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Mwangi Peter Mũhoro

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**THE POETICS OF GIKŪYŪ *MWOMBOKO*
POETRY: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED
PERFORMING ARTISTES**

BY

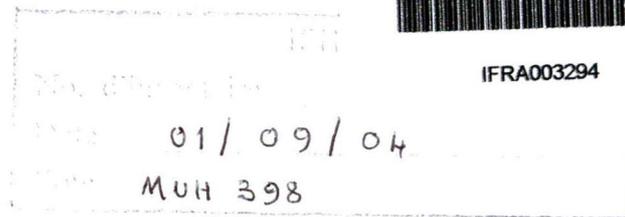
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[B.Ed. (English/Literature), Dip. Ed. (English/Music)]

IFRA



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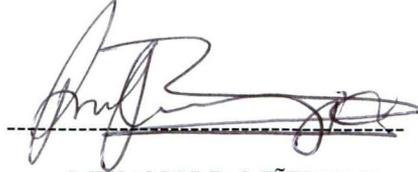


**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS,
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

AUGUST, 2002

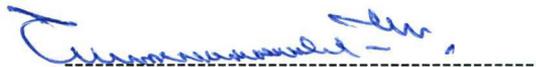
Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in another university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mwangi P. Mũhoro', written over a horizontal dashed line.

MWANGI P. MŪHORO

This thesis has been submitted with our approval as University supervisors.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Mũigai wa Gachanja', written over a horizontal dashed line.

DR. MŪIGAI WA GACHANJA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Prof. Kitula King'ei', written over a horizontal dashed line.

PROF. KITULA KING'EI

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Mrs Alice Gathoni Mũhoro and my son,

Master Victor Mwangi Mũhoro.

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Abstract

This study focuses on the *Mwomboko* poetry, which emerged in 1940s among the Gĩkũyũ community. It represents the socio-historical origins and emergent dance styles. The central focus of the study is analysis of style and literary devices, aspects of performance and aesthetic values embodied in the compositions by selected performing artistes. Nevertheless, an analytical study of various musical works and listening to recorded cassettes on *Mwomboko* gives impetus to our findings. The researcher has coined and adapted a multiethnocultural approach whereby: dance, drama, song, language and philosophy that embraces the social interaction of communities and appreciation of each other's ways of life.

The study demonstrates that *Mwomboko* poetry is rich in stylistic devices: irony, satire, metaphor, simile, metonymy and structural devices; repetition, parallelism, tonal patterns and rhyme. This study proves that these tools are the vehicles of literary communication in the community and society. Stylistic and extra-literary features are invaluable properties for the conduct of poetic discourse. Oral poets are the mouthpieces of the Gĩkũyũ community and its neighbouring communities: Embu, Meru and Kamba who cherish this cultural heritage. The multicultural nature of *Mwomboko* is further depicted in the incorporation of Waltz and Scottish dance art forms. The Luo, Luhya and Miji Kenda touches proves that *Mwomboko* represents historical, political, cultural, religious and economic realities in Kenya.

The guiding light in this study is ethnomethodology/ ethnopoetics, stylistics, semiotic and multiethnocultural approaches in uncovering the literariness in *Mwomboko* poetry. This project affirms that oral literature is not disappearing but thrives even today and it is a means of recording historical and educational events, which are relevant and popular in contemporary society. It is a demonstration that poetry and society are inseparable entities in humankind.

Aesthetics: This is a term that is shared by many aspects of knowledge to refer to beauty in nature or in art forms. In the context of this study, we shall use it to refer to the poetic language that is used by *Mwomboko* singers and the attire used by performers.

Ethnomethodology: This is a literary approach, which is concerned with "Discovering the principles used by members to evaluate the literary texts of the community" and also "a community's theory of creative verbal art". Okombo & Nandwa (1992: 26).

Ethnopoetics: This refers to a study of the poetry of a given ethnic community. It is a form of poetry that uses verbal codes as tools for enhancing communication. Dennis Tedlock in Bauman (1992:81) views it as a study of verbal arts in a world-wide range of languages and cultures. The primary attention is given to the vocal-auditory channel of communication in which speaking, chanting and singing voices gives shape to proverbs, riddles and curses among others."

Ethnomusicology: It involves the exploration of different aspects of musical elements from an ethnic perspective of any given community. The researcher seeks to understand the philosophy of its creation, the response of the people and the musicality dynamics. In our study, it implies the examination of musical elements that enhance meaning relayed by the performing oral artistes. John Blacking in Bauman (1992: 86) refers to it as "A discipline that combines scientific and humanistic methods of research to study of human musical communication."

Folklore: It is a branch of cultural ethnology. The data of folklore are myths, legends, traditions, narratives, superstitions, religions, rituals, customs, dances, and explanations of nature and man, acceptable to individual ethnic groups in each part of the world at any historical moment. (R.D. Jameson in Leach & Fried (1972:400).

Kamanū: An art form that preceded *Mwomboko* but never grew like the latter. It was on love-songs and traditional beauty. The singing and dancing style was similar to some Maasai traditional songs and it incorporated Luo musical elements. The art form was dubbed *Kamanū* a derivation from the Luo word "Ero kamano" which means: "Thank you."

Multiethnoculturalogy: A coinage by this study, it seeks to explicate the gamut of cultural elements manifested in song-narratives, drama, poetry, dance, oral narratives, short forms in communities of a nation-state or across borders. The spirit is exemplified in art forms like *Mwomboko*. It involves the intermingling of communities/ or societies. In contemporary formal education in Africa, it spreads through music and drama festivals. Evangelism and street drama in cities, towns, and peri-urban centres also manifest elements of the emergent strands of this discipline.

Mūthīrīgū: It is a derivation from Mserego the first movement of the Senganya dance of the Miji Kenda community from Coast Province of Kenya. The term was coined by the original *Mūthīrīgū* dancers as a code name for cultural conservatism hinging on politics and female circumcision.

This study will use the term *Mūthīrīgū* to refer to a vigorous poetic dance which emerged in the 1920's as the precursor of *Mwomboko* dance. It was a form of protest dance against the colonial forces and their tools of power.

Mwomboko: The name is derived from *Kuomboka* a Kikuyu word which means "to get burnt, to be happy or to dance" and so the dance was christened *Mwomboko*. For the purpose of this study, it will help the

reader to grasp the concept of a poetic dance which emerged in the 1940's through a major interaction of the Gīkūyū and other communities. It

was given impetus by the Scottish dance from Europe. Its significance, therefore, is derived from the shift of using traditional musical instruments to the accordion and the bell (read *Karīng'arīng'a*) improvised from a circular implement detached from the engine of a car.

Mwomboko-ism: This is the ideology of brotherhood and sisterhood symbolised in the pairing of dancers of a cultural traditional and modernity/ or change. A revered interest in dance and poetic verbal art creates a form of religion politics, culture, patriotism, creativity, and love affairs are the paradigms of the elements of epistemology realised by singers and dancers of the *Mwomboko* dance.

Performance: In our context, performance refers into the totality of the singers' manipulation of language, the pairing of dancers (females versus males), aspects of drama in the song-cum-narrative, use of symbols, teasing of the audience by dancers and all aspects of body movement.

Poetics: Poetics as conceived by Jakobsen in Innis (1985:145) "deals primarily with the question: *what makes a verbal message a work of art?* Poetics deals with problems of verbal structure" and in fact is "an integral part of linguistics." We shall apply it (poetics) in this study to explicate the poetic language in *Mwomboko* poetry.

Semiotics: This is a science dedicated to the study of the production of meaning in society. As such it is equally concerned with the processes of signification and with those of communication, i.e. the means whereby meanings are both generated and exchanged. Its objects are thus at once the different sign-

systems and codes at work in society and the actual messages and texts produced thereby. (Elam, 1980:2)

Sign: This is something which brings an object into relation with an interpretant. It operates in generally three modes: that is something in itself, in connection with a second and a means between a second and a third. A sign is anything which produces meaning; not merely commenting on the world but something in the social world. A metaphor or metonymy examples of linguistic signs. Langer in Merriam (1964:230) says that a sign “indicates the existence – past, present, or future of a thing, event or condition”. Signs focus on the study in semiotics, which analyses systems, and meanings in different cultures.

Symbol: A symbol is a sign, whether visual or verbal, which stands for something else within a speech community. It is a thing, a person, idea, event, word, action or utterance, which refers to an object by virtue of a general law. White in Merriam (1964: 231) says that a symbol is “a thing the value or meaning of which is bestowed upon it by those who use it”. It is what sums up abstract virtues or features in language. Words in human language can stand for referents in the outside world.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Mwomboko is an art form, which is found among the Gĩkũyũ community. The origin of *Mwomboko* revolves around cultural polarities that were activated within Kenya's colonial history. In the 1920's, the Gĩkũyũ started protesting against colonialism through *Mũthĩrĩgũ*, a form of protest literature. Around 1930, the colonial government banned the singing of *Mũthĩrĩgũ* songs since they were deemed subversive against British Colonial regime. *Mwomboko* then emerged as a modern dance based on Gĩkũyũ traditional songs.

In addition, it incorporated the European Waltz and the Scottish dance styles, which the dancers learnt from the African and European ex-soldiers who fought in the First and Second World wars. They also imitated missionary educationists who taught in the British East Africa colony. Although *Mwomboko* is not found in other Kenyan communities, it has borrowed aspects of song and dance from different ethnic groups. Incidentally, the colonial regime did not support the growth of African art forms. The colonial administrators and the missionary scholars had a lot in common in the way they viewed the African folkloristic materials.

To them, folksongs were a meaningless form of art. Cagnolo, Knappert, and Harries belong to this school of thought. Cagnolo (1933:162), a Catholic Missionary who worked among the Gĩkũyũ in Nyeri, saw Gĩkũyũ music (poetry) as a 'crude and childlike affair', which "impresses by its harshness but cannot touch the heart."

Our study is a response to such critical attitudes that confine and limit the concept of oral poetry performance to mere entertainment and a simplistic expression of a people's feelings. This study endeavours to show that oral poetry also exists in form of song and that it is central in a community's worldview, social vision, and aspirations. We aim to show how literariness in *Mwomboko* oral poetry can be used as a tool to educate the community and the nation at large. We deem it necessary to explore the aesthetic qualities (sensibilities) and values, which embody the main ideas in the *Mwomboko* oral-poetic art form as rendered by three selected performing artistes.

The premiere *Mwomboko* composers and choreographers are assumed anonymous in spite of the fact that singers like the late Cinda Gĩkombe, Athman Kĩrĩro, Gachungi wa Kĩnanda, and John Arthur wa Mũhũga were famous *Mwomboko* oral artistes. The survivors of this era of 1940s include: Maranga wa Gatonye, Valentino Ndinũ wa Kang'ethe and Gĩtonga wa Gathuma. Others include: John "Kĩrĩma" Mũniũ, Meja wa Wanjirũ and Bernard Gĩtahi Kĩai. Over the years, different crops of homegrown *Mwomboko* performers who cherish African heritage have emerged. As Leach and Fried (1972:1034) put it: "The creative process is not begun and finished by a single individual; it is spread over many generations, and it never comes to an end as long as people are alive."

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study seeks to examine literary stylistics and aspects of performance used by three selected artistes of the *Mwomboko* art form and also incorporated ideas from other artistes of the said genre. Furthermore, we have observed the linguistic diversity in the

type of poetry they compose and perform, their experience as oral poets and the places (towns) where they perform (Geographically – see Scope and Limitation). Their poetry is available in recorded cassettes and in record discs in music stores in Nairobi. Tape and video recording of the three artistes enabled us to examine the dramatic effects of their performances.

Mwomboko is a popular art form whose popularity is ageless and grows day by day more so in the commercial world. Hotels, motels, and cultural centres are busy promoting *Mwomboko* performances. Media houses, for instance, Kameme 101.1 F.M. (Kayū Ka Mūingī) and Coro 101.6 F.M, a branch of Kenya Broadcasting Cooperation, have made *Mwomboko* assume a national profile. This augurs well with U.N.E.P.'s idea of encouraging indigenous people to develop their languages to foster cultural and linguistic diversity in the world community. Through *Mwomboko* poetry, messages pertaining to the control and curbing of HIV/Aids pandemic can be communicated.

It appears *Mwomboko* has some intrinsic values that are connected with the structure of songs and elements appertaining to performance and text. This makes *Mwomboko* poetry a dynamic area of study due to its varied lyrics, which exemplify aspects of cultural creativity. While many dances come and go only a few survive. *Mwomboko* is one of the latter. It has remained evergreen in its appeal to its listeners and this shows that it has artistic qualities worth researching.

This study seeks to understand *Mwomboko* poetry through reflecting on its origins. Inevitably, the data on socio-historical realities was quite valuable in stylistics analysis.

Given that *Mwomboko* has the bearing of a Western dance, it assumes an international touch that shows one emerging art form in the field of cultural practices.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Among other concerns the study seeks to answer the following questions:-

- (a) Do *Mwomboko* artistes apply the linguistic style used during the olden days and is it still attractive and appealing to today's audience?
- (b) Whom do *Mwomboko* artistes sing for?
- (c) Does performance of *Mwomboko* portray stylistic features in a given social context?

1.4 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

This study is guided by the following assumptions:-

- (a) That social-political circumstances have affected the style of communication in Gikuyu *Mwomboko* oral poetry.
- (b) That *Mwomboko* artistes have a target audience (touching their life and spirit) who in turn determine the stylistic parameters of presentation.
- (c) That the style used by *Mwomboko* artistes is determined by performance and its aesthetic values within a given social context.

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to achieve the following: -

- (a) To document the socio-historical origins of *Mwomboko*: its dance styles and the factors that gave rise to this art form among the Gĩkũyũ.

- (b) To show the role of literary stylistics in the communication process entailed in *Mwomboko* oral poetry.
- (c) To explore the role of performance and aesthetic values in explicating literary language in *Mwomboko* poetry.

1.6 JUSTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is motivated by the need to examine the stylistic features that make *Mwomboko* art form a vibrant traditional-cum-modern dance. This study appreciates the previous researches on the short forms: songs, dances, proverbs, riddles, and tongue twisters. However, most of these works focus on the recording and categorisation of the said genres.

This research focuses on the way literary tools can enhance communication depending on the artiste's choice of language. In our Kenyan communities, there is a need to integrate our cultural means of communication in sensitizing and creating awareness on development issues or calamities that befall humankind. Studying *Mwomboko* poetry shows how relaying information on a pandemic like HIV/AIDS can be realized.

This study, therefore, complements what other folklorists, for example, Routledge (1910), Barret (1912), Cagnolo (1933), Kenyatta (1938), Gathigira (1950), Leakey (1954), Barra (1960), Wa Gachanja (1987), Kabira (1987), Nkonge (1987), Mahūgū (1990), Gakuo (1994), Mwangi (1997) and Wainaina (1998) have written on Gīkūyū oral literature. Hopefully, this study will popularize the *Mwomboko* art form by making it available to scholars. In the same vein, researchers in the field of educational, cultural and

communication studies will be motivated to seek for the artistes and dancers of *Mwomboko*. This will motivate the oral artistes to cultivate a sense of pride and nationhood in their music profession.

1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The Gĩkũyũ ethnic community comprises four million plus (Kenya 1999 census document) people who reside in Central Province and its diaspora. Kĩambu, Mũrang'a, Nyeri, Kĩrĩnyaga and Nyandarũa Districts are in Central Province. The Gĩkũyũ diaspora includes: - Nairobi, Nakuru, Laikipia, Eldoret, Kajiado and Narok Districts. The coastal region is also host to Gĩkũyũ immigrants.

This study took place in Mũrang'a, Kĩambu, Nyeri, and Kĩrĩnyaga Districts (See Fig. 1.1& 1.2 page 29-30). Kĩambu and Mũrang'a have of late been subdivided further, creating Thĩka and Maragũa Districts respectively. We studied three artistes: Maranga wa Gatonye, Valentino Ndinũ wa Kang'ethe and Bernard Gĩtahi Kĩai. We selected the three because they perform in districts in the heartland of Gĩkũyũ land whereby traditions of the Gĩkũyũ people are entrenched. Wa Gatonye performs in Nyeri, Nairobi, Laikipia and Narok Districts. Singers and dancers from this Gĩkũyũ diaspora who improvise their dancing styles to suit mixed audiences normally support him. Ndinũ performs in Mũrang'a and Kĩambu, which have similar cultural traits, while Gĩtahi performs in Kĩrĩnyaga, Nyeri, and Nairobi. This kind of distribution gave us balanced results in collecting views and stands on *Mwomboko* poetry.

The singers in the Gĩkũyũ diaspora were also appropriate for the study for in spite of their assimilation into the cultural practices of the communities hosting them they show

culture and folklore and dynamic and accept change. Their performances are flexible just like the way the youth incorporate Reggae, HipHop and Rap beats. Although they do not represent the original Gĩkũyũ homeland's state of *Mwomboko* performance, they show or expand the multi-cultural nature of the art form first experienced when *Mwomboko* emerged. This study's concern was not ethnomusicology and as such, we will confine our focus on the literariness in the *Mwomboko* art form. However, the work raises multidisciplinary issues that leads us to highlight how it (ethnomusicology) enable us to understand the meanings embodied in *Mwomboko* as we examined literary stylistics and aspects of performance.

We would like to highlight that the three artistes have a varied repertoire of songs, which are broadcast regularly in Kenya Broadcasting Corporation's Kikuyu Central Station, Kameme 101.1 F. M. and Coro 102.3 F. M. This research sampled their songs in terms of their stylistic components. That is, the literary tools emergent in a given song.

Gikuyu *Mwomboko* poetry is quite wide and as such, it is impossible to analyse it all in an M.A thesis. Time, space and budgeting limitations prohibit the study of more than three performing artistes. The definition of *Mũthĩrĩgũ* and *Mwomboko* was a limitation as different people in Central Province may have their own disparate definitions.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on Kenyan folklore has tended to focus on collection of narratives. However, there is need for in-depth analysis of the literary data collected in such researches. This study will thus analyse research data drawn from *Mwomboko* songs.

Cagnolo (1933:162) has written about the customs, traditions, and folklore of the Kikuyu. In his work, he shows a biased concept of the Africans' poetic forms. He espouses foreign literature by arguing that "music amongst civilized nations represents the soul of a people but with the Akikuyu, it expresses merely their present feelings".

He fails to see any literary values in Gĩkũyũ songs as he further states:

In Kikuyu, where nature reigns sovereign and coarse, a musical recital is appreciated less by the native mentality, than the poetical narration of a fact. Indeed a simple phrase of doubtful value, or even a simple recitative can hold for hours the interest of listeners and singers, who show no signs of fatigue or boredom.

The above view is biased and patronizing as there is no evidence that he has analysed a Gĩkũyũ song in terms of stylistic features. In analysing literary devices in *Mwomboko* poetry, this study will show the purpose of art in Gĩkũyũ folklore. Cagnolo's focus was simply the recording of folkloristic materials. Wa Gachanja (1987:3) notes Cagnolo's shortcomings and misconception when he states: "Cagnolo's chapter on Gĩkũyũ folklore indicates that he was only interested in recording Gĩkũyũ folklore, for he was convinced that the material would be in complete oblivion within thirty more years." Contrary, to Cagnolo, Malinowski (1922:5) dismisses the attitude of his white informants toward African folklore as being "full of biased and prejudged opinions".

Kenyatta (1938:79-80) mentions in passing the role of Gĩkũyũ folk songs and dances in the initiation ceremonies. He writes: “the songs rendered by the relatives and friends around the foot of the tree generally pertain to sexual knowledge. This is to give initiates an opportunity of acquainting themselves with all the necessary rules and regulations governing social relationships between men and women.” This study will explore why *Mwomboko* songs emerged, who composed them, sang and danced them whether male or female.

On Gĩkũyũ protest songs, Leakey (1954:56) opines that the so-called ‘Mau Mau hymns’ were used as a propaganda machine for “they were a quick and effective way to reach the hearts of the people” during Kenya’s struggle for independence.

The question that emerges is whether *Mwomboko* oral poetry has reflections of religion or cult in form of traditional symbols entailing symbolic meaning. Longman in Merriam (1964:239) states that “symbolic meaning refers to the cultural or affective. That is, what is read into the form is an extrinsic representation of what art is or stands for.” This study focuses on the style that the performers of *Mwomboko* embark on in their creative designs.

Betty Wang in Dundes (1965:308) states:

If the folkloristic protest is permitted, it is perhaps because the blame for its composition usually cannot be affixed to any one person. It is a collective, not an individual expression, and consequently the singer of a song of protest is not to be blamed for the content of his song. He is only reporting what the folk say.

Folkloric protest can be understood through a critical analysis of the symbols applied in songs and oral poetry. Turner (1967:5) states, “The total significance of a symbol may

be obtained only from a consideration of how it is interpreted in every one of the ritual contexts it appears." Thus, we agree with Wang's preceding idea on composition.

Finnegan (1970) echoes Betty's view while commenting on *topical and political songs* in Kenya. A good number of the Mau Mau songs that she refers to were composed in Mwomboko style to voice Gĩkũyũ people's opposition to colonialism. The beat makes them a vibrant means of communication in Gĩkũyũ folklore. Finnegan (1970:285) says:

One of the best examples of the use of songs for secret propaganda is the hymns used by the Mau Mau movement in Kenya in the early 1950s. This movement, part political, part religious, was banned by the government, and yet, largely by means of these songs, was able to carry out active and widespread propaganda among the masses in Kenya.

Finnegan's observation is highly appreciated in this study as it gives impetus to our parameters in searching aspects, which enhance communication in *Mwomboko* as an ethnopoetic weapon of expression.

As Wa Thiongo (1972:16) notes: "Literature does not grow or develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society." That implies that the literature of a people emanates from the people through their beliefs and day-to-day activities. In comparison, Ranger writes about the influence of colonial administration on dance as folklore.

In (1975:9) he shows what prompted the origin of Beni Ngoma in Eastern Africa:

In its region of origin Beni was co-existent with colonial rule. In Lamu, for example, the Beni associations first emerged in the 1890's soon after the establishment of British control, and came to an end in the early 1960s with the achievement of Kenyan independence.

Ranger's observation indicates that there are art forms that emerged during the colonial era and co-existed with colonial administration due to the latter's cultural backgrounds.

The current study is interested in the origins of *Mwomboko* art form. It also focuses on how to understand aspects of style and performance employed by *Mwomboko* singers.

Bauman (1975:191) indicates how performance enhances the explication of style in the communicational process by stating "performance sets up, or represents, an interpretative frame within which the messages being communicated are understood."

While arguing about the poetics of the lyric and the understanding of "the nature of the language-game" applied by poets, Culler (1975:162) states:

Poetry lies at the centre of literary experience because it is the form that most clearly asserts the specificity of literature, its difference from ordinary discourse by an empirical individual about the world.

In exploring the literary stylistics in *Mwomboko* poetry, we have indicated the position of poetry as opposed to ordinary discourse in folklore expression.

As Dundes (1980:36) says: "folklore provides a socially sanctioned outlet for the expression of what cannot be articulated in the more usual, direct way." The research sought to explore the signs and symbols in *Mwomboko* songs as paradigms of creativity in Gikūyū folklore. We would like to point out again that *Mwomboko*, like modern protest literature, arose from the Gikūyū community's struggle for freedom (see introduction) from colonial forces, that were determined to destroy cultures and history of indigenous Kenyans and to replace them with imperialist culture. This undertaking invited resistance in the form of anti-colonial movements. As Wa Kĩnyatti (1980:3) writes:

In resistance to the complete destruction of their cultures and history and to the imposition of imperialist culture, the Kenyan people, in the process, developed new anti-colonial culture which found its expression in patriotic songs, poetry and dances such as *Mũthĩrĩgũ* and in the anti-colonial movements such as *Dini ya Musambwa*, *Dini ya Kaggia*, *Dini ya Roho*, *Ndonye wa Kauti*, *Mumboism*, etc.

It is evident that resistance to colonial oppression was a task of national concern among Kenyan communities. This research aims at exploring the effectiveness of the poetics of *Mwomboko* art form as an ethnopoetic tool of communication and what the message means to the oppressed, exploited and disillusioned people.

Ernst Cassirer in Okpewho (1983:27) states that man as an artiste “has a symbolic system” characterised by a “slow and complicated process.” This entails the idea of artistes drawing their artistic material from various patterns of life experiences of humankind and examining signs as applied for instance in *Mwomboko* poetry. Eco (1984:46) states that “a sign is not only something which stands for something else; it is also something that can and must be interpreted” and this is our concern in investigating style and performance in the *Mwomboko* art form.

Fine (1984:65) notes “that performances are uniquely patterned within specific cultures and variable across cultures.” The thinking of the community is reflected in cultural signs. Morris in Innis (1985:vii) observes that “human civilization is dependent upon signs and system of signs, and the human mind is inseparable from the functioning of signs.” The idea of allegorical symbolism is exemplified in Beidelman (1986) by illustrating “how images from the animal world bespeak of the larger structure of

kinship in Kaguru society.” Our study focuses on exploring literary stylistics as applied in *Mwomboko* poetry.

As we noted in our library research, the trend followed by the pioneer African literary scholars was that of collection and categorization of oral poetry. Kipury (1983:198-232) for example has made an effort to explain the functions of her collections of Maasai songs and poetry. Nandwa and Bukenya (1983:85-167) too have given short comments about the songs contained in their anthology. Kabīra and Mūtahi (1988:14-167) have an anthology of Gikuyu traditional songs. Chesaina (1991:108-143) gives a collection of Kalenjin songs. Bukenya et al (1997) have analysed aspects of oral poetry in general. Through stylistic analysis in *Mwomboko* poetry, this study seeks to prove that oral poetry is a growing phenomenon, which continues to flourish in our every day experiences and through it is unlikely it will vanish, changes will always occur.

In the same vein, we disagree not only with scholars of the missionary era who envisaged the disappearance of folkloristic materials, but also with African literary scholars who portray African art as a fading phenomenon. Kieti (1988) and Kemoli (1989), quoted in Wainaina (1998) belong to this school of thought. Kieti (1988:10) claims:

As other oral literature in Ukambani, Mwali is fast disappearing. Mwali (sic) can be sung and explained to researchers today by people above the age of forty. The knowledge of myali will disappear in a few decades.

Kieti’s standpoint is echoed in “Oral Literature at Crossroads”, an essay by Kemoli (1989:1). He laments: “The African is on the verge of being totally alienated from his own culture.” We would like to point out that oral literature is a living phenomenon

whose identity is reflected in the multiplicity of cultural values depicted in a group of people who share a common view of life. This study explores why *Mwomboko* songs reflect mainly on contemporary affairs and topical issues.

Scholars who have researched songs from Kenya give us the artistic qualities and the documentation of oral-poetic forms. Mkiimbo (1981), Mahūgū (1990), Gakuo (1994), Mwangi (1997) and Wainaina (1998), generally reflect on aspects of poetry in song.

Mkiimbo (1981:49) highlights the social function and meaning in song as a political weapon when she says: “The social, cultural and political aspects which are found in Kimondo (a political – song-dance) have been put across to the people by some of the most important tools of communication- that is Language.” Mkiimbo’s observation denotes the role and function of music (poetry) as a symbolic device in the language communicational process espoused in artistic renditions.

Mahūgū (1990:249) was quite essential in our research for she has researched on the Agikuyu songs of independence and she has mentioned *Mwomboko* dance briefly. She writes:

Mwomboko dance evolved with the coming of modern musical instruments and no wonder it was called *Muomboko* (irruption) for it was descriptive of the manner in which the musical instruments rendered the atmosphere with violent vibrations of electrifying sounds since the song was danced to the accompaniment of the accordion.

In studying stylistics emergent in performance, participants, and audience, we seek to explore whether musical instruments used in *Mwomboko* poetic dance play any role in reflecting the aesthetic values and elements of social significance in this given art form.

Gakuo (1994:116) shows how modern song borrows from the African traditional song. He shows how literary devices like proverbs are central in Kamarū's poetic songs. He says that proverbs (in orature) used in modern songs are borrowed from the traditional songs and that "they concretize the issues that the artiste addresses himself to. They not only demonstrate his skill and prowess in the manipulation of language but also the indebtedness to the Gīkūyū oral literary tradition."

Mwangi (1997:9) notes that Kamarū "has from time to time used his talent in applying symbolic language to correct evils in society. His poems have manifested a social psychology which focus on democracy, justice and progress in the land". Mwangi's observation gives impetus to our exploration of aspects of poetics. Wainaina (1998) collected and analysed Gīkūyū popular songs. He demonstrates how and what the Gīkūyū popular song has borrowed from the Gīkūyū oral tradition. His study also focuses on aspects of orature, which give us insight into Gīkūyū oral poetry. He is of the view that "Artistes in the popular music scene re-appropriate texts from orature in their compositions and also appropriate styles and techniques from orature". (1998:65). In the analysis of song-texts, we shall explore Wainaina's contention further as we seek to identify the centrality of poetics in the *Mwomboko* songs.

Miruka's (1994:91) views on oral poetry, more so how they reflect on the popularity of performers and participants in an oral performance, makes our stand clear in examining the socio-historical context of the folk song. He contends:

Populism in poetic performance ----- may be the case of transferring the romantic picture of ancient Africa as mass of egalitarianism where the individual was secondary to the community.

The egalitarian nature of the oral artiste, the participants, and audience is examined to ascertain whether it is the pivot of the cohesiveness of African societies. Further, we shall examine how literary stylistics is determined by cultural behaviour and linguistic trends in the community. As Maffi (1996:25) notes:

Human culture is a powerful adaptation tool, and language at one and the same time enables and conveys much cultural behaviour. While not all knowledge, beliefs and values may be linguistically coded, language represents the main instrument for humans to elaborate, maintain, develop and transmit such ideas.

The linguistic features in the cultural and spiritual values embodied in *Mwomboko* poetry is examined through the stylistic analysis of song-texts, the cassettes and video tapes and recorded data to highlight how language is a crucial tool for voicing a people's vision. Maffi (1996:46) states that "language is also a psychologically, educationally and politically crucial tool for counter-hegemony and self-determination; it is one of several mobilizing factors in struggles for national recognition". This study assumes *Mwomboko* poetry to have originated due to Gĩkũyũ search for cultural, social, political and economic recognition in the eyes of the colonisers.

