven adventure stories published between 1968 and 1987. The stories in the series highlight delinquency by boys in a boarding school. All the books in the series have three boys as the leading characters: Sebastian Mulutu (fondly referred to as King Kong), Moses Kibaya (popularly known as Holy Moses) and Rukia, the Dorm 3 prefect. These three main characters together with other boys at Mukibi Educational Institute for the Sons of African Gentlemen are always involved in smoking, illicit consumption of alcohol, lying to authorities, deceitful games such as poker, among other deviant behaviour. It is ironical that the above described (mis)behaviour take place at a school for the *Sons of African Gentlemen* (emphasis added). One student – Holy Moses – describes the institution in the following words:

> I cannot say there was anything unusually impressive about the Institute itself. To me it looked the poorer, seedier type of junior secondary school, and I was certainly in a position to make the comparison. There was a collection of low, shabby buildings, most of them with thatched roofs, and a compound that no self-respecting cowherd would allow his beasts to graze in. [1]

The author deploys satire to mock boarding school and figures of authority. Through this mockery, she empowers the young narrator's voice – Holy Moses and other boy characters. In other words, Kimenye's work is satirical. Like 'the great satirists [she] not only attacks people or customs [that she] thinks are bad, but [she] also creates a dream world in which the real world is fantastically inverted or travestied'[2]. This is demonstrated, for example, when she mocks school and teachers through a student.

The author of the *Moses* series, Barbara Kimenye, was born in England in 1929. She however states that her early life in England has 'no bearing'[3] upon her career as a writer in Uganda. Kimenye's above assertion is quite debatable as Schmidt notes:

> The dialogue of Moses and his friends is full of British colloquialism and phrases from Western popular culture. The discovery of caves is referred to as "a jolly good sign" (Kimenye, 1973c). King Kong frequently refers to other boys as "twists" and uses the phrase "how the blazes," while a boy's crying is referred to as "blubbering" (Kimenye, 1971a). Boys who want to avoid girls "play it cool" (Kimenye, 1973b), they "dig" dancing at the café (Kimenye, 1971a), and consider campfires to be "strictly for the birds".[4]

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[1] *Moses* (1968:6).
[2] Mathews (1969:24)
[3] Jahn, Schild and Nordmann, (1972:176)
[4] Schmidt (1976: 78)

Barbara Kimenye can be described as a prolific Anglophone Ugandan writer for children owing to her creative output and double heritage. She moved to Uganda in 1950 as a housewife and mother to two boys. She first worked as a journalist for *Uganda Nation* before joining *Daily Nation* of Kenya. She published two anthologies of short stories *Kalasanda* (1965) and *Kalasanda Revisited* (1966) before shifting to writing for children. Her first children's books are *The Smugglers* (1966) and *Moses* (1968). Her *Moses* series is popular both in Uganda and Kenya and is categorised as part of children's literature.

Jack Zipes asserts that 'children's literature and culture are understood in the broadest sense of the term *children* to encompass the period of childhood up through adolescence'[5]. Barbara Kimenye's main characters in the *Moses* series are aged between fourteen and eighteen years. Indeed, the narrator in the series, Moses Kibaya, also known as Holy Moses is fifteen years old. Through this selective choice of characters and setting – junior secondary school – it is arguable that Kimenye had adolescents as her audience though it can also be said that the series suits adults interested in school boys adventures.

In comparison to other children's stories in East Africa, Kimenye's *Moses* series stands out because it is not directly informed by Ugandan or Kenyan history like many other books for children such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Njamba Nene and the Flying Bus.* In Ngugi's book, Njamba Nene's knowledge of his African village is glorified as the book attempts to narrate the colonial history of Kenya. The *Moses* series seems to mainly

[5] "Introduction" to Yenika-Agbaw (2008)

celebrate boyhood masculinities through the adventure form in a single sex boarding school setting.

Many African writers of children's literature use stories to teach children history, culture and instil confidence[6]. I agree with Schmidt that the *Moses* series is not directly didactic but hasten to add that this does not mean that Kimenye does not tackle serious themes. Schmidt states:

> The large element of humour especially in the *Moses* series of adventure stories and the restricted settings of Kimenye's novels, prevent them from having a strong didactic function. Even though Kimenye's novels are used as supplementary school readers, their function is more to make reading interesting than to teach truths about African life.[7]

The present study attempts to show that although Kimenye does not engage in teaching African history or culture, she is committed to the theme of boyhood in a boarding school through the adventure form. There is evidence from the imprint pages of the books in the series that each book has been reprinted regularly. For example, *Moses* was first published in 1968 and has been reprinted fourteen times, the most recent reprint being in 2007[8]. The *Moses* series is set in Uganda and many characters have Ugandan names but there are also Kenyan names such as Mr Karanja which is a Gikuyu name and Mutua a Kamba name. These two communities reside in Kenya. The author of the series also

[6] Muriungi (2006:6)
[7] Schmidt (1976: 79)
[8] The copies of *Moses* series used in this research were purchased in 2008 so there may be more recent reprints.

makes references to Kenya in the selected books. This characteristic gives the series an East African outlook.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study examines boyhood masculinities in the selected stories. To achieve this main aim, I endeavour to answer the following questions: How does Barbara Kimenye construct boyhood masculinities in the selected stories? What is the role of the adventure form in Kimenye's construction of boyhood masculinities? What strategies does the author use to imagine single sex boarding school and family? And how does her imagination of school relate to the construction of boyhood masculinities? The study also examines Kimenye's construction of girlhood: Does she entrench female stereotypes? or does she deconstruct them?

In depth, the study examines different ways through which boyhood masculinities are constructed including two aspects that S.R. Bird identifies, namely: emotional detachment of male characters from female characters and competitiveness among boy characters[9]. Emotional detachment is evident in Kimenye's *Moses in a Muddle*, for example, when Miss Juli Sekabanja sends her younger brother to call both Holy Moses and King Kong from Dorm 3 in order to help her catch a 'spy'; the two boys make 'a vow never to share a secret with another woman as long as [they] lived'.[10] Kimenye also constructs Rukia, King Kong, Itchy Fingers and Holy Moses as competing for various identity actualisations such as being tough, clever and authoritative. Competition is also

[9] Bird (1996:121)
[10] *Moses in a Muddle* (1976:31)

evident in *Moses in a Muddle* where boy characters are described as aiming to outshine each other in order to get attention of a new girl student, Juli Sekabanja, in their school.

The study also highlights how Kimenye represents heroism. It attempts to show that the author's portrayal of idealised identity of a hero constitutes an aspect of boyhood masculinities. The study equally examines adventurousness as an example of the many ways through which boys express their masculinities in the selected texts. Each of the leading boy characters in the series attempts to show other boys at Mukibi Educational Institute that he is unique and deserves recognition and respect for his idea of manliness.

I also examine girlhood in *Moses in a Muddle*. I highlight Kimenye's construction of both single and mixed sex education with close reference to the history of boarding schools.

1.3 Justification of the Study

There are a number of reasons why this study is important. One is the fact that Barbara Kimenye's *Moses* series has not been extensively featured in major literary studies despite the fact that it has been in the market since 1968 when the first four books in the series were published. While reviewing Asenath Bole Odaga's *Literature for Children and Young People in Kenya* (1985), which examines oral stories from the pre-colonial era, and those published during the colonial and postcolonial periods in Kenya, Nancy J. Schmidt observes that Odaga's book 'fails to represent the dynamics of Kenyan publishing in the 1980s'.[11] In particular, Odaga fails to discuss book series for children published by East African Publishing House or multinationals such as Heinemann and

[11] Schmidt (1986:610)

Oxford however distinct the content and form of their fiction books are in comparison to what she discusses.

The present study attempts to show the relevance of Kimenye's *Moses* series that has not been illuminated. In particular, it examines how Kimenye constructs boyhood masculinities through the adventure form in a boarding school, an aspect that differs from the popular focus on the role of literature in teaching children history and moral issues.[12]

Many studies on children's literature in Kenya reveal that it has mainly been tailored to be didactic[13]. The present study offers a different perspective on children's literature in Kenya.

Since the 1980s there has been an increase of studies related to gender relations and in particular feminism. These feminist studies have enormously contributed to freeing boys and men from tough traditional roles expected of them by societies. For example, feminist studies have educated males that they do not have to be violent in order to be regarded as men in our contemporary societies[14]. However, it is important to shift the trend to boys by examining fiction books exploring boyhood other than, say, looking at boyhood from a girlhood perspective. This study helps in redressing the imbalance that has been created in gender studies and also complement feminist studies indirectly.

[12] Odaga(1974), Mwanzi (1982), Trivedi (1991) and Muriungi (2006)
[13] Odaga (1974) Osa (2001) and Muriungi 2006)
[14] Abbot (1993:1 – 2)

Frances Cleaver argues that 'much of the focus on gender in development has been on discrimination against girls and women and not how boys learn to be men and what this means for gender relations as they grow up'[15]. Cleaver also puts emphasis on theories of masculinity that argue that for change in gender roles and identities to happen, it is important to critically understand processes through which people learn about their culture that facilitates and sustains gender roles and identities. The current study focuses on boyhood masculinities and attempts to understand gender identities through literature which acts as one of the tools of socialisation.[16]

There has been an increase in student unrest in secondary schools especially in Kenya in the last three decades. In her article "Masculinity and Adolescent Male Violence: The Case of Three Secondary in Kenya" Caroline W. Kariuki notes that 'during the 80s, the number of disturbances in Kenyan schools increased from 0.9% to 7.2%'[17]. According to her report this rate had escalated to 7.7% by 2000. In the recent past, there has been a wave of violence especially just before the commencement of annual national examinations in Kenya.[18] Carole Summers traces student unrest in Uganda from 1942 when she asserts that students at King's College Budo in Uganda 'manipulated headmaster and celebrated affiliation over discipline'[19]. The prevalence of student unrest both in Uganda and Kenya informs the examination of the representation of (in)discipline in the selected storybooks.

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[15] Cleaver (2002:46)
[16] See Cleaver (2002:167 – 168) for theories of masculinity and literature as a tool of socialisation.
[17] Kariuki (unpaged)
[18] See John Njagi, Waikwa Maina, Charles Wanyoro, Silas Nthiga and George Munene article "Students who took part in riots to sit for exam" published in *Daily Nation* October 19 2008 for insights into the contemporary problem of student unrest in Kenya.

[19] Carole, Summers (2006:1)

1.4 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

There are numerous common characteristics across the selected storybooks from the *Moses* series. One is the fact that Kimenye uses the same characters, and two is that her characters are involved in adventures. It is also important to note that there is a similarity in illustrations deployed in all books in the *Moses* series – they all capture action by the three leading boy characters. These illustrations suggest that the texts are dealing with active boys thus they also inform the present study on representation of boyhood masculinities.

There is also a general absence of round girl and women characters in the series apart from *Moses in a Muddle* (1976) and even in this case there is an aversion to girls and women by boy characters. Nancy J. Schmidt notes:

> The heroes' aversion to girls and young women is a stock incident of function about early adolescent boys which appears in each of Kimenye's novels and provides the substance of the adventure in two of them.[20]

The aversion of boy characters to girls highlights boyhood masculinities in the series. Schmidt's observation of boy characters as disliking girls is viewed in the present study as an enactment of gender inequalities. It is also seen as representing the idea of hypermasculinity that Ira Silverman and Simion Dinitiz define as 'antisocial, aggressive

[20] Schmidt, "The Writer as a Teacher: A Comparison of the African Adventure Stories of G. A. Henty, Rene Guillot and Barbara Kimenye". *African Studies Review,* vol.19, No. 2, (Sep., 1976) p. 69–80.

and criminal activities … of delinquent boys'[21]. There are numerous traits that indicate hypermasculinity in the series, for example, when Holy Moses in *Moses and the Penpal* discovers the penpal he had written to, A.P. Kibuka, was in fact a girl: Alice P. Kibuka, he says 'my head reeled. I can't remember ever being so shattered in my life'. Holy Moses goes ahead to state that: 'I'm not replying to this soppy rubbish [Alice's letter] I don't intend getting mixed up with silly women'.[22]

It is important to point out that not all boy characters in the selected stories are averse to girls and women, at least not all the times and all the places. I argue that Kimenye's representation of her boy characters indicates that boyhood masculinities are diverse, fluid and can coexist. In other words, boy(s) are portrayed as having different behaviour that are sometimes contradictory and that one's or a group's behaviour is mainly influenced by particular factors.

Kimenye portrays her leading characters in the selected storybooks as delinquents. In *Moses and the Penpal*, for example, Kasali who is described as 'smelling like a dustbin'[23] keeps a winery right in Dorm 3. The decision by Holy Moses, King Kong, Rukia and Itchy Fingers to go to Tororo instead of going home in *Moses on the Move* and the fact that they agree to act as cripples for Finito, the healer, indicate elements of juvenile delinquency. I use the term juvenile delinquency in this research to mean acts by minors that contravene the rules set by institutions such as family and school. However the term

[21] Silverman and Dinitiz, "Compulsive Masculinities and Delinquency: An Empirical Investigation" *Criminology* 11, No 4. (1974:49–515)
[22] *Moses and the Penpal* (1968:24 – 26).
[23] ibid.p.4

does not invoke a moral sense – that is – those who are delinquents are immoral. A close examination of the rules that boy characters break as represented by Kimenye suggests that they [rules] are faulty and some of those charged with the responsibility of implementing them do not actually obey such rules in their lives.

There are numerous studies discussing masculinity including Seilder (1989), Smith (1996), Segal (1990), Cleaver (2002), Dawson (1994), Mooka (2005), Odhiambo (2007) etc. Graham Dawson's *Soldier Heroes British Adventure: Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* is comprehensive and insightful on how soldier-hero adventure stories have impacted on masculinities in Britain. It is important to quote Dawson at length as he suggests that adventure narratives play an important role in the construction of masculinities among Britons, an idea that is important in the current study. Dawson asserts:

> Boys and men, as well as women and girls, endeavour to locate themselves imaginatively within their complexly structured social worlds. This is what I mean by the narrative imagining of masculinities. As *imagined* forms, masculinities are at once 'made up' by creative cultural activity and yet materialize in the social world as structured forms with real effects upon both women and men. As *narrative* forms of imagining, they exist in a temporal dimension of flux and dynamic contradictions, within which men make efforts towards a degree of continuity in psychic life.[24]

Dawson gives a personal account of how his own idea of masculinity was developed by the soldier-hero adventure stories he read. Dawson argues that 'military virtues such as

[24] Dawson (1994:264)

aggression, strength, courage and endurance'[25] were presented as manhood qualities which could only be attained in a battle. His work illustrates how British war adventure stories were idealised to an extent that the kind of masculinity that they created countered anxieties in the existing social world that was divided along fault-lines of 'ethnicity and nation, gender and class'. Dawson concludes that 'through soldiers' stories of this kind, a national past lives on'[26] and that soldier-hero adventure stories played a critical role in imagining masculinity which in turn defined Britain as a nation especially during war times.

Dawson also emphasizes that 'boy culture in Britain was such that it was shaped by war stories and images and this constituted their masculinity'.[27] There are a number of ideas that are relevant to the current research from Dawson including his definition of the adventure form as involving discovery, newness, danger, risk-taking among other characteristics that are, in themselves, embodiments of masculinities. But first, I want to make a clear distinction between Dawson's aim and that of the current study: Dawson aims at highlighting the real impact of soldiers' adventure stories in Britain but the present study aims at examining the representation of boyhood in the selected books. Unlike Dawson who is concerned with war stories, I will ask the following questions in the present study: What kind of boyhood masculinities does Kimenye construct in the selected stories? How does Kimenye imagine the boarding school in relation to boyhood masculinities? And what kind of adventures does Kimenye imagine East African boys engaging in? How are females represented? Is there a particular behaviour that is

[25] ibid.p.1
[26] ibid.p.282 – 283
[27] ibid.p.5.

expected of female characters by the male characters? And if yes, how do we interpret a female character's behaviour that is similar to that which is expected of boys?

Victor Seider asserts in *Rediscovering Masculinity* that:

> When we learn how to use language as boys, we very quickly learn how to conceal ourselves through language. We learn to 'master' language so that we can control the world around us. We use language as an instrument that will help show us as independent, strong, self-sufficient and masculine[28].

Seider's study highlights the role of language use in constructing a specific masculinity. Language is the cornerstone of studies whose primary data is prose fiction like the current one. Through the analysis of language used by the boy characters, I elucidate how the characters express and create their masculinities.

Nicholas Davies locates his study, *The Negotiation of Masculinity by Young, Male Peer Counsellors,* in the qualitative research tradition and identifies what he refers to as the main themes of masculinity namely: emotional stoicism, normative heterosexuality, gendered division of labour and displaced toughness. Davies' research highlights some indicators of masculinities which are relevant to literary studies like the current one[29]. His idea of masculinities as being both fluid and plural is also important.

[28] Seider (1989:142)
[29] Davies (2007)

Edward Mooka explores masculinities in Sembene Ousmane's *God's Bits of Wood*. Mooka discusses white masculinities, black masculinities, female masculinities and of much importance to the present study, he has a subsection on violent boyhood masculinities. Mooka uses the idea of masculinity as a performance to elucidate the critical role that street boys in Ousmane's *God's Bits of Wood* play in the workers' struggle in the novel. Mooka asserts that 'boys performed masculinities in relation to one another'[30]. The idea of masculinity as a performance between boys is extended in the present study to include masculinities as performances of boys in institutions such as families and school.

Catherine Muhoma argues after Hartsok that 'masculinity is linked with the notion of potency and virility'.[31] She observes that masculinity can also be enhanced by external factors such as money. The latter is important in examining boyhood masculinities in the selected books such as *Moses and the Penpal* and *Moses on the Move*. In the former, Holy Moses and King Kong engage in the business of selling penpals' addresses from old *Sunday Nation* newspapers while in the latter, Holy Moses, King Kong, Itchy Fingers and Rukia visit Tororo with the intent of earning money instead of going home. The question here is: what role does money play at Mukibi's Educational Institute in relation to boy characters' construction and performance of boyhood masculinities?

Tom Odhiambo's "Juvenile delinquency and violence in the fiction of three Kenyan writers" argues that there is a close relationship between youth delinquency and state

[30] Mooka (2005:56).
[31] Muhoma (2005:28)

socio-economic structures. Odhiambo identifies 'crimes of necessity' among young characters that graduate to 'crime as lifestyle' when they are old in Meja Mwangi's (1973) *Kill Me Quick*, John Kiriamiti's (1984) *My Life in Crime* and John Kigia Kimani's (1989) *Life and Times of a Bank Robber.* Odhiambo asserts:

> There is a close connection between criminal activities by the youth and the socio-economic structures of most societies. Violence and crime may be deployed by young men and women as strategies to access the networks of relationships and structures that determine the distribution of economic wealth.[32]

The question that arises from Odhiambo's insight in relation to this study is: is there a link between the boys' understanding of boyhood masculinities and the way Kimenye imagines institutions such as a boarding school and individual student families?

In addition to the school and family institutions is the issue of cultural construction of masculinity. Caroline W. Kariuki's article "Masculinity and Adolescent Male Violence: The Case of Three Secondary Schools in Kenya" examines cases of student unrest and violence in St. Kizito Secondary School, Nyeri Boys' High School and Kyanguli Secondary School. She identifies three factors that might have played critical roles leading to rape, loss of lives and property. These factors are: enactment of gender inequalities in St. Kizito[33], the power relationship between students and prefects in Nyeri

[32] Odhiambo (2007:134)
[33] Leslie Steeves (1997:2) partly attributes gender violence in the St. Kizito incident to patriarchy in the larger society of Meru where the school was situated.