1.9.0 THEORY AND METHOD

1.9.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is influenced by the following theoretical interdisciplinary models, which are interrelated with an aspect of multidisciplinary academic orientation. Firstly, we propose the use of stylistics as espoused by Crystal and Davy (1969), Guerin, et al (1979), Todd (1987) and Stephen (1991). Guerin, et al: (1979:287) state that "in stylistics we study the particular choices an author makes from "the available materials", choices that are largely culture oriented and situation bound". This theory is appropriate in our study in

that it helps to explicate the poetics in a given text, be it oral or written. It is ideal in that it shows how to explore the meaning and social significance in a song-text by unravelling how language is used in a special way to serve a particular artistic function. Leech and Short (1981:13) indicate that: “Stylistics, has implicitly or explicitly, the goal of explaining the relationship between language and artistic function.”

Stylistics appraises the impact of literariness in language as a means of communicating artistic works as Stephen (1991:349) says: “One aim of stylistics is to define the work of literature in terms of its patterns of speech, diction, sentence structure and imagery.”

Crystal and Davy (1969:10) state:

The aim of stylistics is to analyse language habits with the main purpose of identifying, from the general mass of linguistic features common to English as used on every conceivable occasion, those features which are restricted to certain kinds of social context; to explain where possible, why such features have been used, as opposed to other alternatives; and to classify these features into categories based upon a view of their function in the social context.

This study focuses on the stylistic analysis of the linguistic features, which are entailed in the Gikūyū *Mwomboko* poetry. In documenting this poetry, we shall highlight the social context, which determine the creation of *Mwomboko* poetry.

In discussing the linguistic diversity of the world’s indigenous and minority people,

Maffi (1992:22) states that every group of people have:

Their right to continue to develop as distinct peoples with their own languages and cultural traditions, reversing the culturally and linguistically homogenizing trend that current global socio-economic process are bringing about along with the drastic reduction of biological diversity.

Maffi's idea is that indigenous languages of the world should be encouraged to develop as a means of disseminating vital information about socio-economic affairs in their respective communities.

The second theoretical model is ethnomethodology as developed by Benson and Hughes (1983:56) who say this is: "the study of how persons, as parties to ordinary arrangements, use the features of the arrangements to make for members the visibly organised characteristics happen [.....] it is concerned with the procedures members use to do 'going about knowing the world.'" This study finds it as the ideal approach for it opened up to the exploration of the stylistic tools used in performance of *Mwomboko* songs. Okombo and Nandwa (1992:26-27) argue that ethnomethodology is vital in discovering "the appreciation of individual texts and in evaluating the artistic worth of individual performers within the target community." This work focuses on three *Mwomboko* artistes who operate in the heartland of Gikūyū land and its environs. Okombo and Nandwa (1992:30) further say:

The researcher, by closely observing the performance and carefully listening to the discourse of those who consume the art, manages to infer the principles on which the artistic creations are based.

This researcher not only took field notes during performance but also made cassette and videotapes recording to acquire data for guiding us in stylistic analysis. Tedlock Hymes in Foley (1995: 22-23) echoes the necessity of "acoustic or video recording" while pinpointing why researchers should learn from "ethnopoetics the necessity of coding performance features into any textual representation." Bauman (1992:85) states that ethnopoetics approach is vital in portraying the features which are "unique to a

particular artiste or occasion.” After establishing the principles which govern the process of artistic creation in *Mwomboko* songs through ethnomethodology/ethnopoetics approach, we explicate further, the signs and symbols used in *Mwomboko* oral poetry.

Thus, our third theoretical model is semiotics as developed by Mukarovsky (1977), Eco (1979), Scholes (1982) and Eagleton (1983). This research hinges on cultural studies and as such the realms of signs in the thinking exemplified in *Mwomboko* poetry was our concern. Mukarovsky (1977:179) says that “semiotic thinking conceives of the entire domain of culture as a realm of signs, with literature assuming its own special position.”

He further argues (1977:181) in semiotic poetics:

Literature is a form of verbal communication dominated by the aesthetic function. This function which literature shares with the other arts determines the specific features in the production, structure and reception of literary works. The semiotics of the producer (authorial subject) is a critique of all forms of determinism-biographical, psychological, sociological. The literary work signifies the poet’s life, his personality structure and the social circumstances of its genesis in many different ways, direct as well as figurative.

Our concern was the stylistic features of language portrayed in *Mwomboko* poetry as produced by three selected artistes in their performances. Schipper in Karani (1991:15) says that “ a semiotic enterprise seeks answers to the what, how and why performances communicate” to the target audience " cultural and historical convention" (Eagleton 1983:84). Our study examined aesthetic values as a basis to reflect the social-historical, political, and cultural contexts of *Mwomboko* poetry whereby literary stylistics was qualified analytically. This complemented the analysis of song-texts to be recorded in performance.

Scholes (1982: 15-16) states that a text “must be understood as the product of a person or persons, at a given point in human history, in a given form of discourse, taking its meaning from the interpretive gestures of individual readers using the grammatical, semantic, and cultural codes available to them.” This study explores how linguistic features are used to code message in signs and symbols in communicational process and as Eco (1979:32) asserts: “every communication process must be explained as relating to a system of significations.” The explication of cultural codes reflects the creative designs applied by oral poets in artistry in every day communication process. The current research has emerged as a multi-disciplinary work that touches on different aspects of life. The issues raised in *Mwomboko* poetry focus on the problematic of multi-cultural orientation matrix. As such, it has incorporated a multiculturalism approach as advanced by Kottak and Kozaitis (1999). Its viability rests in that a kind of social order rose in colonial times whereby different ethnic communities of Kenya shared different ideologies in the philosophy behind the formulation and practice of *Mwomboko*. The study coined multiethnosculturalology approach to capture the standpoints emerging from the research.

1.9.2.0 METHODOLOGY

1.9.2.1 Research Design

Our fundamental requirement is to show clearly and precisely who was to be studied, what was to be observed, when the observations were to be made and how the data was to be collected. These interrogations led us to assess, interpret, describe, analyse contexts and performances of three selected artistes to appraise the position of stylistics

in *Mwomboko* poetry. The research mainly depended on the insights of ethnopoetics as charted by Albert Lord (1960), Richard Bauman (1992), and John Miles Foley (1995).

1.9.2.2 Library Research

This was conducted as a means of highlighting the theoretical perspectives of studies related to ours. We studied materials on *Mwomboko* in the Kenya National Archives, Kenya Broadcasting Cooperation, Kenya Bomas of Kenya and National Museums to establish the origins of this art form.

1.9.2.3 Field Research

This entailed the collection of data over a two months period in the year 2001. This was the basis of stylistic analysis of our study.

a) Primary Data

This consisted of song-texts, which were recorded on cassettes and selected on the criterion of their literariness in language communication praxis. Transcription and translation was carried out systematically and revamped by field notes. This was followed by the exploration of tools of stylistic analysis, such as: irony, satire, metaphor, similes, metaphor and structural devices: repetition, parallelism, tonal patterns and rhyme. We selected five songs from each of our three selected artistes on the merit of their portrayal of linguistic features that are attributed to style. Later on, we increased the number of songs.

b) **Secondary Data**

This consists of the performances recorded on videotapes and photographs in given social contexts. This data will provide us with information as appertains to the dynamics of the communicator and his interaction with the audience. This assisted us in the analysis of the stylistic and aesthetic values in *Mwomboko* oral poetry. Furthermore, we explicated aspects of style coded in signs, symbols, nicknames, tone, mood, dance movements, formations and gestures. The secondary data also enabled us to explore the stylistics employed.

c) **The Sampling Procedures**

It is estimated that there are close to one hundred surviving singers of *Mwomboko* songs in Mūrang'a, Nyeri, Kīambu and Kīrīnyaga Districts. These four districts form the strata of the traditional home of Gīkūyū (see Figure 1.1, 1.2). We used mud-balling/snowballing sampling technique to select three singers as a focus for our research. We visited an artist and on interviewing him he led us to another one whom he knew so as to ensure that our work was purposive. The application of a purposive sample led us to settle on three artistes." A purposive sample is one in which individuals thought to be most important or relevant to the issue studied are targeted for the research (Sommer, Barbara and Sommer, Robert 1991: 228)." Further Nachmias, David and Nachmias, Chava (1987:183) state that " the sampling units are selected subjectively by the researcher, who attempts to obtain a sample that appears to him or her to be representative of the population." These were chosen according to age, professionalism, intensity of their music production and their geographic location.

Wa-Gatonye was selected since he performs in Nairobi, Nyeri and parts of Rift Valley Province, while Ndinū operates within Mūrang'a and Kīambu Districts, which have similar cultural traits. Furthermore, Ndinū performed with premiere artistes like Athman Kīrīro, Cinda Gīkombe, John Arthur wa-Mūhūga and Gachungi wa Kīnanda. Gītahi performs in Nyeri, Kīrīnyaga and the cosmopolitan Nairobi Province, thus reaching out to a wider national range. Being patriotic, they all perform in all public holidays and national holidays at either district, provincial or national levels.

1.9.2.4 Methods of Data Collection

a) Interviews.

We conducted face to face scheduled interviews with Maranga wa Gatonye, Valentino Ndinū wa Kang'ethe and Bernard Gītahi Kīai as our singers' respondents. We took photographs of the artistes and dancers during interviews to capture the dramatic effects (See Plates 1-8). The interview schedule assisted us in recording context along with text to ensure that meaning was not lost. However, Ndinū did not appreciate a scheduled interview. Therefore, we conducted an unstructured interview to enable us to collect accurate data. For the other two: Gītahi and wa Gatonye, we applied structured interview using questionnaires but also carried out unstructured interviews on different interview dates. We also used questionnaires to interview dancers: David Kīenja, Bonface Kariūki, Kībirū wa Mūthia, Njimi wa Kobe and Thamburi wa Mairang'a, a female dancer in different performances that we attended.

b) Participant Observation Method

To examine the major aspects of performance, we took part in performance. Our participation enabled us to understand the articulation of *Mwomboko* composers' worldview. We acquired trained field informants who assisted us in data collection. Tape and video recording took place during interviews and performances. The resource persons were motivated to give their best and some thought the recording was meant for Kameme 101.1 F.M and Coro 102.3 F.M electronic media promotion on oral poetry. Consequently, they demanded money since they thought we were agents of media houses. We used our interview schedule to have a face-to-face interview with two dancers of *Mwomboko* who participated in each singer's performance. These were selected through a purposive sampling technique.

1.9.2.5 Data Processing, Analysis and Interpretation

Once we finished collecting data from the field, we listened keenly to the recorded oral materials on tapes, transcribed song-texts from tape to paper, applied free translation, viewed video tapes to enable us study the style in the *Mwomboko* choreography, explicate the signs, symbols and aesthetics values in *Mwomboko* poetry.

1.9.2.6 Conclusion

This Chapter concentrated on the introduction: background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research assumptions, aims and objectives of the study, justification and significance, scope and limitation, and literature review. It further illustrates the theoretical framework and the methodology the study assumes.



Plate 1 and 2. Bernard Gitahi being interviewed by the researcher



Plate 5 and 6: Kariokor *Mwomboko* Dancers performing with Wa Gatonye during Jamuhuri day celebrations.



Plate 7 and 8: Kariokor *Mwomboko* Dancers performing with Ndinu wa Kang'ethe during Madaraka Day celebrations

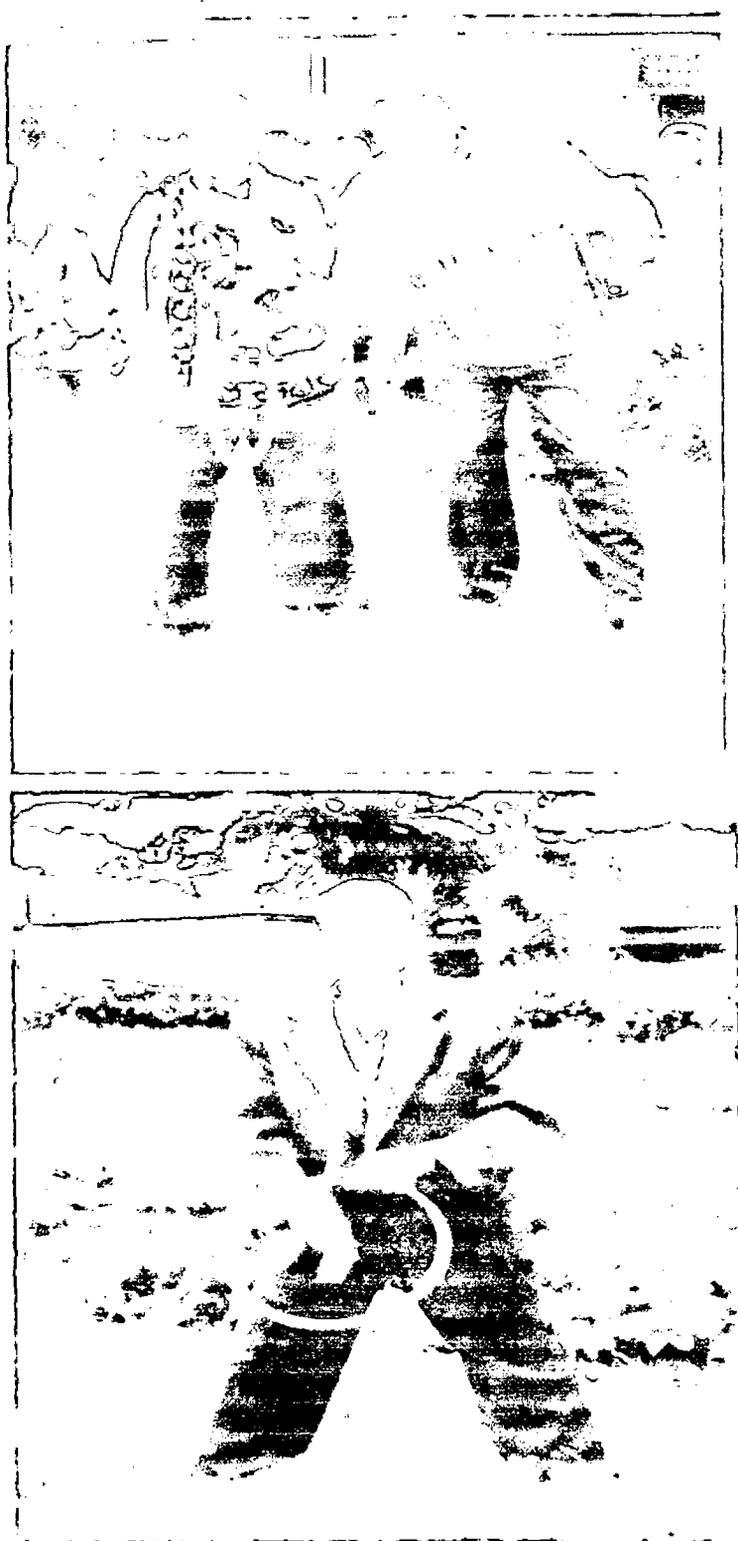
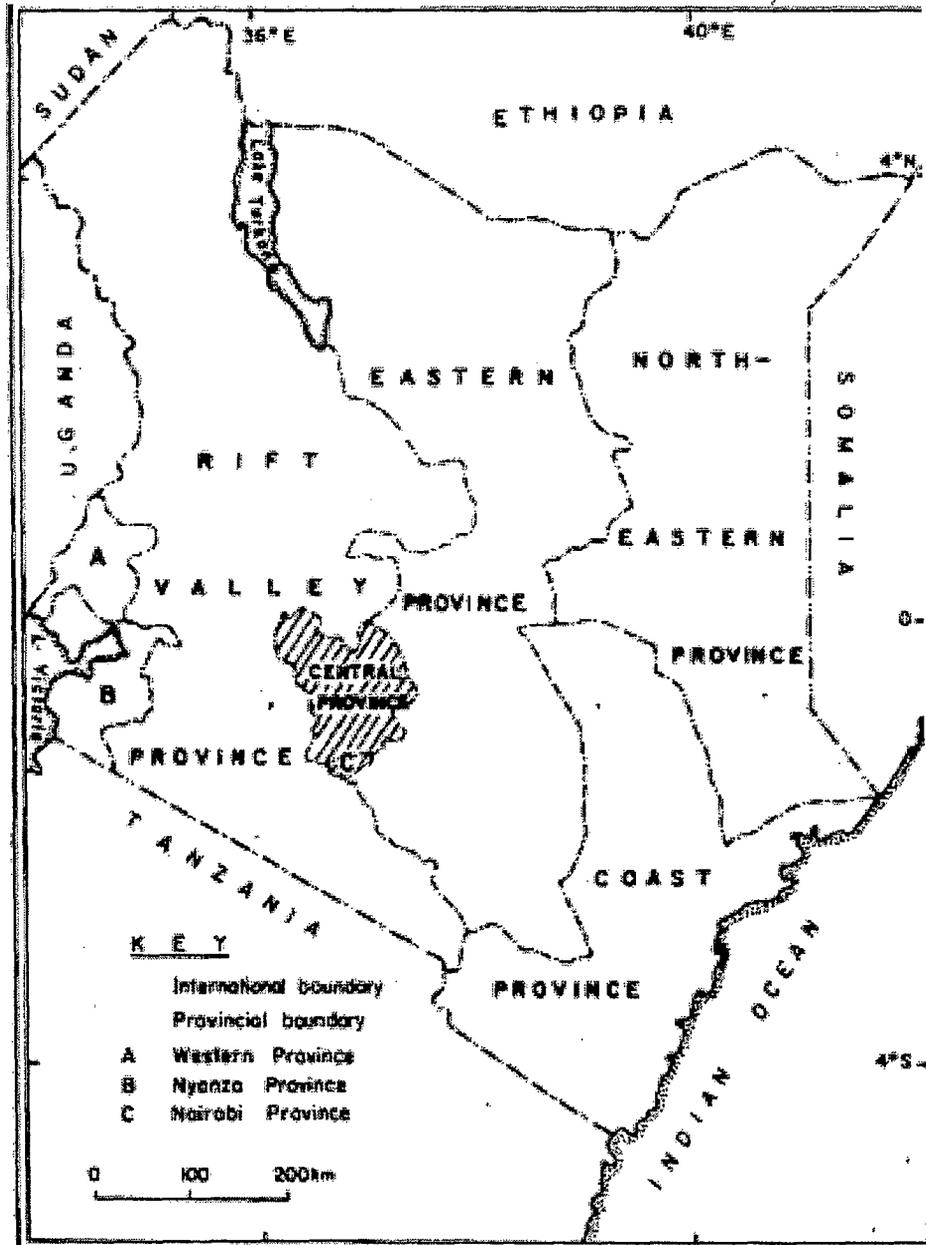
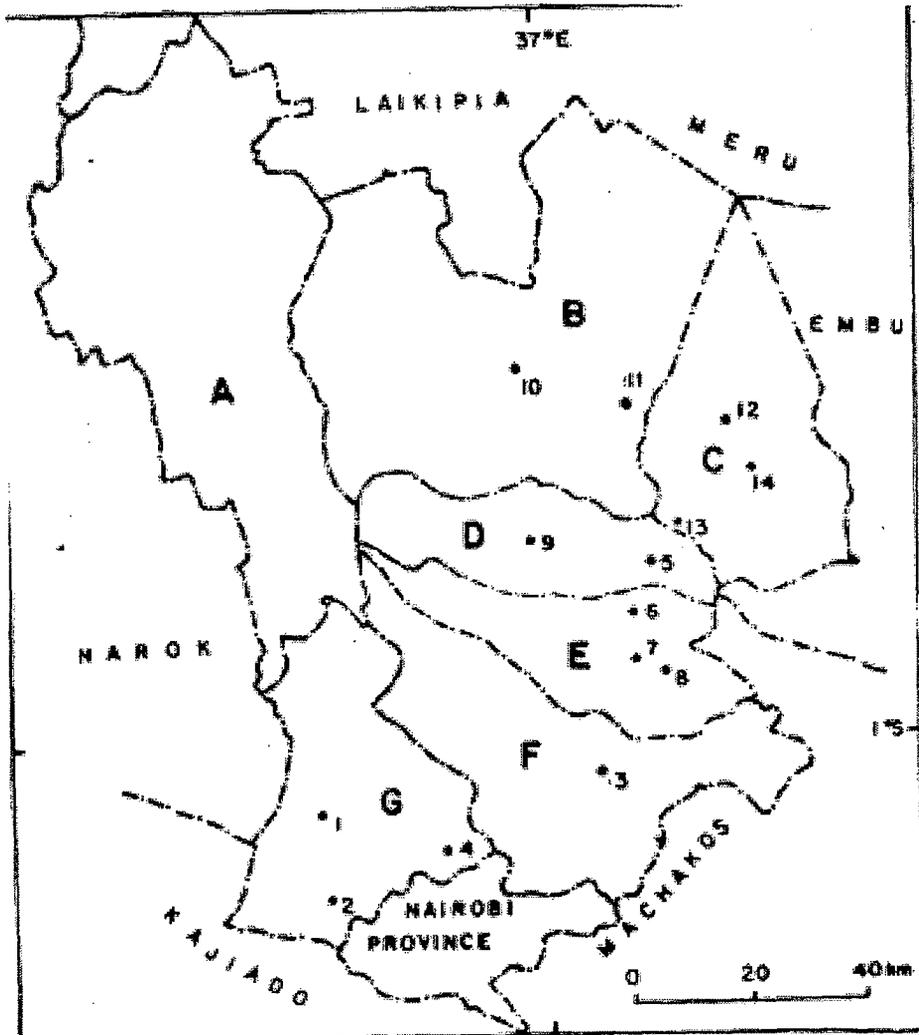


Plate 3 and 4: Valentino Ndinu Kang'ethe showing the researcher how he performs in Maragua Town.

The Location of Central and Nairobi Provinces in Kenya



The Location of towns in the Districts of Central Province where *Mwomboko* is performed



LEGEND

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|----------------------|
| 1 Limuru | 8 Makuyu | A Nyandarua District |
| 2 Kikuyu | 9 Kangema | B Nyeri " |
| 3 Thika | 10 Nyeri | C Kirinyaga " |
| 4 Kiambu | 11 Karatina | D Murang'a " |
| 5 Murang'a | 12 Kerugoya | E Maragua " |
| 6 Maragua | 13 Sagana | F Thika " |
| 7 Saba Saba | 14 Kutus | G Kiambu " |

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 *MWOMBOKO* POETRY: ITS SOCIO-HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND EMERGENT DANCE STYLES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the socio-historical factors, which gave rise to the *Mwomboko* art form and gives an outline of the genesis of *Mwomboko* poetry through time. It looks at the role of the *Mũthĩrĩgũ* poetry as the precursor of *Mwomboko*. The connecting theme in this chapter revolves around the mutation of *Mwomboko* into minor genres, which are discussed under the subheadings: *Machi*, *Koraci*, *Mwomboko*, *Tindo*, *Ndongomothi*, *Rumba* and *Kariara*. This chapter also explores the contribution made by soldiers and Carrier Corps who participated in the First and Second World Wars. The chapter also gives reflections of *Mwomboko* as a form of protest literature that was popular in Central Province of Kenya and its environs, and considers the role of anonymous composers of *Mwomboko* poetry. Some well-known première *Mwomboko* artistes are discussed as well as emergent dance styles in the 1940s (see above). This information has given this study a firm ground to carry out the analysis of features of style, performance and aesthetics of *Mwomboko* poetry.

2.2.0 Socio-Historical Origins of *Mwomboko* Art Form

In this section, we shall identify the factors, which led to the emergence of *Mwomboko* poetry as a social product that was born out of the need to communicate diverse messages in the Gĩkũyũ community and to some extent, the neighbouring communities. It is noted that communication entails the reflections of the live experiences of members

of a community and the society at large and the social significance of the message. As such, the role of tradition is very vital in creativity and to build on the present, we have to have insight of the past.

As Vansina (1992: 94)) says:

Communication presupposes society and all messages are social products. Hence messages of oral tradition have a social face. They are significant to members of the communities in which they are told. Otherwise, they would not be communicated at all. Would the social pressure not alter the contents of a message? No doubt, this occurs, and, as all messages from tradition are altered in the present, when they are recorded they are strongly influenced by the social present. Therefore, one must assess the extent of such influences, the means by which they can be recognized, and the ways in which the interpretation of any message will have to take such influences into account.

It is noted that *Mwomboko* poetry is a social product, which facilitates dissemination of knowledge on oral traditions and the emerging modern art in our society. The rendering of a social face is quite important and significant not only to the Gĩkũyũ Community but to the Kenyan Society as it incorporates a diversified element of music across Kenya. It further portrays an international touch in borrowing aspects of the Scottish dance. The social pressures for the struggle for political and economic independence altered the contents of the messages in order to accommodate protest literature that was suitable for the impending armed struggle. The influences of the social present have continued to necessitate change in the content in *Mwomboko* poetry. It is these kinds of influences that this study has embarked on in documenting the socio-historical origins of *Mwomboko* art form, and how they affect the style of language applied by our three selected artistes in relation to other première composers.

2.2.1 Soldiers and Carrier Corps who participated in the First World War – 1914-1918

This section deals with the role played by soldiers and Carrier Corps who were conscripted to fight in the First and Second World Wars which pitted British (Kenya's colonial master) against Germans. According to Kyle (1999), it is evident that Kenya was colonised by the British Empire from around 1898 when the first coloniser touched the Kenyan soil. Kyle (1999:6) says: "the British Consul-General in Zanzibar proclaimed the East African protectorate (EAP) in Mombasa on 15th June 1895. The powers were officially notified by the foreign office the following year." After occupying large tracks of land and indulging in legal and illegal trade, they got sympathizers in the name of colonial chiefs. Through such collaborators, they were able to conscript African soldiers and Carrier Corps (portes) into the army of British Empire.

It was during the First World War when some African soldiers first learnt the strengths and especially the weaknesses of the white people. It was imperative that in the British army, musical parades were used to instill discipline and confidence in the soldiers. When the white soldiers were relaxing, they disported themselves through dancing the European Waltz, a dance that was performed with the accompaniment of the accordion. The Africans watched the whites perform their dance and they were captivated to the point of longing to perform it.

After the end of the First World War, some white soldiers came to settle in Kenya-a new haven for white settlers who were interested in migration from Britain, Wales and Scotland. These white soldiers brought along with their European cultural values and

practices that included their language, formal education, their music: song and dance among others. They brought musical instruments, for instance the accordion. As they played, the Africans observed and made merry. The African soldiers and porters who participated in the war also brought back the accordion and started learning how to play and sing to its rhythm, which later modulated to the new *Mwomboko* touch.

2.2.2 *Mūthīrīgū*, the Precursor of *Mwomboko*.

The term is connected to Mserego, the first movement of Sengenya danced at weddings (Orawo, 2002). The First World War was a phenomenon that became an eye-opener for the Africans' vision of the nature, strengths and weaknesses of the white colonial administrators. For instance, they saw the white man dying and agonising in the state of warfare. In the 1920's, the Gikūyū community had a major rift between the African traditional conservatives and those people who embraced the new white man's religion – Christianity.

The conservatives protested against the white man's banning of female genital mutilation. Among the Gikūyū this was a rite of passage that was revered with extreme gravity. Consequently, outlawing it prompted the genesis of Gikūyū Karing'a schools and Independent churches. The point we are making is that those who learnt to play the accordion musical instrument backed up those who sang *Mūthīrīgū* songs.

Mūthīrīgū emerged as a traditional poetic dance whose main objective was to denounce the foreign White man's culture that was being imposed on the citizenry. The ultra-

conservative traditionalists cherished performing *Mũthĩrĩgũ*, the precursor of *Mwomboko*, for it was to them an ethnopoetic stratagem to oppose foreign culture.

According to Ndinũ wa Kang'ethe, one of our selected artists who hails from Maragũa and plays professional *Mwomboko* poetry, one notable singer who performed *Mũthĩrĩgũ* songs using an accordion was a Luo artist popularly known as Nyangera. He was an employee of Kenya Railways who had the opportunity to tour many towns that were connected through the railway line. On many occasions, he used to perform at Kariokor Memorial Hall. Here he interacted with Gĩkũyũ singers and audiences.

Nyangera, the professional performer, and trainer of traditional and modern art also played *Mũthĩrĩgũ* songs in towns like Maragũa, Mũrang'a and Thĩka. It is in Maragũa town where Ndinũ met him and they struck a friendship. The latter was still a young boy and at first he was taught how to play the bell, which is popularly known as Karĩng'arĩng'a. The Luo refer to the bell as *ongengo* and the accordion as *onanda*. Anton Mito a Luo co-played with Nyangera. Later he learnt to play the accordion. The Gikuyu refer to it as *Kĩnanda kĩa Mũgeto*. *Mũthĩrĩgũ* protest dance was viewed as a form of subversion by the colonial powers and around 1930, it was outlawed.

The white missionaries and literary scholars ignored the recording of *Mũthĩrĩgũ* poetry. Among such biased gainsayers was Father Cagnolo who worked in Nyeri. In spite of the varied choice of words and musical phrases in *Mũthĩrĩgũ*, Cagnolo who wrote about Gĩkũyũ songs and dances in the 1930's disparages whatever he collected. He (1933:162) quips:

Another quaint fact is: there is in this country a limited number of musical phrases, recitatives of a sort, allotted to certain ages and particularly circumstances of life, and beyond these you may search in vain for any new conception. Nobody sees the need to invent new ones, those in use being recognized from time immemorial, and being strictly conventional for all special occasions. Hence the great antithesis between these Eastern peoples and people from the West.

Cagnolo's argument lacks substance for the richness and variety in *Mwomboko* poetry, which emerged in 1940's, speaks for itself as is evident in our documentation. New conceptions continue to emerge in the *Mwomboko* art form and this marks a transition from the "pure" traditional music to the new traditional-cum-modern art.

2.2.3 Soldiers and Carrier Corps who participated in the Second World War- 1939 – 1945

At around late 1930's, those singers who had learnt to play the accordion began to think of a new dance that would not provoke the colonial administrators. Later the African soldiers who fought in the Second World War – 1939-1945 also brought more knowledge about the shortcomings of the white man.

The new exposure made them bolder in facing the colonial masters. Like those soldiers of the First World War, they brought with them the accordion musical instrument. When they came back, they met groups of youthful verbal artistes playing a traditional-cum-modern-dance music. The *Mwomboko* poetry thus was already growing and setting firm roots among the youth of the 1940's colonial times.