Boys' High School and, student and teacher power relationships in Kyanguli Secondary School.

Kariuki's study is important to the present one as the three factors she lists above inform the trajectories of criticisms that this study takes towards Kimenye's representation of boyhood masculinities. For example, the study attempts to answer the following questions: How does Kimenye represent gender inequalities between boys and girls and among boys? How does she imagine student-prefect and student-teacher interactions?

Closely linked to the above is Deevia Bhana's article "Violence and the Gendered Negotiation of Masculinity Among Young Black Schools in South Africa" in *African Masculinities*. Bhana identifies numerous types of masculinities and argues that 'there are thus different patterns of masculinity, different ways of being a boy'[34]. Bhana also observes that 'schooling is an important arena in the construction of masculinities'[35]. Bhana's study is relevant to the present one as it cautions against looking at masculinity as a homogeneous, fixed performance by boys and men. Bhana's emphasis on the school as an important site for the construction of masculinities is also important as it encourages examination of the representation of school in the selected stories.

Robert Morrell highlights numerous types of masculinities in South African schools as a result of corporal punishment[36]. He quotes (Morrell 1994 &1997) and asserts that 'the purposeful and frequent infliction of pain by those in authority in a formal and ritualised

[34] *African Masculinities* (2005:208)
[35] ibid.
[36] Morrell (2001)

way in an institutional setting historically promoted violent masculinities among black and white, ruling and working class men'[37]. He further highlights that the various school masculinities he encountered during his research project 'rested on the idea that there are big differences between men and women [and that] men are harder and harsher than women'[38]. Morrell's article "Corporal Punishment and Masculinity in South African School" is important to the present study in three ways.

First, it is important in the examination of Kimenye's representation of corporal punishment in the selected texts. Two, his argument that masculinities rest on the idea that there are major differences between men and women is important in exploring Kimenye's imagination of boyhood and girlhood in *Moses in a Muddle*. Finally, Morrell's conclusion that masculinities characterised by misogyny, violence and uncritical acceptance or rejection of authority [are] promoted by continued corporal punishment'[39] is important in analysing the representation of numerous school masculinities in the selected stories and whether they are linked to the corporal punishment described in the stories.

It is imperative to define keywords used in this research namely: boyhood, masculinities and adventure. Lynne Segal notes:

> In all cultures and societies, gender stereotypes begin from the moment we are born and are identified as either a boy or a girl. Boys learn about the behaviour expected of men which, in

[37] ibid.p.140
[38] ibid.p.149
[39] ibid. p.155

> most cultures, are synonymous with being physically and emotionally strong, being competitive, dominating and controlling others[40].

The term boyhood is used in this research to refer to attempts by leading boy characters such as Holy Moses, King Kong, and Rukia in the selected storybooks to define themselves as boys. Although the term boy is used to generally refer to a young male person; I understand it as socially constructed hence the fact that there are various constructions of who is a boy. In a nutshell, the term boy is used in this research to label particular male characters boys because they have one or all of the following characteristics: behaviour, age, stature (students in a junior secondary school), among others. The term boyhood therefore captures the characteristics associated with the characters classified as boys.

Masculinity can simply be defined as a specific attempt to construct a particular kind of manhood through repetition of a particular behaviour either by an individual or a group. Tamara Shefer et al assert that 'masculinity, like femininity, does not come 'naturally', but is rather constantly and continuously fought for through performances of idealised and normative versions of masculinity'.[41] Lindegger and Maxwell assert that 'masculinity is not a property of individual men, but a socially constituted phenomenon, an everyday system of beliefs and performances that regulate behaviour between men and women, as well as between men and other men'[42].

[40] Segal (1990:168)
[41] Shefer, T et al (eds)(2007:3)
[42] ibid p.95

Muhoma adopts the term masculinity into literary discourse by asserting that it is 'as much about the utterances of the characters, as it is about their actions. Both take place in social contexts'[43]. The term 'masculinities' is more appropriate than 'masculinity' in the present study because it reflects the complexities, diversity and fluidity involved in the construction of manhood among the selected characters in the selected books. Paul Smith asserts:

> At the very least, one can say that masculinity is hardly ever defined as such – it simply exists and accretes around itself sets of behaviours and assumptions that are plugged right into the power grids of everyday life. This is the silent running of what I call *indefinite* masculinity. That is to say, masculinity *is not;* rather, there are only *masculinities* in plural, defined and cut through by differences and contradictions of all sorts[44].

Lynne Segal argues that masculinities connote understanding and appreciation of the differences between men. Kimmel and Aronson argue that:

> The use of the plural – masculinities – acknowledges that masculinity means different things to different groups of men at different times … men's experiences depend on class, race, ethnicity, age, region of the country and location in the global economy[45].

The term masculinities is used in this study to refer to characterisation of individual young male characters and their group's identities as boys. I argue that each of the boy characters' has a distinct notion of manliness although some aspects are shared as a result

[43] Muhoma (2005:28)
[44] Smith (1996:2 – 3)
[45] Kimmel and Aronson (2001:338)

of shared space. Therefore the existence of numerous boy characters with varied understandings of who is a boy and what is boyhood highlight boyhood masculinities. Since boyhood masculinities entail the struggle for power among boys, it is important to contextualise terms such as dominant / hegemonic, normative and non-normative/ marginal masculinities in this research. The term hegemony can be traced to Antonio Gramsci's *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* where he argues that the bourgeoisie promotes a particular culture as a superstructure to control their base – capital. In other words, the bourgeoisie through a nexus of institutions and particular habits control and maintain the markets for their own good.

Hall et al expounds on this in *Resistance Through Rituals* when he argues that 'the dominant culture [hegemony] represents itself as the culture'[46]. Leslie Steeves asserts that 'hegemony refers to an ongoing *process*, not merely to *ideas* imposed by ruling class.[47]' The ideas of control and power in Gramsci's and Hall et al's concept of hegemony are reflected in how the term is used in gender studies. R.W. Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as 'a configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women'[48]. In other words, Gramsci's bourgeoisie class according to Connell is occupied by men in patriarchal societies. The

[46] Hall et al (eds) (1976:12)
[47] Steeves (1997:4)
[48] Connell (1995:77)

present study uses the term hegemonic masculinity as expounded by Wetherell and Edley who stretch it to cover not only relations between men and women but also among men[49].

However there is a danger in reading characters who are parents or teachers in the selected stories as the ones producing the dominant culture [that which] represents itself as the culture to boy characters. This is because the present study focuses on boy characters who are depicted as having their own dominant culture emanating from relations among themselves. The above danger also looms if we try to look at Kimenye's representation of boys from Hall's perspective – youth as a subculture[50]– because it will to some extent, stretch the focus of the study to include adult characters.

Lindegger and Maxwell expound on Connell's (1995) notion of multiple masculinities that describes how men position themselves in relation to women and other men in relation to hegemonic standards. This elaboration is important in this study as they highlight three categories of masculinities namely: complicitous, subordinate and marginal. They argue that the above terms describe how far and different a particular masculinity is from the dominant hegemonic masculinity'[51]. The term dominant hegemonic masculinities is used in this research from Lindegger and Maxwell's above perspective to refer to Kimenye's representation of influential boy characters whose behaviour is portrayed as the benchmarks that govern inter-boy relations. Their behaviour is also depicted as popular and that which resonates with that of the majority of other boy

[49] Wetherell and Edley (1999) as quoted by Lindegger and Maxwell "Teenage masculinity: the double bind of conformity to hegemonic standards" in Shefer, T et al (eds)(2007:96)
[50] Hall et al (1976:13) define subculture as 'sub-sets – smaller, more localised and differentiated structures, within one or other of the larger cultural networks'.
[51] Shefer et al (2007:96)

characters. Subordinate masculinity refers to a particular behaviour that resonates with the dominant hegemonic masculinity but lacks the ability to control other boys' behaviour. Normative masculinity simply refers to a particular behaviour that is popular among boy characters, that is, it encompasses both dominant and subordinate masculinities. Non-normative (marginal) masculinities refer to particular behaviour that is different from dominant hegemonic masculinity and is not popular among the majority of the boy characters.

The term boyhood masculinities as used in this study is situated in the concept of sociality that refers to non-sexual interpersonal attraction. The term sociality is used to refer to homosocial heterosexual interactions among boys. [52] Lipman-Blumen asserts that homosociality refers to the 'literal' that is, spatial separation of male spheres from female spheres, and it means that in developing (moral) attitudes, (political) opinions, and systems of values, members of the same sex are the most important significant others'.[53]

Simply put, homosociality refers to the seeking and preference for company of the same sex. According to Lipman-Blumen homosociality is practised more by men than women[54]. The *Moses* series presents a homosocial space in the way boy characters like Holy Moses, King Kong and Rukia dominate in the stories and even when there are female characters, there is aversion against them by the leading male characters. The homosocial settings of the selected stories therefore presents to the author expansive space to imagine boyhood masculinities. R.W. Bird, quoting Connell (1992), argues that

[52] Bird (1996:120–132)
[53] Lipman-Blumen (1976:15 – 31)
[54] Lipman-Blumen (1976:15 – 31)

'homosociality in general promotes clear distinctions between hegemonic masculinities and non-hegemonic masculinities by the segregation in social institutions just like it demarcates women and men in social institutions'[55]. Bird's argument underscores the importance of a homosocial space while studying construction of masculinities among men and boys by extension. Homosociality in the *Moses* series is characterised by attraction among boy characters and also through absence of female characters in many of the stories in the *Moses* series. This is also accentuated by the fact that the author sets many stories in a single sex boarding school.

The term adventure is used in regard to its role in Kimenye's construction of boyhood masculinities. Graham Dawson observes that British masculinities have been imagined through adventure stories of soldier heroes. He argues that 'masculinities are lived out in the flesh, but fashioned in the imagination'[56]. This idea is used in the present research to highlight Kimenye's portrayal of boy characters as living through their shared imagination of boyhood masculinities: for example, the idea that adventures are boys' preoccupation and not girls'.

Michael Nerlich in *Ideology of Adventure* argues that the idea of adventure is historical and played a critical role in the history of western European capitalistic societies[57]. What emerges from Dawson and Nerlich is the idea that the adventure form constructs a dangerous, aggressive and domineering kind of image to readers or listeners. In fact, one

[55] Bird (1996:121)
[56] See Dawson (1994:1) on how soldier hero adventures imagined masculinities in Britian and how people were influenced by that imagination including the author.
[57] Nerlich (1977)

can read western imperialist narratives as forms of adventures that created forms of national masculinities which colonialists endeavoured to achieve or live up to. The present study uses Nerlich's notion that adventure in itself is a dangerous enterprise that involves risk-taking, courage and aggressiveness to examine Kimenye's imagination of boyhood masculinities in the selected adventure stories.

The research report is situated within a theoretical framework that underscores gender as a social construct. Muriungi asserts that:

> Children's literature in Kenya and elsewhere has also been seen as aimed at teaching gender roles, and these roles are often presented in a stereotypical manner. More often than not, girls are portrayed as meek beings that are providers of food and are meant to be industrious and caring in order to grow up to be good wives and mothers[58].

The study probes whether Kimenye makes any literary intervention to deconstruct stereotypes on girls and women as Muriungi observes above.

The study also uses Judith Butler's idea of gender as a performance or what she refers to as the theory of performativity. Butler defines performativity in two ways: one, as 'an expectation that ends up producing the very phenomenon that it anticipates' and two, that 'performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its

[58] Muriungi (2006:25)

effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration'[59].

Butler's first definition is understood within the context of this research as both individual and social definition of who is a boy and what constitutes boyhood while her latter definition is understood as institutionalisation of a particular behaviour by either an individual or a group within a particular space. These two concepts are important because, first, there are different ideas of masculinities by different characters and yet there are some habits that are shared by some boy characters which constitute normative masculinity. Although the idea of boyhood masculinities as represented by Barbara Kimenye in the selected stories is mainly about boys in a school, there is evidence that adult characters in the school such as Mr Mukibi, Mr Karanja and Mr Kigali, the watchman, arguably represent cultural ideas of masculinities. In short, masculinity is viewed as an enactment of boy-like or man-like behaviour by either an individual or a group at a particular place and time due to specific influences.

The research applies a systematic close reading of the primary texts. This is important to clearly analyse the main characters in the selected stories. This approach enables a comprehensive analysis of Kimenye's construction of boyhood masculinities at Mukibi Educational Institute. The above methodology is of great use as it helps to analyse how Kimenye constructs boyhood masculinities through language. This approach is important to unpack Kimenye's thematic concerns and plots that help her constitute adventure tales.

[59] Butler (1990:xv)

The study also makes reference to numerous works of literary criticisms in a bid to offer comparison. The research report is also informed by various reviews of children's literature in order to support arguments made and also offer alternative voices to my criticism.

In chapter two, I systematically analyse the leading boy characters in the selected stories namely: Holy Moses, King Kong, Rukia, Makumbi and Kasali. I highlight the representation of individual's and group's construction and performance of masculinities. I also distinguish dominant, normative and non-normative masculinities by examining the portrayal of various boy characters. In investigating these boy characters, I scrutinise examples of illustrations that specifically suggest construction of boyhood masculinities. Through the analysis of characters, I highlight the diversity of masculinities in Kimenye's imagination of boyhood at Mukibi Educational Institute. I also investigate the role of the adventure form in Kimenye's imagination of boyhood masculinities.

In chapter three, I examine Kimenye's imagination of school and family institutions and how they affect construction of boyhood masculinities by boy characters. I highlight stylistic devices that Kimenye uses to describe both the school and family institutions. I also look at characters who represent authority such as the headmaster of Mukibi Educational Institute, Mr Mukibi, the deputy headmaster, Mr Karanja, teachers such as Mr Wafula, Mr Bakole and Mr Lutu, Kigali the school's watchman, Holy Moses's guardians, that is, Uncle Silasi and Aunt Damali and King Kong's parents. In addition, I highlight Kimenye's portrayal of corporal punishment.

In chapter four, I explore how Kimenye tackles gender inequalities in *Moses in a Muddle*. In particular, I examine the representation of girls through Juli Sekabanja in the abovementioned storybook. I attempt to answer the following questions: what are the boys' stereotypes of girls? What is Kimenye's adult characters' imagination of girls? What does Kimenye do to males' imagination of girls? Does she entrench stereotypes about girls or does she deconstruct them.

I also look at the representation of mixed sex education in *Moses in a Muddle* and argue that Kimenye's portrayal of Juli Sekabanja as behaving like boy characters is a critique of negative stereotypes on girls and women.

In the conclusion, I draw from the previous chapters and discuss how Kimenye imagines boyhood masculinities in an East African single sex school (and mixed sex school like in *Moses in a Muddle*). I highlight how boy characters construct and perform masculinities among themselves [boys] and between them and girls – as represented by Juli Sekabanja. In addition, I discuss Kimenye's vision for boyhood masculinities in the selected texts. I also give a brief assessment of the selected storybooks in relation to boyhood masculinities.

Chapter 2

Hegemonic and Marginal Boyhood Masculinities in the Selected Storybooks

2.0 Introduction

Sharon R. Bird's "Welcome to the Men's Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity" highlights the importance of understanding masculinities in a homosocial space and how hegemonic masculinity is undermined in a heterosocial setting[60]. Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as 'the maintenance of practices that institutionalize men's dominance over women [and is] constructed in relation to women'[61]. For the purpose of simplicity and relevance to the present study, it is important to substitute Connell's 'practices' with behaviour and lay emphasis that it is in relation to boy characters. Bird's research further reports that: 'non-hegemonic masculinity is subordinated through relegation to heterosocial setting. Emotional detachment, competitiveness, and sexual objectification of women remained as criteria to which men are held accountable, especially in all-male interactions'.[62]

Bird's observation is important in this chapter mainly in two ways: first, because her study is based on a homosocial context just like the selected stories which are set in a boys' boarding school. Secondly, and equally important, is the need to draw complexities that exist among men and in particular between older men and boys. Bird undertook her research among men aged between 23 and 50 while the selected stories mainly deal with

[60] Bird (1996:121) defines heterosociality as 'nonsexual attraction held by men (or women) for members of other sex'.
[61] Connell (1987:185 – 186)
[62] Bird (1996:130)

teenage school boys. This disparity is important from the outset because although boyhood cannot be divorced from general manhood there are important differences. Connell notes that gender inequality is not just between men and women but also among men[63].

Bird's research is on adults in constant contact with women unlike the boy characters in the selected stories in a boys' boarding school. Although Bird identifies three main ways in which hegemonic masculinity is maintained in a homosocial setting, that is, emotional detachment, competition and objectification of women[64], this chapter aims at highlighting Kimenye's suggestion through her representation of boys in the selected stories that boyhood masculinities are fluid and maintained through many other ways.

In this chapter, elucidate numerous performances of particular masculinities by boy characters both at individual and group level and how they coexist. I advance the argument that there are many ways of being a boy. Indeed, unlike Bird who notes that non-hegemonic masculinities characterised by, for example, emotional attachment are subordinated, Kimenye through her boy characters suggests that numerous notions of boyhood masculinities including those that are characterised by emotional attachment and violence can coexist. Kimenye's representation of boy characters suggests that boyhood masculinity depends on a context in which one is operating other than who exhibits particular 'universal' traits that are associated with men. In other words, Kimenye's depiction of boy characters indicates that the principles that govern construction of

[63] Connell (1987 &1992)
[64] Bird (1996:120)

specific individual and group boyhood masculinities are various and dependent on given contexts.

I also demonstrate the role of adventure in Kimenye's imagination of boyhood masculinities and how illustrations in the storybooks enhance that representation.

2.1 Of Brain, Brawn and Power: Dominant Hegemonic Boyhood Masculinities in the Selected Stories

Muhoma asserts that masculinity as an umbrella term 'stands for all the different ways in which men are defined by [others], and by themselves, and also as a semi-detached property of the self, not identical with the biologically sexed body'[65]. In other words, masculinity can simply be seen as a particular set of behaviour that is expected of men and / or a particular set of behaviour that men perform because that is how they understand what being a man entails. By extension, Muhoma's idea of masculinity implies that there are various sets of behaviours that different people from different societies expect from men and that men perform because that is how they understand manliness.

This part of the chapter explores the characters of Holy Moses, King Kong and Rukia at Mukibi Educational Institute and I argue that their behaviour represents the dominant masculinity –that is – set of behaviour that gives them control over the majority of other boys in the school. In Connell's (1995) words, as quoted by Lindegger and Maxwell, this represents 'complicitous' masculinity which, for emphasis, 'ensures the dominance and

[65] Muhoma (2005:146)

subordination of women [and] also applies in relations between men'[66]. In the selected texts, dominant masculinity is characterised by being cunning, use of physical power and exercise of power as a result of being a prefect. I refer to these traits as brain, brawn and power respectively. In other words, it is through brain (intelligence), brawn (physical prowess) and power (prefect) that Holy Moses, King Kong and Rukia respectively manage to have control over the rest of the boys.

I argue that Kimenye's portrayal of her boy characters highlights the above described set of behaviours as the hegemonic standards among boys and forms the basis of hierarchy among them, that is, dominant, subordinate and marginalised categories of masculinities which are classified in relation to the above three main characters. It is also important to note from the outset that Kimenye's dominant, subordinate and non-normative (marginalised) masculinities share a common denominator in that they all highlight juvenile delinquency. Simply put, the above categories of masculinities are characterised by performance of behaviour that contradicts what is expected of students either by their school or respective families. But Kimenye also portrays the dominant masculinity as complex. For example, Holy Moses who is mainly depicted as intelligent and King Kong who emerges as violent manifest other traits in different situations. In some instances, Kimenye portrays Holy Moses as more powerful than King Kong and Rukia while at other times King Kong or Rukia emerge as more dominant. It is important to review the primary text at this stage.

[66] Wetherell &Edley(1999)as quoted by Lindegger and Maxwell in Shefer, T., et al(eds)(2007:96).

The story *Moses* (1968) is Moses Kibaya's (Holy Moses) narrative of his first term experiences at Mukibi Educational Institute for Sons of African Gentlemen. He begins his story by proudly confessing that he has just been expelled from his sixth school. This admission becomes the first evidence of juvenile delinquency. He states: 'I was able to stretch out on the bed and have a peaceful smoke. I would not have minded a glass of beer, too, but there wasn't much hope of that in my uncle's house.'[67] Of course, Holy Moses is fully aware that he is not expected to smoke or consume alcohol by his foster parents.

Moses is portrayed as a delinquent both at home and school but he is also described as an ambitious young man. For example, he hopes to soon be 'piloting a jet aircraft'[68] and later on to be Africa's first man in space, because 'heights never worried him as he was climbing trees before he was five years old'[69].

It is Holy Moses's ambition to be internationally famous that makes him want to escape from his seventh school – Mukibi Educational Institute – after finding out that the institute was a place where 'Mr Mukibi was making money out of boys… who had been thrown out of other schools.'[70] His rebellious nature can therefore not be interpreted as merely out of fun but informed by the context in which he is operating. He decides to escape from the school and go to America as 'Africa's answer' to America's Sidney

[67] *Moses* (1968:1)
[68] ibid.p.3.
[69] ibid.
[70] ibid.p.17

Poitier. Escape to America becomes a leitmotif in the story, highlighting his determination to achieve his dream.

Upon his arrival in the school, Holy Moses meets King Kong who confronts him during their first lesson together for sitting close to him without his permission. 'Why you sit here?' he demanded, once the teacher had rushed away, presumably to empty his bladder. "Next lesson, man, you sit somewhere else or I give you this!" He waved an enormous fist under my nose.' [71] But Holy Moses is depicted as not the type to cower as a result of physical threats. He retorts to King Kong: 'Jug it, fish face!... who do you think you are ordering about?'

"Me King Kong" he announced, standing up and thumping his chest.

"Oh, yes…" I replied. "Well, I've got that record at home."[72] Holy Moses and King Kong engage with each other in a verbal fight until King Kong cannot take Moses's acerbic tongue when he sings: 'Old King Kong had a terrible pong, a terrible pong had he. He smelled so high that folks passing by thought he wasn't sanitary.'[73] The two boys engage each other in a physical fight only for each to earn 'six of the best' strokes of cane from the headmaster – Mr Mukibi – when he finds them brawling.

The fight between Holy Moses and King Kong can be interpreted as competition in a homosocial setting. King Kong's attack on the newcomer – Holy Moses – is an attempt to make him aware that he is the toughest boy at Mukibi while Holy Moses's reaction is his desire to create a space for himself among the boys. Bird notes that 'in male homosocial

[71] *Moses* (1968:11)
[72] ibid.
[73] ibid.p.14

groups, a man risks loss of status and self-esteem unless he competes. The meaning of competition is assumed under male homosocial circumstances, and violators of this norm are disadvantaged'[74]. Kimenye depicts the boys' boarding school as a space characterised by competition among students. The verbal and physical fights between Holy Moses and King Kong can be broken down in order to show various behaviour and how they constitute dominant masculinity: on the one hand, King Kong loses to Holy Moses when it comes to verbal fight but wins physically. This depicts him as fast with his fists while Holy Moses is fast with his brain.

King Kong's character is heightened by his own revelation that he had been kicked out of his previous school as a result of 'knocking down a teacher who had … insulted his tribe'.[75] On the other hand, the depiction of Holy Moses as intelligent is emphasized by his language prowess. He gives an example: '[when] Mr Karanja visited our class during an English lesson given by Miss Nagendo. I was 'shining' as they say because English is the only subject which has always been easy to me.[76]' Kimenye is privileging intelligence here over other strands of masculinities. It is also arguable that Kimenye views those who can speak English as more intelligent through the way she describes Holy Moses as being admired by the rest of the students.

The initial animosity between Holy Moses and King Kong leads them to be the best of friends. Their newfound friendship indicates their acceptance of each other as equals. Although King Kong is portrayed as the best fighter and Holy Moses the most intelligent

[74] Bird (1996:128)
[75] *Moses* (1996:18)
[76] ibid.p.21

in class, their behaviour is common among the majority of other boys at Mukibi Educational Institute. The commonness of fighting and cunning in the school is what I call normative masculinity which is in relation to the dominant masculinity. The term subordinated masculinity in this case refers to acts of cunningness and fights by other boy characters who are not as domineering as Holy Moses, King Kong and Rukia.

King Kong and Holy Moses are also depicted as sharing some behaviour. For example, Holy Moses is not only a smoker but keeps his cigarettes safely in the hems of his underwear while King Kong 'sews a few fags on his pants in case of emergencies'[77]. The two also share a similar idea of heroism – that is – being looked at in awe and admiration by others. For example, when the two boys are thoroughly caned by Mr Mukibi after being caught fighting, they [King Kong and Holy Moses] are proud that they are the centre of attention notwithstanding the pain they are undergoing[78]. Moses narrates:

> Afterwards we put on the clean shorts and shirts that Miss Nagendo brought us, and joined the rest of the school for prayers outside the dining hall. You can imagine how King Kong and I were the object of everybody's curiosity. We felt all right, except for being rather stiff and sore in parts![79]

The fact that Holy Moses and King Kong have similar delinquent habits like sneaking cigarettes into the school and smoking highlights Kimenye's suggestion that man-like behaviour is socially constructed. The fact that the other boys admire Holy Moses and

[77] *Moses*(1968:21)
[78] Morrell (2001:153) refers to unwillingness by men to show emotion as 'inscrutable masculinity'.
[79] *Moses* (1968:20)

King Kong despite them [King Kong and Holy Moses] on the wrong side of the law indicate two things: one is that they share the idea of heroism out of delinquency and two that there is hierarchy among themselves.

Holy Moses and King Kong and other boys also derive pleasure in playing poker dice. It does not take long after the arrival of Holy Moses at Mukibi Educational Institute before he is taught how to play poker dice. He states: 'on fifty cents borrowed from King Kong, I won two shillings and a half a tin of jam which had been craftily hidden in a tree outside the dorm window'.[80] The poker dice game is portrayed as the order of the day at Mukibi's and Holy Moses and King Kong take advantage of its popularity to raise money when they are broke. For example, when they decide to go to America, King Kong uses his polished skills of playing poker to raise money for their transport. Holy Moses notes how King Kong raises their fare: 'I've won five shillings' he [King Kong] announced, bouncing on my bed with delight 'and here, have a cigarette – I won six cigarettes, too" '.[81] Gambling is here presented as a kind of adventure for boys.

King Kong and Holy Moses are also portrayed as full of fantasies as seen through the former's wish to marry Makeba and the latter's consistent hope to go to America and become successful in the film industry, notwithstanding their ages and economic status.

[80] *Moses* (1968:27)
[81] ibid.p.46

Another element that characterises dominant masculinity is power as a result of one being a prefect in the school, as in the case of Rukia. It is important to briefly review the history of the prefect system at this point. Kimenye's Mukibi Educational Institute for Sons of African Gentlemen can be said to be a parody of boarding secondary school [82] in Africa modelled on the British system. This is not surprising because Uganda is a former colony of Britain. However I am not suggesting that Kimenye's imagination of Mukibi is a replica of secondary schools in Uganda.

M.A. Eckstein in "The Elitist and the Popular Ideal: Prefects and Monitors in English and American Secondary Schools" argues that the prefectorial system found in English secondary school is an excellent example of how educational system purveys social ideals of authority and responsibility to young ones'[83]. In other words, he views the prefect body in schools as a way of inculcating leadership values and social order in a society. He suggests the above happens through relegation of duties by teachers when he asserts that: 'prefectorial duties generally include the policing of school premises and activities in various ways, thus relieving teachers of certain everyday minor supervisory chores'[84]. According to him, one of the criticisms of the prefectorial system is that 'it has not moved away from a centralised and elitist authoritian system.'[85] Indeed, he notes that in case of Britain and United States: 'School and society provide reflection of one another, though not necessarily in identical images'[86]. In other words, the school prefectorial system to an extent resembles the political structure in a society and

[82] I discuss boarding school system in detail in the next chapter.
[83] Eckstein (1966:184)
[84] ibid. 184–185
[85] Ibid. p.188
[86] ibid.p192

according to him school prefectorial system is more liberal in the United States than in Britain. There are a number of resonances from the above brief review of school prefect system and the representation of prefects and how they affect boy characters construction and performance of masculinities at Mukibi Educational Institute.

Rukia is elected the Dorm 3 Prefect by other students following the deputy headmaster's – Mr Karanja – bid to improve the school in absence of the headmaster – Mr Mukibi. The nomination of prefects takes place while King Kong and Holy Moses are undertaking a punishment because of being late for Mr Karanja's maths lesson. Upon King Kong hearing that Mr Karanja refused to accept him as a nominee, he gets angry: 'But… all the school knows I've always been boss in Dorm 3 … If anybody is going to be a prefect, it should be me. Me prefect of Dorm 3! Everybody vote for King Kong! Anybody no vote and… wham!'[87]

King Kong's thirst for power demonstrates its relevance in this homosocial group. It highlights competition among boys and in particular on who is in charge of others. Kimenye explores the idea of giving students responsibilities to inculcate positive values through Mr Karanja but this fails as it emerges from Rukia's acts as soon as he is elected the Dorm 3 prefect. The narrator – Holy Moses – notes that once Rukia was elected as prefect he used 'his newly-acquired privilege to settle a few old scores with King Kong'[88]. Rukia's position as a prefect changes the equation between students and authority. 'Whereas the boys had been united by bonds of loyalty to each other against

[87] *Moses* (1968:44)
[88] ibid.p.46

the common enemy, the staff, they are now divided amongst themselves.'[89] Holy Moses's observation of the prefect system highlights the turbulence of the homosocial setting as a result of some boys being prefects while the rest remain subjects of both teachers and prefects.

First, it is clear that the introduction of prefect system at Mukibi comes with another element of dominance. Rukia, who it is clear has been in competition with King Kong, seizes the opportunity not only to control King Kong but also the other students. Kimenye is highlighting another strand of dominant masculinity among boys. She suggests that if the prefect system is not checked, it can give some students power to dominate over others just like King Kong and Holy Moses use their physical strength and intelligence respectively to control the majority of boys in the school. Eckstein's suggestion that the prefect system resembles political structures in a society makes it possible for us to read political instability of post-colonial Uganda whose initial years of independence were characterised by coups and counter coups.[90]

The dominant masculinity characterised by Holy Moses's intelligence, King Kong's physical strength and Rukia's political clout does not go uncontested. Hall et al assert that: 'other cultural configurations [subordinate and marginal] will not only be subordinate to this dominant order: they will enter into struggle with it, seek to modify,

[89] *Moses* (1968:49)
[90] Milton Obote overthrew Edward Muteesa 11 in 1966. The former was deposed twice from office. In 1971 Idi Amin took over from Obote through a military coup. Amin was overthrown by Tanzanian and Ugandan forces in 1979 and Titi Okello was installed the President but was deposed by the current President Yoweri Museveni after six months.

negotiate, resist or even overthrow its reign – its *hegemony*'.[91] Hall et al's observation is explored by Kimenye in the way she represents her boy characters' attempt to topple Rukia. When all the boys leave the school for bird-watching and King Kong and Holy Moses are left in school as a punishment for being late for a maths lesson, the duo decide to punish Rukia for his meanness by pouring sugar and jam on his bed. This highlights their desire to cut Rukia down to size by teaching him a lesson. During the bird watching activity, one boy pushes Rukia down from the top of a tree which results in him breaking his leg. However neither Mr Karanja nor Rukia ever know who did the pushing. The fact that no one reveals the culprit shows the high level of contestation of this strand of dominant masculinity.

Caroline W. Kariuki's article "Masculinity and Adolescent Male Violence: The Case of Three Secondary Schools in Kenya" offers insight to violence by students on their prefects. She examines the case that led to murder of four prefects in Nyeri High School in 1999 in Kenya. She observes that 'the history of prefect – student relationship maybe read as a power relationship whereby each group endeavours to exert its will over the other through the use and control of resources'[92]. This important observation is well reflected in Rukia's tyranny in Dorm 3 that unites students against him. Kariuki also uses Jean Baudrillard's controversial idea in his book *The Spirit of Terrorism* that all subordinated people consciously or unconsciously harbour a terrorist desire– that is – to destroy any supreme power. Kimenye explores this 'pull-him-down' feeling in the way

[91] Hall et al (1976:12)
[92] Kariuki's "Masculinity and Adolescent Male Violence: The Case of Three Secondary Schools in Kenya" (unpaged).

she portrays the subordinated characters in relation to Rukia's immense power as a result of being a prefect.

Barbara Kimenye's idea of boyhood masculinities as complex and ambiguous is portrayed in *Moses and the Penpal* (1968). Briefly, *Moses and the Penpal* starts with King Kong uncharacteristically coming up with a new idea of selling addresses of people who have advertised in *Sunday Nation* for penpals. Trouble starts when Holy Moses writes to A.P. Kibuka telling him not only how handsome he is but also how he is planning to go to America. Holy Moses's penpal turns out to be a girl, Alice Kibuka, and Holy Moses for unknown reasons cannot stand a girl as a friend.

Meanwhile, Kasali – a new boy referred to as the school stinker – sets up a winery in Dorm 3 upon his transfer from Dorm 1. It is Kasali's regular acts of giving his fellow students in Dorm 3 nightcaps that make him tolerated. The presence of a winery in Dorm 3 causes dangerous accidents. For example, at one time Kasali, Holy Moses and King Kong are badly hurt by an explosion from the wine making contraption and are rushed to a hospital. The news of the accident in Dorm 3 is published in newspapers and Alice Kibuka gets to know that Holy Moses, her penpal, is hurt and decides to pay him a visit. When Holy Moses and King Kong return to the school, they quickly devise a way to avoid Alice by imploring Kasali to impersonate Holy Moses in the hope that his stench will deter Alice from pursuing the relationship further. As fate would have it, Kasali falls

in love with Alice and quits school to marry her and continue with his wine-making business.

Holy Moses is characterised as averse to women as reflected in the portrayal of his relationship with Alice. After discovering that his intended penpal is a girl and not a school boy as he had imagined, he expresses his feelings: 'my head reeled. I can't remember ever being so shattered in my life'[93]. He is depicted as fearing women so much that Alice's second letter informing him that she is on her way to visit him hastens his plan to get out of the school and start his journey to America. Although he wields a lot of power as a result of his intelligence he is portrayed as averse to women. His dislike of women highlights Ira Silverman and Simion Dinitiz's idea of hypermasculinity which is characterised by being antisocial and Bird's portrayal of mature men's emotional detachment while in a male homosocial circle[94].

Like in *Moses*, Rukia is demonstrated as power hungry and not afraid to lord it over on other boys in Dorm 3 in *Moses and the Penpal*. When Kasali is taken to Dorm 3, Rukia orders him out: 'ugh! Who invited you here?…out. We haven't room for another flea! We're not having Kasali. You can take him and his stuff back where you brought them from!'[95] The narrator reports of the overwhelming power that Rukia wielded: 'Rukia, as dorm prefect, was in a position to veto visitors'.[96] However Rukia is not only proud of being a prefect but he also tells anyone who cares to listen that he has a girlfriend –

[93] *Moses and the Penpal* (1968:24)
[94] Bird (1996)
[95] *Moses* (1968:8)
[96] ibid

Clarissa. He also uses *Sweethearts Sentiments* as a reference book whenever he writes to her and tutors other students on letter writing.

Rukia urges the new letter-writers to either tell their potential penpals that they are stamp collectors or that they won the tennis championship in their school. And when the students laugh because Mukibi Educational Institute does not even have a decent football field let alone a tennis court, Rukia offers more advice that reflects his acquired habit to exaggerate things while writing to his girlfriend. 'You'll have to use a bit of your imagination if you want somebody to keep on writing to you'[97]. His pride in his fantastical relationship with Clarissa highlights Kimenye's imagination of boyhood masculinity as not fixed but fluid and depending on a given situation. For example, when it comes to competition for power, Rukia lords it over to all and sundry in Dorm 3 but unlike Holy Moses, he is not afraid to talk about his love life; if anything he exaggerates it. Kimenye's portrayal of Rukia as domineering, power-wise and one who does not shy away from women indicates performance of various behaviour by a single individual

And just like in *Moses*, *Moses and the Penpal* also highlights shared habits by boy characters which include smoking, fighting and lying to the authorities. These shared habits are the prevailing characteristics of the shared idea of boyhood masculinities at Mukibi Educational Institute. Interestingly even Rukia, who in *Moses* is out to settle old scores with King Kong through (mis)use of his newly acquired power, acts like other boys in *Moses and the Penpal*. For example, he allows Kasali to continue brewing wine in Dorm 3 as long as he gets regular nightcaps. And when Kasali's winery blows up in

[97] *Moses and the Penpal* (1968:7)

Dorm 3 and Holy Moses, King Kong and Kasali have to explain to Mr Karanja what they were doing; Rukia advises the trio to 'play it cool. Claim loss of memory'. Rukia's traits of being a draconian prefect, a lover and an accomplice to crime further demonstrate the fluidity and performance of numerous masculinities by a single individual.

Kimenye portrays Holy Moses, King Kong and Rukia as intelligent, violent and politically powerful respectvely. I argue that these traits constitute dominant masculinity in the selected texts because they have control over other boys due to the above traits. The above representation indicates that much of what they do is against the laid down school rules. This highlights juvenile delinquency which is not the preserve of the three boys only. The majority of boys are portrayed as smokers, playing poker dice, cheating and consuming alcohol – all which are illegal. I have labelled these characters whose behaviour resonates with the dominant group as performing subordinate masculinity and together with the dominant group they constitute normative masculinity. These behaviours include among others smoking, illegal consumption of alcohol, sneaking out of the school, playing poker dice and fighting. However there are other characters whose masculinities are non-normative – they are not shared by the majority of boys and do not resonate with the dominant group. I refer to these as marginal masculinities.

2.2 Of Wine Makers and Married School Boys: Non-Normative (Marginal) Boyhood Masculinities

This section of the chapter explores the representation of marginal masculinity in the selected texts. Marginal masculinity is here used from Connell's concept of multiple

masculinities comprising complicitous, subordinate and marginal masculinities[98]. The last refers to masculinity that is totally different from dominant hegemonic masculinity which in this study is characterised by three main elements: intelligence, brawn and political power. In other words, marginal masculinity refers to particular behaviour that is different from popular behaviour by the boys at Mukibi Educational Institute. I examine those boy characters whose construction of masculinities does not resonate with the above mentioned three strands of dominant masculinities. The category of marginal masculinities in the selected texts is characterised by Kasali's wine making behaviour and Makumbi's married status.