2.2.4 *Mwomboko* Poetry and Socio-cultural Protest in Nairobi and Central Provinces of Kenya

The Gikūyū youth had their own traditional style, which they fused with the new encounter. They observed the white man's "Waltz" and the Scottish dance. Then, they

incorporated some of their aspects but made sure that they danced contrary to the foreigners' tempo. The hybrid became *Mwomboko*. It appears the use of the Waltz and the Scottish dance illustrate the vibrancy and dynamism of folk-materials through the fusion of a multicultural touch dictated by the passage of time and in new circumstances. In comparison to the two foreign art forms, theirs was lively, vigorous and forceful.

In essence, they were satirising the white man's dance with their own traditional-cum-modern dance, which incorporated aspects of song and dance from Gikūyū land.

According to Ndinū and other resource persons, they also borrowed from other communities in Kenya, including Luo, Luhya, Kamba, Miji Kenda, Embu, Meru and the Maasai. It is against such a background, that we say *Mwomboko* emerged as a form of social protest in Nairobi and Central Provinces of Kenya. One would perhaps ask, was this multicultural historical backdrop the beginning of Kenya's National Dance? In formulating *Mwomboko* dance, the composers saw the need to copy some aspects of the European Waltz and the Scottish dance as traditional cum modern art always accommodates change. Ranger (1975:9) in "*The Origin of Beni*" shows how Africans copied the white man's cultural aspects and officialdom:

Beni dancers copied European military and ceremonial uniforms; took pride in their skill at drill; and often put on lavish displays of loyalty to the British Crown.

Though the Gikuyu imitated some aspects of white man's culture in formulating *Mwomboko* poetry, what comes out strongly is the satirical structure, which is reinforced by vigorous movement, the ting of the bell, the very *Karīng'arīng'a* and the fabulous *Mwomboko* multi-rhythmic beat. As compared to the soft movement in the European waltz and the Scottish dance styles, the new *Mwomboko* dance tended to offer

potentiality for action and humorous teasing which touched the hearts of singers, dancers and the audience. This was meant to ensure that the strong characteristics of African traditional musicality were reflected in the new *Mwomboko* poetry.

2.3.0 Anonymous Composers

The composers of *Mwomboko* songs are deemed anonymous, as there are no written records which show the originators of this art form. Finnegan (1977:201) supports the aspects of anonymity in composition of traditional oral poetry. However, she shows the vitality of audiences in determining creative art:

It is true audiences play a more directly influential part in the creation of oral literature than is common with written literature; and the process of variability in oral poetry and the influence of traditional conventions from which a poet selects means that in one sense many poets play a part in the composition of poetry, and not just one original composer on the model of written literature.

Finnegan's study considers the important role played by anonymous composers of oral poetry and also shows how insightful they were, where they danced and whom they interacted with so as to create this art form. According to Maranga wa Gatonye, in the emergence of *Mwomboko* there are those singers who imitated the white colonial farmers in the white Highlands in the Rift Valley. First they observed the Scottish dance as well as the Waltz and then they changed the style of formations and movements of the white man to emerge with their own style in conformity with African traditional mode of dance.

According to Maranga wa Gatonye and Chege, a national choreographer in Nairobi based at the Presidential Music Commission of Kenya, the new Christian schools also

discouraged the singing of the African traditional folk songs and dances as they were viewed as pagan. To force the message down the throats of the people, literary studies carried by white missionaries disparaged African folklore. Cagnolo, the catholic priest quoted above studied the Gĩkũyũ songs and dances and asserted that they were meaningless. He proclaims: (1933:162).

We Western people, though wishing to be sympathetic, are not able to appreciate and have no wish to learn their music, so different to that which our taste and training has accustomed us. Our musical Perceptions are jarred by such crudeness, and although we may listen carefully, no feelings of joy, or grief, or horror can be aroused in us, feelings which are stirred so easily by our Western music.

With such views the traditional music was scorned and relegated to the illiterate people in the society. The African students were therefore taught Scottish dance in schools in place of their own traditional folk music and dance. The Gĩkũyũ composers saw it wise to use various varieties of dances to come up with the *Mwomboko* dance. It emerged as a “traditional-cum-modern” dance that appealed to the youth more so because it brought change to the traditional songs which they performed then, for example *Mũgoiyo*, *Kĩbaata Nduumo* and *Gĩchukia*. Notwithstanding, variety and choice of dance style movements from different ethnic cultural sources made *Mwomboko* a force to reckon with in Gĩkũyũ land.

2.4.0 Emergence of Notable Artistes

In oral tradition, the copyright of oral forms belongs to the community or the authorities in charge of cultural heritage. This implies that no single artiste who performs

folkloristic materials can proclaim that he or she owns such materials. This is very true of the *Mwomboko* poetry, which emerged in the late 1930's and the early 1940's.

Some of these verbal artistes participated in Kamano a kind of verbal art that emerged as a traditional-cum-modern dance but never gained prominence. It was given impetus by the accordion musical instrument and the bell, which were quite instrumental in rendering flow, blending and splendour to the emergence of this new form of artistry.

2.4.1 Premiere *Mwomboko* poetry performers

Although *Mwomboko* composers are deemed anonymous, some well-known artistes emerged as prolific singers of *Mwomboko* songs in the late 1930's and the early 1940's. Some of them were able to record music in discs that were used in olden days. However, this does not qualify them to be the formulators of *Mwomboko* but notable singers who promoted its growth.

These include: - Athman Kīrīro wa Tharimū, Gachungi wa Kamau alias Wa-Kīnanda, John Arthur wa Mūhūga, Cinda Gīkombe alias wa-Watīrī, Meja wa Wanjirū, Ndinū wa Kang'ethe alias Nabūū wa Njei, Kīrīma wa Waithīra alias Kīgaragaro, Kībirū wa Mūthia alias Kwīrenga Beni ya Mūgūre, Onesmas wa Nyaikamba, Mūkweri wa Kweri, Hitler Njūgūna, Chema Ikue, Kahīī ka Arūme among others.

The late 1950's and the mid 1960's produced the likes of: Mwangi wa Gachaū, Bernard Gītahi Kīai, Maranga wa Gatonye, Wa Gaitharī, Wanganangū, Meciria, Loreto Ndirangū, Mwangi wa Kīnyenje, John Kīragū alias Wakīnanda, H.M. Kariūki among others. Joseph Kamarū, a popular Kikuyu Musician also tried a hand in *Mwomboko* poetry in the mid and late 1960's.

2.4.2 Cinda Gĩkombe

It is not the intention of this research to study the lives and times of the artistes enumerated in 2.4.1. However, we have found it quite inevitable to pick one notable verbal artiste who belongs to the first generation of singers to serve as an illustration of the type of life the *Mwomboko* singers led, as it will assist us to understand aspects of style as applied in the origins of this art form. Cinda Gĩkombe is the most ideal for he is best known in most parts of Kenya.

Cinda started working as a turn boy for a lorry that belonged to an Asian Trader known as Maunji, who operated transport business in Thika and its environs. He used to transport cereals to the needy areas in Central Kenya.

Through coincidence, Cinda Gĩkombe met John Arthur who taught him how to play the accordion. It so happened that working as a turn boy was not Cinda's career but his life revolved around music endeavours, most specifically the performance of *Mwomboko* poetry. He emerged as a refined singer and player of the accordion. Thus, he left his job as a loader with Maunji Transporters and concentrated on *Mwomboko* performances. In one of his songs, he proclaims *Gĩkĩ nĩndagĩthomeire*, which translates: I am well trained in the art of playing the accordion.

Ndinũ alleges that Cinda Gĩkombe dropped his birth name and nicknamed himself *Cinda Gĩkombe*, which means, "Win a Cup". Our resource person proclaims that *Cinda Gĩkombe* started *Mwomboko* dancing competitions. The dancers were required to jump over some set "traps" in pairs as they danced. The pair that never fell on the so-called "traps" won the cup and some little cash reward. The reward also included being

allowed to dance extra formations and movements without being charged the entrance fee to the festival ground.

During Cinda Gĩkombe's time, *Mwomboko* songs swelled up the hearts of the youthful Gĩkũyũ people to a near fanatical-religious fervour. In the 1940's, poetic creation evolved spontaneously as the artistes performed and as dancers gyrated to the rhythm. In spite of the small fee charged during dances, *Mwomboko* poetry was an art performed as a tradition and without a thought for fame or fortune as is the practice today. The ideologies that emerged in *Mwomboko* were people-driven for they were for the interests of the entire Gĩkũyũ community and other interested neighbouring peoples of Kenya.

This study notes that the towering *Mwomboko* artistes: Cinda Gĩkombe, Athman Kĩĩro, Gachungi wa Kĩnanda, Maranga wa Gatonye, Ndinũ wa Kang'ethe, John Arthur wa Mũhũga and H.M. Kariũki exemplify the diversification of creativity of a multicultural incorporation in Gĩkũyũ folklore. These artistes lived as commoners, yet they assisted in rendering splendour to the lives of energetic youthful people who lived in oppression and exploitation perpetuated by the colonial masters from Britain.

When the state of emergency was declared in Kenya, the colonisers used Cinda as a roving bard who entertained detainees in various detention camps around the country.

To the freedom fighters, he appeared to be more of a pro-colonial element and so a misused weapon of change. His cooperation with the colonial administrators thus enabled him to continue performing in clubs and bars even after the outlawing of the *Mwomboko* art form.

All in all, Cinda Gĩkombe is one of the most popular premiere singers of *Mwomboko* for he was able to record his music in vinyl discs in the early 1940's. He was also able to travel across not only Central Province but also the rest of our country. When Kenya became independent in 1963, he continued to perform and at one time, he was employed by a Breweries Company in Nairobi to advertise their brands of beer through song and dance.

Unfortunately, it is alleged that a jealous fellow worker bewitched him for Cinda was better paid than the villain. This was the beginning of the end of this venerated *Mwomboko* maestro. He became a lunatic and he died in 1987 in one of the lunatics' asylum in Kenya. Time and space cannot allow us to talk about all *Mwomboko* artistes. Nevertheless, we believe the little we have highlighted about Cinda Gĩkombe alias "Wa-Watĩrĩ" gives a picture of the experiences of most premiere *Mwomboko* oral poets.

2.5.0 Emergent Dance Styles of the *Mwomboko* Art Form

2.5.1 *Machi Namba Imwe* (March Number One)

As the name suggests, this dance style was dubbed "March" for it assumes a pseudo-military nature in formation. The accordion player held his loved musical instrument facing his enthusiastic dancers. Beside him, the bell-player stood erect like a post. The accordion player gave an introductory part whereby the dancers stood erect holding the collars of their shirts facing upwards. After this dramatic introductory prelude, all the dancers clapped their hands as a gesture of respect for their so-called "Beni-Masta", that is bandmaster. He continued to play and the dancers filed into the dancing ground. This marked the first dance movement in *Mwomboko* poetry.

Ndinū wa Kang'ethe alleges that some of the original words of *Machi Namba Wanu*, that is March Number One, were actually in Kiswahili. He recalls the wording of the song by Kĩrĩro:

U Mabwana, U Mabwana – upitapo, unaitika
Salaam --- Good Morning Sir - ileo, Leo, Leo,
Leo ni Siku kuu tunyoe mireembe tukalale ho!

Oh! Masters, oh! Masters! Whenever you pass,
You must answer- greetings- Good morning sir
Today, today, today is a holiday
Let us celebrate! Let us celebrate!

This extract is a reflection of the incorporation of various cultural values from different ethnic groups into *Mwomboko* poetry. These Kiswahili words used by Kĩrĩro denote the interaction of the coastal people with *Mwomboko* artistes in Nairobi. The idea of march and movement reflects the aspects of the *Mserero Sengenya* from the Coast. Kĩrĩro is alleged to have gone to Mombasa to seek medical attention as he was suffering from pancreatitis. The words *tunyoe mireembe* highlight the fusing of linguistic features from the Luhya community from Western Province of Kenya.

In spite of the great efforts by Kĩrĩro to incorporate Kiswahili in *Mwomboko* poetry, the audiences showed a breakdown of communication as majority of the Gĩkũyũ were not conversant with Kiswahili. Therefore, the artiste was prompted to translate his ideas and dance movement as well as language into Gĩkũyũ. He modified the tune and sang:

Njamaa yangu kũngũ, Ngũria gũtaria atĩa mbuiya ya marĩndĩ,
Njenerarĩ wa Kĩnũthia marakara, ngũria nĩguo ũkwendaga ngwĩre ĩ
nĩũguo.

My comrades Oh! Kungu! How is it “Mbuya ya Marindi”
General son of Kinuthia-Anger -I am asking whether that is
What you wanted – I tell you it’s O.K.

The audience felt more comfortable with the Gikūyū touch innovated by Kīrīro. The song *Machi Namba Imwe (Wanu)* - that is March Number One was dubbed by the audience/dancers as *Marakara*, which means “Anger”. The dancers performed in a style whereby males marched with female dancers of their choice. One of the hands of female dancers rested on the shoulder of her male companion while the other gripped the male’s hand. The male dancer held the left hand of the female dancer with his right while the other hand rested on the waist in a grand style.

This study has noted that some artistes like Maranga wa Gatonye refer to *Machi Namba Imwe* as *Machi Nene*, that is the “Grand March”. This is because it opens the floor for the dancing festivities. Its performance takes a longer time in comparison with *Machi Nini*, the Minor March.

In Ndinū’s song, the character in the song *Machi Namba Imwe*, March Number One is dubbed “General”, which indicates nicknaming, symbolic language and the military touches in *Mwomboko* poetry. This incorporation by verbal artistes is evident of the foreign cultural touches in this art form. In a battle situation, a general guides the security detail to the leaders of the land. In *Mwomboko* poetry, the singer was and is still the leader of a troupe. Normally, a strong person was chosen to protect him from any likely danger or fights.

2.5.2 *Machi Namba Igĩrĩ* (March Number Two)

This can be counted as the second movement in *Mwomboko* poetry. Like its predecessor, it also assumes a pseudo-military march and it resembles March Number One. The disparity occurs in the extra formation, which reflects the male dance; making

an extra formation while turning round rhythmically with much display of diligence. A mismatch or poor dancing is disparaged and scorned by the audience.

The songs performed within the “March” dance style revolve around love lyrics; and the artiste concentrates on saluting the erstwhile participants, the excellent dancers and strong people who provide security for the dancing party. One of the *Machi* lyrics says:

Ndīrerire baba angūranīre I itanathiī Thīka
Kwīitanga, thogora ūtarī na gīthimi ngūona ta
Ngūhenio

I told my father to help me marry
Before I disappear to promiscuity in Thika
A price without a Measure!
I see as if I will be cheated.

The wording of this lyric shows that the artiste focused on the social problems, which are faced by the youth. His form of composition warns the dancers to take stock of their behavior to ensure that they live a respectable and dignified life.

Ndinū “Nabūū” wa Kang’ethe, one of our select artistes of this study who belongs to the first generation of *Mwomboko* artistes is quite important in our study. This is because he recalls what he witnessed as he performed in the 1940’s. He says that *Machi Namba Igīrī*, March Number Two was not inferior to *Machi Namba Imwe*, March Number One. It has its own strengths and dynamism in terms of performance.

However, it could not be performed before *Machi Namba Imwe* for the fluidity of the integration of dance movements may show gaps left by the introductory aspects of the former dance style.

As we have mentioned earlier, some artistes call *Machi Namba Igĩrĩ* simply as *Machi Nini*, The Minor March. An example is Maranga wa Gatonye, one of our select artistes of this study. The aspect of being minor is based on the duration of the performance, formations and movement patterns entailed in the dance style.

2.5.3 *Koraci* (Chorus)

This is the third movement in the *Mwomboko* poetry that emerged in the 1940's. This dance style is the movement that singers dubbed *Koraci*, which actually is the Gikũyũ pronunciation of the English word "chorus". This is not because the dancers participated in responsorial chanting but rather it was a movement with simple formations that set the pace for the more complex movements like *Machi Namba Imwe*, March Number One, *Machi Namba Igĩrĩ*, March Number Two or other *Mwomboko* movements, which we will examine later.

At times, it served as an interlude whereby the singer and the dancers re-organized themselves after performing the major dance movements. It also acted as a means of recognizing important ladies and gentlemen attending for the performance. Ndinũ wa Kang'ethe alias *Nabũũ* recalls one song in the *Koraci* category, which goes:

Njahĩra, Njahĩra, ũũ ũũ rendi Njahĩra
 Njahĩra ũũ rendi Njahĩra – birithina rendi Njahĩra
 Mũbirĩmbĩ ngũria ũkuuga atĩa
 Tunda bingu – ngũria ũkuuga atĩa
 Njahĩra! Njahĩra! Njahĩra! rendi Njahĩra

Njahira Njahira - Oh! Oh! Lady Njahira
 Njahira Oh Lady Njahira – Pilsner – Pilsner – Lady Njahira
 Mubirimbi – I am asking! What are you saying?
 Unripe fruit – I am asking! What are you saying?
 Njahira! Njahira! Njahira Lady Njahira.

Here the focus is on a lady whom the singer refers to as Njahīra, which literally means "sigh for me". He likens her to an unripe fruit. He "invokes" her name repeatedly with a tinge of a wooing tone. This kind of composition denotes the kind of target audience that the artiste has in mind. It entails the youthful, boisterous and at times bawdy *Mwomboko* enthusiasts. This implies that the audience plays an important role in determination of the work of art so created. Finnegan (1977:231) explains:

It is clear that audiences do often have an effect on the form and delivery of a poem. Of course the nature of the likely audience influences all literature, but with oral literature there is the additional factor that members of the audience can take part in the performance.

In *Koraci* dance movement, the artiste rendered oral poetry, which revolved around the lives of his audience. The latter appreciated it, for it touched on their social experiences. Spontaneously, members of the audience chanted words as the artiste sang. This was a responsorial style that focused on their lives and souls. The *Koraci* lyrics are soothing in nature and wells up in the hearts of enthusiastic *Mwomboko* admirers. The language of performance gravitates to love affairs and social concerns. This holds the audience from the beginning to the end of the performance.

Maranga wa Gatonye shows the level of intimacy when he personifies his accordion by stating: "Kīnanda warīra atīa ta kūrī Njamūhūri?/The accordion, how do you cry as it were Jamhuri (day)?" This exemplifies a *Koraci* song that links love ideals with those of national concerns, like the annual Jamhuri Day Celebrations.

2.5.4 *Mwomboko*

This is the fourth movement in line with the emergent dance styles in *Mwomboko* poetry. The word *Mwomboko* is a coinage, which no artiste can claim to have come up

with its entomological origin. If we reflect back to the first movement, which was dubbed *Machi Namba Imwe*, March Number One, song number 3, page 136, we recall the use of Kiswahili words. According to Ndinū wa Kang'ethe, it was a common practice for singers and dancers of *Mwomboko* to "throw words about", or shout them out "here and there" in the arena in appreciation of the performance. One informed point from our resource persons shows that the Gĩkũyũ intermingled with different Kenyan communities, which moved, from the rural or the so-called reserve areas to work in Nairobi.

The interaction of Nyangera, a leading and fiery Luo artiste is one of the pointers to the coinage of the name. When he played Luo traditional songs using the accordion, the Luo dancers tended to jump and fly to its rhythm. The Gĩkũyũ endeavoured to imitate and they perceived that Luo dancers were very vigorous and that they tended to *kũmbũka*, which means to fly. The Gĩkũyũ singers and dancers resolved to modulate the so-called "flying movements" or motions in Luo and other fast traditional rhythms from other communities. They danced in a file, lifting their legs and arms here and there in unison. The Kiswahili speakers dubbed this as *Kuambuka*, which actually means lifting, especially of feet. According to music a teacher (Pan African Music Arts Education Conference, Kisumu July 2003), in one Malawi language the word *Kuomboka* means dancing and moving from the lowlands around the lakes to the highlands. This reminds one of Peter Tsosi who sang the famous "Pole Musa" song with the Eagles band who lived in Nairobi.

In Nairobi as different ethnic communities interacted and appreciated each other's cultural practices, the Kiswahili speakers joked: "Huu ni mchezo wa kuambuka, ni muambuko kweli." At this juncture the Gĩkũyũ singers and dancers proclaimed and joked that theirs (dance styles) was *Kuomboka* but not Kuambuka. The word *Kuomboka* thus derived a special meaning for the singers and dancers. It now stood for the dance, which they christened *Mwomboko*. By and by, through performance by artistes and the excitement of fans, the word also got a connotative meaning whereby it also meant, "to be happy" or "passionate love." As dancers performed on open grounds, which at times were filled with hot soil, their feet got boils as if they had been burnt by fire. This reminded them of the Gĩkũyũ word *Kuomboka* which means, "to be burnt" by hot substances and the subsequent wearing off of the burnt top skin. Notwithstanding, the word *Mwomboko* was born and it carried more impact than the other names that were dubbed in the other dance styles. Ndinũ wa Kang'ethe recalls through singing the original words that were uttered in *Mwomboko* movement's lyrics:

Mwomboko ti hinya, Mwomboko ti hinya
 No makinya merĩ na kuuna x2
 Hahĩ! Warũgũrũ rendi Waitherero rendi Warũgũrũ
 rendi gatunda

Mwomboko is not the use of bodily strength
Mwomboko is not the use of bodily strength
 It is only two-foot steps and bending (cutting off!)
 Hahi! Lady Waruguru, Lady Waitherero, Lady
 Waruguru, Lady a young fruit.

The choice of words was meant to reassure the dancers that the new modern dance style was danceable and easy to follow. The movement and formations need not require use of strength but skill and agility. There was need for such an assurance for the shift from

the authentic traditional dance where the Gĩkũyũ performed with limited movements and formations. In the new traditional-cum-modern dance, it is the traditional touch, which carried an upper hand in creativity ideals. In *Mwomboko*, the movements and formations were revered (and still are) as much as the words of the artistes.

The words also reflect the dancing style in the new *Mwomboko* dance as compared to the Scottish, Luo, Luhya, Maasai, Kamba, Embu, Meru and coastal traditional dances. The lady characters mentioned in the song that is Lady Warũgũrũ and Lady Waitherero are symbolic of the inclusion of dances from all directions (East, West, South, North) and all other communities whose characteristics are incorporated in the *Mwomboko* poetic dance. Waruguru literally means “She-who-hails-from-the-west,” while Waitherero is “She-who-hails-from-the-east.” Therefore, in *Mwomboko* poetics East meets the West thereby culminating into the vibrant traditional-cum-modern dance christened *Mwomboko*.

In *Mwomboko* dance style, the performers move in a file, count two steps, bend down and then move majestically back and forth on the dancing ground. The dancing formations depend mainly on the directions of the accordion player (the bandmaster) and the bell-player’s coordinated rhythm.

2.5.5 *Tindo* - (The Chisel)

This emerged as the fifth movement in styles of the *Mwomboko* art form. *Tindo* is a Kiswahili word, which means, “Chisel”. Literally, this is a carpenter’s/ blacksmith’s tool that is used for splitting wood or drilling holes in wood for the purposes of joinery work.

The dance formations of *Tindo* are similar to those of *Mwomboko* movement. The main disparity occurs in that the dancers do not bend after counting two steps. Instead, they move their feet rhythmically in the manner an artisan drives his/her chisel on a piece of log while splitting it. At the same time, dancers move in a file, swing their bodies in a zigzag posture and then march majestically. Ndinū wa Kang'ethe's *Tindo* song says:

Hūrira tindo, magūrū maya yokire na Jomo Kenyatta,
 Igikora tūmwana twa boti.
 Nīngūthiī Marīira mwana wa kwa Njeeri ngeyonere
 rendi ya nyondo inya – wūi iya!

Drive the chisel; these legs (footsteps) came with Jomo Kenyatta,
 And met the youthful comrades of 1940.
 I will go to Mariira, son of Njeeri to see a lady with four breasts–Wui iya!

Ndinū wa Kang'ethe and Boniface Kariūki alias Thahabu wa Karanja who sang and danced in the 1940's recalled a day at Kaloleni Hall, Nairobi in 1946. Jomo Kenyatta, as a K.A.U. (Kenya African Union) leader had a chance to address the freedom schemers, the youth and sympathizers that were working in Nairobi. He posed a question to them: "If I hold the throat, will you bear the kicks?" The audience retorted: " Yes! We will bear the throes/kicks of this deadly animal." It is apparent that Kenyatta, an astitute politician and a gifted orator borrowed poetic words from the *Tindo* dance and further asked, "If you want to split a tree, what do you use?" The audience answered back vigorously: "Chisels! Chisels! Surely, we are the chisels. We shall be very firm in the cause of splitting this animal."

The *Mwomboko* enthusiasts sang the *Tindo*, a sub-genre of *Mwomboko*, as a follow-up to the spirit of a political rally that urged for unity of purpose. They uttered:

Drive the chisel. These legs (footsteps) were brought by Jomo Kenyatta. Harambee! Harambee! Drive the Chisel; one wheel came with Jomo Kenyatta. And met the youthful comrades of 1940.

The wheel referred to was that of struggle for freedom. It is apparent that the *Tindo* dance style was a movement that became very popular due to the political overtones that were fused into it. The Mau Mau guerrillas went ahead to compose liberation songs using the *Mwomboko* dance styles. They reflect a rich technical ability in composing in terms of stylistic devices, danceability, clarity, consistency in form and strong cultural heritage. Thus, in principle, this study disagrees with Ogot (1976:2) who alleges:

Like the Negro spirituals the Mau Mau Hymns are technically poor and stylistically doggered. But we have to make allowances for sincerity as against technical ability. The ideas and feelings of hymnologists are fused with those of broad masses, the workers, peasants and militants. They represent the upsurge of poetry committed to the defense of life, to the struggle of a better life. Hence, it is not for form that we study these hymns as for content.

It appears, Ogot did not have mastery of the Gikūyū language, thus, he had a major limitation in his comments that “Mau Mau Hymns are technically poor and stylistically doggered”, for we have proved that there is a significant form, simple but a unique dominant style in *Mwomboko* songs, which also exemplify some of the most well known Mau Mau songs. Ogot (1976: 2) further observes: “Like the Negro spirituals which were apparently adopted from songs sang at camp meetings of white evangelical sects, Mau Mau hymns were written in the old familiar tunes of Hymns, Ancient and modern”. This study does not find any limitation in borrowing ideas and feelings from the masses and from the traditional and modern music for the cause of freedom. Rather, it enhances a high level of communicating propaganda material in an intriguing way without inviting

suspicion and apprehension from the enemy. This study shows how *Mwomboko* songs were innovative propaganda and how they were used as ethnopoetic stratagems in opposition to colonialism. The style in *Mwomboko* poetry reflects visionary and organized compositions with a variety of literary qualities, which are exemplified in the analysis, carried out in Chapter Four and Five of this thesis.

2.5.6 *Ndongomothi* (A Fool)

This word was coined by *Mwomboko* composers to stand for a movement that was born out of “*Tindo*” dance style. *Ndongomothi* is neither a Kiswahili nor an English word. It is a corrupted Kikuyu word, which refers to a slow learner or less gifted person in terms of manipulation of skills or intelligence. It is common in Gĩkũyũ land to hear speakers say: “This is a *Ndongomothi*” while referring to a fool among brilliant persons.

The dance formations in the *Ndongomothi* resemble those of *Tindo* dance style. However, the formations are so simplified that whereas in *Tindo* the dancers march and swing their feet while at the same time moving around in gyrating circular formation, the *Ndongomothi* formations are slowed sideways with less vigour. The original words in *Ndongomothi* according to Ndinũ’s version are:

Ndongomothi na kamwena ĩ Ndongomothi na kamwena nĩguo
Nĩwe ngũona na ũthiũ Thahabu wa Karanja
Ngũthiĩ Nyĩrĩ kwa Mũhoya - Ndongomothi na kamwena kinya ũguo
Ndongomothi and Sideways, eeh! Ndongomothi sideways!
Are you the one I can see by face, The Golden boy of Karanja?
I will go to Muhoya’s place in Nyeri – Ndongomothi sideways! March this way.

According to Boniface Kariũki alias Thahabu wa Karanja, a bell-player, a dancer-cum-trainer of *Mwomboko*, *Ndongomothi* was started to cater for dancers who had problems associated with sexually transmitted infections. Words like *Ndongomothi na gacwende*,

that is *Ndongomothi* and *Kaswende* (Syphilis) were uttered as this dance style was performed. During this period in time, venereal diseases like gonorrhoea and syphilis were the most common sexually transmitted diseases. The victims of such diseases had problems in maintaining the tempo and posture of their bodies and especially the groin area when required to dance *Tindo* dance style. Notwithstanding, *Ndongomothi* was a boon and bane for the infected and affected enthusiastic dancers. According to Boniface, more often than not, it was associated with the affluent people. One version of *Ndongomothi* by Cinda Gikombe states: "*Ndongomothi* is for the rich / What have I ever eaten from paupers?" These two lines suggest both the rich and the poor got indulged in the dance for as pointed out earlier, *Ndongomothi* was formulated to give room for the slow-witted, less competent dancers. The singer is also not a well to do composer, so in extolling the affluent, he is ironically using verbal art as a weapon for voicing the predicaments of the wretched of the earth in the society. However, this is meant to show the importance of acquiring wealth. The verbal artiste shows the level of creativity, experience, and consciousness in social classes emerging in modern society modelled on colonial cultural ties. As the artiste is the mouthpiece of the community, he indicates how different happenings are analysed through song and dance. In *Mwomboko* poetry, performers and the audience portray brilliance in appreciating art. The literary language is used to create impact in the thematic concerns of the song-poetry. The consciousness of the community is manifested by the positive reception the artiste gets from the target audience. The level of judgment of the artiste manifests the expectations of the community. As Okombo *et.al* (1992:25) state:

Human communities are not just communities of naïve actors,

they are also communities of analysts, who reflect and pass judgments on their own actions. The work of the individual members of a community is on the whole directed by their own consciousness of the judgmental expectations of their community

Poetry holds together the vision and aspirations of the Gīkūyū community. Their success and failure is balanced by the poetic touches, which pinpoint the negative side of their lives. In spite of human weaknesses, they revere the continuum of life.