In *Moses and the Penpal*, Kasali's arrival in Dorm 3 is opposed by Dorm 3 members while Dorm 1 members express relief for his departure. These two acts out rightly suggest that his behaviour is not approved by other boys. In other words, his idea of masculinity is in opposition to that of the majority of boys'. One of Dorm 1 boys escorting Kasali to Dorm 3 remarks to Rukia when he opposes the coming of Kasali into Dorm 3: 'Tell that to the deputy head. Kasali is yours from now on, and you're very welcome to him'[99].

Kasali is portrayed as unlikeable by other boys mainly because he stinks. But despite other boys disliking him, he does not make an effort to be clean; in fact, he becomes arrogant. The narrator notes that 'once [Kasali] had made himself at home, [he] was not the snivelling little creep we had thought him. In fact he was quite cocky on several

[98] Connell (1995) as quoted by Lindegger and Maxwell in Shefer, T. et al (2007:96)
[99] *Moses and the Penpal* (1968:9)

occasions and had to be taken down a peg or two.[100]' The Dorm 3 members are forced to buy a strong perfume – Midnight on the Nile – in their bid to cope with what Rukia calls Kasali's 'Personality Plus', that is, his bad smell.

But as soon as Kasali sets up his winery in the dormitory the students start liking him due to the prospect of free drinks. The narrator reports that 'soon after Rukia had announced what he intended to do [throw Kasali out of Dorm 3]… several of our crowd tentatively asked for a reprieve for Kasali'.[101] Kasali is depicted as consistent in his ambition despite his fellow students not liking him at first. He is not interested in the school work but in creating 'an entirely new wine which would sell on the East African market and make his fortune so that he could leave school'[102]. He becomes a hero in Dorm 3 as soon as the other students realise that he is committed to making wine. The portrayal of Kasali as unlikable initially to being a hero later indicates fluidity of boyhood masculinities. It also shows how marginal masculinities can negotiate with the dominant masculinity. Kasali becomes popular because of his wine. This transformation is reflected, for example, when Kasali, King Kong and Holy Moses visit Kigali – the watchman – soon after Kasali has not only given him a number of nightcaps but also a contraption to distil more wine on his own. The narrator expresses his dismay at the popularity of Kasali at their expense: 'King Kong and I were astonished to see that Kigali welcomed Kasali more warmly than either of us'[103] .

[100] *Moses and the Penpal* (1968:16)
[101] ibid.p.17
[102] Ibid.p.55
[103] ibid

The acceptance of Kasali by other boy characters and Kigali's preference for him in presence of Holy Moses and King Kong show the coexistence of marginal and dominant masculinity. Although he becomes popular, his behaviour is still different from the rest of other boys at least in so far as his wine-making business is concerned. But there are instances in which Kasali's behaviour is identical to that of the rest of boys. For example, after his wine making contraption causes an accident and Holy Moses, King Kong and Kasali are injured and taken to a hospital, they all pretend to be 'too weak to hold a conversation' with the headmaster.[104] Their trick works as Mr Karanja leaves them in peace. This shows complexity in the interaction of dominant and marginal masculinities: there are no clear boundaries.

Kasali quits school to concentrate both on his dream to be one of the best wine brewers in East Africa and also to marry Alice Kibuka. Kasali's character not only portrays fluidity of boyhood masculinity but also emphasizes the argument that there are many ways of being a boy in a homosocial setting. And even a group's behaviour is fluid as seen in the transformation of Dorm 3 members dislike of Kasali to perceiving him as a hero.

In *Moses*, Makumbi like Kasali in *Moses and the Penpal* is initially portrayed as a bother and unlikeable. On the first night that Holy Moses and King Kong plan to escape from the school to America through Mombasa, Makumbi keeps on following them and the two regularly refer to him as weed. And when they finally get to the gate, a woman dumps a baby in Holy Moses's hands before running away complaining that if the person she has been waiting for has not brought money then he has to keep the baby. It later emerges

[104] *Moses and the Penpal* (1968:37)

that Makumbi is the father of the child and husband to the woman and that he has been following Holy Moses and King Kong to borrow money from them in order to give his wife. Mr Karanja expels Makumbi as soon he learns that he is married.

It is Makumbi's last words to Holy Moses and King Kong in hospital that make him a hero to them:

> Only, let me give you a word of advice: make the most of your school days while you can. Education is the most precious thing you can have, only you don't always realise it until, as in my own case, it is too late.[105]

Makumbi's advice makes Holy Moses see the need for education as he later confesses that 'perhaps all the incidents which prevented the success of our escape scheme were blessings in disguise'.[106] First, Makumbi is categorised as a boy because he is in a junior secondary school that is intended for boys. However the decision by the deputy headmaster to expel him from the school after realising that he is married suggests that in his [Mr Karanja's] mind, someone who is married is not a boy. Mr Karanja's decision indicates that boyhood is merely a social construction. Jeff Hearn notes: 'boys, young men and men are not any one, particular thing. These are social categories, not fixed in biology'.[107] The expulsion of Makumbi and Kasali from the school can also be interpreted as the author's didactic voice in which case she is frowning upon performance of extreme masculinities like wine-making and marriage by school boys.

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[105] *Moses* (1968:80)
[106] ibid. p.80
[107] Shefer, T. et al, (2007:26)

Ouzgane and Morell assert that: 'it is not automatic that a particular version of masculinity will become dominant'[108]. This implies that during the interaction and negotiation of dominant and marginal masculinities it is not given that the marginal will topple the dominant though there is that possibility. This observation is similar to the representation of Kasali and Makumbi in *Moses and the Penpal* and *Moses* respectively. Although their behaviour is described as not popular in the boys' homosocial circle at Mukibi Educational Institute initially, they emerge as heroes as soon as the other students understand the contexts in which they are operating. But Kasali and Makumbi never rise to an extent that every one copies their behaviour. In other words, though they do not become dominant but they win admiration from other students. Barbara Kimenye is arguing that one's idea of manliness is influenced by factors prevailing in his life and this accounts individual construction of masculinity which may not be shared by other members.

2.3 Adventure and Boyhood Masculinities

Graham Dawson argues that an adventure is characterised by risk that gives one a new experience and excitement. He asserts that 'without risk, there can be no adventure, but since both gain and loss remain possible outcomes, excessive risk may cause the experience of excitement to give way to anxiety'[109]. It is clear from the back pages of selected texts that the publisher is interested in marketing them as adventure stories. For

[108] Ouzgane and Morell (2005:16)
[109] Dawson (1994:53)

example, in *Moses and the Penpal* (1968) the publisher writes: 'this is the eighth entertaining adventure for the friends in Dorm 3.'

Muhoma's definition of masculinity as 'different ways in which men are defined by others and by themselves' and Dawson's idea of adventure as involving risk, gain or loss and excitement underscores high chances of a character's notion of masculinity clearly emerging in an adventure structure. This section examines the role of adventure in institutionalising both individual and group masculinities through Kimenye's representation of boyhood masculinities in the selected works. Muhoma argues that 'masculinity as performative suggests that its model is naturalised through forcing the male characters to undergo a series of *repetitions* in order to be recognised as men'[110] (emphasis added). This section looks at the roles of repeated adventure forms in both individual and group construction of boyhood masculinities.

In *Moses*, the idea of adventure is first captured by the narrator's revelation that he is going to a new school after having been expelled from six other schools. His expulsion is as a result of his bad behaviour at least in accordance to the expectations of the school. This makes the reader anxious to know how he is going to behave at Mukibi Educational Institute. It does not take Holy Moses and King Kong long before they get bored by the school environment and decide to escape to America. The former hopes to be successful in the film industry and King Kong hopes to marry Miriam Makeba. The boys' escape schemes become the leitmotif in the stories.

[110] Muhoma (2005:15)

During their first escape attempt, Holy Moses and King Kong leave Dorm 3 in the middle of the night:

> We went on talking long after lights out and I was beginning to wonder whether any of the boys would go to sleep before midnight. I worried so much about this that I fell asleep myself. I almost shouted out aloud when King Kong shook my shoulder and whispered, 'come on, Moses, its time we were moving.[111]

Unfortunately their escape fails; first because Kigali who keeps King Kong's money is senselessly drunk and second because Makumbi's wife leaves her child with Holy Moses mistaking him for Kigali.

Their second attempt to escape from the school is foiled by the arrival of other students from bird-watching activity and their third attempt is stopped by the presence of thugs in Mr Mukibi's house. Each of the three escape attempts promises a good adventure in which Holy Moses and King Kong endeavour to define themselves as boys. They are characterised as ambitious, brave, liars to the school authorities and rebellious. For example, their attempt to leave the school in the middle of the night without permission from the authorities depicts them both as courageous and rebellious.

The idea of escaping from the school and going to America is credited to Holy Moses. He narrates his plan to King Kong: 'Eagerly I described my escape scheme. Briefly, it was to hitch-hike across Africa, work my passage on an American bound ship, and once in the

[111] *Moses* (1968:27)

United States, find a job as a film star'.[112] The escape attempts enable King Kong to emerge as brave and fast with his fists. For example, when they are forced to go back to Dorm 3 because of Makumbi's wife, he scares the other boys by threatening to physically harm any of them who will reveal that he saw a baby in the dormitory. 'Nobody know this baby here. Nobody see this baby. Anybody want to talk, and – wham!' He made a realistic punch at the air with his fist.'[113] During their third attempt, they find thugs in Mr Mukibi's house and King Kong again confronts them while Holy Moses runs to alert the rest of the school members. Adventure form plays a central role in the performance of individual masculinities as seen in the cases of Holy Moses and King Kong.

In *Moses and the Penpal* Alice Kibuka's threat to visit Holy Moses at Mukibi Institute rejuvenates Holy Moses and King Kong's desire to escape from the school to the United States. The novel idea of having penpals enhances King Kong's character as a bully and Holy Moses as creative. When King Kong realises that there are more people writing letters to penpals than the number of addresses he sold, he roars: 'Me King Kong! Me bash the twits who try to ruin my business![114]' And Holy Moses's creativity is reflected in his letter to A.P. Kibuka. He describes his school in glowing terms, his ambitions to go to America before giving his imagination a free reign by describing how he drives his guardian's Mercedes Benz while making his own films.

The group's identity is also revealed, for example, during the letter writing incident when they are all involved in lying about themselves and Mukibi Educational Institute. This is

[112] *Moses* (1968:24)
[113] ibid.34
[114] *Moses and the Penpal* (1968:7)

further enhanced when they learn the presence of Alice at the school's gate with an aim of seeing Holy Moses who detests meeting her. Rukia sends Itchy Fingers to the gate to instruct Kigali that 'due to a case of suspected mumps the deputy head says no visitors are allowed in school compound'[115]. The risky state of things forces Rukia to bring out his abilities to control and manipulate students as a prefect. It does not take long after this before Dorm 3 boys communally organise for Kasali to impersonate Holy Moses in the hope that his bad smell will do the trick – make Alice Kibuka dislike Holy Moses once and for all. The fact that all the members of Dorm 3 agree to this plan portrays them as united in principle about lying. Thus the author's ability to come up with a plotline which involves risk and excitement – adventure – plays a fundamental role in the construction of both individual and group boyhood masculinities.

Kasali is also depicted as an adventurist in his wine making project. He is the only school boy at Mukibi Educational Institute who knows how and has courage to make wine. It is because of his adventurous nature that he is marginalised / unpopular at first. The wine-making process is portrayed as a dangerous one like when the contraption blows up injuring three boys. Holy Moses narrates the danger they put themselves through: 'I didn't hear the rest because an almighty 'Boom!' filled the air. I know I was flung into space, but I don't remember anymore until I awoke in a hospital bed'[116]. And yet it is Kasali's act of making wine that propels him to a hero status in the school – up from being the 'school's dustbin'.

[115] *Moses* (1968:61)
[116] *Moses and the Penpal* (1968:32)

When Kasali's contraption blows up, Rukia swears the rest of the dorm members to secrecy. This shows the shared habits by the group which are enhanced through adventure just like individual masculinities as seen through Kasali's behaviour.

In *Moses on the Move* (1971), Kimenye presents a classic school boys' adventure. Holy Moses and King Kong decide not to go home for their half-term break but instead go to Tororo in hope of getting temporary jobs. Along the way, they are joined by Rukia and Itchy Fingers and together they all agree to act as physically handicapped for Finito the healer who is willing to pay them. Their work entails going to the podium while limping and later on pretending to have been miraculously healed by Finito as soon as he places his hands on them. Finito hopes that such a performance by the boys will encourage others to go to him to get healed at a fee. But things get out of control while the show is still on. King Kong is the first to go on stage and makes a number of mistakes including 'sticking' to Finito's angels / girls for long as they walk him around the podium. This act shows two sides of King Kong both as a fighter and an adventurer.

This adventure also augments King Kong's character as a fighter when he is employed as a bouncer in Moonbeam Nightclub, a job for which Holy Moses considers him a natural candidate. When King Kong and Holy Moses go to pick their luggage and coincidentally meet Finito and his violent gang, it is King Kong who saves the situation by beating them all up proving to be fast with his fists. In Moonbeam Nightclub, Rukia equally proves that he is not just a power hungry prefect but that he also has a soft spot for girls by not only dancing with them but also allowing them [girls] to order drinks as they please yet he

does not have money. Holy Moses's creativity is manifested when he coordinates with King Kong and Itchy Fingers to financially bail out Rukia from the threatening bar owner.

By the end of the story, the four boys emerge as liars as seen in the way they, for example, cheat Mr Bakole in order to free themselves from him so that they can meet their date – Finito – on stage. *Moses on the Move* highlights the fact that boyhood masculinities are fluid, depend on a given situation and, importantly, that adventure provides a fertile environment for the performance of both complex individual and group masculinities. This is so because in an adventure there is risk involved and novelty; these two qualities enable individual characters in an adventure setting to portray their outstanding traits. The constant use of adventure form by Kimenye institutionalises both individual and group construction and performance of particular boyhood masculinities.

2.4 Boyhood Masculinities Through Illustrations

An illustration can be loosely and simply defined as an elaboration, thus either words or drawings in a text can be classified as examples of illustrations. David Bland suggests that an illustration in the case of a book that consists of both words and drawings depends on which came first: drawings or words?[117] But even in the conventional way where words come first and drawings come later, Bland cautions us that 'illustration is at best an impure art [and that] the imaginative type of illustration which rests upon the text is itself a sort of extension of text because it says things visually [that] are not possible to

[117] Bland (1962:16)

words'[118]. This implies that an illustration is not simply a drawing that captures exactly what an author has written. An illustrator chooses a perspective which may veer off to some extent from a story. In any case a drawing cannot be the same as words as each has its own strengths and weaknesses. Drawings as illustrations are one of the main characteristic of children's literature. Lyn Lacy argues that illustrations are important in children's books mainly because 'young children have such a limited range of experiences that they need visuals to bolster their understanding of words'[119].

This section of the chapter is interested in the representation of boyhood masculinities in the selected texts through illustrations. I argue that the illustrators in the selected texts not only emphasize boyhood masculinities as depicted by the author, Kimenye, but that they participate in the imagination among other functions. The *Moses* series is characterised by two colour (black and white) illustrations and this include all cover pages. Although the two colour drawings have been replaced by four colour in the most recent children's literature books, it is worth noting that the selected texts were published were published in 1960s and 1970s. In all the storybooks in the *Moses* series, there is at least one boy character in action on the cover pages. This shared aspect highlights that the books have a lot to do with boys. The fact that the illustrators chose to capture boys together on the cover pages (except in *Moses in a Muddle*) suggests that boyhood is characterised by desire of boys to be with other boys in a heterosexual way.

[118] Bland (1962:13)
[119] Lacy (1986:16).

In *Moses*'s cover page, there are two boys who later in the story emerge as King Kong and Holy Moses fighting. On the same illustration, there are other boys in the background cheering on the two who are fighting while at the same time the illustrator, Rena Fenessy, captures the arrival of the headmaster, Mr Mukibi. The illustration highlights King Kong's physical prowess as he is portrayed overpowering Holy Moses. It highlights one strand of dominant masculinity – brawn. The fact that the other boys are cheering on the fight indicate the commonness of fights in their school. It is also important to note how the illustrator captures boarding school space through the dormitory and the arrival of the headmaster. This portrayal indicates a boys' boarding school as a site for performance of violent masculinities. Although Kimenye does not add fine details like hairstyle of her characters – the illustrator portrays King Kong and Holy Moses's hairstyles as shaggy both on the cover pages of *Moses* and *Moses in a Muddle*. This illustrates cases where the illustrator chooses a perspective in her representation. In other words, she imagines boys as untidy by conspicuously portraying the two boys having shaggy hairstyles.

The portrayal of King Kong as a fighter by Kimenye is also enhanced on the cover page of *Moses on the Move*'s where he is captured knocking down one man. Once again, boys are portrayed as courageous, rough and action oriented. This is further enhanced in *Moses and the Penpal* on page 55, where King Kong is thumping Kasali. The illustration depicts Kasali as a coward which is not necessarily true throughout the story thus suggesting the illustrator's point of view of King Kong and Kasali. In short, the strand of dominant masculinity that is represented by King Kong as a fighter is exaggerated in the

illustration. Indeed, King Kong is portrayed as having a big body and fast with his fists in many illustrations.

On the other hand, the representation of Holy Moses as intelligent is well captured in the illustration on page 11 of *Moses and the Penpal*. He is drawn writing a letter to his potential penpal, A.P. Kibuka.Holy Moses is also captured through illustrations as fearful and averse to women. The cover illustration on *Moses and the Penpal* captures Holy Moses's shock after reading Alice P. Kibuka's letter. The disgust on Holy Moses's face captures Kimenye's portrayal of him as averse to women. In *Moses*, page 28, Fennessy captures Holy Moses at the gate holding his suitcase while King Kong's suitcase is on the ground. There is a silhouette of Makumbi's wife near the gate. The illustration depicts Holy Moses as adventurist yet fearful as his mouth is showed to be wide open in fear while the rest of his body appears stiff.

The illustrators also highlight normative and marginal masculinities at Mukibi Educational Institute. In *Moses on the Move*, the illustration on page 15 shows King Kong, Holy Moses, Rukia and Itchy Fingers preparing for Finito's healing show. They are captured acting how they will pretend to be physically handicapped in Finito's show. Onditi's illustration shows these boy characters at ease while lying and courageous enough to agree to undertake such a risky exercise. The fact that these boys participate in this, indicates the author's idea of boys in the school as deceitful and daring. I have argued that this behaviour represents normative masculinity.

The illustrations also highlight marginal masculinities by capturing say Kasali's behaviour that is different from the rest of other boys. For example, on page 30 in *Moses and the Penpal*, the illustrator captures Kasali leading Holy Moses and King Kong into observing his wine making contraption. On page 77, Kasali is captured packing to leave the school after telling their deputy headmaster that Alice Kibuka was his fiancée. The illustration shows Holy Moses and King Kong admiring Kasali for his guts. This depiction highlights different behaviour at Mukibi Educational Institute in that Kasali has to leave the school because Mr Karanja thinks that he is not a boy as a result of his (Kasali's) behaviour.

As Jacobs and Tunnel note that illustrations 'establish settings ... reinforce text... extend or develop the plot,[and] establish mood'[120] the illustrations capture the dormitories and the dining hall thus highlighting the boarding school space. For example, on page 35, in *Moses,* King Kong is captured holding a baby amidst shocked boys in the dormitory. On page 45 in *Moses* there are a number of boys in the dining hall each trying to grab as many oranges as he can. Those who already have the much coveted-fruit in their hands are depicted as happy. The illustration captures the author's description of the moment when Mr Karanja tries to improve the quality of food in the school dining hall. The narrator says of the incident: 'they [students] didn't just fondle and stroke the oranges, and gaze at them in worshipping rapture. Several of them went so far as to spontaneously compose songs praising the kindness of Mr Karanja, and his concern for their welfare"[121].

[120] Jacobs and Tunnel (2004:37) as quoted by Yenika-Agbaw (2008:18)
[121] *Moses* (1968:44)

In conclusion, the illustrators play a critical role in emphasizing the author's portrayal of various masculinities including dominant, normative and marginal. However it is important to view illustrations as interpretations of the text because they add new perspectives to that of words. It is also important to highlight that illustrations help capture setting, plot and characters as discussed above.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to discuss the representation of boyhood masculinities in the selected stories. To begin with, the chapter has dealt with three main characters, that is, Holy Moses, King Kong and Rukia who are present in all the books in the *Moses* series. I have attempted to argue that the three represent dominant masculinities at Mukibi Educational Institute because through their individual constructions and performances of masculinities, they manage to control the rest of the boys. In other words, King Kong's use of fists, Holy Moses's use of intelligence and Rukia's use of political power enable them to wield enormous control over other boys thus becoming hegemonic standards against which other boys are gauged, that is, depending on how close or different they are from the three boys.

The chapter has also highlighted normative masculinity that basically describes the behaviour of the majority of the boy characters. For example, the majority of boys are depicted as being involved in frequent fights and lying to the authorities. The chapter has also pointed out that although King Kong, Holy Moses and Rukia emerge mainly as a fighter, brilliant and power hungry respectively, it does not mean that they do not exhibit

other traits in different situations. For example King Kong talks of marrying Miriam Makeba and is happy while sitting on Finito's ladies. Rukia on the other hand is not ashamed to speak of his girlfriend Clarissa to anyone who cares to listen to his James Bond like stories of his encounters with Clarissa. And as of Holy Moses he is not always courageous as seen when Makumbi's wife approaches him at night.

King Kong and Rukia's behaviour highlight the coexistence of masculinities even at an individual level. They also emphasize that one's behaviour is mainly influenced by a particular setting and motivation other than say particular habits associated with boys.

The chapter has also dealt with marginal masculinities through the analysis of characters such as Kasali and Makumbi. I have highlighted that although these characters are depicted as unlikeable at first mainly because their behaviour does not resonate with the majority of other boys they later emerge as heroes and likeable after the situation in which they are operating is understood. For example, Kasali emerges as a hero when Dorm 3 members realise that he is a good wine maker and a generous one for that matter. He is also seen as a hero by the boys when he makes Mr Karanja expel him on the grounds that Alice Kibuka is his girlfriend because they all know that he is only interested in getting out of school to concentrate on his wine-making endeavour.

Makumbi is equally not liked initially because of his behaviour while looking for money for his wife in the school. For example, he is referred to as a weed by Holy Moses and King Kong when he keeps on following them in their efforts to escape from the school.

However as soon as Makumbi gives them a piece of advice to the effect that they should work hard while they are still young, they are filled with admiration for him as they understand that he has been trying to get education at his old age that most of the boys are not so interested in.

The representation of Holy Moses, King Kong, Rukia, Makumbi and Kasali indicates that there are many ways of being a boy. The fact that Makumbi and Kasali are expelled from school because the former is discovered to be married and the latter has declared his intention to be a husband indicate that boy(s) and boyhood are socially constructed. In other words, the two are suddenly excluded from being boys because they now do not fit in Mr Karanja's mindset of who is a boy despite all along having been referred to as boys. The discussion of these characters also shows that masculinities are fluid and dependent on specific times and places rather than biological factors alone. The analysis of the boy characters underscores that heroism which is a marker of the achievement of a desired masculinity in a particular place is relative to space and time. For example, Kasali and Makumbi also have their moments as heroes notwithstanding that they had at one time in their lives been regarded as the 'school dustbin' and 'weed' respectively.

I have also highlighted shared habits within the school by boys hence underscoring the idea of normative masculinities. Kimenye represents the boys' behaviour at Mukibi Educational Institute as including smoking, consumption of alcohol illegally, sneaking from school, playing poker dice, fighting among others.

Although the domineering characters are respected and looked up to as heroes as seen in the way Kasali and Makumbi respect Holy Moses, King Kong and Rukia, the different strands of dominant masculinities are contested now and then. For example, when Rukia starts lording over the boys in Dorm 3 because he is a prefect, he is pushed down from the top of a tree and ends up breaking his leg. I have argued that this indicates the contestation of dominant masculinity by both the subordinate and marginal masculinities.

I have also highlighted the central role that adventure form plays in the construction of boyhood masculinities. I have argued that the characteristics of adventure, including novelty, risk and courage, allow for construction of numerous boyhood masculinities. And finally, I have highlighted the imagination of boyhood masculinities through illustrations.

Chapter 3

'The Making of Men'[122]: Imagination of Boyhood Masculinities in School and Family Institutions

3.1 Introduction

Tom Odhiambo argues that 'there is a correlation between marginalisation of the youth in society and their adoption of anti-social behaviour as strategies to access material resources'[123]. He emphasises that the society in which the youth live in has an impact on their behaviour. Odhiambo's observation is important in the present study mainly because masculinity is all about an individual's and or a group's behaviour that is seen or understood as man-like within a particular society. I aim to examine how Kimenye imagines boyhood masculinities in school and family institutions.

To achieve the above, I examine the portrayal of boarding school paying attention to the stylistic devices deployed by the author. I also explore Kimenye's representation of school facilities such as buildings, corporal punishment and figures of authority in the school. I aim to answer the question: How does Kimenye imagine boys in a boarding school and in their family environments. It is important to briefly review the history of boarding schools at this point.

[122] This is a satirical remark by Holy Moses in regard to the hardships that Mr Mukibi and the school in general put them through in the name of education. The statement suggests that Mukibi Educational Institute actually does not impart necessary knowledge and skills to enable students to be responsible men. The statement 'making of men' is also frequently used by Mr Mukibi and can be understood has capturing his idea of 'men', that is, as hardened and tough.

[123] Odhiambo (2007:134)

Reuven Kahane asserts that 'the term boarding school is usually applied to residential agencies of socialization'[124]. Kahane's list of 'agencies of socialization includes youth villages, monastery schools, orphanages, Kibbutz schools, military academies, English public schools, various correctional institutions and some vocational schools'[125]. Even from the outset, it is clear that boarding schools were aimed to not only inculcate skills but also some particular social habits that are either of a religious or civic nature. Yitzhak Kashti echoes the above argument when he asserts that 'boarding schools tend to appear selective, conservative, elitist educational organisations, striving to stabilize current social conventions'[126]. Kahane and Kashti's arguments on boarding schools augment Hall et al's observation that the dominant culture creates institutions (superstructure) that include schools to ensure that their base – capital – is supported and sustained[127].

But Robert Morrell cautions us that 'there is a danger in seeing schools simply as Althusserian state apparatus fulfilling a class and gender reproduction function'[128]. Morrell gives an example of Bantu education that was offered to black South Africans before 1994 with the intention of keeping them in check but turned out to empower them in their efforts to dismantle the Apartheid regime. Morrell's observation is important in this study as it suggests that although a state may aim to socialise people in a particular way using an institution such as a school, it may actually succeed in making them what it never intended them to be in the first place.

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[124] Kahane (1998:211)
[125] ibid
[126] Kashti (1988:352)
[127] Hall et al (1975)
[128] Morrell (2001:141)

Yitzhak Kashti traces the spread of boarding schools in Europe during the Industrial Revolution. He notes that the industrial revolution created a new class of wealthy people who were eager to integrate with the upper class and that 'one of the central ways of attaining this aim was to send their children to traditional boarding schools'[129]. The spread of boarding schools in Africa can be linked to the spread of Christianity and colonialism. The Christian missionaries wanted educated native Africans to help in the spread of Christianity while colonial governments were interested in skilled clerks to help in governance. Thus, just like during the industrial revolution, boarding schools played a role in socialising few Africans into Christianity and new systems of governance.

While reviewing G. P. McGregor's *King's College, Budo*[130]*: The First Sixty Years*, L.J. Lewis notes that that 'the story of Budo, like the story of several other schools of distinction in Africa and Asia, is an account of the vicissitudes which have accompanied attempts at transplanting the best of the English public school and boarding school tradition in an alien culture during a period of increasingly rapid social change'[131]. He gives examples of schools such as Achimota in the Gold Coast that was a government school and King's college, Budo. L.J. Lewis also notes that there were numerous 'trials and difficulties, mistakes and misunderstandings that accompanied the establishment of Budo notwithstanding its many successes'[132]. His review highlights the challenges of introducing boarding schools in Africa.

[129] Kashti (1988 :354)
[130] King's College, Budo is based in Uganda. It was founded in 1906.
[131] L.J. Lewis (1968:230)
[132] ibid

3.2 Boarding School as a Site for Indiscipline Boyhood Masculinities

This section of the chapter highlights Kimenye's imagination of a boarding school. In particular, I highlight her portrayal of dormitory, dining hall and general school structures of Mukibi Educational Institute. The dining hall is described negatively and Holy Moses refuses to refer to the food from it as meals but 'sickening mess[133]'. The food from the dining hall is so pathetic that King Kong and Holy Moses have to make arrangements with Kigali to occasionally be taking meals from his place as they fear suffering from malnutrition if they stick to the food available from their school's dining hall. In *Moses on the Move*, the four boys hope that the money they earn from acting for Finito will help them buy better food from the neighbourhood and avoid bad food from the school's dining hall. The poor diet in the school therefore contributes to the boys' behaviour including constant fights over food, sneaking out of the school to buy decent meals and getting into adventure to earn money to sustain themselves in terms of food.

The dormitory space in *Moses and the Penpal* is described as a place for the enactment of normative masculinity characterised by illegal consumption of wine, fights among other delinquent behaviour. This highlights lack of diligent and professional teachers to ensure that the dormitory space is not reduced to a site where delinquent behaviour is performed with utter impunity. The portrayal of the dining hall and the dormitories highlights Kimenye's imagination of a boarding school. Holy Moses points out that it is easy to access a decent meal at home than in Mukibi Educational Institute. Kimenye deploys numerous stylistic devices including metaphors and smiles to imagine a boarding school as a space without proper food for students, supervision from the teachers among others.

[133] *Moses* (1968: 9)

Consequently, this enables construction and performance of indiscipline boyhood masculinities by the boy characters.

As of the school structures, the narrator describes Mukibi Educational Institute in the following words:

> I cannot say there was anything unusually impressive about the Institute itself. To me it looked the poorer, seedier type of junior secondary school, and I was certainly in a position to make the comparison. There was a collection of low, shabby buildings most of them thatched roofs, and a compound that no self-respecting cow-herd would allow his beasts to graze in[134].

Holy Moses's description of Mukibi Educational Institute highlights Kimenye's representation of school through a young adult's perspective. The author privileges the first person point of view which happens to be that of a fifteen year-old Holy Moses. The adults including Mr Mukibi and Mr Karanja's points of view are blocked out. For example, when Mr Karanja asks the students what should be done to improve the school, Holy Moses thinks that Mukibi Educational Institute is beyond redemption and Mr Karanja should simply 'burn the place down and send [them] home!'[135]

As of the classroom, Moses describes it as:

[134] *Moses* (1968:6).
[135] ibid.p.21

> A good copy of an old cowshed, after the cows have finished living in it. The walls were made of unplastered mud and wattle. On two sides they only rose to about four feet high, leaving open spaces up to the sagging thatched roof[136].

Kimenye's use of humour characterised by terms such as 'sickening mess' and 'cowshed' to refer to food from the school's dining hall and the school in general highlights her satirical representation of boarding school. She ridicules the idea of a boarding school as an institution to socialise young people into admirable members of society. In other words, she is caricaturing the institution. Edward Smith states that the word caricature comes from a Italian word *caricature* which means 'a likeness which has been deliberately exaggerated [and] whose purpose is not to make us smile but to make us think!'[137].

Kimenye's Mukibi Educational Institute is a laughable place modelled on a western boarding school. The exaggeration of the school by the author is not only entertaining to the reader but also allows for particular behaviour by boy characters. It is important to delve into satire as a tool for communication as Kimenye deploys it throughout her stories. Mathew Hodgart defines satire as a 'process of attacking by ridicule in *any* medium [and that] travesty… is a requisite of satire'[138]. Kimenye's choice of metaphors such as 'sickening mess' and 'cowshed' coupled with extensive negative description of the school highlight lack of facilities while entertaining the reader.

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[136] *Moses*(1968:10)
[137] Edward Lucie-Smith (1981:5)
[138] Mathew Hodgart (1969:7&30)

This satirical mode of representation can also be interpreted as a mockery of the European model of boarding school in Africa. The fact that Kimenye's boy characters use British colloquialism[139] throughout the stories highlights the British cultural heritage of the author. Although it is possible for African boys (and girls) to use British colloquialism, it is highly unlikely that they can do so throughout as seen in the stories. On the contrary, they are bound to appropriate it to reflect their multilingualism due to the fact that English is a second language to many people in Africa. In other words, the language and tone deployed in telling the stories reveal the author's English heritage and to some extent her attitude rather than that of a fifteen year old African child in Uganda.

In fact, the mockery of the European model of boarding school in Africa may be one possible reason why Kimenye portrays boy characters as delinquents. This means that the indiscipline by her boy characters may not just be as a result of, say, the poor structures at Mukibi Educational Institute but as a result of Kimenye's overall attempt to mock western models of education in Africa for whatever reason(s).

3.3 Six of the Best[140]: Corporal Punishment and Boyhood Masculinities

This section of the chapter explores the representation of the dominant mode of punishment at Mukibi Educational Institute namely corporal punishment. Strauss and Donnelly define corporal punishment or physical punishment as 'the use of physical force

[139] See Schmidt (1976:78) for criticism on the language that Kimenye uses in the *Moses* series.
[140] Six of the best refer to six strokes of cane. Having been a student in a Kenyan primary school and secondary school for twelve years, I can testify that six strokes of the cane was the legal maximum number of strokes of cane that one would get as a form of punishment before the abolition of corporal punishment in the country.

with the intention of causing a child pain, but not injury, for purposes of correction or control of the child's behaviour'[141]. Robert Morrell in his "Corporal Punishment and Masculinity in South African School" argues that the 'construction of masculinity also play an important part in perpetuating the practice [corporal punishment]. These masculinities can be misogynistic, violent, uncritically accepting and rejecting of authority while the current orientation of school masculinities does not depend on corporal punishment, it is likely that some of these qualities are promoted by corporal punishment'[142]. Morrell's observation highlights that some particular behaviour emerge in school as a result of corporal punishment.

This section of the chapter examines the representation of this mode of punishment by asking questions such as: what are the teachers' and students' attitudes towards corporal punishment? Are the teachers' aims in using corporal punishment met in the long run? How do students react towards corporal punishment? I also explore how corporal punishment is represented in the stories.

Turner and Finkelhor argue that 'a variety of negative health and behaviour outcomes suggests that acts involving physical punishment are stressful for children. The most well known outcome of corporal punishment is that it increases violent behaviour by the punished child'[143]. Turner and Finkelhor put forward that corporal punishment is not only responsible for violent and aggressive behaviour by the youth but also psychological problems.

[141] Strauss and Donnelly (1993:420) as quoted by Simons, Johnson, and Conger (1994:591)
[142] Morrell (2001:155)
[143] Turner and Finkelhor (1996:155 – 156)

Holy Moses is first caned by Mr Mukibi for being involved in a fight with King Kong in Dorm 3. When the headmaster – Mr Mukibi – asks for an explanation and the two boys keep quiet, he simply asks them to bend over in readiness for caning. Moses narrates the ordeal:

> The cane came down with such accuracy and speed that it was more like two men with two canes than one man giving strokes to two boys alternately. He appeared to go into some sort of frenzy, for after a while the cane lashed wildly at our backs as well as our buttocks. When I dared to half turn my head and steal a glance at Mukibi, I could have sworn he was frothing at the mouth.[144]

It is not clear what Mr Mukibi aims to achieve by caning the two boys with a lot of vigour: to deter them from fighting again, to correct their behaviour or to force them to answer his question. The last reason suggests that Mr Mukibi is out to defend his big ego other than do any good to the two boys. This is emphasized by the author's choice of words such as 'frenzy' 'wildly' and 'frothing' to describe Mr Mukibi. They indicate that the headmaster is greatly enraged and his administration of corporal punishment has nothing to do with correcting the boys' behaviour but how he feels. Mr Mukibi soon passes out as a result of the exercise. The above particular incident highlights an extreme case of child abuse in the name of discipline. Holy Moses elaborates: 'our backs could not bear to be touched, and our shirts were cut to ribbons'[145].

[144] *Moses* (1968:15)
[145] ibid

Mr Karanja knows that what Mr Mukibi has done to the two boys is child abuse for he quickly requests the two boys not to discuss the incident with the rest of the students. If Mr Mukibi aimed at correcting Holy Moses and King Kong against fighting, he could as well have done that by talking to them. On the other hand, if he aimed at deterring the boys from breaking the school rules, he does not achieve it because right after caning them, they decide to smoke in the sanatorium to cool their nerves.

Mr Mukibi neither deters nor educates his students on the need not to fight; what he manages to achieve is to compel Holy Moses and King Kong to break more rules. It is also Mr Mukibi's caning that makes Holy Moses come up with the idea of running away from the school to America. In this case, corporal punishment is portrayed as driving students away from the school whereas ordinarily we would expect it to make students see their mistakes and improve on their behaviour.

As a result of their failed attempt to escape from the school, Holy Moses and King Kong again land in trouble with the school authorities who again address the problem through corporal punishment. This happens when Makumbi's wife gives Holy Moses the baby on the night of their planned escape; the two boys are forced to give it to Kigali, the watchman, early the following morning. This leads them to being late for class and consequently Mr Karanja denies them a chance not only to listen to his remaining part of the lesson but also to explain themselves. He declares:

> I intend to give you six strokes of the cane. In addition you will spend the rest of the day working in the vegetable garden. And on Sunday, when I take the other students out bird-watching, both of you will stay indoors and catch up on the work you will miss today.[146]

Mr Karanja's pronouncement highlights mechanical administration of corporal punishment at Mukibi Educational Institute by the authorities in total ignorance of what may have caused the boys to err. The caning and working in the vegetable garden does not in any way help them see the need to behave as Mr Karanja expects them to. On the contrary, it helps them plan on how to escape from the school on the day that Mr Karanja would be out with other students bird-watching. Mr Mukibi and Mr Karanja's choice of punishment serves no good purpose but creates a vicious cycle of delinquency.

In *Moses and the Penpal*, it is the fear of 'six of the best' that makes Dorm 3 members refuse to say the cause of explosion in their dormitory and one of the reasons that make Kasali prefer to quit school to make wine for public consumption. When Dorm 3 members are caned by Mr Karanja for starting a fight, they return to the dormitory sad and are only happy when Kasali offers them wine. In other words, Kimenye portrays corporal punishment in the school as neither deterring nor correcting the wrong doers; on the contrary, it perpetuates delinquency.