2.5.7 “*Njeki*” (Jack)

This word is adapted from English, “jack”, the tool used for raising motor vehicles off the ground to enable one to change a flat tyre or repair a mechanical problem. According to Bernard Gītahi Kīai and other resource persons, *Njeki* is equivalent to manhood in Gīkūyū. In symbolic language it is representative of man’s phallic symbol in his role in sexual intercourse in completing the process of procreation. Among the Gīkūyū, the issue of continuum of livelihood from generation to generation is revered almost to a religious extent. To *Mwomboko* singers and dancers, *Njeki* marks the dance movement in which they express their prowess in lovemaking. It is a symbol of reproduction in humankind, propelled by gods of fertility and creativity. Religiously, the dancers perform as if enacting a ritual of communicating with gods/goddesses of love.

This movement is performed at a faster pace as compared to the other dance styles we have discussed before. The dancers file along the dancing ground and make two or three formations which the singers and dancers refer to as “footsteps”. In some versions of the *Njeki* songs, there is a responsorial (chorus) style that incorporates female voices to

create harmony. An example is the *Njeki* song by H. M. Kariūki and the one by Ndinū wa Kang'ethe. In the first version Ndinū sings: -

Njeki ūte mūine nī kamwana – Njeki ūte mūine nī kamwana.
 Njeki ndimenyaga ūrī mūine – Ngūthiī rūgūrū ngūre mīeū
 Ngūthiī rūgūrū ngūre mīeū – ngahande mūtaro ūrī gwiitū

A Jack that has not been sang is a youth x2
 Jack I never come to know you are sang
 I will go to the West to buy arrowroot cuttings x2
 And plant them in a channel at our home.

In this version, the singer uses a parable, which is more of allegory meant to describe “Jack” as a symbol of manhood. He proclaims that “a Jack that has not been sang is a youth” which euphemistically points at a young man who has not indulged in lovemaking. The singer talks of planting arrowroot cuttings in channel at his home. The channel (a river valley) symbolically refers to womanhood. The figurative language refers to the symbols and dynamics of lovemaking. Thus, *Njeki* is a tradition of poetry, which celebrates the institution of marriage because of its potential for human reproduction and continuity in life.

2.5.8 *Rumba* (Rhumba)

This is a Kiswahili word, which was coined or adapted from the Kiswahili Rhumba, which is a kind of dance that was popularised in Kenya by singers from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania who sang mainly in Kiswahili. In *Mwomboko* poetry, the singers modulated the Rhumba style of dancing and formed a movement in *Mwomboko* in which the dancers make a formation of three “steps” which are performed in pseudo-Rhumba beat.

The interaction between Gĩkũyũ and the coastal communities of Kenya opened up room for hybridity, which hinged on incorporation of foreign beats fused into *Mwomboko* dance. This venture has made *Mwomboko* to gain a national touch in spite of the fact that the première singers had little knowledge of Kiswahili, the national language.

John Kĩragũ wa Kĩnanda illustrates the rumba dance style, which says:

Haiya! Haiya! Mwarimũ Mũhoro thikĩrĩria
 Ngĩcũnithia rumba,
 Ngĩcũnithia rumba ndieciragia shati nĩ
 Igathira,
 Ngĩcooka kũrora itigarĩte mũhuko wa kĩraikũ

Haiya! Haiya! Teacher Muhoro listen as
 I lick rumba
 While licking rumba I did not know shirts
 Would wear out,
 But when I checked, only the “kiraiku” pockets remained.

The singer focuses on the miserable life he leads “while enjoying rumba.” According to Wa Kĩnanda this *gũcũnithia Rumba* metaphorically refers to performing and enjoying of *Rumba* dance movement. It is noticeable that *Rumba* like the other movements in *Mwomboko* poetry contains some touch of the Scottish dance. A keen listener detects the mellismatic rhythm adapted by the accordion players from the Scottish beat.

2.5.9 *Kariara*

This is the final movement in the *Mwomboko* poetry that emerged in the 1940’s. Of all the dance styles discussed *Kariara*’s tempo is comparable to that of *Njeki* and *Rumba*. The dancers make three formations and at times add one more formation whereby they turn around and then sideways while still holding hands as they file forward, back and forth on the arena.

Kariara is a dance style that originated from River Kariara in Kandara Division of Maragūa district. As a result, the style was dubbed *Kariara* so as to identify it from other dance styles. It is important to note that dancers from a given village “stole” or learnt a dance style from a group of performers of a given village. When they went to their homes, they danced it to mock and tease those from their village who did not know the new dance formations. The wording of one of the songs identified as forming the *Kariara* movements shows that the singers described how it was danced:

Kariara na mwena – Kariara na mwena I hūī
 Kariara na mwena tita kūrīma mūgūnda
 Nīwe nawe nīnīī – Haithuru ndirī no ūndū īī
 Hūī Kariara na mwena

Kariara move sideways – Kariara gyrate sideways I hui
Kariara move sideways – It is not cultivating a Shamba
 It is you, you and I – All the same I have nothing
 I hui *Kariara* dance sideways.

The choices of words denote the instructions the dancers should take so as to move, gyrate and dance perfectly. The verbal artiste draws the image of cultivating in the Shamba in an ironic way. He paints the image of *Kariara* as being the work of all dancers collectively. “It is you and me,” he urges. It is as if *Kariara* movement is addressed as a person who should respond through dancing.

As we have highlighted above, *Kariara* served as the denouement of the various *Mwomboko* movements/dance styles we have discussed. At any rate the *Koraci* movement more often than not could be sang and danced to mark the end of all the nine dance styles/or movements of the esteemed *Mwomboko* poetry.

2.6.0 *Mwomboko* Poetry and the Mau Mau Armed struggle

2.6.1 Socio-political Awareness

In the 1940's, it became apparent that the Gikūyū felt disenchanted by the oppressive and exploitative colonial administration. This status quo precipitated aggressive opposition in form of poetic dances and underground movements not only in Kikuyu land but also all over British East Africa.

Mwomboko composers advanced allegorical song-poetry, which revolved around love affairs, but deeper scrutiny shows that they were referring to the white man. In 1946, *Mwomboko* composers made a complete overhaul of the art form with the different types of dance styles that we have already discussed. In the same year, the campaign to bring Jomo Kenyatta home (Kenya) gained root. Muoria (1994:132) says: "from the 2nd of September 1946, *Mūmenyereri*, began the campaign to bring Jomo Kenyatta home. After his long journey, he arrived in the country in the month of September 1946." The socio-political activists captured the opportunity to spread propaganda in opposition to the colonial hegemony through *Mwomboko* songs.

A case in point is *Hūrira Tindo*, Drive the chisel, which symbolizes freedom fighters driving the colonial troops in the battlefields, within Aberdare Ranges and Mount Kenya region, the two symbols of Kenya's freedom. Kamaru, a popular oral poet in Kenya, narrates about the torching of huts, execution of young men and how in Kangema Division, dogs' tails were cut by a tyrant coloniser, known pejoratively as Wa-itina, son-of-Buttocks, so called because of his hostility and massive buttocks, a symbol of exploitation. *Mbaara ya Ndaka-inĩ*, The Battle of *Ndaka-inĩ*, symbolizes the combative stance that was applied by guerrillas in Kenya. The song manifests how courage took

them to the enemies' backyard-that is Naivasha police post to acquire arms. This song exemplifies how the Mau Mau patriotic guerrillas at times defeated the colonial soldiers. This solid achievement by freedom fighters is amplified in *Mbaara ya Rũũ-Rũirũ*, The Battle of the Black River. The colonial mercenaries at one point took off from the battlefield around *Karuthi* valley and were speaking desperately through their radio systems seeking reinforcements from Nanyuki.

In 1946, Jomo Kenyatta and other K.A.U. political activists held a mammoth political rally at the Kaloleni Memorial Hall in Nairobi. As Kenyatta was gifted in using parables, symbols and Gĩkũyũ idioms, he inspired political activists to mobilize the masses through song-poetry propaganda. In the *Mwomboko* song, *Hũrĩra Tindo*, the artiste quotes Kenyatta's words. This is the parable in which Kenyatta asks the youth wingers about the symbolic splitting of a log of wood. They replied that "Chisels" were the most ideal tools for the cause of freedom. Then, he asked them whether they would withstand the kicks of a donkey as he held its throat. In one voice, they agreed to be steadfast in taming and killing the beast.

The youth wingers and the masses at large proclaimed that they were the "Chisels" that were to split the animal (colonialism). This marked the beginning for the explicit need for an armed struggle against the imperialists in Kenya. *Mwomboko* poetry became a springboard to propagate the need for freedom and the need to reclaim the annexed lands.

Kyle (1999: 36) registers:

When the Second World War had broken out, official patience with Jeseo Kariuki and his friends ran out when they directly compared the compulsory relocation of some Kikuyu inconveniently placed (sic) in the

middle of white-cultivated land around Limuru (sic) with Nazi policies on the compulsory transfer of people. It was decided to ban the K.C.A for the duration and to detain its leaders.

Muoria (1994: 19) also observes the outlawing of K.C.A the political wing used by those who agitated for change for instance Jesse Kariūki, a political activist. He writes:

The K.C.A story at that time was that, after its banning in 1940 by the Kenya government, which had to use war regulations to do it, a secrete trial of its detained political leaders was held at Naivasha before a British judge, while the war was still going on.

In spite of the leaders being detained, other officials of these progressive Africans' political organizations worked underground relentlessly to ensure all ideal strategies in the struggle for freedom were used to reach all and sundry in Gikuyu land and beyond. The Mau Mau underground strategic movement gained root in the late 1940's. Gakaara (1988: 239) records:

Don't seek to escape from your patriotic responsibility and the pursuit of truth by offering such excuses as that you are a servant of the British colonial government, or that your white employer has forbidden you to attend meetings organized by K.A.U (Kenya African Union). When a white employer alienates you from K.A.U. Is he helping you or alienating you from what is good for you? (sic) Such a white man is using his cunning to keep you away from enlightenment and self-awareness.

Mwomboko artistes, for instance, in the song "The Battle of Ndaka-inĩ", "The Battle of Waiyaki" and the "The Battle of Rūūi-Rūirū", share these views. The leadership in opposition to the colonial government kept on transforming itself with defined informed goals: remove colour bar, facilitate self-government and return of the land that was annexed by Colonizers from the indigenous African traditional set up. K.A.U political activists and Mau Mau schemers fought relentlessly. Leakey (1954:32) says:

Mau Mau was synonymous with K.A.U., or Kenya African Union, and was, moreover, nothing than an extension of the old

“Kikuyu Central Association, under a new guise and with some modifications.

Though Leakey does not support the Mau Mau armed struggle, he shows that opposition to the colonial forces mutated from ethnic communities to national unions that sought a unitary force against the oppressors. It was apparent that there was a great need to unify the masses in Gĩkũyũ land and especially in Kĩambu, Fort Hall (Mũrang'a) and Nyeri Districts of Central Kenya. This was meant to iron out betrayal amongst the Gĩkũyũ folks. Later, the goal was to unify all the masses in Kenya.

2.6.2 Oaths Administration

The K.A.U political activists determinedly needed the youth to be encouraged to join and get entrenched in the armed struggle. As a result the activists timed the youth as they performed *Mwomboko* dance and through hook or crook members of the Gĩkũyũ community were initiated into “Mau – Mau-ism”. Later this spread to Embu, Meru and other interested communities in Kenya. The unitary goal was facilitated through taking of oaths conducted in Central Province and its environs.

To reach more youthful young men, the elders and K.A.U. political activists prepared for *Mwomboko* dancing festivities where they were sure to spread the “Mau Mau” gospel. The *Mwomboko-ist* view of enhancing unity through ethnopoetic stratagems worked miraculously as a double-edged strategy to fight colonialism. The oaths bound the interested parties firmly to the cause for freedom. According to Ndinũ our resource person, the catch phrase was, “If I let out the secrets of our cause for freedom, let me be destroyed by this oath.”

2.6.3 Artistes/Dancers Turned into Mau Mau Guerillas

The energetic and youthful men of the *Mwomboko* of 1940's were converted into freedom fighters in great numbers. The women dancers liaised with the men as they became underground agents and carriers of ammunition that was acquired through any means available to the Mau Mau schemers. At times, this entailed raiding of police posts or attacking any white man or woman who owned a gun. Homemade guns were also in great supply as is evident in the story narrated in the following verse:

Njamba icio twatūma Ndaka-inī,
Nī Kīmathi marī na Mbaaria, Nīmatharīkīire na
hinya nginya atongoria magīkena.

The heroes we have dispatched to "Ndaka-ini",
Are Kimathi accompanied by Mbaaria.
They attacked with great might,
Till guerilla leaders were happy.

The *Mwomboko* spirit of doing things together in calculated moves was manifested in the Mau Mau armed struggle. The artistes among the guerillas composed propaganda songs of freedom using *Mwomboko* tunes to instill bravado, dignity and heroism in the Mau Mau comradeship. Cases in point include *Mbaara ya Ndaka-inī*, The Battle of Ndaka-inī and *Mbara ya R-uūi-Rūirū*, The Battle of the Black River, which are living examples of the socio-political tools of awareness and propaganda in *Mwomboko* poetry.

This indicates how heroism was adored in the Mau Mau armed struggle. The role of song poetry comes out clearly as a weapon of propaganda in Gīkūyū land during the days of colonialism. Patriotically, the characters in the song, Field Marshall Dedan Kīmathi and General Mbaaria are famous heroes in Kenya's armed struggle for independence.

In taking oaths, Mau Mau-ism emerged as a religious movement that inspired the youth to express their stand against colonialism. According to Ndinū, the *Mwomboko* poetry is a means of expressing emotions of humankind and one's ambitions and wishes. A kind of spiritual influence is evident in Mau Mau-ism as a Gīkūyū folk religion, which was born out of the armed struggle. This is the kind of spirit that infuses cultural dignity, political awareness and scorn for foreign ideologies, which are anti-African.

As Ikeda (1979:43) postulates:

Poetry, it has always seemed to me, is a means of giving expression to the subtlest movements of the heart and mind. The fact that we today can respond to the poems of *Many'oshu* is proof that they embody truly Japanese sentiments - of a kind that are unchanging and transcend the barriers of time and space.

Mwomboko reflects traditional and modern values of the life and spirit of the Gīkūyū. The language that was used to compose *Mwomboko* poetry in the 1930's and 1940's is still very appealing to today's audiences (see Chapter Four and Five). It is apparent that it does not only voice Gīkūyū values but also articulates national concerns. *Mwomboko* poetry has survived as an evergreen art form due to its dynamism in artistic creation. This level of artistic development is given impetus by artistes with a sense of direction.

2.6.4. The Banning of *Mwomboko* Poetry by Colonial Powers

On discovering that *Mwomboko* poetry was an ethnopoetic stratagem against their very existence, the government banned the performance of the art form. Anybody who acted to contrary was thrown into prison or detention camp as *Mwomboko* poetry was attributed to Mau Mau-ism and the general aspects of rebellion against the colonial

administration. In *Mbaara ya Ndaka-inĩ*, The Battle of Ndaka-inĩ, revolutionary ideas are voiced:

Hĩndĩ ĩrĩa mũbĩa amenyire Matenjagũo nĩarĩkinya kuo
Abatarĩtio nĩ mūtwe wake ũkahũrĩrwo mbica mūtītũ

When the padre knew that Matenjaguo would reach there,
Seeking his head to be photographed in the forest

Kuuma Mũthithi na Kariara, Njoni ciambataga magũrũ
Ciaigua Gĩtaũ Matenjagũo arigicĩirio nĩ kamatimũ

From Muthithi to Kariara, the Johnnies walked on foot
They heard Gitau Matenjaguo was surrounded by the spear-bearers

Nĩwega kũnina thũ ciitũ? Kana twagĩrĩrũo nĩgwĩka atĩa?
Nanĩcio itũmaga ciana ciitũ ciũragagwo nĩ ng'aragu

Is it good to execute our enemies? Or what are we supposed to do?
They make our offsprings die of hunger.

As pointed out earlier, most of the *Mwomboko* singers and dancers joined the guerrilla forces in Aberdare Ranges or in other hideouts in Mount Kenya region. The accordion musical instrument was outlawed together with any other Gĩkũyũ musical ventures. Those people who owned accordions kept them out of reach of the colonial administration.

Those members of the community who were left at home were later confined together in concentration camps which the locals dubbed *Gĩcagi* or *Icagi*. The creative artistes formulated other art forms like *Kĩrĩiri* and *Kaiyaba*. These were allowed for a time, for the coloniser did not deem them a form of opposition for they were mainly sang by children. The young adults picked them up as did the adults later. They used the *Kayamba* type of musical instrument from the coast to perform these new art forms.

This percussion musical instrument was dubbed *Gacandī* that is a reflection of the esteemed traditional *Gīcandī* duet performance. Valentino Ndinū and Boniface Kariūki, our resource persons claim that *Kīriiri* and *Kaiyaba* were also banned to ensure that no form of poetry was used as a weapon for propaganda in the land. Later, the guitar musical instrument was introduced in the so-called *gicagi* confinements. Out of the *Mwomboko rumba* dance style, a new art form dubbed *Erithi* was born. This cultural development indicates that poetry and society are inseparable in all aspects of life in a group of individuals with common interest. An oral poet reflects the thinking and cultural aspects of his community. As Finnegan (1977:263) states:

All literature in an indirect and subtle way must reflect the society in which it exists. Provided the complex and selective nature of this relationship is recognised, we have a useful reminder that a poet is, after all, a product of his own culture.

In banning *Mwomboko* poetry, the colonial administration aimed at dismantling the cultural fabric and also sought to enforce its foreign ideologies in place of those which bonded the *Gīkūyū*. As the clamour for national independence kept swelling up, the foreign administration was proved wrong. Political organizations kept on mutating into new and better-focused pressure groups, which left the coloniser with one and the only option-granting the indigenous Kenyans their self-government. Kīnyatī (1980:3) echoes the impact of Mau Mau songs in *Mwomboko* poetry when he states: “The Mau Mau songs, which were composed by the workers and peasants in the heat of resistance, marked the high point of Kenyans’ anti-colonial cultural expression” toward imperialistic forces.

2.6.5. *Mwomboko* Poetry in Post-Independent Kenya

When Kenya attained independence from the colonial forces, the *Mwomboko* art form picked up in spite of the social stigma that was manifested by new Christian religious groupings that scorned African traditional forms of folklore. According to Valentino Ndinũ, the biblical quote Psalms 98:5-6 (see page 121) that refers to the playing of harped musical instruments for the purpose of glorifying God was often misinterpreted by fanatical evangelists to stigmatise the accordion players as composing and performing songs to glorify the body of humankind. Thus, Christian fundamentalists proclaimed that *Mwomboko* singers were doomed “to enter Jehanaam”. However, time has proved otherwise as *Mwomboko* continues to have appeal as discussed in Chapter Five. Currently, Christian groups are adopting the *Mwomboko* art form in evangelism. according to an Ethnomusicologist, Father George Wambũgũ, a Catholic priest. The Catholic Church, in Africanizing its hymns, borrows some elements of the *Mwomboko* dance in its adaptations.

As we have observed earlier, *Elithi* art form that incorporated the use of the guitar as an accompaniment competed vigorously with the *Mwomboko* art form. The socio-cultural ideas and moreso love lyrics have become more prominent than the political overtures. Towering artistes like Cinda Gĩkombe and Valentino Ndinũ continued to excel even after independence. Maranga wa Gatonye, Bernard Gĩtahi Kĩai, John Kĩragũ, H.M. Kariũki, Wanganangũ and Mwangi wa Kĩnyenje came up as *Mwomboko* artistes of pre- and post-independent Kenya. They continued with *Mwomboko-ism* from where they had stopped during Kenya’s state of emergence.

One of Kenya's most prominent Gĩkũyũ oral poets, Joseph Kamarũ Macharia alias *Kanya ka Ndeto* (the gourd of words) also tried a hand in *Mwomboko* before concentrating in *Elithi*, *Rhumba* and *Benga* art forms later. His famous number *Hurira Tindo* that he recorded in mid 1960's is an adaptation of *Hũrĩra Tindo*, which was composed and sang by the premiere artistes of the 1940's. He sings:

Mũkĩina twithiti na pachanga, mũririkanagio rũrũ rwĩitũ
 Twithiti nĩ nduka cia Nairobi, Maina wiitũ –
 Kahiga gakũrũ gatiagararagũo nĩ maĩ
 Hũrĩra Tindo magũrũ maya mokire na Jomo Kenyatta

When you dance to *Twist* and *Pachanga*
 You should be reminded of our very own (dance!)
 Twists are the shops in Nairobi, our house!
 An old stone is never by-passed by water
 Drive the chisel; these footsteps came with Jomo Kenyatta

The original *Mwomboko* is still performed through the use of the accordion and the *Karĩng'arĩng'a* (the bell) though up and coming artistes have of late started to record and perform *Mwomboko* songs using the organ or piano, the guitar and modern drum sets. This is exemplified in the song *Mũgithi wa Mireniamu*, The Millennium Train: *Tũnyitane moko maitũ, mũgithi ũyũ / Mũgithi ũyũ wa mireniamu / Mũgithi ũyũ wa ngiri igĩrĩ*, that is, "Lets hold our hands / This is a Millennium train / This is the 2000 train." As it is performed, the audience responds to the antics of the artistes according to his skills in verbal expression. *Mwomboko* enthusiasts pay special attention to the artistes especially when they focus their compositions on the needs of the target audience. Thus, we agree with Bauman (1975:293) who states:

Performance thus calls forth special attention to and heightened awareness of the act of expression, and gives license to the audience to regard the act of expression and performer with special intensity.

Scores of enthusiastic audiences that participate in dancing and chanting animations in various *Mwomboko* songs have sustained the very survival of this art form. A strong cultural legacy is built on *Mwomboko* songs, which exemplify the Mau Mau songs of liberation as tools of communication against imperialism. They also give the historical heroism of the Mau Mau guerrillas who were involved in Kenya's struggle for independence. Kĩnyattĩ (1980:3) states:

The songs eulogize the heroism of the Mau Mau guerillas and sing praises of those who distinguished themselves in destroying the enemy forces, and those others who made the ultimate sacrifice by hurting themselves (sic) into the canon fire rather than fall into the hands of the imperialist's hordes.

This study concurs with Wa-Kĩnyattĩ's views as *Mwomboko* songs have from time immemorial acted as agents which reflect the historical happenings that revolved around pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times. According to Sammy Kĩrigĩ wa-Jane a musician cum producer of Gĩkũyũ popular art, today, it is a common practice to get hotels, motels and nightclubs hiring *Mwomboko* troupes to entertain the enthusiastic patrons day in and day out. In spite of this commercialisation of our art forms, the growth of *Mwomboko* performance has advanced with great intensity in Gĩkũyũ land and its diaspora.

All in all, *Mwomboko* poetry exemplifies artistic tastes, which have made it very popular with F..M. radio stations in Nairobi. Coro F.M., Kameme 101.1 F.M. (Kayũ ka Mũingĩ) and Inooro F.M. are staunch promoters of cultural practices revolving around *Mwomboko* songs among other art forms in Kenya. A case in point is the programme relayed by "Kayũ Ka Mũingĩ" which is entitled *Kĩrĩra na mĩtugo ya Agĩkũyũ*, that is,

“Literature and traditions of the Gĩkũyũ people”. It incorporates *Mwomboko* music to give flavour to the programme.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the socio-historical origins of *Mwomboko* poetry. The pointers to how this art form emerged have been stipulated. We have, therefore, shown the role of *Mũthĩrĩgũ* poetic dance as the precedent art form performed by Gĩkũyũ artistes of protest literature in response to cruel forces of colonialism.

The roles of anonymous composers, soldiers, carrier corps and première *Mwomboko* artistes have been mentioned. The study has also given a chronological development of the dance styles that emerged: *Machi Namba Imwe*, *Machi Namba Igirĩ*, *Koraci*, *Mwomboko*, *Tindo*, *Ndongomothi*, *Njeki*, *Rumba* and *Kariara*.

The study has also shown the level of political awareness disseminated through *Mwomboko* poetry as an ethnopoetic stratagem of struggle for freedom. We have discussed aspects to do with oaths administration and also how singers and dancers joined the guerrilla forces. The study has further shown what led to the banning of *Mwomboko* poetry and other art forms associated with it. The chapter ends with a reflection of how *Mwomboko* poetry continues to grow in post-independent Kenya to date. The improvisation and use of other modern musical instruments apart from the accordion has been mentioned in the reappropriation process.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 ANALYSIS OF STYLE AND LITERARY DEVICES

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the study will focus on the literary tools, which emerge from the oral poetry of the three selected performing artistes. The literary tools include the following: irony, satire, metaphor, metonymy, simile, and structural devices: repetition, parallelism, tonal patterns and rhyme. We will use the terms persona, speaker and artiste(s) in our explication. These stylistic properties are central in *Mwomboko* poetry as vehicles of communication. These tools enrich the quality of the poems analysed in this study, while at the same time they enable the oral artistes to draw examples from different spheres of life and intertwine various ideologies and philosophies with poetic aspects of the songs. This ensures coherence and wholeness in the Gikūyū oral poetry.

3.2 Irony

This falls into verbal, situational and dramatic irony. Stephen (1991) categorises irony distinctly: - “verbal or rhetorical irony occurs when a character says something which is the exact opposite of whatever they mean” (1991:43). He argues, “Dramatic irony occurs when a character speaks lines which have a totally different meaning – for the other characters on stage, or for the audience – to the one he or she means.” Webster (1976:1196) describes irony as: “humour, ridicule or light sarcasm that adopts a mode of speech the intended implication of which is the opposite of the literal sense of the words.” In the song-text *Mwomboko wa Forte*, song number 13, page 162, the artistes mentions one character by name Waceeke, that is “the-thin-one” who is being interrogated by her mother about her wayward ways. Justifiably she retorts:

Naake Waceeke aramūcokerie nyina –
 Nīndenyitīrūo nī mīhūūni -
 Nyomboragūo ūtukū nīguo rwenje

Waceeke retorted to her mum,
 “I was hijacked by the boisterous young men
 I am “set upon” at night – To make it shave!

The unfolding situation is that Waceeke subjected to make love forcefully with the "boisterous young men," yet she willingly destroyed her bed (kīrīrī in previous verse) to pursue platonic love leading to sexual adventures. It is ironical that she blames the men who "set upon" her "to make it shave," that is the act of the manhood "shaving the womanhood." In comparison, we note that irony is used by Okot p' Bitek (1974:49) when he says:

The shop where they sell eyes,
 Where is it?
 When shall I ever see my beloved?
 I praise the beautiful one with anger.

We note that the speaker in Okot's song sounds ironical in that he praises the beauty of his lover with "anger". Okot further applies irony in *Song of Lawino*, Okot p'Bitek (1966:59): "When the beautiful one/ with whom I share my husband/ Returns from cooking her hair/She resembles a chicken." It is ironical that the so-called beautiful one is equated to a chicken. Still, in *Mwomboko wa Forte*, the artiste continues to apply irony by saying: he will never smoke *Kīraikū* (traditional tobacco) with the youthful age group. It is ironical for the artiste to allege that donkeys smoke when he knows they do not smoke tobacco. He is emphasizing the fact that too much smoking of *Kīraikū* reduces one to a beast of burden whose health and shape, which is destroyed through work. The youth in question are accused of being reckless and being extremists while overdoing a thing as they are driven by youth but not reason.

In *Mbaara ya Rũũ-Rũirũ*, The Battle of the Black River, song number 14 page 165, the artiste refers to one woman who comes to give warning to freedom fighters at Karuthi valley. Ironically, the colonial mercenaries who were pounding the guerrillas horrify the woman, but the freedom fighters tell her not to worry, yet at that time bullets are heard striking the banana leaves. The words are:

Mūtumia ūmwe nĩokire na ribooti na ndubia
 Agĩtwĩra “Ciana ciakwa! Gũkũ nĩ gũthũkire”
 An elderly woman contact brought information
 And sugarless tea, tearfully she said:

‘My children you must flee
 Danger surrounds you”

Tukimwira umiriria twi haha nja ngataita
 Rithaathi marigu iguru ciatuthaga macoya
 We comforted her - We are hereby set like *ngataita*
 Suddenly the bullets flew above bananas – they pounded
 Dry banana fibre leaves.

The artiste is highlighting the level of courage portrayed by the guerrillas. In the same song-text a character, *Cinda-reri*, that is “the-one-who-beats-the-rail” ululates and sends shock waves to the enemy forces. The artiste says:

Cinda-Reri oiga rũkemi thirikari ikĩmaaka
 Moigaga nĩwe njenũrũ wa kũrũithia mbaara
 Cinda-Reri chanted a ululation! The government forces were scared,
 They claimed that he was the general who was leading the battle.

The situation is ironical in that *Cinda-Reri* was a “Cheer-leader” in the battle. In verse seven, we are told that the Major General of the guerrillas in “The Battle of the Black River” was “Chui”, that is the leopard.

Machi Nene The Grand March, song number 15, page 169, the artist ironically talks of being attacked by “Kibebe” because of his lady Mariamu (Miriam) who chants: “*ūka nī mūru kūigwa Kibebe nīwathī itanagūikia mooko*, that is, Wife-hood is no good, see Kibebe! You have left before I could hold you lovingly. In *Mami Nyambura*, My mother Nyambura, song number 22 page 184, the artiste indicates his tribulations at the hands of the colonial powers. He is taken to the high court! The irony is that he is not prosecuted, the claimants put across no questions, and no charges are preferred against the defendant. It is simply a harsh sentence: – seven years and fourteen strokes of the cane. Reason? Being a freedom struggle sympathiser. The irony extends in that the inmate in the song proclaims that he ate no food in jail. He survived on water with salt and the stick of *Kīraikū*. This irony stresses the crimes committed against humanity in detention camps and jails in the colonial era.

Gwiitū Nyīrī kwa Rubaathi, At My Home-At Rufus’ Jurisdiction song number 23, page 187, the artiste says that whoever refuses to go to school will be taught by the harsh world. The irony is that the world destroys school truants. The country as such does not have room for an uneducated delinquent character(s) in the society. In stressing the point on modern education, he still says that acquiring degree is a gift, yet the students earned it the hard way. There is a touch of ambiguity in that the word ‘*Kitheo*’ may also imply the word talent. In essence, he is emphasizing the rarity of acquiring a degree during the colonial times.