In *Moses on the Move*, the promise of corporal punishment does not appear to scare Holy Moses, King Kong and Itchy Fingers. This is demonstrated by the fact that even after the three are seen by Mr Bakole and Mr Karanja in Tororo, they still go ahead to lie to them

[146] *Moses* (1968:42)

in order to accomplish their adventure. For example, when Mr Bakole finds the boys, they decide that two of them will go away first and the third boy will lie to him [Mr Bakole] that he is going to look for his colleagues and they will all escape together. And in the case of Mr Karanja, they lie to him that they need to get their bags from their friend's place when they know very well that they had left them in an isolated house.

It takes Mr Karanja's punishment, including caning each boy six strokes, hard labour in the school garden and taking away their hard-earned money and donating it to the Salvation Army, for the group to accept that they had created the mess they are in themselves. Holy Moses elaborates:

> When we were hoeing and digging in the hottest part of the shamba later that day, nobody made any effort to foster a feeling of comrades sharing misfortune. I think we were each blaming the others for the terrific mess for which we were now paying.[147]

The fact that Holy Moses does not consider that they were heroes as a result of their adventure in Tororo is a rare admission to wrongdoing as a result of corporal punishment. However this remorseful feeling is an isolated case as it is limited to only Holy Moses for quickly after his remark, King Kong declares that 'our half-term holiday might have been short and sweet, I bet you anything that none of the others had as exciting time as us'[148].

[147] *Moses o the Move* (1971:77)
[148] Ibid

King Kong's assertion highlights that together with the other boys, they have not learnt a lesson to redeem their behaviour even after being punished. If anything King Kong's statement suggests that they would go for another adventure notwithstanding their knowledge and experience that they would be doing something that contravenes their school's rules and would end up getting corporal punishment from their teachers. Kimenye links juvenile delinquency to corporal punishment. This depiction can be likened to Frantz Fanon's observation that natives who were subjected to violence by colonialists were bound to be violent towards their own when they assumed power[149].

This link can also be seen as Kimenye's mockery of this mode of punishment especially because her boy characters emerge as heroes while the administrators of the punishment come into view as laughing stocks. For instance, Holy Moses and King Kong are viewed as heroes when Mr Mukibi passes out while caning them. Out of this act, Holy Moses and King Kong emerge as inscrutable which is an admirable quality by most of the boys in the school instead of them , say, being portrayed as villains. On the other hand, Holy Moses describes Mr Mukibi as swinging the cane 'wildly' and 'frothing' at the mouth which depict him as being more of a clown than a school administrator. The reader is compelled to laugh at Mr Mukibi because of how he does the caning and admire the two boys for their resilience and patience with their enraged headmaster.

The representation of corporal punishment in the selected texts is a parody that lampoons its administrators at Mukibi Educational Institute. In other words, Kimenye's representation of corporal punishment is a mockery of corporal punishment as we know

[149] See Frantz Fanon The Wretched of the Earth(1963:40)

it[150]. By mocking it, Kimenye manages to entertain her readers and demonstrate construction and performance of particular delinquent behaviour by her boy characters.

3.4 Figures of Authority and Boyhood Masculinities in School

In this section, I aim to examine how Kimenye imagines figures of authority at Mukibi Educational Institute and how she portrays them as informing her boy characters notions of being a boy(s). These figures of authority include the headmaster, Mr Mukibi, the deputy headmaster, Mr Karanja and other teachers such as Mr Bakole and Mr Lutu. I also examine the representation of Kigali – the school's watchman.

Upon his arrival at Mukibi Educational Institute, Holy Moses forms an opinion about the headmaster – Mr Mukibi. He describes him:

> He [Mr Mukibi] raced towards us looking for all the world like a giant marabou stork. This may sound a bit exaggerated, but you should have seen him! Let me describe him from the top downwards. He was bald, his eyes were hooded by creased, wrinkled lids, and his long, hooked nose was like a beak. What a masterpiece of physical beauty this head was! It nodded precariously on the longest, scraggiest neck I had ever seen. His limbs were as awkward as pieces of string roughly fastened on to a potato, and he stood about six feet high.[151]

On the one hand, it is arguable that Kimenye is deploying hyperbole to entertain her readers by caricaturing the headmaster. However, the fact that it is the headmaster who emerges as laughable instead of Holy Moses or King Kong demonstrates Kimenye's

[150] See, for example, how Simons, Johnson, and Conger (1994:591) discuss corporal punishment in schools.
[151] *Moses*(1968:7)

attempt to privilege students' perspectives. Ordinarily, we expect the teacher to wield enormous power and respect from students. The fact that Kimenye privileges student voice highlights the author's focus on young readers.

While analysing Ngugi wa Thiong'o's representation of the ruling class in *Devil on the Cross*, James Ogude argues that the author uses grotesque and the obscene to critique performance of power in a postcolonial African state. Ogude gives the example of how the author describes the bigness of Gitutu's stomach and his general ugliness to demonstrate how Ngugi uses the grotesque technique to critique the postcolonial rulers in Africa who are interested in exploiting people other than offering solutions to the existing problems. On the other hand, Ogude asserts that Ngugi describes the peasants as humane.[152]

Ngugi's description of Gitutu is not any different from how Kimenye depicts Mr Mukibi through Holy Moses. Mathew Hodgart argues that the 'satirist's anger is modified by his sense of superiority and contempt for his victim, his aim is to make the victim lose 'face', and the most effective way of humiliating him is by contemptuous laughter'[153]. Mr Mukibi emerges as ugly and animal like in the way he is contemptuously described by his student – Holy Moses. If Ngugi uses grotesque to critique performance of power in the postcolonial Africa, what are the possible reason(s) for Kimenye's portrayal of figures of authority in the school in a similar manner? Mathew Hodgart argues that 'the great

[152] See Ogude (1999: 55– 67) criticism of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's use of grotesque to critique postcolonial rulers in Africa. For example, he says that by portraying peasants as 'good', Ngugi fails to show their contribution in problems such as corruption.
[153]Hodgart (1969:11)

satirist not only attack people or customs they think are bad, but they also create a dream world in which the real world is fantastically inverted or travestied'[154]. Whereas it is possible to argue that Kimenye is merely entertaining readers by describing Mr Mukibi as ugly, it is also arguable that she is creating a dream world where students assume teachers roles. This enables the reader to see the disparities that exist between teachers and students. Importantly, Kimenye deployment of grotesque technique to describe Mr Mukibi enables construction and performance of delinquent behaviour by Holy Moses and others.

The above argument is enhanced by Mr Mukibi's behaviour which Moses is not impressed with. This emerges when he finds Mr Mukibi smoking his [Moses's] cigarettes that he had hidden in his underwear before coming to school. Moses declares: 'Mukibi is a big thief as anybody'[155]. King Kong agrees with him on Mukibi's thieving trait when he notes that:

> Ho, he's a thief all right. Lots of boys, at the beginning of terms, bring stacks of food with them. If they keep it in the dorm, it is confiscated because he says it attracts rats. If they leave it in the tuck cupboard he removes it from there and pretends it has been stolen. And don't ever let him know if your people send you any money, or he will have that as well![156]

It is evident once again that Kimenye is interested in presenting to the reader a laughable teacher figure instead of a teacher as a role model to his students. Richard A. Gorton

[154] Hodgart (1969:24)
[155] *Moses* (1968:18).
[156] ibid

enumerates a number of important roles that should be played by school administrators who most of the times happen to be teachers. These roles include being a manager, instructional leader, disciplinarian, human relations facilitator, evaluator and conflict mediator. He also points out that for a school administrator to be effective he has to inspire students; in other words, he must be a good role model to students[157]. If Gorton's ideas of a teacher are anything to go by, Mr Mukibi does not qualify to be one.

But I suggest that Kimenye is not just interested with the reader laughing at Mr Mukibi. She manages to highlight the construction and performance of masculinities that are characterised by rejection of authority by boys at Mukibi Educational Institute by caricaturing the headmaster. For example, students such as Holy Moses and King Kong find it hard to obey rules that, say, forbid them from stealing when they know very well that the headmaster does steal.

Mr Mukibi is also depicted as an avaricious school manager. As a result of his love for money, King Kong and Holy Moses feel that they can behave as they wish because they are certain that their headmaster will not expel them for fear of losing two sets of school fees. For example, when Mr Karanja discovers that Holy Moses and King Kong have messed up Rukia's bed while he is a way and threatens them with expulsion from the school, King Kong confidently tells Holy Moses: 'I don't think so. How can he, without old Mukibi's permission? And old Mukibi will not want to lose two sets of school fees'[158].

[157] Gorton (1976:71)
[158] *Moses* (1968:60)

Because of Mr Mukibi's love for money in form of school fees, students are assured of their stay in the school notwithstanding their behaviour. Moses puts Mukibi's love for money clearly:

> It was soon clear to me that Mr Mukibi was making money out of boys like myself who had been thrown out of other schools. Under the pretence of what he called 'making men' of us, Mr Mukibi charged double the usual fees for a junior secondary education.[159]

By imagining Mr Mukibi as avaricious, the author manages to show the indiscipline of her boy characters. Unlike Mr Mukibi, Mr Karanja is considerably portrayed as not only the most qualified member of the staff but also positively impactful on the students' behaviour. Moses describes his teachers thus:

> Besides Mr Karanja, Miss Nagendo and Mr Lutu, there were three others: a little man with shaggy grey hair, Mr Bulega, and … so like Mr Lutu that they might have been his brothers, Mr Kabete and Mr Bakole. Mr Karanja was the only member of the staff who did not look shabby, undernourished and worried to death.[160]

The students' impression of Mr Karanja earns him respect in the school. Towards the end of *Moses*, Mr Karanja makes Holy Moses confess why, together with King Kong, they had wanted to escape from the school. On learning that Moses wanted to go to America and become a successful actor, Mr Karanja decides to tap Moses's talent and energy into

[159] *Moses* (1968:17)
[160] ibid.p.20 – 21

positive use by challenging him to help the school start a dramatic society. Moses feels good about it and forgets about escaping from the school. By portraying Mr Karanja as positively counselling students, Kimenye is highlighting cases where teachers positively impact on students' behaviour.

In *Moses on the Move*, Mr Lutu is depicted as negligent in his duties. Instead of him watching over the boys as they break for half term, he is engrossed in reading a detective story. This negligence enables Holy Moses and King Kong to alight at Tororo and start what ends up as a risky adventure for school boys.

Unlike Mr Lutu, Mr Karanja and Mr Bakole are portrayed as responsible teachers. When Mr Karanja and Mr Bakole find the boys loitering in Tororo, they insist that they stay with the students until they take them back to the school. Although the boys outwit Mr Bakole, Mr Karanja runs after them until he ensures that they are back in the school safely. Thus whereas these school boys' adventure in Tororo happens as a result of Mr Lutu's negligence, Mr Bakole's and Mr Karanja's sense of duty reminds the students of discipline in regard to their school's rules.

Just like Mr Mukibi, Kigali the watchman is caricatured. He is portrayed as unprofessional and an outright bad influence on the students. As a watchman, he is expected to ensure that no student leaves the school without permission from the school authorities. But Kigali not only allows the boys to sneak out of the school but he also conspires with them to ensure that Alice Kibuka does not get into the school. To add to

his unprofessionalism, when Kigali arrives in Dorm 3 and finds the boys drinking alcohol, instead of reporting them to the authorities he says: 'this is very good… you should make more of it'[161]. Any attempt by the reader to see Kigali as a watchman is constrained by his unsteadiness. This is also enhanced when Kigali is drunk. Holy Moses narrates how they get him out of their dormitory: 'taking a bony elbow each, we heaved the old man to his feet and hauled him out of the dorm and up the hill to his door'[162]. The language deployed to describe Kigali reveals the author's attempt to create a caricature. For example, Holy Moses says that, 'he [Kigali] is never very steady on his legs at the best of times, but that night he was in obvious difficulties'[163]. In other words, Kigali is denied all qualities and attributes of a watchman. This is what I call a process of caricaturing that allows Kimenye to portray her boy characters as sneaking out of the school because in actual sense the school does not have a watchman as we know them – as strong, swift and concerned not only in their own security but also of other people's.

In summary, Kimenye deploys different styles to depict the figures of authority in the school. For example, she creates a caricature of the headmaster and watchman. Through this negative portrayal of the above figures of authority, she not only manages to create humour in the stories but also demonstrates the construction of negative boyhood masculinities characterised by stealing – like Mr Mukibi – and sneaking out of the school as a result of the negligent watchman. On the other hand, Kimenye's portrayal of Mr Karanja enables her to highlight positive masculinities like when Moses abandons his plan to escape from the school after being counselled by Mr Karanja.

[161] *Moses and the Penpal* (1968:20)
[162] ibid
[163] ibid

3.2 Home as a Site for Solitary Confinement

Cecilia Shore emphasizes the central role that a family plays during one's childhood to ensure psychological stability of one in adulthood. She asserts that 'since a child's foundation for adulthood is predicated on developing feelings of security and trust – based on parental love, and predictable life… a dramatic disruption is devastating'[164]. Ronald L. Simon et al argue that 'the disregard, inconsistency, and uninvolvement that often accompanies harsh corporal punishment… increases a child's risk for problem behaviours'[165]. The two above studies emphasize that one's family is fundamental in how (s)he behaves both as a child and as an adult. They further suggest that an unstable family may lead to deviant behaviour such as aggression, delinquency, and psychological disorder by children.

The story, *Moses*, begins with the narrator – Holy Moses – sharing his experience upon reaching home – his Uncle Silasi's house. He laments: 'I again met with the usual preaching mixed with abuse from him and the usual floods of tears from his wife, Aunt Damali'[166]. He quickly reveals that his parents died a long time ago as a result of small-pox epidemic and that his uncle has been his guardian. By portraying Uncle Silasi as impatient and temperamental, Kimenye manages to bring out Moses's rebelliousness and general indiscipline. For example, as soon as Holy Moses arrives home he is met with preaching from them and this makes him hide in his bedroom and smoke a cigarette.

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[164] Shore (1994:209)
[165] Simon, Johnson and Conger (1994:603)
[166] *Moses* (1968:1)

Moses's desire to smoke is portrayed as being fuelled by his frustration both at school and at home. As a result of smoking in his bedroom, he almost causes an accident through a cigarette stub he forgets to extinguish. His guardians, Uncle Silasi and Aunt Damali, get hysterical and end up increasing the gap between Moses and them. Moses narrates his guardians' outrage: 'Aunt Damali continued screaming. The other members of the family, who had driven over for the domestic conference, stood around clucking like disapproving hens, and asking Heaven what I would get up to next. Simply by being there they encouraged Uncle Silasi to give way to his bad temper and whack me across the head'[167].

Moses gets tired with his guardians for shouting at him and always regarding him as a criminal. By describing Moses's relatives as some 'disapproving hens' and likening his being at home to being 'a prisoner in solitary confinement', Kimenye is satirising the family institution'[168]. She is inverting the ordinary world – that of a family as an institution that is supposed to offer both physical and psychological needs to children[169]. This satirical mode of representation is not only entertaining but also highlights delinquent behaviour by children as represented by the rebelliousness of Holy Moses.

Robert Morrell quotes Michael Kauffman (1987:9 – 11) to explain how boys are socialised into masculinity:

[167] *Moses* (1968:4)
[168] ibid.p.5
[169] See Cecilia Shore (1994) discussion on family.

> [a boy experiences] anxiety and powerlessness which result not only from the prohibitions of harsh parents but also from the inability of even the most loving parents who cannot exist solely for their young… the boy's acquisition of masculinity is a response to this experience of powerlessness[170].

Moses's delinquent behaviour is partly portrayed as emanating from his powerlessness as a result of his harsh guardians. Indeed, his behaviour can be interpreted as an attempt to empower himself against his feelings of helplessness and rejection.

In *Moses on the Move*, Moses complains that going home simply means 'exchanging one form of discipline for another. The only consolation we have is that at home the food is much better and the beds don't have bugs in them'[171]. His understanding of discipline at home is as an oppressive set of rules whereas indiscipline to him guarantees his personal freedom.

In his book, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, Michel Foucault interrogates the transformation of penal system during modern age that led to the creation of prisons. He argues that the idea of prison was to punish those who disturbed status quo. In other words, discipline to him is simply a relative order at the interest of the ruling class. Foucault's idea of discipline resonates with Hall et al's concept of hegemony whose culture is assumed to be the world's culture and it is at the service of their base – capital. Discipline both at Mukibi Educational Institute and in the boys' respective homes is portrayed as some prescribed way of behaviour by teachers and parents for students and

[170] Morrell (1998:10)
[171] *Moses o the Move* (1971:1)

children and is not in the interest of the subjects. This is not very different from Foucault and Hall et al's observations.

For example, the boys' fear of going home in *Moses on the Move* due to abuse in their homes in the name of discipline is the main cause of trouble in the storybook. To begin with, Holy Moses's guardians – write to him rather bluntly that: 'he [Uncle Silasi] and Aunt Damali were just recovering from the Easter holiday that [Moses] had spent at home and [they] didn't feel like putting up with [Moses] again quite so soon.[172]' On the other hand, King Kong gets a letter from his parents stating that there will be no one at home over the weekend. Holy Moses's case highlights cases of children's rejection by their families while King Kong's case points at negligence of his parents.

Consequently, the two boys decide to go to Tororo and look for temporary work. Their adventure in Tororo is as a result of them not being able to go to their homes. King Kong and Holy Moses's individual behaviour are portrayed as closely linked to their respective families. King Kong has to learn to fight because his parents seem less concerned about where he is and what he is doing. Holy Moses on the other hand has to think of ways out of challenging situations as a result of his cold relationship with his guardians. He also sees King Kong and other boys at Mukibi's as brothers because he does not have relatives willing to stand by him when he needs them.

Kimenye also represents Itchy Fingers's and Rukia's families' attitudes towards them as the cause of their engagement in risky activities in Tororo. When Holy Moses and King

[172] *Moses on the Move* (1971:1)

Kong confront Itchy Fingers at first on why he is following them, he lies to them that his family has gone for a burial which will last a week notwithstanding hot temperatures! But upon persistent questioning, he says the truth: 'I'll tell you the truth. I don't want to go home because last holiday I had such a rotten time that I decided I'd rather, spend half-term in school'[173]. His revelation emphasizes Holy Moses's idea of home as a place where an oppressive kind of discipline is maintained.

The language deployed by Holy Moses's and King Kong's guardians and parents respectively reveals a lot about the two boys' relationships with their relatives. As of Holy Moses, it is clear that Uncle Silasi and Aunt Damali are out rightly rejecting him by telling him that they are not willing to put up with him any more. King Kong's parents on the other hand are portrayed as irresponsible when they simply tell their son, King Kong, that they will be busy somewhere else. What Kimenye is doing here is once again reversing the real world of a family institution as conventionally known. This reversal offers a fantastical world where the two boys emerge as more reasonable than their guardians and parents. Through this strategy, Kimenye manages to show, for example, Holy Moses's and King Kong's construction and performance of masculinity that is characterised by desire for adventure and rebelliousness against authoritarianism imposed on them by the school and family institutions.

3.7 Conclusion

[173] *Moses on the Move* (1971:7)

This chapter has mainly dealt with Kimenye's depiction of school and family institutions as sites for the construction and enactment of boyhood masculinities as portrayed by in the selected stories. In particular, the chapter has attempted to highlight Kimenye's imagination of the boarding school, corporal punishment, general school structures, and family space through satire and how these institutions participate in the construction and enactment of boyhood masculinities. Mathew Hodgart argues that 'all good satire contains an element of aggressive attack and a fantastic vision of the world transformed: it is written for entertainment'[174].