The irony continues to unfold in *Machi Namba Imwe*, March Number One, song number 3, page 140, where the artiste tells his co-performer Nabuu to let go the “bell” – yet he tells him to grip it in the next phrase.

Nabūū rekia ngengere kamwana, Nabūū rūmia ngengere,
Nabuu let go the bell - Young man, Nabuu grip the bell.

Further, the irony lies in that releasing the bell would water down their performance much to the chagrin of the audience. In *Machi Namba Igīrī*, March Number Two, song number 4 page 142, a character, Nyahindū son of Mūkūbwa, is thanked ironically.

“Nyahindū son of Mūkūbwa, even if you get slender, then die, then be buried – I will proclaim your company.” This situation is ironical in that he proclaims his friendship through mentioning negative realizations.

3.3 Satire

This is a literary tool, which is realised when a speaker utters words in a simplistic and jocular manner while the statement(s) carry a lot of weight in the implied meaning. It is a way of ridiculing human follies and vices, for instance, corruption, exploitation, injustice, and general inhumanity. Webster (1976:2017) describes satire as “ a usually topical literary composition holding up human or individual vices, folly, abuses or shortcomings to censure by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony, or other method sometimes with an intent to bring about improvement.” The society, individuals and institutions are the subjects of the satirical mode of communication.

Murray (1978:138) says:

the classic targets of satire are folly and vice, and its field of operation is human society. The satirist is more fully conscious than most people of the contrast between the way things are and the way they ought to be. He exploits the difference

that exists between appearance and reality, between what the people officially stand for and how they behave, between words and deeds.

The satirical touches feature prominently in *Gwitũ Nyĩrĩ kwa Rubaathi*, At My Home Nyeri - At Rufus' Jurisdiction, song number 23, page 183, He satirises education in proclaiming that there is a gap in the community which is caused by chronic truancy, yet a 'degree is a present'. The satire on education is projected further in *Twagũtũma Rũraya*, When We Sent You Abroad, Song number 25 page 191, which the artiste satirises a young man who was sent for further studies abroad. Incidentally, he never sought a degree. Rather, he indulged in pre-marital affairs with white women. He was entirely enticed by the joys of Europe. The artiste proclaims: "*kĩhenererio nĩ mĩago ya rũraya*, that is "you were swallowed by the joys of Europe", thus disappointing the donors of his scholarship.

In making an analogy, the speaker in the song tells the way-ward youth: "Our forefathers and their youth used to invade dreadfully in combative cattle raids in Maasai land. They acquired wealth to assist the family and the community at large." In spite of satirising the disgraced young man, in a sense he is putting across the notion that education and more so acquiring a degree was an avenue to acquire affluence. The speaker further satirises the way-ward youth who became a disgrace at Embakasi Airport in Nairobi when he alighted from the aeroplane accompanied by a white lady. He alleges: "You walked hand in hand! You yapped 'Hello! Hello! Darling', before your parents! What is the meaning of it all?" In brief the artiste is satirising foreign ideologies and trends. He quips: "Who will marry our educated girls in New Kenya?" The artiste continues to satirise the white woman by claiming that she is of no good in

the traditional sense. He says: “She cannot draw water from the river nor get maize from the garden”. Traditionally, these chores were highly valued as they symbolised the success of womanhood and the marriage institution. In olden days, a woman who could not perform these tasks was sneered at and disparaged by the community. *Twagūtūma Rūraya*, When We Sent You Abroad, the singer says: “Giving birth is unlike defaecating / But to come with a white lady instead of a degree / is tantamount to a woman who picks the / Afterbirth and abandons the child.”

This appears to be the highest level of satire in this song-text. It draws a solid wall that the so-called conservative Africans cannot compromise their ways of life. At the time the poetry was composed intermarriage was unacceptable and especially marrying white women. However, today it is quite acceptable and fashionable.

Satirical touches are also underlined in *Mbaara ya Rūūi-Rūirū*, The Battle of the Black River, song number 14 page 165. The artiste is satirising the cowardice of the white mercenary soldiers in the manner they responded to the upsurge of the Mau Mau guerilla fighters at Karuthi valley in Nyeri. The artiste states:

Twahūraga gatua-ūhorō oothē magakomerera
Makahūra kībūnūūka ithuothe tūgakaba

We'd fire our Gatua-uhoro (the decider)
The'd all drop down in fear
When they fired their bazooka we all took cover.

Thūngū nyingī nī ciorire irorete Kīamacimbi
Kūu ciaragia na oba cīitanage Nanyukiī

Most of the enemy soldiers ran heading for Kīamacimbi
They were desparately using radio-calls
Calling Nanyuki for reinforcements.

These "verses" underline the satirical nature of *Mwomboko* poetry, which was meant to instill courage in freedom fighters who survived battle after battle. The entire song-text praises the guerilla fighters and satirises the colonial forces. The speaker in the song continues to satirise the enemies by alleging that: *Nguruneti twarĩ nacio no tũtiahũthagĩra* – that is, we had grenades which we never used. This implies that the guerrillas in this particular battle overwhelmed the white colonial forces and their black cohorts.

In *Machi Nene*, The Grand March, song number 15, page 169, the artiste satirises his age-mate who clings to bachelorhood despite his advanced age. He urges him to "bite" and "munch" the dry maize patiently for his advanced age outlaws him from wooing young ladies for marriage. In the same song-text, the speaker satirises alcoholism. He urges the drunkards to tighten their garment for after "gulping the brew" one will fall with a thud due to the toxic level of the brew. This satire extends to the drinking of *Kumi kumi*, *simbawine*, *Kairaci* and "power alcohol" the deadly brews, which in the recent past have often been fatal to drinkers in Nairobi area and in parts of Central and Rift Valley Provinces of Kenya.

The satirical mood also emerges in *Machi Namba Imwe*, March Number One, song number 3, page 140, where the artiste identifies the colonial influence. The white colonial administrators are equated to locusts, which devoured the green cover in Gikũyũ land. The same "locusts" demanded to be addressed as *Bwana* or *Mabwana*. This implies that anytime the speaker passed them, they demanded to be addressed

“Good morning sir”. The reference is satirical in showing the constrained relationship that existed between the masters and servants in colonial Kenya.

In *Mwomboko ti Hinya*, *Mwomboko* is not use of Bodily Strength, song number 1, page 136, the artiste satirises a young black girl (Nyakairū) who strangled her infant claiming that she had no breasts to be suckled. The satirical tone touches on all young girls who involve themselves in promiscuity. Later, they conceive unwanted babies and eventually terminate them. In a nutshell he is satirising all kinds of abortions.

The *Mwomboko wa Ndinū*, Ndinū’s *Mwomboko*, song number 10, page 154, the artiste satirises an elder whom he urges to wash and shave his beard in readiness to woo young girls who admire old men who own coffee and consequently healthy bank accounts. He sings:

I mūthuuri ndwīthaambe ona yaitwo
Nī inyuī mūrendūo nī tūrendi
Nīūdū wa itina cia kahua na ibuku rīa bengi.

Oh elder! Wash yourself, Even though beer is spilt
You are the ones admired by young ladies
For you own coffee trees and a healthy bank account

All sugar daddy trappings are satirised in this phrase. The artiste chooses those in the rural setting for they indulge in extramarital love sprees with young loose girls and then leave their families wallowing in poverty. Furthermore, in the same song-text a twenty-eight year old bachelor is advised to kiss the idea of marriage goodbye. Why? His advanced years in age restrict him from wooing young ladies for marriage. The satirical mood continues in the same song-text whereby a girl is met lying all alone in a desperate state in the market place. The speaker satirises her for being thankless, in spite

of saving her from hopelessness. The artiste says beer has been spilt for the exploited young girls will never fetch dowry for their homes of birth. He vows to teach her a lesson by wrestling her down till “she sets her will to her people” whom she has ashamed by loosing her virginity and reduced to a sex object.

3.4.0 Metaphor and Simile

3.4.1 Metaphor

According to Webster (1976:1420): “a metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or action is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them.” This entails comparison of more than one entity whereby the degree of comparison is not explicit. The comparison in a metaphor is covert as the relationship that emerges is implicit. As Leech (1969:150) observes: “it cannot be properly understood unless seen against the background of the various other mechanisms of figurative expression”. Stephen (1991: 45) further says it is “a comparison between two objects for the purpose of describing one of them.” This section deals with the identification of the metaphorical language by the three select artistes. It is an attempt to reflect their use in communicating diverse message in the community. In *Mwomboko* poetry metaphors are a common literary feature of style, which is pivotal to the notion of poetic creation.

In *Machi Namba Igĩrĩ*, March Number Two, song number 4, page 142, the artiste uses metaphorical language in the first stanza when he says:

I ndĩrerire baba angũranĩre I itanathiĩ Thĩka kwĩitanga
Thogora ũtarĩ na gĩthimi nguona ta ngũhenio

I told my father to help me get a wife before I indulge in the

Iniquities in Thika, for a price without a measure would deceive me.

The artiste compares life without a wife to a limitless price that one would pay as a bachelor. "Singlehood" is the tenor of the metaphor while the "Limitless price" is its vehicle, which enables a discussion of the social context of the life experienced in towns. The speaker uses this metaphor to voice the idea of loose morals, which lead many young people to get consumed by the vices encountered in urban centres. This trend is aggravated by a new culture of recklessness, which gives leeway to promiscuity. Consequently, the victims get drowned in disasters like HIV-AIDS pandemic. Okot p'Bitek (1974:48) uses metaphorical language to illustrate love affairs when he says:

Oil of my youth
 If any body touches my beloved
 I shall shed tears of blood
 My heart bleeds
 My heart is on fire for her.

The kind of language used by Okot p'Bitek is similar to the one applied by *Mwomboko* artiste for more often than not, *Mwomboko* songs deal with love matters. In *Njeki*, Jack, song number 7 page 148, the artiste sounds ironical when he asserts: "I saw you and I got satisfied with food?" This means personal satisfaction is beyond eating food. The irony is that it means sexual satisfaction. The metaphorical use of language still features in the same text whereby the artiste compares a hen to a he-goat to express its hugeness.

He says:

Ngūkū twarīire kwa Nyahindū I ndiari ngūkū
 yaarī theenge, ngūkū twaitaga na mīcakwe
 īreemete kīmindo
 The hen we ate at Nyahindu's, eeh it was not a hen
 it was a he-goat, A hen we strangled with
 maize cobs as a knife couldn't work.

In this metaphor, the “hen” is its tenor while the “he-goat” is the vehicle, which facilitates comparison. It is the metaphoric rule, which makes us to accept that this was an extra ordinarily big bird. Otherwise, in literal understanding this is not realisable. Among the Gikuyu, the word *ngũkũ* means both a hen and a cock in spite of the fact that *njamba* stands for a cock or a hero. Thus a cock, whose neck could not be beheaded with a knife and prompted the use of maize cobs to strangle it, paints a picture of an extra-ordinary huge bird. The significance of this image is that Nyahindũ is a very generous host and the singer takes it as his duty to espouse virtuous acts in the society.

The *Kũmaka kwa Mwanake*, The Young Man’s Fear/ Awe, song number 9, page 153, the artiste asserts:

Mũka ũyũ wakwa angĩgathũka ndikoria mũndũ ngoria baba -
Nĩwe wangũrĩire thekeni ngarĩ ĩguita ũiro

If my wife gets spoiled, I will ask none other than my father
He is the one who bought me a second hand vehicle
A vehicle that is ever leaking oil.

In this case, the speaker’s “wife” is the tenor and the “second hand vehicle” is the vehicle of the metaphor. The wife is the subject of concern to the speaker. Among the Gĩkũyũ, a father gives his son cattle and goats as dowry for his in-laws. Conversely, that is why the speaker mentions his father for making him marry an aged woman. The song *Mwomboko wa Ndinũ*, Ndinũ’s *Mwomboko*, the artiste compares the colour of a young man’s skin to that of shoe polish. The “skin” is the tenor while shoe polish is the vehicle in the metaphor. The artiste sings:

I kĩmwana watũra Nairobi wahenereirio na thikati
Na rendi nĩ ciagayanirũo ũgakora mathuuro
I kĩmwana inũka ũkahikanie rangi wa mwĩrĩ ũtanagarũrũka
Rangi wa mwĩrĩ ndũragũo ta rangi wa iratũ.

Oh! Young man you have lived in Nairobi
 You are cheated by skirts, While ladies have been shared
 You will get only leftovers,
 Oh! Young man! Go home and marry
 Before you loose your colour,
 The facial appearance, unlike shoes, is never polished

The singer cautions the young man to go back to his rural home and get married before he “loses the appearance of youth” for it cannot be bought from the market like shoe polish.

In the 6th stanza, of *Mwomboko ti Hinya*, an elephant is alleged to have fallen and drowned in Maragūa River while attempting to cross from the place it had gone to dance at Mūgoiri in Mūranga District. Mūgoiri is the home of the late *Mwomboko* wizard, the celebrated Gachungi wa Kamau alias Wa-Kīnanda. The manner in which the elephant cries for help in spite of its size is symbolic and a form of traditional allusion on drowning in sexual rivers (Mathioya and Iratī). The significance of this metaphor is realised in the following verse where the artiste raises the issue of HIV/AIDS pandemic.

He claims:

Ngingo yakīrirūo ndīkīraga mūtwe - No mūrimū ūyū wa mūkingo -
 Ndūūī mūthaamaki na ndūī gītonga kana mūthini wa kangooya.
 Hahī! nī ūmagia mūtī mathangū na honge,
 mīri na gītina mūrata

The neck never goes beyond the head
 But HIV-Aids – the very neck – disease
 Doesn't know a king, a tycoon or a pauper

Hahi! It withers and dries a tree, Leaves and branches
 Roots and the bark my friend.

HIV/AIDS has no respect for authority of kings', rich people or the greatest of paupers.

It withers and dries a tree from leaves, branches, roots and the bark, my friend.

HIV/AIDS is the tenor of the metaphor and the parts of the tree are the vehicle, which bring the effects of this deadly scourge. In *Kariara*, song number 5, page 145, the speaker compares an indescribable person who cannot dance *Mwomboko* with a bundle of firewood – which no one can carry. The significance of this metaphor is that other dancers scorn a person who cannot dance well. The issue of love affairs is raised in *Machi Nene*, The Grand March, song number 15, page 169, through metaphorical touch of language. The artiste compares ladies breasts to spears. He says *Nyondo ici mūroona cia matimū- Nyondo matimū* (These breasts you see are spears-breasts). This implies that they can prick the minds and hearts of curious men and force them to fall in love. In *Kīnanda Warīra Atīa*, Accordion! How do you Cry? Song number 16, page 171, the speaker asserts: *Kīruru kīa ūtūūro ona riūa rīngīthūa / Rūgano rūheanīo mūdū akīngīra irima* that is, “The shadow of life / even if the sun sets / The story will be told when one is buried”.

The metaphorical touch here brings out the comparison of life to a shadow that persists in spite of the setting of the sun. This implies that there is life after death. The opening phrase of the metaphor reminds one of an often quoted Shakespearean extended metaphor:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more.

These lines emphasize that life will surely end when one's fate dictates so. A further illustration of metaphor is in *Cookia Mūrango*, Shut the Door, song number 20, page 181, in verses six and seven. The artiste compares his lover to an unripe banana or a

fruit that never ripens. The lover is the tenor while the banana is the vehicle for bringing out the ground of comparison in clear terms. This implies that her love is raw and has no signs of flourishing or maturing, but only develops sourness. In the next verse, the artiste likens his lover to a jembe with a deformed broken blade – *Magecha*. As a result, it causes blisters in his hands. Yet the Gĩkũyũ folk wisdom has a proverb, which warns, “a farmer’s hands should not be broken” if farming and survival have to continue.

The issue of colonial oppression emerges through the metaphor applied in *Mami Nyambura*, My Mother Nyambura, song number 22, page 184. The artiste refers to the coloniser as the hyena that swallowed the land of Kenya. Here the traditional allusion of the story of the hyena and the lost cow is incorporated skillfully. The Hyena due to its greed wanted to eat the calf, starting with the leather strap used to tether it to a tree, and then proceeded to eat the calf itself with the justification that it was ownerless. Thus, the coloniser is compared to a greedy hyena while the freedom fighters become the calf, which escapes from the hands of the hyena.

The metaphorical touch continues to feature in *Mũthĩ ũrĩa Jomo Anyitirũo*, The date Jomo was Arrested, song number 24, page 189. The white coloniser is compared to the leopard which enters a goat shed and devours the goats one after the other. It is warned that its claws and teeth will be uprooted so that eating food like *gĩtheri* (a mixture of maize and beans) would be comparable to eating ballast.

The song *Twagūtũma Rũraya*, When We sent You Abroad/Europe, song number 25, page 191, draws the comparison of an African man to a breakdown vehicle towing a huge lorry. The breakdown vehicle is the tenor- and the huge lorry is the vehicle. The

metaphor raises the issue of the incompatibility of African cultural heritage with that of the whites. Mixing the two cultures, according to the singer, is like drinking *Mūraatina* (Gīkūyū local brew) and white man's beer simultaneously. He further refers to the white man's "chains" which is an extended metaphor indicating the coloniser's tools of oppression and suppression.

In social terms, *Kariara*, song number 5, page 145, the artiste intertwines a proverb, a metaphor and a metonymy in verse 9. He says:

Gīkani maguuta nī kīnandū reke njarie nawe
 Mīario nī maguta ma ngoro-ngorono ya ngoro
 That-which-rejects oil is "Kinandu" let me talk to you
 Words are the oil of the heart-the sweetness of heart.

In these lines "words" are the tenor while "oil" is the vehicle, which ensures that the social significance of the metaphor projects out appropriately. The artiste is wooing and urging a lady known as Cebu ka Mahūa to listen to his love proposal. In *Mwomboko wa Forte*, The *Mwomboko* of 1940s, song number 13, page 162, the artiste applies a metaphorical touch whereby a character Waceeke is interrogated by her mum. Her mother queries her:

Waceeke aroririo nī nyina mwana ūyū wakwa
 "kagūrūo rī? Na mītī ya ūrīrī watūranga,
 Na mīaro ya ūrīrī waikia riiko

Waceeke was questioned by her mother, my child
 When will you be married? Haven't you broken and burnt your bed.
 Furniture, And the stoppers! You have thrown into the hearth.

This sounds ironical because according to the Gīkūyū cultural traditions, a girl's *Kīrīrī*, that is her bed, is a vital item that ensures comfort and stability in behaviour. It is almost like a shrine, which one adores before being married off according to Gīkūyū

customary law. Waceeke's mother is ironically telling her daughter that she is of loose morals. She has engaged in sexual adventures before marriage. Using irony, the oral artiste castigates Waceeke for her lost virginity, and at the same time shows the value of virginity in traditional marriage.

In voicing his concern over HIV-AIDS pandemic, the artiste in *Mbaara ya Gĩthima-inĩ* says:

Mbaara ya Gĩthima-inĩ kĩa "tũũro
Kĩrĩrĩmbĩ gwakana mũcĩĩ
Tondũ ithima iria cinyuaguo maaĩ
Nyingĩ nĩcirũrĩte

The Battle at the Well of Life
A flame burning the home
The Cause! The wells from which water is drawn
Most of them are now bitter.

The "battle" is the tenor in this metaphorical discourse. The "Well of life" is the vehicle, which fosters the grounding of the metaphor. The "battle" refers to sexual intercourse within the well, which is womanhood. The "flame" is an extended tenor, which indicates the human suffering. These include: physical, mental, spiritual, and financial constraints precipitated by HIV-AIDS disaster. "Bitter" signifies the sickness that is acquired through Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI).

3.4.2 Simile

This is a form of mental image, which revolves around the comparison of two entities in a clear and explicit manner. In simile unlike metaphorical language, the tenor, vehicle and ground are all easily identified. Leech (1969:156) states:

A Simile is an overt, and metaphor a covert comparison. This means that for each metaphor, We can devise a roughly corresponding simile, by writing out tenor and vehicle side by side, and indicating (by like or some other formal indicator) the similarity between them.

We shall identify similes applied in *Mwomboko* poetry and also explicate their significance and appropriateness in usage.

In *Mwomboko wa Forte*, The *Mwomboko* of 1940 song number 13, page 162, the persona refers to a driver, Maina, who is a *Mwomboko* enthusiast. His love for *mwomboko* dance is likened to a he-goat's hot soup. When Maina sees a "fruit" he dances *Mwomboko* in a crazy manner. In *Gīkūyū* a *gacungwa*, a fruit, is symbol for a young attractive lady. Ironically, this is the type of mistress who draws married men away from their wives and matrimonial homes. The villains then hire hide-outs, rented rooms, "green" lodgings, cars, for carrying out extra-marital affairs.

In the same song, the artiste advises Maina, the son of Kīng'ora and Wa-Ngai, to live harmoniously with his wife just as the tendrils of the yam and its supporting tree exist. He says: *Mwendane ta gīkwa na Mūkūngūgū*, [show your love like that of a yam tendril and a *mūkūngūgū*, an indigineous traditional tree]. In *Mbaara ya Rūūū-Rūrūrū*, The Battle of the Black River, song number 14, page 165, the artiste says that the populace was as happy as if it had been made to eat *Mūkenia* a herb that stimulates laughter, joy and merry making mood. He asserts: *Mūngī wakenete ta ūrūmītio mūkenia*, meaning the masses were as happy as it had been fed with a special meal.

In verse 19, the speaker says: *makahaana ta thamaki ikītio thī nyūmū*, in which the artiste likens the driving away of whites at Mombasa Harbour to fish removed from water and exposed to the dry land. This simile is appropriate in that the fighters believed the whites would struggle like fish looking for water for survival once evicted from Kenya.

In *Machi Nene*, The Grand March, song number 15, page 169, the artiste compares women's breasts to *Mīraatina*, a cylindrical gourd-like fruit that is used for brewing local brews, also known by the same name. He proclaims:

Nyondo ici mūroona cia matimū nocio iratwara arūme njera.

Nacio ici ihaana mīraatina ikagarūra rangi

The spear-like breasts make men to be taken to jail

And the ones, which appear like *Miraatina*, change the colour.

The accuracy of this simile arises from the fact that when women, possessors of breasts, are married off, the *Mūraatina* local brew is used in solemnising the marriage. The youthful ladies are compared to the elderly ones through the simile. "Breasts" are the tenor and *Mūraatina* the vehicle of the simile.

In *Mūrurumo warī Manyani*, The Rumbling that was at Manyani, song number 18, page 177, the artiste compares a lady from Nyeri district to one from Nandi district, He sings:

Reendi ndonire TūmūTūmū ĩrī kīni kīirū ta kīa Nandī

A lass I saw at Tumutumumu has gums as black as a Nandi's.

The "gum" is the tenor while "Nandi lady" is the vehicle of the simile, which creates the element of the beauty appraised by the artiste. Further, the impact of beauty is

heightened by the artiste's proclamation that he is ready to slave it out in the beautiful lady's home with one sole motive! - Woo her and eventually elope!

In *Machi Namba Imwe*, March Number One, song number 3, page 140, the artiste compares a character by the name Njatū, The splitter, to a piece of sugarcane, in slenderness and appeal of his physique. This depiction of images from the local environment reflects the plants grown in Gikūyū land. In verse 10 the speaker likens marriage to foolishness. He proclaims that stupidity is like Europeanness. Why? A white man can dismiss and frown at an African's revered cultural values due to his ignorance of the latter's customs. A man seeking marriage also has to perform all types of odd activities, like carrying beehive with live bees to get his bride. The artiste says:

“Ūrimū wīragūo noota ūthūngū - ndakuithirio
Mwatū wīna njūki marakara, ti rūracio
rwa Reendi Ceebu na akīumbūka marakara

Stupidity is like Europeanness
I was made to carry a live beehive – Anger!
The dowry for Lady Ceebu and she took off - Anger!

The accuracy of this simile is strengthened by the choice of “stupidity”, the tenor and the “Europeanness” which is the vehicle, which creates the impact in justifying the ground of the marriage institution.

The song *Machi Namba Igīrī*, March Number Two, page 138 features the artiste recalling a date when they had gone to perform *Mwomboko* at a place called Kīrere. Dust had covered them as if they had been plastering huts with mud his celebrated colleague, Cinda Gīkombe. He says:

Twahunyūkite ta andū moima ithinga
Tūkiuma ndaci Kīrere twīna Cinda Gīkombe

Tūgikinya Mariira twanogete ta ciondo.

We were dusty like people who had been mudding
From a dance at Kirere - with Cinda Gikombe
On arrival at Mariira we were as tired as ciondos,

The “gathering dust” is the tenor while “plastering with mud” is the vehicle that sets the ground for comparison with the dirt the singers encountered. The simile is extended by *twanogete*, that is we were as tired as *ciondos*-, the Gīkūyū traditional bags used to carry heavy loads. The linguistic choice of words reflects the creativity of *Mwomboko* artistes. A person who spends time dancing in a dusty ground is likened to the person mudding a hut.

The song-text *Mwomboko ti Hinya, Mwomboko* is not Complex, song number 1, page 136, the artiste compares a plump lady to a ram in a goatshed. He boasts that he will feed the “ram” for he shall be slaughtering it in his home everyday. He says: *Ndonire reendi imwe itunguhite ta ndūrume Irī gicegū*, that is I saw a lady who was as plump as a ram.

The image the artiste draws is focused on the symbolic nature of a ram in Gīkūyū cultural traditions. It is normally slaughtered to solemnise a Gīkūyū wedding. The suitor later gets his act together by giving *rūracio* after the *ngurario*. These are remarkable and respectable ceremonies, in the initial of the stages towards marriage institution in Gīkūyū cultural practices. Among the Gīkūyū, womanhood is euphemistically and symbolically referred to as “the ram”. It is common to hear a young girl who exposes her nakedness being told to “cover her ram”.

In *Kariara* song number 5, page 145, the artiste compares dancing *Kariara* style to cultivating a shamba. This brings forth the idea of drawing images from the locality where the premiere *Mwomboko* performance was done. The idea of the youth raising dust as they dance indicates the commitment of dancers similar to that of the cultivators of the land. The simile is rendered thus: *Kariara na mwena nota kūrīma mūgūnda*, that is, *Kariara* sideways is like cultivating a shamba. This simile is appropriate in that it focuses on farming, one of the economic activities of Gīkūyū people.

This style of drawing images from the local environment is seen in verse two where one dancer, Thahabu wa Karanja, is likened to a fig tree outside the homestead. The *Mūgumo* (fig) tree is sacred to the Gīkūyū. Sacrifices carried out around its trunk symbolise communication to revered traditional God, *Ngai Mwene Nyaga* who is believed to abide in Mount Kīrīnyaga, today known as Mount Kenya. This image directs the hearers towards draws mind valued systems in the Gīkūyū traditional setting.

The crown of the *Mūgumo* tree is the face or the mirror, which reflects the hope of continued existence among the Gīkūyū. The artiste continues to use a simile when he calls for unity between the dancers and singers when he advises:

I Nīwe nawe nīnī I hūi ngūria gūtaria atīa
Tūhaane ta gīkwa I hūi mūkūngūgū - īgūrū

It is you, you and me eeh! How is that?
Let us be like a yam tendril resting on a *Mukungugu*

A *Mūkūngūgū* is a tree which supports the tendrils of a yam creeper. The gripping of hands of dancers is reflected in the creeping nature of the yam tendril. The simile thus asserts the interdependence of the human race in life circles, more so in mutual love.

The image in *Njeki-Marirū Ikĩombora*, Jack – When Wonder Dismantles, indicates the strength of similes in creating symbolic objects or situation - the artiste says: *No ūtukū yonaga ta torch – marirū Ikĩombora mĩtambo* - and at night it glows like a torch - When wonder dismantles systems. The question that arises is what systems are dismantled? Are these man's or woman's sexual organs? Jack itself is a symbol of manhood. In the same song, the artiste uses a simile when he says:

Ndathire na ūtukū ngicooka na ūtukū ta mbono yendetie kabuti.
I went at night and returned by night like a “Mboono”
who had sold his rain coat.

Mbono stands for a foolish spendthrift. This image is drawn from the Italian prisoners of war who were constructing roads across Kenya. They used to wear heavy raincoats to cover their bodies. Selling of one's raincoat symbolised the highest degree of bankruptcy both financially and mentally. This is especially so, for the danger one was exposed to after being left without the “mighty” kabuti, a raincoat as security.

The image hinging on simile is also manifested in *Mbaara ya Ndaka-inĩ*, The Battle of Ndaka-inĩ, where the artiste draws a comparison of his movement in the forest to that of wild animals. He sings: “while traversing the forests, we crawled like wild animals. Just like an ostrich whose house was on fire - Or like a lion that had set eyes on meat”.

In *Mbaara ya Gũhima-inĩ*, The Battle of the Well, the persona compares the HIV-AIDS scourge to the flooding of a river. He sings:

“Ūyū nota mūiyūro wa rūūī, na rūtwaraga mūthambīri
This is like the flooding of a river, and it drowns a champion swimmer.

The simile exemplifies the plight of Kenyans who perish every day due to this killer disease. In the same song, the artiste says: “I am not advocating that you be as silent as the night” so as not to interact, socialize and make merry. But one should “weigh oneself on a measuring scale”. The singer uses this latter statement metaphorically to advise his target audience to avoid being victims of HIV-AIDS.

The artiste also compares conservatives in tradition who ignore facts about HIV-AIDS scourge to pigs, which “fry themselves with their own fat”. He utters: “You will fry yourselves like a pig, it fries itself with its own fat”. This impresses the idea of “ignorance” which has no defence. It only leads to self-destruction.

The imagery on simile also features in *Mbaara ya Waiyaki*, The Battle of Waiyaki song number 21, page 183, in which the artiste compares the white man to a log of wood. Further, he likens the former to a piece of sugarcane. He asserts: *Marūngo maake mekwenda gūtinio ta kīgwa kīa mūirū*, that is, his organs require to be slashed like parts of a black sugarcane.”

This simile signifies that in spite of the indomitability of the colonial administration, the freedom fighters were determined to cut Europeans down to size like sugarcane (slashed with a panga). The sugarcane eaters enjoy the sweetness of the sugarcane, so the freedom fighters are urged to courageously execute the white people to pave way for political, social and economic independence in Kenya to taste fruits of *uhuru*, freedom.