Kimenye aggressively attacks boarding school and home as we conventionally know them through satire. For example, on regard to the school the structures are portrayed as some cowsheds which cowherds will shy away from keeping their cows in. In other words, Kimenye manages to highlight the travesty of school using satire. The author does the same with figures of authority in the school such as Mr Mukibi and Kigali the watchman. And even the corporal punishment is portrayed as ineffective and an activity that its administrators practise to satisfy their big egos but has nothing to do with correcting students' behaviour. It is important to quote Mathew again for emphasis on how satire works. He states that: 'the great satirists not only attack people or customs they think are bad, but they also create a dream world in which the real world is fantastically inverted or travestied.[175],

[174]Hodgart (1969:12)
[175] Ibid.p.24

Indeed Kimenye inverts the real world by, for example, making a teacher such as Mr Mukibi lose his face as a figure of authority that his position demands in front of his student – Holy Moses. The author also describes the school as deprived of major facilities hence making learning difficult. What emerges out of this satirical representation is fantastical world characterised by students who are more admirable than their teachers, a home that is likened to a solitary confinement, and school buildings that are worse than cowsheds. Through this mode of representation, Kimenye manages to show construction and performance of likeable delinquent boyhood masculinities. It is likeable delinquent masculinities because the real world is reversed , that is, teachers are not teachers as are professionally known, the school is not as we professionally know it , and the institution of family does not function as it is expected to. Therefore, it becomes possible for boys to be rebellious against all these faulty systems.

Kimenye's portrayal of the boarding school can be termed as a mockery of the institution as it is known the world over. Unlike Reuven Kahane and Yitzhak Kashti who note that boarding schools are institutions to socialise people into an elitist way of life, Kimenye's Mukibi Educational Institute highlights that a boarding school can also be a place to socialise boys into juvenile delinquency. Kimenye manages to bring out negative masculinities by the way she imagines school structures, negligence of the teachers, corporal punishment and lack of a good relationship between students and their relatives. But as I argued earlier on, this depiction may be interpreted as mockery of western model of education institution in Africa. It can also be said to be an indication of what L.J.

Lewis notes in his review of G.P. McGregor *King's College, Budo: The First Sixty Years* that there are many challenges of western models to schools in Africa.

Chapter 4

When Chicks Begin to Crow in the Presence of Cocks: Girlhood Masculinities

4.1 Introduction

Sharon R. Bird asserts that 'being masculine… means being not-female'[176]. She argues that there are clear behaviour expectations of boys and men in different societies that most of the times they are assumed to be natural. She writes:

> The rules that apply to homosocial friendships and to masculinity are so familiar that they are typically taken for granted by men and women alike. Rarely does anyone (other than the social scientist) seriously question the expectations associated with gender identity or gender norms. Instead, it is assumed that "boys will be boys" and will just naturally do "boy things". Doing men things or "doing masculinity" is simply the commonplace activity of men's daily lives, recreated over and again, maintaining the norms of social behaviour.[177]

If 'being masculine means being not-female' and that boys and men are familiar with the behaviour expected of them by their societies and in particular times then, by implication, girls and women who attempt to behave like boys and men can be said to manifest female masculinity. Female masculinity here encompasses both girls' and women's attempts to behave like boys and men respectively.

The idea of female masculinity can be further delineated using Sylvia Tamale's title: *When Hens Begin to Crow: Gender and Parliamentary Politics in Uganda*. Tamale begins by elucidating what she calls a 'popular mythology' among many African

[176] Bird (1996:125)
[177] ibid.

communities that 'female chickens normally do not crow'[178] to show the challenges that women face in political space in Uganda – a domain that has been and continues to be dominated by males. Tamale notes that: 'in many African cultures a crowing hen is considered an omen of bad tidings that must be expiated through immediate slaughter of the offending bird'[179].

Tamale underscores the challenges encountered by females who attempt to comport themselves as expected of men. But why would females want to behave as expected of men? First, it is because in many patriarchal societies power is vested in men and hence for a woman to have freedom and possibly gain control over others she has to behave as expected of a man. Two, a woman behaving as a man serves as a clear indication that masculinity is socially constructed and has nothing to do with sex, that is, someone can behave as he/she is capable of.

This chapter borrows its title from Sylvia Tamale's above mentioned work. However, it modifies 'hens' – which in her work refers to women – to 'chicks'[180] to point out that we are dealing with younger women, girls. The chapter aims to examine the representation of girls through the character of Juli Sekabanja in Barbara Kimenye's *Moses in a Muddle*. I argue that Sekabanja's character as behaving as expected of boys, if not better, is an attempt by the author to critique stereotypes labelled on girls and women by extension.

[178] Tamale (1999:1)
[179] ibid
[180] Chick is also a slang word a young woman.

The chapter also discusses mixed sex education or what is commonly referred to as co-education in secondary schools through the presence of a girl character in a male dominated institution – Mukibi Educational Institute. I argue that negative gender stereotypes on women prevalent in many African societies play a central role in the construction and enactment of boyhood masculinities as portrayed in *Moses in Muddle*. The chapter also highlights the role of illustrations in the story in enhancing girlhood masculinities.

Moses in a Muddle is a story about the entry and exit of Juli Sekabanja from Mukibi Educational Institute. The announcement of her admission into the school is portrayed as causing a lot of excitement among boys. However Juli Sekabanja does not meet the boys' expectations of her from day one in the school when she tells Holy Moses that 'all I need [King Kong] for is to help me catch a foreign spy'[181].

The above assertion by Sekabanja marks the start of an adventure led by a girl who can not behave as expected of her by the society, a character that earns her aversion from boys and later on dismissal from the school. Her 'masculine' behaviour puts the school members in trouble including a fight at night with campers – whom she alleges to be spies – and makes the school headmaster – Mr Mukibi – spend a cold night in a police station. The excitement that Juli Sekabanja causes among boys gives an insight to co-education that has been frequently rooted for young adults in East Africa. The story expounds on the consequences of gender stereotypes and girlhood masculinities in a mixed sex secondary school.

[181] *Moses in a Muddle* (1976:15)

4.2 Girls as Dainty, Sweet, Charming and Mean: Othering of Females through Stereotypes

The third chapter of Columba Muriungi's doctoral thesis titled "Gender in Children's Literature: The Female Character in Biographical Writing" laments that most African literary writers present the female characters as either mothers or prostitutes. Mother figures are presented as ones whose main responsibilities revolve around taking care of their children and husband(s) by performing kitchen chores. And in case of female figures as prostitutes – women are shown as not only family breakers but as also corrupting the society.[182] Quoting Dixon (1977), Singh (1998), Sugino (1998), Ernst (1995) and Loule (2001) Muriungi asserts that: 'Girls… are usually represented as sweet, naïve, conforming and dependent on boys, while boys … are shown to be strong, adventurous, problem solvers, independent, capable and in charge of situations'[183].

Upon Mr Karanja's announcement that Juli Sekabanja would be joining the school as a student, the boy students' ordinary lives almost comes to a standstill as they prepare themselves for her arrival. The narrator – Holy Moses – states: 'They were all too busy searching their boxes for clean shorts and shirts. Four of them were even stripped to the waist round a four-gallon can of water, washing with soap'. And when Holy Moses enquires on what is going on, Okot answers, 'We're only tidying ourselves up so she won't mistake us for a lot of tramps.' And Holy Moses gives us insight on how they live as boys and the possible reason for their sudden change of behaviour: 'usually nobody

[182] Muriungi (2006:79)
[183] ibid p.96 – 97.

cared about the way they looked and the unexpectedness of everyone's wanting to impress the girl student rendered King Kong and me speechless'[184].

The boys' imagination of Juli Sekabanja as a trophy to be won before her arrival in the school indicates the cultural stereotypes of girls and women by the larger community that inform these boy characters' worldview. The idea of a girl or a woman as a prize to be won by the cleanest of them highlights competition among the boys – a characteristic that Sharon R. Bird argues governs hegemonic masculinities in a male setting[185].

This representation suggests the patriarchal tendency to control girls and women. This is emphasized by various moves by the boys to win Sekabanja ranging from cracking jokes to Rukia offering her his expensive Parker pen. It is suggested that the winner of Sekabanja will have rights to manipulate her according to his wishes. The boys' image of a girl is also manifested when Holy Moses and King Kong take Sekabanja's clean sweater to Dorm 3. Holy Moses narrates that 'the silly fools [Dorm 3 boys] automatically assumed that she must be dainty and sweet.'[186]

Caroline W. Kariuki article "Masculinity and Adolescent Male Violence: The Case of Three Secondary Schools in Kenya" highlights a disturbing case of how boys in St Kizito School in Kenya went on rampage and not only destroyed school property but also raped 70 girls, 19 of whom died in their bid to escape from the dormitory. Kariuki argues that the need for boys to control the females played a critical role in what happened. She

[184] *Moses in a Muddle*(1976:5) for all the quotations made on pages 84 and 85
[185] Bird (1996)
[186] *Moses in a Muddle*(1976:9)

asserts: 'Adolescent male students needed to control the females'[187]. She also points out that the St. Kizito's case was a reflection of the 'gendered system of the broader society' that highlights 'structured inequalities between boys and girls'.

Kariuki's argument highlights the impact of indoctrination of young boys through repugnant ideas operating in a patriarchal society. The boys' imagination of Sekabanja as sweet, dainty and as a trophy to be won indicates their idea of girls and women as unequal to boys and men. The above described imagination of girls by boys is augmented by the adult characters' attitudes towards females. Upon Sekabanja's arrival in class, the headmaster tells the three boys seated on the best desk to vacate for the lady: 'If they would be so gallant as to vacate their seats for a charming lady'[188]. Mr Mukibi's above statement suggests that boys ought to be gallant while girls should not only be charming to males but also tender and therefore needful of men's protection.

But not all males imagine a girl as sensitive, innocent and needing male protection. Kigali, the watchman, views women both as mean and less dignified as human beings. When Holy Moses and King Kong relay the news that Juli Sekabanja was joining the school, Kigali laments:

> I never thought I should live to see the day when I'd be looking after the gate of a girls' school. Why parents want to send their girls to school is something I shall never understand. They must have nothing to do with their money.[189]

[187] Kariuki (unpaged)
[188] *Moses in a Muddle*. (1976: 10)
[189] ibid.p.4

It is clear from the above that Kigali views girls as less human beings compared to boys. This not only elucidates his patriarchal worldview that reflects that of his society and in particular that of his generation but it also points to indoctrination of young people by the old. His parting shot to the two boys: 'believe me, women are mean'[190] highlights the latter point. But the image of a girl as a trophy, naïve, as a lesser human being or mean is not justice to females. The next subsection discusses Juli Sekabanja's refusal to conform to both the boys' and adults' imagination of a girl's behaviour. Her behaviour which is contrary to the male characters' expectations is argued to be a critique to stereotypes labelled on females. The fact that Sekabanja performs hegemonic masculinities that characterise the boys' homosocial setting (if not out performing them) serves as the author's intervention to decolonise children from gender stereotypes through a literary technique.

4.4 When what Boys can do Girls can do Better: Girlhood Masculinities

Columba Muriungi argues that the representation of girls and women in most of African literary texts is that which shows women being in safe places while male characters are involved in expeditions characterised by opposition and risks. She argues that this representation denies women the badge of heroines. She observes: 'studies on heroism have further demonstrated that in most cases female heroism is either condemned or it is simply ignored. It has also often been seen as less interesting'[191].

[190] *Moses in a Muddle* (1976:5)
[191] Muriungi (2006:84 – 85)

Muriungi highlights disassociation of heroism with women in most of African literary texts which is a misinformed representation as women have been and continue to be heroines in Africa. There are two main ways that the above indictment is prevalent in African literary texts: one is through absence of round female characters and two is through stereotypes. In the *Moses* series, hardly do we find female characters other than in *Moses and the Penpal* and in *Moses in a Muddle*. Actually the series can accurately be described as a school boys' series.

This section of the chapter explores the representation of Juli Sekabanja and compares it with that of boy characters such as Holy Moses and King Kong. It aims to interrogate whether Sekabanja's characterisation does anything to critique stereotypical representation of girls and women both as discussed in the earlier section dealing with the males' imagination of her before arriving at Mukibi's – and in regard to Muriungi's observation that the female figure in African literature is that they operate within a safe environment.

The first encounter between Sekabanja on the one side and Holy Moses and King Kong on the other shatters the latter's expectations of a girl in terms of behaviour. The incident occurs after the two boys learn of the admission of Sekabanja into the school. They decide to sneak from the school and smoke while envisioning how she behaves like. As soon as Holy Moses utters a disparaging remark about Sekabanja, that she is probably an escapee from prison for her to have agreed to be admitted at Mukibi Educational Institute, Sekabanja who has hidden herself at the top of the same mango tree, where Holy Moses

and King Kong are, pushes the two boys down the tree before running away. First, Sekabanja is portrayed as brave. This is seen when it is taken into account that she climbs the tree late in the night and alone. It also emerges that she has been eavesdropping on Holy Moses and King Kong's conversations all along. And when the two boys later confront her about it, Holy Moses narrates: 'she shrugged her shoulders and remarked that she had never heard [them] say anything worth repeating'[192].

Sekabanja is depicted as performing what characterises hegemonic boyhood masculinities at Mukibi Educational Institute only at a higher level in comparison to the two dominant boy characters – Holy Moses and King Kong. For example, if it is the question of sneaking at night or smoking which Holy Moses and King Kong do, Sekabanja equally does the same. But she is more courageous given that she escapes from home at night alone and she has the guts to attack the two boys.

Juli Sekabanja completely fails to fit into the boys' imagination of girls when she empties her lunch over one boy's head who attempts to amuse her 'by shooting beans from his mouth to the other side of the table'[193]. The narrator reports the other boys' general reaction to this behaviour: 'she wasn't quite so popular after that. It was widely agreed that she ought to be left alone because she had shown herself to be no lady'[194]. Her behaviour indicates that human behaviour has nothing to do with one's sex contrary to what her society thinks. By failing to fit into boys' imagination of girls as not violent, the author is arguing that girls can equally be 'masculine'.

[192] *Moses in a Muddle* (1976:15)
[193] ibid. p. 16 – 17
[194] ibid. p.17

Juli Sekabanja's adoption of behaviour associated with boys is heightened when she leads the boys into an adventure of catching spies. At first, the boys think that she is mad because for all they know, girls are not supposed to be involved in dangerous spy catching expeditions. Juli Sekabanja verbally fights the two boys and arm twists them to join her in the adventure. For example, she calls Holy Moses and King Kong 'thick heads' and 'cowards'[195] before threatening the latter that she will write to Miriam Makeba – King Kong's fantastical bride-in-waiting – telling her that he is married with ten hungry children if he refuses to accompany her.

The portrayal of Sekabanja as courageous by leading the two boys on what is understood to be boys' behaviour – adventure – is a critique to the kind of earlier literature that Muriungi laments depicts girls as lesser than boys[196]. Sekabanja outsmarts Holy Moses in his famed brilliance and cunning when she devices a way to catch the spy – by throwing a net over him and pulling – and King Kong's prowess in fighting when she gives him [King Kong] a taste of his own medicine by punching him. The catching of the spy by Sekabanja takes place when Holy Moses and King Kong have gone back to the school fearing for their lives after the spy's attempt to shoot them. This shows Sekabanja as not only fitting in the boys' hegemonic masculinity at Mukibi Educational Institute but actually being more courageous than Holy Moses and King Kong. It is also arguable that Kimenye is making Sekabanja an honorary man by depicting her as excessively masculine. However her sex disallows her inclusion into the esoteric club of masculine

[195] *Moses in a Muddle* (1976: 18)
[196] Muriungi (2006:96)

boys. King Kong and Holy Moses keep referring to her as 'the girl' and there is general aversion against her because of her sex. For example, after the two boys make the decision not to pursue the spies; the narrator expresses his displeasure at associating with 'the female' and not just Sekabanja: 'we were both regretting having got ourselves involved with this female.'[197] The author seems to recommend that girls should adopt masculinity in order to be equal in society. One cannot avoid asking whether there aren't positive masculinities to construct other than say fighting and participating in adventures.

This aversion to Juli Sekabanja indicates the boys' desire to maintain their impenetrable homosocial group by their refusal to admit her into it not because she is not qualified – behaviour wise – but because she is a female. It is not just the boys who other Sekabanja because of her sex but also Mr Mukibi and the alleged spy – Mr Kangi. Upon sensing trouble as emanating from Juli Sekabanja, Mr Mukibi declares to the police: 'And if it's anything to do with that girl, well, she's not really a student at this institute. I refuse to take any responsibility for her'[198]. Mr Kangi refers to Sekabanja as a savage because she had hit him. These two adults are portrayed as averse to Sekabanja simply because they do not associate girls with boy-like behaviour such as being involved in an adventure and physical fights. Mr Mukibi is depicted as willing to excuse boys if they are the ones behind the trouble but not Sekabanja because she is a girl. This highlights discrimination against women in that the standards used to measure morality are harsher on them. This again is not different from Muriungi's observation on adults' African literature where the female figure is portrayed as corrupting the larger part of the society.

[197] *Moses in a Muddle* (1976: 25)
[198] ibid. p.51

It is also important to observe another different dimension of gender in relation to King Kong and Juli Sekabanja on the one side and Emanuel – Sekabanja's younger brother – on the other. Sharon R. Bird quoting Connell (1987&1992) argues that 'to understand gender inequality, one must do more than study relations *between* genders. The nature of gender relations is such that asymmetries exist between men and women'[199]. King Kong and Sekabanja are portrayed as constantly assaulting the young boy – Emanuel. Kimenye seems to highlight the age factor in gender, that is, the older one is, the superior he/she is. For example, Sekabanja beats her younger brother for what she calls his failure to take orders from her. Her comment however makes Holy Moses think of inequality between boys and girls as he poses: 'it made me wonder who she thought she was: orders indeed![200],

Sekabanja carries herself as an equal to King Kong because they are of the same age but superior to Emanuel because he is younger. But Holy Moses observation highlights boys' attempts to denounce equality based on age but sex factor. In other words, Holy Moses is portrayed as viewing Emanuel as superior to Sekabanja because he is a male notwithstanding that he is younger whereas it appears obvious that King Kong is superior to him [Emanuel] because he is older.

4.5 Mixed Sex Secondary Schools as Sites for Gender Inequalities

Caroline Kariuki's article "Masculinity and Adolescent Male Violence: The Case of Three Secondary Schools in Kenya" roots for the need to 'define or redefine school

[199] Bird (1996:120)
[200] *Moses in a Muddle* (1976:40)

violence in terms of gender'. In her examination of violence perpetrated against girls in St Kizito by their male colleagues, she observes that 'St Kizito serves as a unique case study because the school accommodates both boys and girls and reflects the gendered system of the broader society. In this context, mixed secondary schools need to be seen as sites of structured inequalities between boys and girls'[201]. She argues that violence at St Kizito by male students against female students was caused by the former's desire to control the latter. The above argument is also made by Leslie Steeves in her book – *Gender violence and the press: the St Kizito story*[202].

Karen Stabiner's *All Girls: Single Sex Education and Why it Matters* argues that the problem of mixed sex education for girls is how the presence of boys makes girls doubt their abilities. She asserts that single sex schools provide girls with more opportunities than mixed sex schools[203]. R.R. Dale on the other hand roots for mixed sex education. He asserts that: 'This education [single sex] might be less than 'total', that it might fail to be 'balanced' and that good social and emotional adjustment might be adequately achieved if the education were carried out in schools which the sexes were artificially segregated'[204].