3.5 Metonymy

Metonymy shows a degree of comparison, which highlights association between two or more entities: Webster in Leech (1969:152) states: “Metonymy is a figure of speech

that consists in using the name of one thing for that of something else with which it is associated". Thwaites *et al* (1994:47) complements this definition by stating:

A metonym is an association of terms. One sign is associated with another of which it signifies either a part, the whole, one of its functions or attributes, or a related concept.

This section identifies and explains the significance of metonymical linguistic features, which are evident in *Mwomboko* poetry. The metonymical touch is evident in *Mbaara ya Rũũ-Rũirũ*, The Battle of the Black River, song number 14, page 165. The persona exemplifies how "they" fired "the decider" an action that prompted the enemy forces to drop down in fear and only retaliated cowardly with their superior bazooka ammunition. The homemade gun, *gatua-ũhoro*, the decider, is associated to decision making in the armed struggle. The term *gatua-uhoro*, metonymically indicate that with innovation of skills and use of local blacksmiths, the armed struggle had to continue relentlessly.

In *Machi Nene*, The Grand March, song number 15, page 169, the persona metonymically refers to a crowd of ladies as "breasts". He fanatically dreams of being rewarded with a sackful of breasts whereby he would need no assistance to carry them to his home. He argues that he would carry "them" for ten miles till he falls in the "valley". The valley here is a point of ambiguity in the sense that it may mean a woman's thighs. This alludes to the notion and allegation that singers of the olden days, were followed by a crowd of curious women (old and young alike) to their traditional *thingira*, that is a hut, perhaps to satiate the platonic love affairs which ironically transpired to sexual overtures. Mythically, they (singers) earned a curse which made them not to marry at all, or marry late in life or have broken families.

In the same song-text, the speaker refers to *magūrū mairū* to despise the law enforcers of the land. He sings:

Ona magūrū mairū mangiūka, mena magūrū mana
Na maceng'era - kūnyua ni tūkūnyua –Yahīa ndīrī teene

Were the black legs to come
And come with their four wheels
And their handcuffs
We shall drink, drinking time is never fixed

The “black legs” is a transferred meaning of the policemen who hunt down those who take illicit brews. The “four wheels” refers to the police patrol car. “The black legs” reflect the wearing of black shoes and socks as a metonymical reference to women and men in the police force. However, the reference is a derogatory name for the force, which is mainly associated with harassment, and intimidation of the ordinary people.

In *Kīnanda Warīra Atīa*, *Accordion! How Do You Cry / or Resonate?* The speaker talks of the accordion crying and likens it to Christian church bells. The “bells” are used to refer to the entire Christian fraternity. Thus, this metonymical reference in the part of the Christian culture is associated with the whole Christian fraternity.

On the same verse, he asserts that the breasts will definitely get somebody to suckle them. This appears to be a link in the association of the church bells and matrimonial affairs between men and women. The consummation of the marriage prepares for the conceiving of a bride and the newborn baby is then expected to be breast-fed by its mother.

Metonymically, the theme of colonialism recurs in *Mūrurumo warī Manyani*, “The Thundering at Manyani”, song number 18, page 177, where the speaker recalls the noisy encounter that greeted him and his fellow detainees at Manyani Detention Camp. “Plates

and cups” mentioned by the singer show the nature of brotherhood and association between the comrades, which was prompted by hunger. The choice of language is effective in that it heightens the intensity of hunger experienced by the detainees. He sings:

Mūrurumo mūnene ndaiguire ndakinya kambī ya Manyani
Thaani na ikombe ikīūrania kaana no tūrīhūūna

I heard great rumbling on arrival at Manyani Camp.
Plates and cups asking each other whether they would get satisfied?

The association indicated through the personification of “plates and cups” is an indicator or symbolic of the misery, atrocities and sufferings experienced by the detainees at Manyani Detention Camp and by extension many around the whole country.

The artiste in *Machi Namba Imwe*, March Number One, compares himself to a stone thrown with a sling from his home (Maragūa District) to Ndia location (Kīrīnyaga District) for the sole purpose of keeping off vermin from destroying finger millet in a plantation. He asserts:

Ūi Njenerarī wa Kīnūthia, Ndaikirio na Kīgūtha
Ngarire mwere ūrī ndia marakara!

Oh! General son of Kinuthia, I was thrown with a sling
With a sling – To go and keep off (predators) at Ndia - Oh anger!

The “stone” and “sling” are metonymical indicators which stand for the people involved in tending the finger millet plantations.

Gikuyu oral poetry is very much concerned with family life and the nature of pro-creation. Consequently in *Njeki Ūtarī Mūine*, Jack-Who Has Not Been Sang, the speaker uses food crops like “arrow-root cuttings” being planted on watered channels as being representative of reproduction. This is captured in the following lines:

Njeki ūtarī mūine nī kamwana
Ngūthīī rūgūrū ngūre mīeū ngahande mūtaro ūrī gwīitū.

A Jack that is unsung is a boy
I will travel westwards, To buy arrowroots - cuttings
For planting in a canal at our place?

The word *gwīitū*, which literally means "ours" has a double meaning for it, is a euphemistic reference to the crotch zone and private parts in the human anatomy. The association applied here is metonymical in that a man has to copulate with a woman to facilitate fertilization. The multiple symbols create allegory.

The poetic creation in *Hūrira Tindo*, Drive the Chisel, song number 6, page 147, manifests the artiste's vision, which associates a human being's footsteps to the ideologies, strategies and aspirations embraced in the struggle for Kenya's independence. He visualises: *Hūrira tindo magūrū maya yokire na Njomo Kīnyatta*, that is, Drive the chisel, these footsteps came with Jomo Kenyatta. The implication is that Jomo Kenyatta followed the "footsteps" of the premiere political activists as well as freedom fighters to strengthen his role for the cause of freedom. Metonymically, the "footsteps" is a reference to all the actions taken to fight colonialism. The impact created by the choice of words makes the reception of the message sound and clear. In one version of *Hurira Tindo*, the artiste talks of *Mūgūū moja* instead of footsteps. This means "One leg" or "One wheel". The most appropriate meaning is "One wheel" which is symbolic of the fancied Kenyan clarion call "wheel of freedom".

The metonymy association is also projected in *Njoya na Mūthece*, The-One-That-Picks-With-A-Beak, song number 11, page 156. The persona says that a patient is admitted in

a hospital while the jail admits a criminal. The artiste is metonymically justifying his declaration to marry an under age girl. He states:

Ndīroigire ngūkahikia ona karī kanini
 I declared to marry in spite of her being too young and tender
 Thibitarī īthiaga mūrwaru – Nayo Njera wīhītie
 A patient goes to a hospital - A criminal to a jail

The association of a “patient” and “hospital”, a “criminal” and a “jail” metonymically manifests that a “bride” goes to be married in a “home” of her husband in spite of her tender age. The bride is tied to the chains of marriage just like a prisoner in jail or a patient by sickness.

Further, in the same song-text, the artiste compares the atrocities at Chief Inyathiū’s place to a tractor burning fuel. He says: *Kwa Inyathiū gūkīhīa kwambīrīrie itinga mūtīrīrī*, the burning at Inyathiū’s place, started like a tractor burning fuel.

Inyathiū was a colonial chief who was slain for his role as a betrayer to the cause of freedom. The guerrillas were aggrieved by the capture and killing of their famous general Gītaū Matenjagūo, whose name symbolically means He-who-is-never-shaved. This heroic character is mentioned in *Mbaara ya Ndaka-inī*, The Battle of Ndaka-inī, song number 2, page 138. The metonymy in the analysis in question paints the picture of total destruction.

In *Kariara* song number 5, page 145, the persona draws the association of “words”, “speaking”, “honey” and the “heart”. This concretizes the idea of true love that is smooth and shiny like oil. The speaker says: *Mīario nī maguuta ma ngoro – ngorono ya ngoro*. That is “words” are the “oil” of the “heart” - the “cream” of the heart. The

Gīkūyū used to uphold beauty and smearing of oil, for instance oil from castor oil seeds. This oil was applied for cosmetic purposes and as a measure of smartness and traditional values embodied in the Gīkūyū cultural life.

3.6.0 Structural Devices

3.6.1 Repetition

This involves the repetition of words, phrases, and ideas in literary works. In Gīkūyū oral poetry, repetition is used to enhance the message that the artiste intends to convey to his/her audience. Through emphasis and stress the artiste communicates vital information to his/her target audience. Wales (1989:402) correctly asserts: “In speech repetition may arise out of the desire for emphasis, or out of intensity of feeling.”

In *Mwomboko ti Hinya*, song number 1, page 136, the artiste shows his feelings by repeating the phrase *Mwomboko ti Hinya, no makinya meri na kuuna*, that is, *Mwomboko* is not complex, it is two steps and bending!” The verbal repetition assures the listeners and dancers of *Mwomboko* dance to be at ease with the art form. He stresses that it is not complex to learn and master its dynamics in movement and formations. Being a modern-cum-traditional art form the artistes stress the dancing format to promote its beauty. The repetition of syllables and stanzas enriches the style of performance.

Ruth Finnegan (1977:102) says: “Verbal repetition can be at a number of levels, from the repetition of syllables to that of whole verses and lengthy passages.” As is evident in the songs in the appendix, phrases and stanzas are repeated as a means to vary style and emphasise thematic concerns. A case in point is *Cookia Mūrango*, Shut the Door, where

the artiste emphasizes the idea of domestic strife in his home prompted by his estranged wife. Phrases and verses of this song are repeated with a view of reinforcing the concept of failed marriage. Artistes apply repetition in stressing issues concerning marital affairs, social, political and economic affairs experienced by their social group. Artistes of Gīkūyū oral poetry are talented members of a given social group. The singers of *Mwomboko* poetry focus on the events known to them and their social group and as such, Gīkūyū oral poetry is comparable to Okot' p' Bitek's collection of songs in *The Horn of My Love*. Okot' p' Bitek (1978:8) observes that the Acoli songs:

refer to persons and events known not only to the poet, but also the social group. The dancers sing them because they are psychologically and sociologically significant. The poet is the agent of the society.

The life and spirit of the Gīkūyū people is reflected in their oral poetry. The artistes repeat ideas advanced by their predecessors to capture the psychological and sociological needs of their social group. Philosophically, they have to express their lines of thought, anticipation, anxiety, fear, anger, sorrow and joy, which surround their lives.

3.6.2. Parallelism

This involves the artiste's skills of drawing parallels in ideas, characters or issues in the songs they perform. Ruth Finnegan (1992:98) states: "Parallelism is another important structural device in oral poetry. It consists basically of a type of repetition (usually a binary pattern) in which one element is changed, the other usually the syntactic frame itself – remaining constant."

In *Mbaara ya Rūūr-Rūūrū*, *The Battle of the Black River*, song number 14, page 165, the white mercenaries are contrasted to the black freedom fighters. The freedom fighters

are heroic and they stand for political, social and economic emancipation while the former are cowardly and represent colonialism and exploitation.

Parallelism also features in *Mbaara ya Ndaka-inĩ*, The Battle of Ndaka-inĩ, song number 2, page 138. The artiste continues with the idea of patriotism versus betrayal. In the song, Gĩtaũ Matenjagũo is a heroic freedom fighter who happens to be betrayed by the villainous *Kamatimũ* (spear-bearers) who formed part of the black forces, were cohorts with the colonial administration. The words say: “From Mũthithi to Kariara, the Johnnies walked on foot/ When they heard that Gĩtaũ Matenjagũo was surrounded by spear-bearers”. The contrast between freedom fighters searching total emancipation and colonial forces perpetuating and advancing exploitation and slavery comes out as a form of parallelism in characterisation. The Johnnies refer to the white colonial mercenaries while *Kamatimũ* (spear-bearers) is a pejorative reference to homeguards.

In *Mwomboko ti Hinya*, the artiste quips: *Hũũni Mũitĩrĩro, Rendi Mũitĩrĩro mararoranirie ya kĩaanda Hahĩ! Maroranagia atĩ wĩtagũo atĩa ngwũite – Gũkuhĩha nĩ kũũru – Warũgũrũ rendi Waitherero rendi*. A tall guy! A tall lady! They set off to the valley- Hahi! They were questioning - what’s your name? I do mention you - it’s bad to be short! One cannot rule out genitalia and sexual connotations.

The artiste parallels a tall guy with a tall lady and the two are supposedly in love drifting towards a river valley to make love. The parallelism comes out clearly when the issue of height is raised. Tallness is extolled and shortness despised by these tall lovers in their rhetoric on love. Wales Katie (1989:402) underlines that “parallelism is a feature of many different kinds of schemes of rhetoric” in creative art.

3.6.3 Tonal Patterns

In Gĩkũyũ oral poetry, prosody determines the speaker's intention and the overall meaning implied in a word, phrase, line or stanza in a poem. The ability of the artiste to vary, raise or lower his/her voice in a performance determines the meaning and response of his target audience. The verbal impact is crucial in the oral communication process for "when one is trying to describe the tone of a poem, it is best to think of every poem as a spoken rather than a written exercise" (Patrick Murray, 1978:163). The Gĩkũyũ language is tonal therefore, the voice of the singer determines the implication in the meaning(s) in *Mwomboko* songs.

Tonal repetition is a common feature in Gĩkũyũ oral poetry. An outside observer/listener will not find it easy to draw a distinction in the appropriacy of tonal patterns as poetic devices when used as vehicles of communicating varied meanings in songs. In *Njeki-Marirũ Ikĩombora*, Jack-when Wonder Dismantles, song number 8, page 151, the artiste applies assonance, alliteration and contrast to convey a lovemaking message as evident in the lines: *Ngũkinya na mūtwe njooke ngururuke njooke ngaragare na mūtwe ndore kana ndorio nĩ mūdũ*. The tonal patterns enhance the message that the artiste has reached the zenith of sexual arousal. The "u", "ũ", "o", and "a" vowel sounds are applied to create assonance as a tonal pattern arrangement. The vowels emerge as vital variables in denoting the impact created in the minds of the listeners. Wales (1989:403) notes that "obvious patterns of repetition on the phonological level in poetry are those of regular rhythms, to produce different metres, also repetition of vowels and consonants in alliteration, assonance and rhyme."

In *Mwomboko ti Hinya* the artiste says: "It's okey! I have nothing - I am asking - How is it? / It's you, you and me - you are charming / Hahi! Lady Warūgūrū, Lady Waithererō. Even after the translation, the tonal patterns still emerge in these lines. "The you, you and me" refer to three persons. It is only the tone of the singer which brings out this distinction. As Nketia (1955:113) asserts:" One of the distinctive features of a dirge is the quality of voice that is used in singing it." This notion is comparable to Gīkūyū oral-poetic forms for the artiste's voice is the vehicle of communication between one and one's audience.

3.6.4 Rhyme

Webster (1976:1949) says rhyme is the "correspondence in terminal sounds of two or more words, lines or verse, or other units of composition or utterance". In Gīkūyū oral poetry, rhyming sounds are notable at the end of lines of song texts. For instance, in *Machi Namba Igīrī*, song number 4 page 142," the ulterior "a" sound is realised in "verses" 1,2,4,5,6,8, and 12. The "o" ulterior rhyme is found in "verses" 1,3,7,10,11 and 12. The rhyming vowels in different words do not only create musicality but also ensure unity, order and rhythm in the song - text/poem. The rhyme in the example is achieved through poetic arrangement of vowel sounds.

As Finnegan (1977:96) notes:

Rhyme is probably among oral literatures in close contact with writing that vowel and consonant rhyme is most significant. It occurs in late Latin songs, modern English nursery rhymes and rhymes of troubadours, British ballads, Malay *Pantun* quatrains, and Irish political songs.

Most of the songs that we have analysed in this study carry rhyming features, which contribute to the general literariness in terms of linguistic paradigms.

3.7 Conclusion

In this Chapter, stylistic devices like irony, satire, metaphor, metonymy, and simile are used to raise cultural issues, marital problems, political matters, platonic, passionate, affectionate and infatuation types of love, social disasters like the HIV/AIDS scourge, struggle for independence and the continuity of life. The idea of allegory realized as multiple symbols is captured in the song *Njeki, the Jack* where it is treated as an able being: human or animal that is a fountain of love. A contrast of male phallic imagery and the female pudenda. Due to the limitations of this study, not all literary devices were studied. Features like euphemism, paradox and personification are too obvious yet significant in Gikūyū oral poetry.

Although our discography section shows that most poems tend to fall in two, three or four lines in "stanzas," it is purely for identifying various components of the analysed materials. The idea of stanza is non-existent in African oral poetry or oral performance. The accordion and the bell compliment our so-called short lines during performance to create pause, tempo, and timbre in the musicality of the process. The incorporation of these modern musical instruments in traditional music characterizes this tendency. Our so-called long "stanzas" are represented, in the song *Mbaara ya Waiyaki*. As need arises to narrate historical episodes of the protracted conflict between Chief Waiyaki wa Hinga and the colonial administration the artist applies the said formula.

Other literary devices analysed include: repetition, rhymes, tonal patterns and parallelism. In some cases the rhyming features and tonal patterns in the songs are lost in the process of translations and transcription. Translation is a challenge in this study as some Gikūyū vernacular words have no one to one direct equivalent. The researcher tried as much as possible to ensure meaning as implied in performance was not lost (see song number 16). Repetition is a central literary device applied by artists to emphasise and send message according to the prevailing circumstances.

It is apparent that history keeps on repeating itself and so cultural values of any given community are bound to be repeated in the course of handing over the notions of conformity in signs and symbols which bind a people together.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 THE ROLE OF PERFORMANCE AND AESTHETICS THAT UNDERLIE THE POETICS OF *MWOMBOKO*.

4.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on the role of performance and aesthetics that underlie the poetics of Gĩkũyũ *Mwomboko* poetry. We have interviewed, taped and video-recorded oral materials from three selected artistes of the *Mwomboko* art form. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight some aspects of language which feature in performance and the criteria used in the composition of songs. It also covers the interaction between the performers and their target audience, composition of *Mwomboko* songs, general overview as regards the performance of *Mwomboko*, effects of mass media on *Mwomboko* and the major aesthetic values inherent in *Mwomboko*: symbols, nicknames, costumes, make-up and allusion. These categories are appropriate in depicting features of language that are emergent in Gĩkũyũ oral poetry. *Mwomboko* is part of the said poetry and as such this chapter endeavours to analyse how performance and aesthetics enhance the understanding of literariness in verbal art.

4.2 INTERACTION BETWEEN THE ARTISTE AND THE AUDIENCE

The interaction between the artiste and the audience acts as the hallmark to assess the success or failure of a performance. This study revolves around performances staged by Valentino Ndinũ, wa Kang'ethe, December wa Gatonye and Bernard Gĩtahi Kĩai as the basis of our analysis. These professional artistes are proud of their profession in spite of the low income they earn through performances. Our study shows reflections of verbal art in the occasions performed, for instance, during *Madaraka* and *Jamhuri* holiday

celebrations. Different elements of cultural values and meanings are manifested in *Mwomboko* through the interaction of artistes and their audiences. Behague in Bauman (1992: 176) asserts:

The interactions between performers and audiences reflect various meanings assigned to the performance event and process. The event itself dictates certain general expectations fashioned by tradition on the part of both performers and audiences.

The argument Behague advances is shared in this study as *Mwomboko* performers interact with their audiences in various occasions determined by the social context: weddings, parties, funerals, get-togethers and political rallies as well as parties. The three artistes performed in this kind of environment as a form of entertainment to the given social context. To ensure a successful performance the artistes have to focus on the lives and experiences of the target audience. The manner of crafting linguistic features to suit their target audience makes the “general expectations” of the latter realisable.

4.3.0 COMPOSITION OF *MWOMBOKO* SONGS

Composition reflects the cultural heritage, national matters, social concerns, human suffering and historical events in the Gĩkũyũ community and to some extent the Kenyan society.

4.3.1 Cultural Heritage

The artistes focus on the cultural heritage of the Gĩkũyũ people and to some extent their neighbouring communities. They sing about the beauty of their cultural values, which give a sense of identity and pride to the community. What emerges are songs, which touch on how men and women should conduct their chores in life through reverence of the traditional god of the Gĩkũyũ, the very *Mwene Nyaga*, the possessor of brightness.

The artistes espouse the offering of traditional sacrifices in the sacred *Mūgumo*, the fig tree. Valentino Ndinū touches on the sacredness of the *Mūgumo* in *Machi Namba Imwe*. Through cultural heritage, a form of awakening led to the Gīkūyū community and other Kenyan communities to compose poetry in praise of or in condemnation of the colonial administration. Language as Ngūgī wa Thiongo (1981:13) observes: “is a means of communication and a carrier of culture”. There was a dichotomy in the way home guards and freedom fighters viewed their Cultural freedom. Thus, in the case of Kenya, homeguards praised the latter while freedom fighters condemned them. Furniss (1995:23) observes:

Oral art may exhort people to demonstrate strength, courage and prowess and yet lull others into humility and silence before dominant power. Examples are plentiful of oral art, which became part of the colonising process in praising the colonisers and also of oral art as a tool of the anti-colonial struggles.

In Gīkūyū oral art, the song genre is used as a means of cultural expression to show discontent, dissatisfaction or opposition to colonial leadership. Gīkūyū oral poetry manifests such an anti-dominance and anti-colonial message. This is envisaged in sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.5.

4.3.2 National Matters

The artistes’ sensitivities move them to compose songs, which revolve around national issues involving the Kenyan society. This study recognizes the role of performance in spreading national ideals as witnessed during public holidays and national days: Madaraka, Moi, Kenyatta and Jamhuri days. The song-text “*Kīnanda Warīra Atīa?*,” Accordion! How Do You Cry? song number 16, page 172, illustrates how Kenyans

celebrate Jamhuri Day and the national aspirations which inspire the Kenyan society to do so. The translation "How Do you Resonate" makes the literary meaning disappear while "Accordion! How Do You Cry" shows how the artiste personifies the musical instrument and treats it as his companion. Later he says: you cry as if you want us to take lunch. Indirectly he is addressing his patrons to respect the *coro-maĩ* tradition, that is watering the *coro* flute to make it resonate well, a reference to a Gĩkũyũ idiom which means asking someone to offer or buy a drink for quenching ones thirst.

The artiste's level of competence in terms of creating songs relevant to the national and international interest is epitomised in the song *Mbaara ya Gĩthima-inĩ*. He urges his patrons to respect the art of *coro-maĩ*, but beware of poisoned "wells." The Battle of the Well, which symbolises the HIV-AIDS as a national disaster, he narrates how this pandemic has wiped out families, unravelled social ties and destroyed the national economy.

Kenya National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (October, 2000:5) says:

HIV/AIDS will have severe economic impact on all sectors within Kenya's economy. Each major sector of the economy is likely to be adversely affected and most households afflicted by HIV/AIDS are likely to be seriously impoverished.

The socio-economic impact is exemplified by 'red flags' placed on funeral motorcades which traverse different parts of Kenya day in and day out. In the same song, the artiste comments about the bombings, which took place at the former American Embassy in Nairobi. The style of language used is full of figures of speech and symbolism to enhance the teaching of morality in society. This exemplifies the position of an artiste as

a teacher in his/her society as Achebe would say (Achebe, 1975) Poetry emerges as a vehicle of societal mores and cohesiveness but not art for art's sake.

The gravity of the recent conflict between *Mūngikī*, a Gīkūyū traditional religious sect and “*Kamjeshi*” self-styled touts – militia operating in Nairobi city are cited by Bernard Gītahi Kīai in his song *Gwītū Nyīrī – Kwa Rubaathi*, At Our Home – at Rufus’ Jurisdiction, song number 23, page 187, in which he voices his concerns on the two thuggish groups of citizens which torment innocent wananchi as they travel using public means. He advises them to revere education and hard work as the solution to the problems bedevilling the Kenyan nation.

4.3.3 Songs for Social Concern

These are songs that reflect issues about marital status: single, bachelor, spinsters, estranged couples and married couples. A case in point is the song *Cookia Mūrango*, Shut the Door, song number 20, page 181, where the artiste blames his estranged spouse for creating a tense and hateful atmosphere at home, something that earns him derision in the entire neighbourhood. In *Twagūtūma Rūraya*, When We Sent You Abroad, song number 25, page 191, the artiste castigates a young man who goes for further studies, but instead of getting a degree, he marries a white woman who makes him behave like a foreigner in own his homeland. The language that the artiste uses in these songs is well crafted and is full of figures of speech.

4.3.4 Human Suffering and Misery

Most of the composers of *Mwomboko* songs more often than not narrate their suffering and misery in trying to make ends meet. Bernard Gītahi Kīai proclaims that he creates

songs, which revolve around the misery of Gĩkũyũ and the Kenyan people at large. He says that he started experiencing misery, untold suffering and abject poverty in his youth. The political atmosphere during his youthful days was extremely hostile for this was at the advent of the state of emergency in colonial Kenya. For these reasons the environment and the events of the day play a major part in terms of his motivation to compose songs. In *Mami Nyambura*, My Mother Nyambura, song number 22, page 184, he focuses on the tribulations, which he and his mother experienced during colonial Kenya's state of emergency.

4.3.5 Historical Events

The artistes of *Mwomboko* songs endeavour to narrate historical events, which originated in pre-colonial and postcolonial Kenya. For instance, Bernard Kiai composes songs that revolve around colonial and post-independent political events. In *Mũthĩ "rĩa Jomo Anyitirwo*, The Day Jomo was Arrested, song number 24, page 189, he gives details of the events that preceded and followed Jomo Kenyatta's arrest on 20th October 1952. He mentions Kenya's political activists of the 1950s and 1960's: Tom Mboya and Ronald Ngala and their roles in the struggle for freedom.

In *Mbaara ya Waiyaki*, The Battle of Waiyaki, song number 21, page 183, he elucidates Waiyaki's vision for the land of Kĩrĩnyaga that is Gĩkũyũ land, and even beyond. While performing this song, Gĩtahi reveals his feelings for the heroes of the land. His gestures, facial expression and body movement focusing his audience add punch to his performance. He is very proud to be associated with poetry to do with the cause for freedom in Kenya. Notwithstanding, he disparages the betrayers and reminds them that a

curse will surely befall them. It is apparent that cultural nationalism is quite comparable to political nationalism. Furnis (1995:23) notes: “cultural nationalism was an inseparable companion of the political nationalism of post-independent states from the humiliation of belonging to colonial empires”. It is evident that in Gĩkũyũ oral poetry, aspects of cultural nationalism emerge in form of songs, most notably, Mau Mau songs. These songs apply tunes from not only Christian hymns but also mainly the cultural music of the Gĩkũyũ. Artistes use these tunes to send everyday messages to their target audience. December Maranga wa Gatonye creates his music through observing political situations in Kenya. He takes pride in performing the famous *Mbaara ya Rũũĩ-Rũĩrũ*, The Battle of the Black River, song number 14, page 165, which gives a historical picture of warfare at Karuthi valley in Nyeri. Wa Gatonye espouses the triumph of Mau Mau guerrillas as if the battle took place only several years ago. Wa Gatonye is a magnificent *Mwomboko* artiste who belongs to the last of the first generation of singers. His design of poetry indicates his mastery of art. He ensures that he maintains originality in his songs to identify a sense of purpose. He performs his song *Mũrurumo warĩ Manyani*, The Rumbling at Manyani, song number 18, page 177, with vigour and style that reflects the true life that detainees encountered during the colonial era.

As our resource persons see it, *Mwomboko* is a cultural expression, which emerged due to the Gĩkũyũ People’s need to voice the socio-historical realities of the 1930’s – 1950’s. A multicultural realisation that saw different communities interacting and appreciating each other's cultural practices and creativity. It was an era that was marked by political activism that was given impetus by cultural nationalism precipitated by the colonial hegemony in Kenya.

4.4.0. The Performance of *Mwomboko* Dance

Mwomboko poetry as we have argued before is an art form, which was formulated through fusion of different cultures within Central, Nairobi and Rift Valley Provinces. It also bears aspects of the Scottish dance as a mark of its authenticity. It is a dance which signifies pride and dignity of humankind. In the course of collecting data, we learnt that our resource persons identify themselves with *Mwomboko* poetry for it represents their African heritage. Samuel K. Kĩmani, the composer of a famous *Machi* song, *Kūraya na Gwiitū* 18, Far Away From Home –Location 18, (but not in the appendices) says *Mwomboko* is not only a symbol of change but it facilitates a kind of musical renaissance in Gĩkũyũ land and its diaspora. Further, it is a cultural performance which graces occasions depending on the occasion or the festival that is being conducted.

Stoeltje in Bauman (1992:261) writes:

Festivals are collective phenomena and serve purposes rooted in-group life. Systems of reciprocity and of shared responsibility ensure the continuity of and participation in the festival through the distribution of prestige and production.

The singers and dancers of *Mwomboko* show a high level of commitment and prestige in performance. The language that they use epitomises responsibility, creativity and vision in reflecting their lifestyles and social ideals: making merry, celebrating their existence, espousing marriage, political agitation and community development. The artistes emerge as symbols of entertainment in all festivities conducted in the nation.

We made an effort to capture Ndinũ's dancing troupe during Nairobi International A.S.K. show cultural performance. Ndinũ maintains authenticity as he performs what he calls the premiere *Mwomboko* dance styles. He and his troupe perform *Machi Namba*

Imwe, Machi Namba Igĩrĩ, Koraci, Mwomboko, Tindo, Ndogomothi, Rumba and *Kariara*. (See page 43-60 Chapter Two). The overriding tone and mood manifested through artistes and applied in performance are quite significant in determining implications in linguistic expressions in the overall meaning of *Mwomboko* songs. The dance movements (see page 43-60 Chapter Two) symbolise the organization skills of the performers and order in the community. The gestures and body movements enhance the implied meaning in songs and also direct dancers to change from one dance movement to another. From this angle, we advance that the dynamics of performance and the performer: gestures, facial expression, teasing, antics and body movements create impact in the dramatic elements of *Mwomboko*. Ndinũ's antics in performance and those of his cultural troupe attract, appeal and facinate the spectators from all walks of life. The *Mwomboko* cultural dance that they perform during A.S.K. shows throughout the country thrills people from different racial backgrounds. We found foreigners like Europeans who attended the show appreciating the performance. Europeans who showed unlimited interest in this art form may have been reflecting on their Waltz dance and comparing the movements and formations in *Mwomboko* dance.