Whereas Stabiner argues that single-sex education is good for girls because the absence of boys provides them with a favourable environment to develop self-belief and esteem, Dale highlights that single-sex education is not balanced. In fact he observes that single-

[201] Kariuki (unpaged)
[202] Steeves (1997)
[203] Stabiner (2002:2)
[204] Dale(1969:x)

sex environment is not the only factor that leads to academic excellence and that: 'the single-sex tradition has continued its self – perpetuating course, founded not on educational theory but on a combination of historical evolution and a public image of a few schools where an elite, educated by an elite, produced scholars for the ancient universities'[205].

In short, whereas Stabiner seems to suggest that schoolgirls should be prevented from an environment where there is bound to be enactment of gender inequalities, Dale argues that mixed-sex education provides a chance not only for young adults to acquire academic knowledge but also to get proper education on gender.

This section of the chapter examines the representation of co-education in *Moses in a Muddle*. Mixed-sex education is hinted at in the story through the presence of Juli Sekabanja in otherwise a male-dominated school. Like Kariuki and Steeves who highlight the failure of authorities to recognise and address the impact of gender politics in students' violence at St Kizito, I argue that both boys and the school administration are represented as failing to recognise the negative impact of gender politics in students' behaviour and highlights their ignorance while rooting for single-sex secondary schools. I argue that Kimenye's portrayal of Sekabanja in the school with boys indicates negative gender stereotypes against girls as Stabiner observes but by portraying the male school administrators as participating in the gender stereotyping, I argue after Dale that mixed-sex education provides a balanced education if only there is deliberate attempt to confront gender stereotypes.

[205] Dale(1969:xi)

Mr Mukibi admits Juli Sekabanja to Mukibi Educational Institute mainly because 'her father is a very good friend of [his and] he has … paid [him] a year's fees in advance'.[206] Mr Karanja, the deputy headmaster, is the first one to object this move: 'A girl student in a place like this would be scandalous!'[207] Mr Mukibi uses the excuse of the importance of co-education to try and make Mr Karanja buy his idea. He explains: 'I think it will be a very good thing. Of course, she will not be living here… I'm entirely in favour of co-education'[208].

First, on top of Mr Karanja insisting that 'it can hardly be called co-education – one girl amongst more than two hundred boys',[209] he also reveals his dislike for girls by his statement that 'the presence of girl amongst more than two hundred boys at Mukibi is scandalous'. He is portrayed as advocating for a single-sex secondary school. This is heightened by his announcement of the coming of Sekabanja to school. He states:

> The head master feels that one girl studying here should make no difference whatsoever to the general routine of the school and he expects you boys to treat her with courtesy and consideration… I know many of you have sisters, so there is no reason why you should find anything unusual in working beside a girl.[210]

Mr Karanja's dislike of the girl student is reflected in the way he tailors his announcement; he makes sure that it is understood as Mr Mukibi's thus technically

[206] *Moses in a Muddle* (1976:2)
[207] ibid.p.1
[208] ibid
[209]ibid
[210] Ibid. p.4

excluding himself from the collective responsibility of administrators willing to implement co-education. Mr Karanja also others Sekabanja by consistently referring to her as a girl and not as a student. This serves to highlight his mastery of stereotypes on girls and women. He attempts to educate the students to take Sekabanja as their sister a bid that fails because she is not and cannot be their sister but their colleague. The understanding of gender equality demands fair treatment of both Juli Sekabanja and other students regardless of their sex. It is therefore the failure to properly educate the boy students on gender from the word go that cements the general thinking that boys and girls cannot coexist as students without tensions as a result of their specific gender.

The above representation highlights the failure by the school administration to sensitise students on gender equality. Robert Morrell roots for proper gender curricula for young people. He observes that 'the diversification of school curricula should be encouraged so that boys can grow up with a more open understanding of what masculinity is and be more prepared for the choices and opportunities that life offers them'[211]. The fact that teachers such as Mr Mukibi contribute to stereotyping girls by referring to Sekabanja as a 'charming lady' not only points at a shared notion of girls and women by the school administration and the wider society but also the former's ignorance on the impact of such stereotypes on the behaviour of the students' that is characterised by discrimination against the girl student.

The fact that Mr Mukibi denounces Sekabanja to the police officers by stating that: 'she is not a student at … the institute' concludes that he does not take co-education seriously

[211] Morrell "The New Man?" in *Agenda* No. 37 1998

and had only accepted her in the school simply because of the money he had been paid in terms of fees. Equally, the boy students led by Holy Moses and King Kong are relieved by the fact that Sekabanja leaves Mukibi Educational Institute. Holy Moses narrates: 'it's true what Kigali says about women – they are the stubbornest creatures on earth'[212]. The Mukibi Educational Institute community comprising students, teachers and Kigali, their watchman, is portrayed as conspiring against Sekabanja based on their implicit shared imagination of boys' and girls' behaviour.

Caroline Kariuki reports that after the violence at St Kizito the post mortem of the incident ignored the influence of gender politics : 'the school was closed and an official at the education department of the Kenya Catholic Secretariat said the church would focus more on single-sex secondary schools rather than mixed ones'[213]. Although Stabiner acknowledges that the problem with mixed-sex education is that boys kill self-belief in girls, she does not offer a way out other than rooting for single sex education. But Kariuki's observation and Stabiner's argument are not different from the way Kimenye plots her story. Sekabanja is at last denounced by the headmaster and she leaves for England 'to go to a very nice school for girls'[214]. The failure of mixed-sex school is blamed on the inability of both students and administrators to acknowledge and confront the input of gender politics on the behaviour of students and administrators.

4.6 Girlhood Masculinities Through Illustrations

[212] *Moses in a Muddle* (1968:.63)
[213] Kariuki (unpaged)
[214] *Moses in a Muddle* (1976:.63)

Vivian Yenika-Agbaw uses an epigram from Rudine Sims to highlight the importance of images in children's books. Rudine Sims asserts: 'For people who have been nearly invisible or made the object of ridicule, the image-maker has the vast potential for changing their world by changing both the way they see themselves and the way they are seen by others'[215]. Rawennoff observes that 'traditionally, children's books have been linked to what is today called "raising consciousness". A good illustration … widens the scope of children's own creativity… to develop their tastes, sensibilities…'[216]. Sims and Rawennoff highlight the fundamental roles that images in books play to children.

This subsection briefly discusses sampled illustrations from *Moses in a Muddle* and highlights how they portray girlhood masculinities. Like Sims and Rawennoff, I argue that the perspective of illustrations play a critical role in inculcating particular ideas. For example, when girls are depicted in illustrations doing what is expected of boys then by implication the illustrations act as an intervention to critique negative stereotypes labelled on girls and women. I also emphasize that illustrations possess immense power towards this deconstruction because they actually show action compared to words which lack the ability to show. In other words, illustrations show practice of what Kimenye describes in words and sometimes even exaggerate it if they do not take another perspective altogether.

First, this section examines illustrations that depict Sekabanja as dainty, charming and a trophy to be won. Secondly, it highlights Sekabanja's image as a fighter and an

[215] Yenika-Agnaw (2008:2)
[216] Van Rawennoff (1982: 1)

adventurer through illustrations. *Moses in a Muddle* is illustrated by Rena Fennessy. The illustration on page 14 captures Juli Sekabanja in the middle of a number of boys. On the one hand, the excitement of boys is well written all over their faces while there are some captured with their mouth wide open marking the moment in the story where the narrator describes boys as 'panting for honour' by trying to get Sekabanja's attention. The illustration highlights the imagination of girls by boys as a trophy to be won.

Fennessy also captures Sekabanja as a fighter on the cover page illustration of *Moses in a Muddle* where she is drawn attacking a man who later in the story turns out to be the alleged spy, Mr Kangi. First, it is clear that the artist exaggerates what is described in the story as Sekabanja merely pointing at Mr Kangi to what appears to be a physical assault on the man. Fennessy's exaggeration is an attempt to portray Sekabanja as a fighter. This is notwithstanding her small body in the drawing and the presence of a police officer. In other words, Fennessy takes liberty to show that notwithstanding body size that is nature given, girls can equally be strong and violent.

The image of Sekabanja as a fighter is emphasised by the illustration on page 40. It shows Sekabanja hitting King Kong hard. The latter is captured squatting presumably because of the blow. Holy Moses is captured as coming in between Sekabanja and King Kong. This heightens Sekabanja's toughness as the drawing seems to suggest that King Kong on his own cannot handle her in a physical combat and so Holy Moses has to come to his side. The illustration augments the author's argument through Sekabanja that a girl can do better what a boy can do.

Fennessy also captures Sekabanja as an adventurer on page 20. She is captured ahead of Holy Moses and King Kong towards the possible source of danger – the alleged spy. The artist also captures their togetherness as a result of curiosity about the alleged spy other than boys trying to win Sekabanja. It highlights the moment in the story when Sekabanja is explaining the goings on between two people that she alleges to be foreign spies. The drawing portrays her as more brave and adventurous than the two boys.

In conclusion, Rena Fennessy's illustrations participate in the author's attempt through her story to deconstruct negative stereotypes on girls by males. And because of the power of illustrations, they go an extra mile in actually showing real actions other than words that arguably only describe possibilities.

4.7 Conclusion

The chapter has chiefly attempted to examine three main issues in *Moses in a Muddle* namely: the representation of boys' and male adults' imagination of girls through stereotypes, the portrayal of girls as performing behaviour associated with boys more than boys through the character of Juli Sekabanja, and the politics of mixed sex secondary schools. The chapter has also highlighted the portrayal of girlhood masculinities through illustrations. I have attempted to argue that the boy characters in *Moses in a Muddle* are represented as thinking of girls and women by extension as the other. This idea of girls by boys is evidenced, for example, by their description of Sekabanja before her arrival in the school. They seem to think that a girl should be clean,

sweet and dainty. This is almost the opposite of what is expected of boys at least in accordance to the portrayal of their lifestyle in the school. First, the narrator points out that they hardly wash themselves and fights, smoking and sneaking out of the school characterise their day to day lives.

The author also portrays the imagination of girls and women by adult characters such as Kigali who thinks of them as not only less dignified as human beings but also as mean. This highlights the effects of patriarchy and how adults indoctrinate the young ones with ideas that are aimed to enhance gender inequality.

However the arrival of Sekabanja in the school marks the start of deconstruction of all the boys' ideas of girls. Within a short time in the school, Sekabanja ceases to be viewed as a lady because her behaviour to them is not lady-like. She beats the dominant group of boys such as Holy Moses and King Kong in brilliance and fighting skills respectively. In short, Sekabanja emerges at the top of the dominant club behaviour wise.

However because of her sex, she is not accepted into the esoteric club of the dominant group. In fact, she is disliked by both young and adult males because of her behaviour that emerges as boy-like to them. The aversion of Sekabanja by boy characters highlights enactment of gender inequalities in mixed sex secondary schools.

The administration – through Mr Mukibi and Mr Karanja – is depicted as both unaware and unable to confront the impact of gender constructions on students' behaviour. The

insistence on single-sex secondary school by both Mr Mukibi, who denounces Juli Sekabanja, and Mr Karanja shows administrators as ignorant of gender politics' impact on school violence and their unwillingness to reverse this.

The sampled illustrations from the storybook equally play a central role in enhancing girlhood masculinity. They not only capture dramatic moments in the story but they also break the monotony of words in the story.

In conclusion, the representation of girlhood masculinities in *Moses in a Muddle* can be said to be a literary intervention by Barbara Kimenye towards the campaign for gender equality. The fact that the book is tailored to be read by young adults as elaborated on the book's blurb underscores the need to educate young people on matters of gender politics through literary works.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

What I have basically attempted to do in this research report is to look at Kimenye's imagination of boy(s) and boyhood. In other words, I have attempted to highlight Kimenye's construction of boy(s) and what boyhood entails. I have tried to argue that there are numerous ways of being a boy or rather there are various constructions and performances of boyhood masculinities in the selected texts using Judith Butler's theory of performativity.

Butler defines performativity as 'an expectation that ends up producing the very phenomenon that it anticipates [and] is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual'[217]. I have used Butler's theory of masculinity as a performance as further elaborated by Muhoma who asserts that 'masculinity as performance suggests its model is naturalized through forcing the male characters to undergo a series of repetitions in order to be recognized as men'[218]. Using this theory, I have deciphered numerous behavior patterns by different boy characters in the selected stories. In chapter two, for example, I have highlighted three distinct categories of masculinities namely: dominant, normative and non-normative (marginalized). The above categories are an attempt to classify behavior patterns by boy characters based on power, influence and popularity of a particular behavior.

[217] Butler (1990:25)
[218] Muhoma (2005:15)

But even in the abovementioned categories: dominant, normative and non-normative (marginalized) classes; there are various strands of behavior in each category. For example, I have included King Kong, Holy Moses and Rukia in the dominant category yet they exhibit different behaviors. I have done so simply because they are described as popular and controlling other boy characters because of their strands of behavior throughout the selected texts. For emphasis, King Kong is described as physically strong and fast with his fists while Holy Moses is depicted as the most intelligent. Rukia is portrayed as possessing immense power over the rest of students as a result of being the Dorm 3 prefect. The above characters are portrayed as constituting the hegemonic standards that gauge other students' behavior. For example, Kimenye portrays many boy characters as frequently being involved in brawls but it is King Kong who emerges as the best. Simply put, the question in relation to fights at Mukibi Educational Institute among the students is how good can one fight like King Kong.

However the dominant masculinity category is not without ambiguities and complexities. The three characters whose behavior constitutes dominant masculinity, that is, King Kong, Holy Moses and Rukia do not just exhibit the above described traits. They are also portrayed as exhibiting other different traits mainly depending on various situations. For example, just like the majority of students at Mukibi they are also involved in smoking, illegal consumption of alcohol, lying to the school authorities, fighting, sneaking out of the school among others. The above sets of behaviors are portrayed as common at Mukibi Educational Institute. They resonate with the strand of behavior in the dominant category and I have classified them as normative masculinity. The behavior that resonates with

that which is encapsulated in the dominant masculinity category but is less intense has been classified as subordinate masculinity. I have also highlighted another category of masculinity that I have labeled non-normative or marginal masculinity which basically encompasses behavior patterns that are completely different from the rest of the students including dominant masculinity. In this category, I have included characters such as Kasali the wine maker, and Makumbi the father and husband-cum-student.

Kimenye uses adventure forms in the selected stories to highlight construction and performance of delinquent individual and group masculinities. Kimenye's adventure form is characterized by a plotline that begins with curious characters aspiring for a particular thing. This is then followed by movement of characters from a safe zone to a dangerous one as possibility of a big gain or loss in the venture increases. The ends of Kimenye's adventure stories are marked by movement of characters back to a safe ground though there is little evidence that her characters learn any lesson after having been in danger during the venture. For example, in *Moses on the Move*, the boy characters move from their school to Tororo where their lives are endangered by their contact with avaricious and fraudulent Finito who masquerades as a healer. The boys' journey to Tororo is motivated by the bad food offered in their school's dining hall and their unwillingness to go to their respective homes among other reasons. Although at the end of this story the boys move back to a safe zone – the school, King Kong is portrayed as happy that they went to Tororo thus highlighting their yearn for another adventure notwithstanding the mess that they find themselves in because of their journey to Tororo. I have also

highlighted how illustrations not only enhance Kimenye's imagination of boyhood masculinities but also participate in the imagination.

Muhoma asserts that the term masculinity can also be interpreted to mean different ways in which men define themselves and how they are defined by others[219]. Her statement underscores both individual and community's participation in the construction of particular masculinities. In chapter three, I have highlighted Kimenye's imagination of a boarding school and school in general. I have attempted to break down the units that make up a boarding school as portrayed in the description of Mukibi Educational Institute. These units include dormitories, dining hall, classes, teachers among others. I have attempted to draw attention to the stylistic devices that Kimenye deploys to capture the above units. In particular, Kimenye uses satire, the first person point of view to not only describe the structures in the school but also create caricatures out of the school's figures of authority.

By privileging Holy Moses's voice, Kimenye manages to shut out the adult characters voices. Consequently, Moses manages to express his man-like behavior based on his subjective perception of Mukibi Educational Institute, its figures of authority and the administration of corporal punishment. His voice is closely backed by his friend King Kong and other boy characters who dominate in the stories. Kimenye uses satire to invert figures of authority in the school, the boarding school and even corporal punishment. For example, she uses grotesque and obscene to caricature Mr Mukibi and Kigali the

[219] Muhoma (2005:146)

watchman. Consequently, they emerge as laughing stocks and this gives students such as Holy Moses and King Kong's behaviors relative credibility. In other words, Kimenye manages to reverse the real world of figures of authority in the school using caricature. As of the school, it is depicted as worse than a cowshed. Through these stylistic devices, Kimenye manages to entertain and offer a fantastical world.

Kimenye's portrayal of corporal punishment is not different from Morrell's observation in his research titled "Corporal punishment and masculinity in South African Schools" where he argues that it [corporal punishment] leads students to be misogynistic, violent and accept or reject uncritically school authorities[220]. In other words, the constructions and performances of boyhood masculinities in the selected texts are partly based on the author's imagination of a school.

Kimenye suggests that it is the school that socializes male students at Mukibi Educational Institute to be the boys they are and want to be. Muchemwa and Muponde argue that 'masculinities are sets of ideas that can oppress, repress or liberate, depending on historical and political imperatives'[221]. Ultimately, Holy Moses's and King Kong's notions of manliness are retrogressive to their acquisition of knowledge, skills and character building. Kimenye's representation of boyhood masculinities can also be interpreted as a literary intervention to urge for positive ideas of masculinities by ensuring institutions such as school and family aid boys towards their construction of who is a boy and what boyhood constitutes.

[220] Morrell (2001:155)
[221] Muchemwa and Muponde (2007:xvi)

In chapter four, I have attempted to highlight Kimenye's construction of girlhood masculinities as a literary intervention to critique stereotypes on girls and women by extension. The above argument comes from Sekabanja's attempts to fight the image of girls by males as dainty, sweet, charming and mean. The fact that Sekabanja is portrayed as more masculine than the dominant boys at Mukibi Educational Institute indicates that gender is socially constructed and has nothing to do with one's sex but one's abilities. By portraying boys as refusing to accept Sekabanja into the dominant class because she is a girl, Kimenye is stressing the enactment of gender inequalities in schools. Although it is possible to say that Kimenye roots for single sex education through Sekabanja's exit from Mukibi Educational Institute, it is also arguable that by portraying gender inequalities in the school she is actually urging students and administrators to confront the problem head on to make mixed sex schools more efficient for learning.

Kimenye's work is excellent in highlighting boyhood masculinities mainly because most of her characters are young males. The adventure forms and other stylistic devices that she deploys offer entertainment to the readers as they are full of humour. Her depiction of boyhood masculinities offers a reader a chance to understand that boyhood/manhood, girlhood/womanhood are socially constructed and can be deconstructed. However there is conspicuous lack of female characters in most of her storybooks in the *Moses* series. Indeed it would be worthwhile for a researcher to delve on a work that has only girl characters to examine construction of girlhood and girls. Secondly, Kimenye's so called African boy characters seem to be faulty for they do not speak in the way we would expect many second speakers of English language to. They are also involved in some

exotic adventures such as chasing campers/spies and visiting urban places that do not reflect common challenges associated with East Africans. For example, we do not see Kimenye's characters grappling with poverty per se, diseases, female circumcision, dictatorship among other challenges that have been historically central in East African politics.

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