The intercultural touch in *Mwomboko* poetry makes it an important and significant art form, which is meaningful in the lives and souls of the Gĩkũyũ and other communities which cherish their music. As Kaepler in Bauman (1992: 196) states:

Dance is a cultural form that results from creative processes that manipulate (that is, handle with skill) Human bodies in time and space so that the formalization of movement is intensified in much the same manner as poetry intensifies the formalization of languages.

Mwomboko is cultural art form whose richness is manifested through the organized and rhythmic body movement as evident in Ndinū's dancers. The role of performance is to reflect the community's aspirations and this is determined by the style of language used by artistes. As such, some artistes embrace experimentation in rendering their artistic creations. Cumulatively, culture is dynamic so the *Mwomboko* performance changes and adjusts to the times as the lifestyle of the community changes.

The style taken by Bernard Kīai Gītahī is rather radical. He innovates different tempo for the songs he performs. He dubs all his movement as *rumba*, *super-rumba* or *Machi*. His dancing troupe incorporates the *Rumba* beat applied in modern songs. He is not as conservative as Valentino Ndinū wa Kang'ethe. He uses the organ, the guitar and the machine drum to perform his *Mwomboko* poetry. His troupe wears shukas, *mīgeka* hats and ordinary clothes during performance. Wa Gatonye's approach is also different from Valentino Ndinū's and Bernard Kīai's. He does not always stick to order of dance movements as indicated in Chapter Two. In his performance, he starts with *Mwomboko wa Forte* (The *Mwomboko* of 1940's). As he is an accordion wizard, he controls his dancing troupe with his voice and his instrument. His appeal and musicianship in performance lies in his ability to construct words, suitable for his target audience and geared only for entertainment purpose but also and educating them. As Taban Lo Liyong (1991: 15) observes:

In the art of literature, words are the bricks for the construction, and the author's artistry is the cement. The author had a purpose in his mind, which governed his conception of the work and sided him to execute it to perfection.

Artistes in Gīkūyū oral poetry construct words in a language that appeals to listeners who appreciate the art of performance. *Mwomboko* folk-singers have creatively

appropriated a foreign musical instrument, the accordion, to convey an essentially Gĩkũyũ world-view. It appears oral poetry is not for "pure" entertainment but rather it represents the oral artiste's vision, aspirations and world-view. Thus, the role of performance is monumental in understanding the poetics of *Mwomboko* for the Gĩkũyũ language is tonal and as such, meaning is determined by the effectiveness of the singer's voice.

4.5.0 Effects of Mass Media in *Mwomboko*

The artistes in this study have different views about how the media should address the issue of communicating to the audience through promotion of cultural forms of folklore. Bernard Gĩtahi Kĩai thinks the new F.M. stations, most notably Kayũ ka Mũingĩ 101.1 Kameme F.M. should not over-promote the Gĩkũyũ music. He is of the opinion that such a gesture would make would-be buyers of finished products: tape cassette and C.Ds opt to listen to F.M. stations. To him this would kill the means of their livelihood. We challenged him that there was a time, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (K.B.C.) stations shunned the playing of ethnic music to ensure national unity. "Kameme and coro FMs should not promote excessively Gĩkũyũ Cultural Music". Gĩtahi adamantly insisted that these upcoming F.M. stations should regulate the promotion of cultural music. We differed in principle with Gĩtahi as we believe the ethnic F.M stations are doing a good job in ensuring that folklore material are promoted in the contemporary societies. In olden times, the artistes relied on travelling through invitations across the country but today modern technology has widened the space of their audience coverage.

It is true that the mode of sending and receiving messages have changed. It is apparent that artistes like Bernard Kĩai should accommodate these changes to ensure that music industry grows and maintains its appeal more so to the youthful audience that cherishes high technology music beats played with modern instruments. Epha Maina, a popular musician based in Nairobi, fuses modern beats with *Mwomboko* tunes as evident in his song *Mwomboko wa Epha*. Another example is Joroge Benson who has re-recorded *Mwomboko* songs and has incorporated “Rap”, “Reggae” and “Hip-Hop” beats in his poetry. This implies that folklore is not a static form and entity but a flexible one which accomodates creativity and change.

In matters of performance, the musical accompaniments, especially the accordion and bell supplement the voice of the singer in communicating various messages. The coded language captures the interest of the target audience. In *Mwomboko* the driving force is the application of a coding system to render various communicational processes. The signs used by the artistes to code their message reflect the experiences of the target audience.

As Eco (1979: 8) describes it:

A code is a system of signification, insofar as it couples present entities with absent units. When- on the basis of underlying – something actually presented to the perception of the addressee *stands for something else, there is signification.*[italics mine].

We appreciate Eco’s views especially in reflecting the song *Mbaara ya Gĩthima-inĩ*, The Battle at the Well, song number 12, page 159, where the “well” in question refers to womanhood. As the audience uncodes this coded message, it cherishes the poetry for

it renders meaning to the community. The signification of the decoded message unfolds through the dynamics of oral performance.

4.6.0 Major Aesthetics and Values Inherent in *Mwomboko*

To capture the fundamental concepts that determine the aesthetic values in *Mwomboko* poetry, this study is obliged to use texts that were recorded during performance in form of cassette tapes and videotapes. The aesthetic mode of performance necessitates communicational process through the words, actions and sounds uttered by the artiste. Through the medium of the text collected from three select artistes, their artistic verbal performance becomes the springboard of the analysis of style used by performers. The symbols, special names, attire, make -up and allusion are important springboards of understanding and analysing the aesthetic values in *Mwomboko* poetry. In the contemporary society, communication is determined by among others, the aesthetics transactions that reflect various forms of socio-cultural grounding.

Fine (1984:69) states:

To those familiar with contemporary “field” and transactional theories of communication, a theory of an aesthetic transaction grounded within a particular socio-cultural context, or “aesthetic field” is compatible with the notion of art as aesthetic mode of communication.

In *Mwomboko* performances aesthetic values enhance communicational processes in that the audience identifies itself with the beauty of the poetry for it reflects on their socio-cultural contextual ideals. It is imperative that the dancers were ingrained in the African traditional religious values that bonded the community through cultural practices. The ideologies expressed in *Mwomboko* show cultural nationalism in the emergent Kenya

nation. The intercultural interactions of Luo, Lugha, Meru, Embu, Miji Kenda, Kamba and the Gĩkũyũ signalled the birth of Kenya.

4.6.1 Symbols and Nick Names

The language used by the select performing artistes portrays a variety of symbolism, which reflects different messages in the community. In *Machi Namba Imwe*, March Number One, song number 3, the artiste draws the audience's attention to locusts which dismantled the house of Mumbi, through singing: *Ngigĩ ciokire gũthũkia Nyũmba ya Mũmbi gũtonga*. The so-called “locusts symbolise the coming of the white man and his “destruction” evident in the clearing of bushes/ virgin forests and eviction of the Gĩkũyũ ethnic community from its homeland. In *Njeki Ūtarĩ Mũine*, Jack Who Has Not Been Sang, song number 7, page 148, the artiste talks of *Njeki*, “Jack” is a symbol of manhood. This entails man’s role in the continuum of life. “A Jack that has not been sung is a young man / Jack! I never knew you were sung!”

Further the singer says: ‘Dare touch me, I will tell my mother, I will tell my father, you will be taken to court. The silent –one, you have removed the shilling”.

This picturesque focus on sexual overtures whereby a man comes into body contact with a woman. No artificial light is required but “Jack” knows how to “cultivate” the garden of love. The artiste then strikes the point home in the chorus whereby the lady warns the silent-one for the removal of the shilling, which in actual sense symbolises removal of a lady’s virginity.

Symbolism also features in *Mbaara ya Gũthima-inĩ*, The Battle at the Well, song number 12, pages 155 when the artiste says: *Ekũte kũhindĩĩ akiuma kuo mwĩrĩ waake*

ukagarūrūka, that is, “He/she dived and left with a changed body”. This symbolises the symptoms the victim of HIV/AIDS acquires after infection.

There are special names which feature in *Mwomboko* poetry. Ndinū refers to one of his dancers as *Meja Njenerarĩ*, that is Major General. This projects the idea of the spirit of militancy that was inevitable in the Mau Mau armed struggle. The special name that emerges is an indicator of change in the social circles of members of the Gĩkũyũ community. *Meja Njenerarĩ* reflects the pride and sense of identity that emerged in *Mwomboko* poetry. There was a need to consider the security detail in a *Mwomboko* performance to assure the dancers of peace and tranquility.

It means that such characters were Always handy case any form of violence erupted during a performance. The high esteem bestowed to the likes of *Meja Njenerarĩ* fostered pride and dignity in *Mwomboko* performances.

A name like *Nabũũ mūrũ wa Njei* reflects on the boisterous life led by some artistes. “Nabũũ” refers to one who loves drinking beer and *Njei* is a sword-like implement that was used by male singers/dancers of traditional Gĩkũyũ folk music to enrich the variety of attire and make-up.

The characters in songs are at times given special names like *Rendi Waitherero* as a Lady-who-hails-from –the- East and *Rendi Warũgũrũ* as a Lady-who-hails-from-the-West. These names are special in that they represent the directions of the compass that is symbolically the meeting of the West and the East in cultural interaction.

Mbũiya marĩndĩ is a phrase, which appear to have a special meaning, which only the artiste can comprehend in its entirety. It is a coinage from the word *Wambũi*, a female

name, and *kīrīndī*, which means the “crowd”. In essence, therefore it means an extra beautiful lady who unnerves and moves the crowds.

Names like *Machi Namba Imwe*, *Machi Namba Igīrī*, *Mwomboko*, *Tindo*, *Ndongomothi*, *Rumba*, *Koraci* and *Kariara* which are forms of dance name codes in *Mwomboko* poetry are special words in the identity and history of the origins of the said oral-poetic form. Their meanings have been discussed and explicated in Chapter Three of this thesis.

4.6.2 Costumes and Make-up

The use of costumes and make-up in *Mwomboko* are signs of rich cultural values among Africans. The Accordion player who also acts as the band master in his musical outfit dons a head gear which is made out of the skin of the colobus monkey. This is a symbol of cultural beauty and décor, an important aspect in performance. Today, Valentino Ndinū Kang’ethe, Bernard Gītahi wa Kīai and Maranga wa Gatonye don ordinary clothes while performing in night clubs or in tourist resort hotels.

This is contrasted to their performances in public holidays and National holidays, as exemplified in plates 5, 6, 7 and 8. In such great occasions, *Mwomboko* dancers and artistes don sheets of cloth designed to cover the body partially. They also don a black long trouser, a white shirt and the sheet or *Leso* on top. This is also what men and the dancing troupe wear. They also don Sombrero type of hats, which is commonly known as *Mūgeka*. The women in the dancing troupe don dresses, which are covered with blue sheets (*Lesos*). Hats made out of woollen material cover their heads. They need not be of the same colour.

The men wear trousers with white, red green and black stripes. These symbolise the colours identified with the struggle for Kenya's independence. According to *Ndinū*, during the times of *Cinda Gikombe*, the *Mwomboko* artiste wore a uniform that resembled that of a police commissioner or an army squadron commander. These make-ups were meant to satirise the white man's ways. They symbolised the black man's desire to fight to acquire what white man had achieved. The costumes add splendour and cultural beauty to the performance of *Mwomboko* songs. As *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o* (1993:77) notes: "Culture carries the values, ethical, moral and aesthetic by which people conceptualise or see themselves and their place in history and the universe". Conversely, *Gīkūyū* oral poetry, composers reflect on the life experiences of the community.

4.6.0 Use of allusion

This details the use of language to allude to various aspects of human life that embody environmental encounters. This allusion can be historical, traditional, biblical or literary.

Heywood (1983:XI) observes:

Modern poetry also abounds in ambiguities of mood and meaning, and draws on allusiveness of language. Thus, specific words may be chosen not for their simple dictionary meaning (denotation) but for the *associated meanings which they carry over for us from all contexts. Such connotations may be sensory, emotional or intellectual.*[italics/ emphasis mine].

This study shows the historical, literary, traditional and biblical allusion that is evident in *Mwomboko* poetry. In *Mbaara ya Waiyaki*, The Battle of Waiyaki, song number 21, page 183, the artiste says: "are you the ones who willed to change? Don't be cowed by

the white's stature-and his bloody face, A white is a log, which is split with a chisel." This is a reference that alludes to Waiyaki's words and his stoicism and fortitude in combating the coloniser. The spirit of patriotism, choice and consequence is later seen in indigenous Africans: Tom Mboya, Ronald Ngala and Jomo Kenyatta as well as in Asian African Makhan Singh and Pio Gama Pinto among others, as beacons of opposition to the global imperial realities. In *Mbaara ya Ndaka-inĩ*, The Battle of Ndaka-inĩ, song number 2, page 138, the characters who are espoused by the artiste are historical figures who emerged as heroes in the cause for freedom. They were involved in storming a police post in Naivasha where they acquired ammunition to fight in the said battle. The artiste sings:

I Njamba icio twatūma Ndaka-inĩ, Nĩ Kĩmathi mena Mbaaria
Nĩmatharĩkĩire na hinya nginya atongoria magĩkena

The heroes we have dispatched to Ndaka-inĩ
Are Kĩmathi and Mbaaria, They assailed forcefully
Till guerilla leaders were overjoyed.

The act of raiding a police post at Naivasha to acquire ammunition for fighting in the Battle of Ndaka-inĩ historically alludes to the Mau Mau war of Independence. Many heroes emerged and were consumed by the consequences of the armed struggle. This poetry projects the purpose, identity, history and heritage of those who sacrificed and fought for total liberation of the Kenyan society. The artiste continues to explain how they took photographs in the war-torn region as future evidence of their cause. In *Kũmaka kwa Mwanake*, The Young Man's Fear, song number 9, page 153, the artiste draws the biblical allusion in verse three. He states: "So that I may bury her with a

crucifix (cross) and things like those of the whites". This indicates the effects of Christianity in the Gikūyū community. There has developed a need to bury their kin and kith in the white man's style. This shows the Gikūyū accommodation for the positive cultural traits of the white people. *Wa Gatonye* approves of this by quoting the bible in one of his songs. This alludes to Psalms (98: 5-6) "Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre/ With the lyre and the sound of melody! / With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before King, the LORD!"

In *Mbaara ya Githima-ini*, The Battle at the Well, song number 12, page 159, the artiste alludes to Kenya's history in the immediate past. He narrates the circumstances which faced Kenyans when a bomb was detonated in August, 7th 1998 in the American, Embassy, Nairobi. The persona quips: "In the year 1998, it was a dream like America's / The Osama's terrorists blew a bomb / We saw darkness in daylight".

This allusion shows the sensitiveness and intellectual level of the *Mwomboko* artistes. This gives force to the assertion in this study that topical and contemporary issues feature in *Mwomboko* poetry. The America's "War Against Terror" has become a global agenda which involves many countries including Kenya.

In *Mbaara ya Rūūi-Rūirū*, The Battle of Black River page 165, the entire song features the state of warfare. It focuses on how guerillas stoically fought the white mercenary soldiers who had superior weapons. It alludes to the cowardice of the white mercenaries when they were cornered at place called *Kīamacimbi*. The use of allusion adds impact to the meaning of the *Mwomboko* poetry, as the audience is provoked to think deeply.

There is a bit of literary allusion when the artiste in the song *Mbaara ya Githima-inĩ*, The Battle at the Well says: *Mūtikae kūmerio nĩ kīama, mwīkarange ta ngūrūe*, that is, “do not be swallowed by the party and get fried like pigs”. This reflects on Ibsen (1967: 98) who declares: “a party is a sausage machine- it minces all brains up together and turns them into fatheads and blockheads.” The artiste compares the destruction caused by HIV-Aids scourge to that caused by fanatical following of Kenyan political parties. In *Mbaara ya Ndaka-inĩ*, The Battle of Ndaka-ini, song number 2, page 138, the artiste questions: “Should we execute our enemies? Should we not? Yet they are the ones who make our children go hungry”. This poetry about the battle of Ndaka-inĩ reminds the reader of Shakespeare (1994: 81) when Hamlet queries: “To be or not to be, that is the question: Whether ‘tis nobler in the mind to suffer/ The strings of outrageous fortune/or take arms against a sea of troubles/ And by opposing end them: to die to sleep” while handling the issue of revenge on his Uncle King Claudius. He was faced by the dilemma whether to kill him or not. Equally, the freedom fighters were faced with the question of whether or not to kill the white colonialists and their henchmen to propel the indigineous Kenyan people to independence.

4.7.0 Conclusion

In analysing the aspects of performance of the *Mwomboko* poetry of the three selected artistes, we notice that they share many ideas. One of these things is their ability to incorporate instantly the contemporary issues in the society. The role of performance in explicating linguistic features of style is evident. This is true when they compose songs on the disastrous and devastating effects of HIV-Aids scourge.

The poetry on contemporary and emerging issues like America's "War Against Terror" is quite impressive. This clearly shows that they have a perception and observation of the society in which they live. They truly emerge as the voice of the members of the community they do perform for. The interaction with audience is nothing short of the acclamation that *Mwomboko* is a form of popular entertainment, which is alive, and that accommodates change.

Notwithstanding, the audience plays a great role in the direction that the artistes take in terms of text production. The intensity of performance is determined by the artistes' ability to apply various technical dynamics of performance. The ability to set the right mood determines the size of the audiences that attend various performances.

Finally, we observe that the performance of *Mwomboko* as a sub-genre in Gĩkũyũ Oral Poetry plays a prominent role in explicating the features of style which emerge in the songs. It gives the audience a chance to visualise the implications of the underlying poetics of *Mwomboko* applied by the singers. The choice of verbal forms depends on the artist's target audience. He has to satisfy their psychological needs through language that the audience can identify with. As evident in the history of Cinda Gĩkombe, *Mwomboko* bears reflections of ethnodrama where the spirit of competition is encouraged by leaders of the art form. A famous Gĩkũyũ comedian/ humourist, Ndumeniko Gĩthingithia of the *Gĩagatika* play fame exploits musical elements to enhance his dramatic performances. He quips in one of his recorded plays: "I would leave everything else apart from my accordion, it is my true 'accomplice'." This is a traditional allusion to Cinda Gĩkombe's reverence for his accordion which was his only consolation when he became a lunatic.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of this study has been to document *Mwomboko* poetry: its socio-historical origins and emergent dance styles. Further, it features an analysis of style and literary devices used by *Mwomboko* artistes and the analysis of aesthetic values of the poems.

The assumptions were that the socio-political circumstances have affected the style of communication in Gĩkũyũ *Mwomboko* poetry; that *Mwomboko* artistes have a target audience who determine the stylistic parameters of presentation; that the style used by *Mwomboko* artistes is determined by performance and its aesthetic values within a given social context.

The collected song-texts provided the primary data for analysing irony, satire, metaphor, simile, metonymy, repetition, parallelism, tonal patterns and rhyme. This study also applied stylistics and ethnomethodology in unravelling different literary aspects of the contexts of actual performances. The emergent symbols and aesthetic sensibilities were examined not only through the application of the two theoretical approaches but also the semiotic and multiethnoculturalology framework. We have also discussed the important and significant roles of the performer and the audience.

The secondary data collected in the field in form of photographs, recorded cassettes, videotapes and notes made during fieldwork helped me to explicate the role of the performer and performance in captivating the target audience. Through outlining and describing song-texts and performances, it has been established that stylistic devices are

quite central in the composition and performance of *Mwomboko* poetry. The richness of song-texts is reflected in the variety of the poetics emergent in *Mwomboko*.

In performance, the cathartic effect was realised on both the audience and the artiste. This was especially so when contemporary issues on HIV-AIDS pandemic were handled with a humorous and satirical touch. Through performance, the aesthetic satisfaction was driven home due to the ability of the performer to use appropriate language to address a given audience.

5.1 Major Findings

The language that artistes used in the 1940's on the social issues of the time is still very appealing to today's audience. The artistes use the original tunes and modulate the linguistic features to relay new themes which are relevant to today's society. The artistes' focus on composition is dictated by the needs of the target audience. For instance, the allegorical references in *Mwomboko* poetry hinge on the Gikūyū people's socio-cultural life experiences in their immediate environment. The artistes use certain styles, for example, symbols and allusion to caution members of the community who are morally bankrupt and lack human dignity. To celebrate the beauty of creation, the artistes use similes, metaphors, metonymy and proverbs in their verbal expressions. The message so relayed makes a strong impact and meaning on the audience and the community at large.

The *Mwomboko* tradition of performance is embedded in the Gikūyū community's modern art through fusing *Mwomboko* with popular beats: Reggae, Rap and Hip-hop music. This adaptation of *Mwomboko* into other popular music forms is featured in the

music played by F.M stations for instance, Kameme F.M. and Coro F.M. Kenya Broadcasting Corporation occasionally plays *Mwomboko* music. Through stylistic features, artistes pinpoint the thematic concerns that are reflected in *Mwomboko* poetry. This is exemplified in the song *Hūrira Tindo* in which the artiste addresses the issue of classes in society. The class strata shows how one group is involved in capital accumulation, thanks to corruption nurtured in policies of neocolonialism. Stylistic features bring forth different ideas on the positive and negative ideals in the society. Freedom fighters symbolise struggle, positivism, progress and well-being of the nation they (guerillas) yearned for. The colonialists, spear-bearers (*Kamatimū*) and other home guards symbolise colonialism, negativism, destruction and grabbing of national resources.

An analysis of the literary stylistics show that *Mwomboko* emerged as an instrument of social, cultural and political agitation. According to Valentino Ndinū and other resource persons, the dancers of *Mwomboko* in 1940's became astute freedom fighters of the 1950's.

Mwomboko poetry has a long and rich cultural heritage throughout its existence as a poetic art form. This is portrayed in the data we collected in performances staged during national and public holidays. In *Mwomboko*, some symbols are drawn from plants, leaves and fruits. These symbolise beauty in cultural values and the continuum of life. Ndinū in his song *Machi Namba Imwe* says: *Ngonire gacungwa ndahūūna*, that is, "I saw you-small-fruit and I got satisfied" with what life has to offer. The garments, *mathaaga* worn by *Mwomboko* dancers are symbolic of the Gikūyū cultural beauty and are a reflection of aesthetic values in performance. Furthermore, they symbolise the

tenderness and deep feeling of men and women who cherish the heritage manifested in *Mwomboko*. A case in point comes out clearly when artists applied cultural nationalism to formulate prewar Mau Mau *Mwomboko* poetry. They incorporated it into the armed struggle propaganda machine to counter the upsurge of colonialism. This nature of poetry also educated the Kenyan masses about the inevitability of the struggle for freedom.

In performance, the joining of hands symbolises and emphasizes unity in all aspects of familyhood. This is an important and significant gesture for the respect of re-creation and the power of livelihood especially through motivation of the spirit of globalization.

The emergent dance styles: *Machi Namba Imwe*, *Machi Namba Igĩrĩ*, *Koraci*, *Mwomboko*, *Tindo*, *Ndongomothi*, *Rumba* and *Kariara* signify the organisational skills and order in the Gĩkũyũ oral poetry.

The accordion musical instrument and the bell, *Karing'aring'a* are quite instrumental in *Mwomboko* performance. They regulate the steps, formations, pace and tempo of the performance by dancers. All in all, it appears the way forward is to strengthen the use of verbal art revolving around our indigenous traditional African poetry in modern art.

The *Mwomboko* song-narratives can be used as a technique in HIV-AIDS awareness campaign in rural Kenya and urban centres where *Mwomboko* art form is performed.

This would be in line with Kenya Government's policy espoused in *Kenya HIV/AIDS Disaster Response Project (KHADRP)* by National Aids Control Council (December, 2000:21 of 145) that: "The government will take lead in mobilizing communities, public and private sectors in the fight against HIV/AIDS".

5.2 Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that *Mwomboko* artistes reappropriate poetry composed in the olden days to air their social concerns on contemporary issues. The linguistic style of yester-years has proved attractive and appealing to today's audience. As such, they have a target audience for whom they compose and sing. In effect, the performances of *Mwomboko* songs exemplify stylistic features which are used to suit a given social context.

The contextual analysis of different *Mwomboko* poems show that their literary quality can make them an avenue to educate, warn, encourage and create harmony within members of a community. The findings of this study are a source of reference material for scholars of literary and cultural studies, NGOs and CBOs interested in issues of community development. The song-texts could be used as texts for the teaching of poetry in upper primary and secondary school, tertiary institutions and first year at university.

The application of ethnomethodology in studying *Mwomboko* poetry has proved that it is a viable theoretical perspective in cultural studies research. The performative aspects enables the researcher in folklore to understand the criteria the community uses in expressing meaning in its verbal art after participating in shows.

Thus, the investigation we have carried out on song-texts, and our participation in oral performance demonstrate that *Mwomboko* poetry is an example of an African art form, which is characterised by originality as well as adaptability and is a didactic, historical record, visionary and imaginative.

5.3 Suggestions for further Study

Mwomboko is so widespread and varied that there is room for further studies on various literary aspects of the art form. Scholars of orature can, for instance, explore the images of women portrayed in *Mwomboko* poetry. Further research on the role of women in protest literature as in *Mwomboko* is germane.

Researchers on oral literature scholarship can study thematic concerns, which are reflected in *Mwomboko*. For instance, the appropriateness of using *Mwomboko* poetry as a tool of carrying out campaigns on national disasters that face the nation. Further research on the structural elements, poetic constructs and characterisation in *Mwomboko* can be pursued.

This study suggests that oral poetry from other ethnic communities, which emerged during the colonial era, can be investigated. This would create room for comparative studies to ascertain whether it plays the same roles as in *Mwomboko*.

It is imperative that studies on various art forms create a meeting point between the literary scholars and the alienated masses who appreciate traditional African verbal expressions, but lack a forum that would ensure that the poetic work is published. *Mwomboko* poetry should be preserved for use now and the future for its didactic function on moral behaviour. Further it warns people about social disasters, raises issues on democratic ideals, human rights and it appraises the struggle for political and economic freedoms.

APPENDIX I

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1. MWOMBOKO TI HINYA

1. Mwomboko ti hinya, Mwomboko ti hinya
No makinya meri na kuna x2
Hahi! Waruguru rendi Waitherero rendi Waruguru
rendi gatunda
2. Haithuru ndiri nondu nguria guteri atia niwe nawe
Nani iri riri
Hahi! Waruguru rendi Waitherero rendi Waruguru
rendi gatunda
3. Niwe nawe nani haithuru ndiri no undu Menja
Njenerari nguria gutaria atia iri mweka
Hahi! Waruguru rendi Waitherero rendi Waruguru
rendi gatunda
4. Niwe nawe nani ndiroguthaithira maundu no meri
Mwomboko ti hinya no makinya meri na kuna
Haiya! Waruguru rendi Waitherero rendi Waruguru
rendi gatunda
5. Huni mitiro, Rendi mitiro mararoranie ya kianda
Hahi mararonagia ati wtago atia ngigwite gukuhia ni kuru – Waruguru
rendi gatunda
6. Njogu nraguire ruu rwa Maragua ikiuma kuna
rwimbo Mugoiri - iri kwa Inyathi
Hahi! iroigaga wu mutindu – mutinduute ruu ndigaakue
7. Ngingo yakirwo ndikiraga mutwe no murimu uy
wa mukingo – Ndui muthamaki na ndui gitonga kana
muthini wa kangoya
Hahi! ni umagia mui mathangu na honge miri na gitina muraata
8. Ndonire rendi imwe itunguhite ta ndurume iri gicegu
Ngimenya na ngoro – ndurume ngatira ndaracia
thinjagira nyumba. Hahi Ngigathimaga maguuta
9. Mwomboko ti rwimbo, Mwomboko ti ndaci
Tumwana twa boti mwaigua atia?
Hahi! I ndaciariruo boti, ngirua na boti, ngihikania boti
Ngiciara na boti
10. Muhiki nyakairu naraitire mwana aroiga ndari nyondo
cia kwonguo – koruo ari mugu muhiki nyakairu angiamuheire
mutha wa ngombe -
Hahi Waruguru rendi Waitherero rendi Waruguru rendi gatunda

1. **“MWOMBOKO” IS NOT USE OF BODILY POWER/COMPLEXITY**

1. Mwomboko is not use of complex bodily acts
It is two footsteps and bending (“cutting”!)
Hahi! Lady Waruguru, Lady Waitherero,
Lady Waruguru – “a-small-fruit”.
2. It’s O’key! I have nothing – I am asking “How is it?”
It is you, you and me – you are charming
Hahi ! Lady Waruguru, Lady Waitherero
Lady Waruguru – “a-small-fruit”
3. It is you, and me-It’s okey! I have nothing
Major General! “How is it? – Are you fine?”
Hahi ! Lady Waruguru, Lady Waitherero, Lady Waruguru –
“a-small-fruit”

It is you, you and me- I am beseeching you – there are two things!
Mwomboko is not complex – It is two footsteps – then bend
Haiya! Lady Waruguru, Lady Waitherero, Lady Waruguru, Lady Waitherero,
Lady Waruguru “a-small-fruit”.
5. A giraffe guy! A giraffe lady! They set off to the valley
Hahi! They were questioning – what’s your name?
I do call you – It’s bad to be short!
6. An elephant fell into River Maragua – it was leaving a singing and dancing jig at
Mugoiri – Eeh! At Inyathiu’s !
Hahi! It was screaming – Remo-ove! Remove me from the river –
I may die.
7. The neck is never greater than the head - But HIV-AIDS!
It does not spare a king, Neither a tycoon nor a great pauper
Hahi! It dries a tree, leaves and branches, roots and the
bark – my Pal!
8. I saw one lady – As fat as a fattened ram in “gicegu”
I knew at heart – the ram! I will fetch its food – After
paying bride price – then be slaughtering it in the house.
Hahi! And squeeze fat out of it.
9. Mwomboko is not a song, Mwomboko is not a dance!
The youth of 1940s – How is it?
Hahi ! – I was born in forty, circumcised in forty,
Married in forty, and sired children in forty.
10. The bride, Nyakairu – strangled her child and justified:
“I have no breasts for suckling!”
If she was brainy, bride Nyakairu – she would have given it a cow’s milk.
Hahi! Lady Waruguru, Lady Waitherero, Lady Waruguru – “a-small-fruit”

2 MBAARA YA NDAKA-INI

1. I njamba icio twatūma Ndaka-inī I, - nī Kīmathi marī
na Mbaaria,
Nī matharīkīire na hinya nginya atongoria magīkena
I nī matharīkīire na hinya nginya atongoria magīkena.
2. Twahītūkīire kwa mūnene ūmwe naake warī wa
Nyoota ithaatū,
Tūkī ūrio kana nī ithuī kīama kīrīa kīracaria wīyaathi
Tūkīrūio kana nī ithuī kīama kīrīa kīracaria wīyaathi
3. Twaragia twīina ūchamba mūingī- nīūdū wa kūmenya
gītūmi,
Tūkīrūio tweterere nginya macookio makoima
kwa anene x2
4. I Njeeri mūrītu wa Kariara a, na Njooki mūrītu wa Iyego,
Nīwacio mūkuona mbica-inī magītungatīra rūrīrī
Nīwacio mūkuona mbica-inī magītungatīra rūrīrī
5. I mbica icio mūkuona īkoomete Iī nīcio
Twahūrīrūo Kīnyona,
Tūrūgamīrīrūo nī ūgo, naake Wang'ombe aragūrage
I, tūrūgamīrīrūo nī ūgo, naake Wang'ombe aragūrage
6. I mbica īo īkomeete na ngaara, nī ya Kago mūrū
wa Mboko,
Nīwe ūharūrūkagia ndege, īgīthīī kūnyarira ituungati
I nīwe ūharūrūkagīa ndege, īgīthīī kūnyarira ituungati
7. Hīndī īrīa mūbīa amenyire Matenjagūo nī arīkinya kuo,
Abatarītio nī mūtwe waake ūkahūrīrūo mbica mūtītū
Abatarītio nī mūtwe waake ūkahūrīrūo mbica mūtītū
8. Kuuma Mūthithi na Kariara, Njoni ciambataga magūrū
Ciaigua Gītaū Matenjagūo arīgīcīirio nī kamatimū
I Ciaigua Gītaū Matenjagūo arīgīcīirio nī kamatimū
9. Ngaragu tuonire Thubukia, thetera ciarega na mbūri
Ndūngū Mwanake wa Gīcerū – akiuga “Ngombe nī
icucuo gūcucuo.
10. Nīwega kūnina thū ciitū? Kaana twagīrīrūo nī gwīka atīa?
Nanīcio itūmaga cīana ciitū ciūrāgagūo nī ng'aragu
Nanīcio itūmaga cīana ciitū ciūrāgagūo nī ng'aragu
11. Tūgītūrīkīria mūtītū twakurumaga ota nyamū
Gweta ta nyaga ī hīire kana mūrūthi woonete nyama

Gweta ta nyaga ī hīre kana mūrūthi woonete nyama

12. Tūtiakīrūagīra kwenda, twarūaga tondū no nginya
Tūnyūrūrūkie bendera ya ngeretha – “Wīyaathi nī waū?”

2. THE BATTLE OF NDAKA-INI

1. Oh! the heroes whom we have dispatched to Ndaka-ini,
Are Kimathi and Mbaaria,
They attacked assertively, till guerilla leaders were overjoyed
Yes! they attacked assertively, Till guerilla leaders were overjoyed.
2. We passed through one leaders' jurisdiction
He who donned three “stars”
We were asked whether we are the council
That is searching for freedom
Yes! We were asked whether we are the council
That is searching for freedom
3. We showed bravery as we talked
For we knew the cause
We were asked to wait till a response from the leaders was due,
Yes, We were asked to wait till a response from the leaders was due.
4. Oh! Njeri a girl from Kariara, and Njoki a girl from Iyego
They are the ones you see on the photograph – serving the nation.
Yes! they are the ones you see on the photograph – serving the nation
5. Oh! the photographs you can see sleeping!
Are the ones we took at Kinyona
We were secured by medicine- manship
As Wang'ombe performed the medicine- man's trade
Yes! We were secured by medicine- manship
As Wang'ombe performed the medicine man's trade
6. The photograph you can see sleeping! “Stomach upwards”
Belongs to Kago son of Mboko
He who brings down enemy warplanes –
On their mission to devastate our patriots.
Yes! He is the one who sends down warplanes
On their mission to pound our patriots.
7. When the padre knew that Matenjaguo would reach there.
Seeking his head to be photographed in the forest
Yes! Seeking his head to be photographed in the forest
8. From Muthithi to Kariara, The johnnies walked on foot
When they heard Gitau Matenjaguo was surrounded by the
spear-bearers.

Yes! They had Gitau Matenjaguo was surrounded by the spear-bearers.

9. The famine we “saw” at Subukia, settlers refused us goats
Ndungu son of Gicheru ordered, “Let cows be slashed and slashed!”
Yes! Ndungu son of Gicheru ordered, “Let cows be slashed and slashed!”
10. Is it good to execute our enemies? What are we supposed to do?
They make our offsprings to die of hunger
Yes! They make our offsprings to die of hunger
11. When we traversed through the forest, we crawled like animals
Say like an Ostrich whose shelter was on fire, or a lion on seeing meat
Yes! Say like an Ostrich whose shelter was on fire, or a lion on seeing meat
12. We fought-not that we liked it - We had to!
To bring down the English man’s flag (union jack)
“Who owns freedom?”

3 MACHI NAMBA IMWE

1. Ndia ndia ndiamba – Nyūmba ya Mūmbi gūtonga
Ngigī ciokire gūthūkia – Nyūmba ya Mūmbi gūtonga
Ngigī ciokire gūthīnia – Nyūmba ya Mūmbi gūtonga
2. U mabwana u mabwana – upitapo unaitika
Salaam! Good Morning sir – I leo, leo, leo
Leo ni siku kuu – Tunyoe mireembe tukarare ho
3. Ti tūkarūga – Ti tūkarūga - Wachira mūrū wa Kahenya
Ndoimire gwiitū – ngīthiī kwa mbarī ya Mūgwe
Kwa mbari ya Mūgwe - baba na maitū makigwa
na kīrīro – mūriū waminīria – cia mūka mūgima
Ndūrore Banga-inī ūgathūkūme cia mūka
4. Njama yangu kūngū! - ngūria gūtaria atīa mbūiya marīndī?
Njenerarī wa Kīnūthia marakara - ngūria nīūguo ūkwendaga
Ngwīre = I niūguo
Ngwīre cebu ka mabūa – niūguo
Nyanya wiitū kwa mūkūbwa - Njatū wiitū nota kīgwa
“kwendaga atīa marakara - “Njenerarī wa Kīnuthia – nīūguo?”
5. “i Njenerarī wa Kīnūthia – Ndaikirio na kīgūtha
Ngarire mwere ūrī Ndia marakara
Ukuga atia Njenerarī = I mūihwa?
6. Njama yangu kūngū – ngūria ūkwendaga atīa mbūiya marīndī
Niniī nawe mūriū marakara kamwana irigithathi I nīūguo
Nabūū wiitū irigithathi kamwana - Nabūū irigithathi

rīakwa marakara ūkwendaga atīa nīwe ngūria I nīguo.

7. Njama yangu kūngū – Njenerarī wa Kīnūthia
Njenerarī wa Kīnūthia marakara - ūkuuga atīa
Nabūū mūrīū tahiūha
8. Nabūū rekia ngengere kamwana – Nabūū rūmia ngengere
Nabūū rekia ngengere marakara - Kamwana irigithathi rīa mwene
- 9 Ndīrī kairītu ka maitū marakara –
Ndagaikūrūkia werū mbūiya marakara –
Ngombe ikīnyua kahiūragie I mūraba
10. Ngombe ikīnyua itigambaga marakara
No ikīrīa nī irumaga I wega
Mūrō nī hūūni naake ndarumaga andū ao.
11. Gūtīrī irumaga imera igīrī - nonginya yunīke rūhia
Marakara - I kūrūdūo ndīregaga I ruoro.
12. “rimū wīraguo noota ūthūngū
Ndakuithirio mwatū wīna njūkī marakara –
Ti rūracio rwa Rūūndia na akiūmbūka = I wega
3. **MARCH NUMBER ONE**
 1. “Ndia ndia ndiamba” – the House of Mumbi is rich
Locusts came to devastate - House of Mumbi is rich
Locusts came to torture - House of Mumbi is rich
 2. Oh! the Sirs! Oh! the Masters! - As you pass-
Greetings! Good Morning sir? – Today, Today, today
Today is a holiday. Let’s celebrate!
 3. It is not jumping! It is not jumping - Wachira son of Kahenya
I left home – Went to the Mugwes – Yes!
House of Mugwe – My father and mother started crying – son? You squandered
wealth - worth marrying a whole wife
Go to Pangani - and earn yourself a wife!
 4. My Kinsmen “Kungu!” – How is it “Mbuiya marindi”?
General son of Kinuthia – Anger – I am asking - is that what you wanted me to
tell you?
Let me tell you Cebu Ka mabua - It is Okey!
Nyanya our Own-the Mukubwa’s – Njatu our own- slender like sugar cane
What did you want – anger! “General son of Kinuthia
Is that Okey?”
 5. Oh! General son of Kinuthia - I was thrown with a sling

To keep off predators in a finger millet farm at Ndia -
 Anger! What do you say?
 General - My cousin?

6. My Kinsman! "kungu" – I am asking: what do you want
 "Mbuiya marindi"?
 It is me and you son, Anger! A young man – somebody's
 first born – "What do you want – I am asking you?"
7. My Kinsman "Kungu!" General son of Kinuthia
 General son of Kinuthia – anger! -
 What do you say?
 Nabuu - Oh son! Hurry up!
8. Nabuu let off the bell-young man – Nabuu grip the bell
 Nabuu let off the bell - Anger – Young man –
 Somebody's first born.
9. I have no girl – who's my mother's - Anger!
 I would send her in a flattish valley land - Anger!
 When cows are taking water - she shakes "Muiraba"
10. When cows are taking water they don't moo – Anger!
 But as they eat - they rule – nicely
 It-that-is-eaten-by-satisfaction, doesn't curse its people.
11. None "rules" for two seasons – The horn breaks
 Anger - eeh! Once wrestled down – it accepts the mark of defeat.
12. Stupidity is just like Europeaness
 I was made to carry a live bee-hive-Anger
 The bride price for Lydia – And she flew off-nicely

4 MACHI NAMBA IGIRI

1. I ndīrerire baba angūranīre ī itanathī Thīka kwīitanga
 Thogora ūtarī na gīthimi nguona ta ngūhenio
2. Wūi Nabūū irigithathi rīakwa rīa mbere kamwana
 Mūriū ndī mūgendi na thinacara itanakinya twīgaīre kīama
3. Twahunyūkīte ta andū moima ithinga ī -
 Tūkiuma ndaci Kīrere twīna Cinda Gīkombe,
 Tūgīkinya Marīira twanogete ta ciondo
4. Wūi I Nabūū irigithathi rīakwa – wūi kwa Njoni Atha
 Ndī mūgeendi - Na kamūiria ndīcirie – wūi iyī irigithathi
 Rīa mwene ngūria gūteriī atīa ?
 Nīatīa Menja Njenerarī Nabūū ari gūūka.

5. Wūi njoochi īno no īrutuo mīraatina I mīhūnī tūnyuire nja
Tūtige mūdū ūrī na mūka agiatha mūciī waake.
6. Wūi ngūkū twarīre kwa Nyahindū ī a na
Ndīarī ngūūku yarī theenge - ngūūkū twaitaga na
Mīcakwe īremete kīmindo
7. Haiya! ngwīra Kīgotho angūranīre ī - I itanathiī Rūirū
Kwītanga thogora ūtari na gīthiimi nguona ta ngūhenio
Wūi nīatia Nabūū Mūrū wa Njei - “kugaga atīa?
8. Njīra īno yoothe ya kwaambata ya gwa Karanja
Ndīrīmenya nongakūgacha wa Wamwea aikīrīrīrio maūrū
Wūi nīatia Nabūū mūrū Wanjei ngūria gūtaariī atīa.
- Ciugo: Anitii- Anitii !- Mūdū ti njege!
8. Haiya! Mūnū ūrī na mūka arī kūngīra egūtwaario igooti
Na nditwario niī ndī Nabūū mūrū wa Njei –
Ngūria gūtaria atīa?
9. Wūi nīatīa Nyahindū mūrū wa Mūkūbwa -
Wa kwa mūkūbwa ona ūngīhīnja no ūngīgakua no
ūngīgathikuo ngoiga twarī naawe –
Wūi nīatīa Gīchinga wa Waithaka mūriū ūkwendaga atīa?
- Ciugo: Kahoora - hinya munene nduri indo.
10. Wūi kīhī gīkūrū noota ithe, ndonire Gīchinga maceemete
Gacungwa mena ithe,
Wūi ūkūrū noota kīgaragaro, Naake mūhiki no kiriro –
Mwanjīka atīa?
12. Wūi mūrīmū ūyū wa Mūkingo i - ndūcagūruga mīaka
Mūkūrū kana mūnini nī kīmīri gīa kūmīira kīrīndī
Wūi ūyū ni mūigwa wa Kaiyaba ūthecete o ngoro
4. **MARCH NUMBER TWO**
1. Eeh! I told my father to enable me marry
Before I go to Thika and indulge in promiscuity
A price without measure – I may be cheated!
2. Wui! Nabuu my first-born – Young man
Son I am a traveller - and at six (at dusk)
We shall set out our will to the council.
3. We were as dusty like people who had been plastering huts with mud

From a dance performance at Kirere – with Cinda Gikombe,
When we arrived at Mariira – we were as tired as “*Ciondos*”

4. Wui! Oh! Nabuu my first born – Wui! At John Arthur’s
I am a passer-by - Before I click mind –
Wui! Somebody’s first born – How is it?
How are you Major General? Nabuu has come.
5. Wui! “The miraatina” should be removed from the brew
We boisterous youth - take it outside
Leave somebody with a wife – Calling the shots at home.
6. Wui! The hen we ate at Nyahindu’s - eeh!
And it was not a hen - It was a he-goat
A hen we strangled with maize cobs
It could not be slaughtered with a knife.
7. Haiya! I will tell Kigotho to get me married – eeh!
Before I go to Ruiru and swim in a spelling promiscuity
A price without a measure – I may be cheated
Wui! How are you Nabuu son of Njei - How is it?
8. The way – climbing up – along Karanja’s
When I know it – I will extoll you – Wa-Wamwea
was scandalized
Wui! How is it Nabuu son of Njei – How is it?
Words: Anitii! - Antie - a person is not a porcupine.
*Antie – in Dholuo means – “I am here”
9. Haiya! A married person has by-passed me
He is assisted to carry his coat – Yet I am not given a hand
I Nabuu son of Njei - I am asking? How is it?
10. Wui! How is it Nyahindu son of Mukubwa?
You from Mukubwa’s - Be you slender – Be you dead
Be you be buried – I will proclaim – we were colleagues
Wui! – How is it Gichinga son of Waithaka –
Son ! What were you up to?
Words: Slowly! One cannot acquire wealth through force.
11. Wui! A first born boy resembles his father –
I saw Gichinga ambushing “a-small-fruit” – Accompanied
by his father –
Wui! Old age is like a rolling sloppy ground – The girl was crying
What have you done to me?
12. Wui! This disease – HIV-AIDS! Eeh – Doesn’t choose years!

Old and young alike - It is a crusher of the crowds
Wui – this is a Kaiyaba” thorn which has pricked the heart.

5. KARIARA NA MWENA

1. Kariara na mwena – Kariara na mwena ĩ hũĩ
Kariara na mwena – noota kũrĩma rĩma mũgũnda = ĩ hũĩ
Nĩwe nawe nĩnĩ – Haithuru ndirĩ no ũndũ ĩ hũĩ
Kariara na mwena.
2. Thahabu wa Karanja ĩ hũĩ nĩwe nguona no ũthĩũ
Ta mũgumo ũri nja ĩ hũĩ Kariara na mwena
I nĩwe nguona no ũthĩũ Kĩnyũthi mũrũ wa kwa Njooki?
Ciugo: Kĩnyũthi wa Njooki – wicanure.
3. Haithuru ndirĩ no ũndũ ĩ hũĩ Kariara na mwena
Ngoima nĩta njaũ ĩ hũĩ twathĩnjire ũthoni
Thahabu wa Karanja ĩ hũĩ ngũria gũtaria atĩa?
4. Nĩwe nawe nĩnĩ ĩ hũĩ Nabũũ mũrũ wa Njei
Kĩnyũthi mũrũ wa Njooki – Bindiru mũrũ wa Gĩtiha
I Kĩnyũthi wa Njooki, ĩ hũĩ Bindani mũrũ wa kĩhiũ
5. Nĩwe nawe nĩnĩ ĩ hũĩ ngũria gũtaria atĩa?
Tũhaane ta gĩkwa ĩ hũĩ mũkũngũgũ ĩgũrũ
Kariara na mwena ndagũthaiha ngũria ũkwendaga atĩa?
Ciugo: ukwendaga atĩa? Nabuu! Nyotoka ta ma Kariara.
6. Gĩkĩ kĩngikima I hũĩ mũndũ ũtoĩ kũina rwĩmbo
Nĩ mũrigo wa ngũ ĩ hũĩ ũtari na mũkui
Kariara na mwena ndogũthaiha ngũria mũkwenda atĩa?
7. Twainaga ngurumo Kariara Tũgĩkorererũ
Nĩ magũrũ mairũ na chibũ ona tũbuteni
Rabae wa Ngũgi akuire arũmĩte kĩmindo
Ciugo : I na magego! E muruuthi wa Mwomboko!
8. Njũgũũma ya njamba ĩthukagirio ũgeninĩ
Naake mũndũ mũgo nĩerirũo ndakĩũĩo kwao
Mwarimũ Mũhoru hĩ hũĩ Kariara na mwena
9. Ngoro ndĩrumaga tũhũ ĩ Cebu Ka Mahũa
Gikani maguuta nĩ kĩnandũ reeke njarie naawe
Mĩario nĩ maguuta ma ngoro ngorono ya ngoro
Ciugo: Mũndũ wa ngai nĩ kwĩyaria.
10. Ngũũri ndĩgaagwo ke ngwĩre Cebu ka Mahũa
“ka ngũinie ndari Kariara Cebu Ka Mahũa
Kariara na mwena ndagũthaiha nĩwe naawe nĩnĩ - Munya njuiri.

11. Kariara Rūraya, hūi Kariara ti ndiara, Kariara ti
Ndaci, - gīkī nīndagithomeire!
Gīkī kia mūgeeto ngagītiga ngīthīi irima

12. Kariara tūriare, hūi Kariara Wariara
Ndaaci ya Mwomboko ūndūire tūrakūngūira
“yū ti mūrimū mūnene ūrīa ūrainainia thī

5. **KARIARA – AND – SIDEWAYS**

1. Kariara – move sideways, Kariara Gyrate sideways
Kariara and sideways is like cultivating a shamba
It is you, you and I - It's okey - I have nothing
Eeh! Kariara gyrate sideways.

2. The Golden son of Karanja – hui! Hey! Are you the one I
can see through the face? Like a fig tree outside the homestead
Kariara move sideways – Are you the one I can see through the face?
Kinyuthi son of Njooki?

Words: Kinyuthi son of Njooki. Comb yourself!

3. It is Okey! I have no say – Hey! Kariara gyrate sideways
A sheep was like a calf – Hey! We slaughtered – at our inlawship
The Golden son of Karanja, Hey! Kariara gyrate sideways.

4. It is you, you and I, Hey! Nabuu son of Njei
Kinyuthi son of Njooki – Bendan son of Gitiha
O Kinyuthi son of Njooki – Bedan son of Kihiu

5. Eeh! It is you, you and I – How is it?
Let's be like a yam tendrill creeping on a “mukungugu”
Kariara and sideways – I beseech you – What do you want?
Words: What are you upto? Nabuu? Quench yourself with Kariara's.

6. This is a peculiarity – Hey. One who knows not the song
Is a bundle of firewood – Hey with no carrier
Kariara gyrate sideways – I beseech you – what do you want?

7. We were dancing along a river valley – We were ambushed
By black-legs, And the chief – And the “captains”
Raphael son of Ngugi died while biting his knife

Words: with his teeth – a Mwomboko lion.

8. A hero's club is utilised in foreign territories
A witch-doctor is never known at home
Teacher Muhoro – Hey – It's kariara – gyrate sideways

9. A heart curses not for nothing, Eeh Cebu “the –flowery-one”

That which rejects oil is the container – Let me dialogue with you
Talking is the oiling of the heart - The honey and cream of heart.

Words: A Godly person talks outrightly!

10. A pincer is never inherited – Cebu! “The-flowery-one”
Come and dance with me Kariara Cebu! “the-flowery-one”.
Kariara gyrate sideways – I beseech you –
It is you, you and I – pluck the hair.

11. Kariara in Europe, Hey ! Kariara isn’t a fiord,
Kariara isn’t a dance - this one! I have learnt it!
This-that-is-pulled - I will leave it when going to the tomb.

12. Kariara! Let’s shine! Hey! Kariara! Wariara
A “Mwomboko” dance – Enhances cultural growth
This is no great disease – that has shaken the entire world.

6. HŪRĪRA TINDO

1. Rīrīa mūkūrīa na mūkanyua, mūkīgūrāga matoyota
Nacio nding’ūri macindici – Nyūmba ya Mūmbi
Nīmwariganīrwo ni Kīmathi

Hūrīra tindo, magūrū maaya yokire na Njomo Kīnyata
Harambee – eeh! Harambee hee! Oh! Eeeh Harambee
Yokire na Njomo Kīnyata

2. Mīkawa yaarī ya Nyakerū, Mīgūnda yaari ya Nyakerū
Mūmenyage atī nī Kīnyata na mūtīgairī wiitū ti
Dedani Kīmathi

Chorus: Hūrīra tindo

3. Rīrīa Kīmathi wiitū akuire, Akīrūrīa wīyaathi wiitū
Ngong’u nginya Karīmatūra – Mwangi na Irūngū
Gīkūyū na Mūmbi makiuga !

Chorus: Hūrīra tindo.....

4. Twathiī Rīnjiko twerirūo atīa?
Twerirūo makinya no meerī –Nītūkūheo mūthenya ūmwe
nyūmba ya Mūmbi tūrīkanage Kīmathi

Chorus: Hūrīra tindo

5. Geithia ngīta na ūgeithie mwene – Ndīrarūnīre
Gwitū Maragūa – ngiugūrūo ngemi ni nyakīnyua - Mūhorō wiitū
Ngirutiruo ndurume gicegu

Chorus : Hūrīra tindo ...

6. Ngūmūtiga na kiugo gīkī , Yīragūo yaarī iria yakua
Mūrīkanage Kīmathi na njamba ciitū gūtīrī gītātūrīe kīngī

Chorus : Hūrira tindo

7. Mūkīina twithiti na bathanga – mūrirkanagio rūrū rwiitū
Nyūmba iitū kahiga gakūrū gatiagararagūo ni maaī
Chorus : Hūrira tindo ...

6. **DRIVE THE CHISEL**

1. When you eat and drink – And buy toyotas
And tycoons Mercedes – House of Mumbi!
You have forgotten Kimathi

Drive the chisel, These footstpes came with Jomo
Kenyatta – Harambee hee! Harambee ! Hooi!
Eeh Harambee came with Jomo Kenyatta

2. Hotels were owned by whites, Land was owned by whites
You should know that it's Kenyatta and the late
Dedan Kimathi who spearheaded the struggle
Chorus : Drive the chisel ...

3. When Kimathi – our own died, struggling for Uhuru
From Ngong to Garbatura – Mwangi and Irungu
Gikuyu and Mumbi proclaimed:
Chorus : Drive the chisel ...

4. When we attended the Legislative Council, what were we told? – We were told
there were only two steps. We shall be offered – A Day set aside, House of
Mumbi to commemorate Kimathi
Chorus : Drive the chisel ...

5. Salute the guitar and its owner – I sang at Maragua
Our home - The Nyakinyua ululated honourably
Muhoro – our own - A he-goat was ushered from a “gicegu,” goat
Chorus : Drive the chisel

6. I leave you with this word – It is praised of its milk capacity only when dead
Be remembering Kimathi and our heroes
There is none – That cannot support or co-exist with another.
Chorus : Drive the chisel ...

7. When you are singing Twist and Pachanga
You should be reminded our very own mwomboko!
Our house, an old stone is never by-passed by water.

7. **NJEKI – ŪTARI MŪINE**

1. Njeki ūte mūine nī kamwana – njeki ūte mūine nī kamwana
Njeki ndimenyaga ūrī mūine – ngūthiī rūgūrū ngūre mīeū

Ngũthiĩ rūgūrũ ngũre mĩeũ ngahande mũtaaro ũrĩ gwiitũ

2. Nĩwe nawe nĩnĩ ndakuona – merirũo atĩ marĩ nduĩrĩo
Nĩwe nguona I nĩwe nguona Thahabu mũriũ
Ngũria ũkwendaga atĩa?
3. Haithuru ndirĩ no ũndũ ĩ ndirĩ no ũndũ
Thahabu wa Karanja ndĩrĩ o muoyo
Nĩwe nguona no ũthiũ ndogũthaithĩrũo – kamwana mũriũ
4. Nguonire ndahũũna kamwana mũriũ
Nguonire ndahũũna Mangĩriti – Wũi Gachungwa ndĩ mwega
Menja Njenerarĩ ndagũthaitha – Marirũ ĩkĩombora mĩtambo
5. Mbitirĩthi wa Kĩhiũ ndagũthaitha, nĩwe nguona na ũthiũ wa wĩyathi
Ndagũthaitha ka marirũ ĩkuombora mĩtambo
Kiongo kĩenjagũo mwene akiuga – ta wakienje na ndari ya wa-kĩenje
6. I Kamwana mũriũ ngũria gũtaria atĩa nĩguo, cama thakame ya mũthũngũ
Nĩwe naniĩ Thahabu wa Karanja – Huko itegagwo rĩrĩa igũikia- Ndagũthaitha ka
marirũ I kuombora mĩtambo i
I marirũ ĩkuomba – ĩkuombora mĩtambo

Ciugo: Nĩguo! Haithuru!

7. Naawe Mũhoru nĩndangũthaitha – Reheũhoru ngĩkũhe ũhoru
Nĩwe naniĩ mwarimũ wiitũ – nduutu ĩrutagũo na mũkuha
Mũrutuo arutaguo nĩ mwarimũ – mũthigari nĩ kamanda Rehe ũhoru ngĩkũhe
ũhoru
No ũmenyage cooro nĩ maaĩ – marirũ ĩkĩombora mĩtambo
8. Wũi gachungwa keega – Gatumire hũũne ta mwaka ũmwe
Ndorio ngoiga ndirĩaga irio, ndũirio nĩ wendo na kwĩhooka nyume moko-inĩ ma
ũnyakerũ
Rĩria tũkonana naawe rĩngĩ ndigacooka kũhũũta rĩngĩ
Nginya rĩrĩa ngakĩenjwo mbuĩ – Marirũ ĩkĩombora mĩtambo
9. Kinya wenge tũkinye weenge, merĩ na kuna nĩ mũkinyo, tũkanyange hinya wa
ũnyakerũ
“kinyaguo nĩ akinyi oogĩ – ndongomothi ciũragia afĩrĩ -
Gĩkĩ nĩ Gĩthigonji gĩa gĩgĩkũyũ – gĩthigonji ta kĩa mboburũ
Kinya wenge gachungwa gakwa – marirũ ĩkĩombora mĩtambo
10. Njeki njeki karũmaindo kunda rũrũ naniĩ rũrũ
Tũhenie nda tondũ nĩ kĩrimũ kĩhaicaga mĩti na iratũ
“ka ngwenyũre na ũnyenyũre Haicia bendera
Tũkĩgoce – andũ aitũ nĩndagĩthomeire – marirũ ĩkĩombora
Mĩtambo

7. JACK-WHO -HAS- NOT -BEEN -SANG!

1. Jack who has not been sang is a young man
Jack who has not been danced is a young man
Jack I never knew you were sang – I will go West
and buy arrow root cuttings – I will go west and buy arrow root cuttings -
And plant them in a channel at “ours”.
2. It is you, you and I – I saw you – Eyes see other eyes
It is you I see through the face – the Golden boy of Karanja.
I am querrying ! What were you upto?
3. It’s Okey! I have no say ! I have nothing!
The Golden son of Karanja – I am alive
Are you the one I see by face? I beseech you young one.
4. I saw you, I got satisfied – You Young man – son!
I saw you Margaret – Wui! “A-small-fruit” I am Okey.
Major General! I beseech you-when-the-One-that-glitters
dismantles the systems.
5. Beatrice daughter of Kihiu I beseech – I can see you by face of uhuru
I beseech you like “the – glittering –one” dismantling the systems
A head is shaved – when the owner announces – Like Wakienje
and his darling Wakienje
6. Yes! Young man-son! I am asking – How is it? Taste a white's blood
It is you and I – The Golden boy of Karanja
A mole is trapped while it is “throwing up” the soil
I beseech you like “The-one-that-glitters” dismantling systems.
Words: Is it? It’s Okey!
7. And you Muhoro – I beseech you – Bring information
It is you and I our teacher – A jigger is removed with a “Mukuha” –
A student is taught by his teacher, a soldier by a commander
Bring me information – I will also give you information
But know that – The “coro” is smoothened by water,
When “the-One-that glitters” dismantles systems.
8. Wui! “The-small-fruit” – good one – satisfied me a whole
Year – when I was questioned, I answered
“I live on love and longing,” - to be free from Nyakeru
When I shall meet you again – Never shall I know hunger
Till I will be shaved “white” hair- when “The-one-that –glitters”
Dismantles systems.
10. March elegantly, Let’s march elegantly,
Two steps and bending is a movement
Let’s trample on the powers of the white-one

That is moved by bright movers – the slow-witted asked?
 Is this Scottish Gikuyu ? – A Scottish bread?
 March elegantly, “My-small-fruit” – when the –one-that-glitters
 dismantles systems.

10. Jack! Jack! Eater-of-things, Take this and I do so
 Let’s cheat the stupid stomach – that climbs a tree in shoes
 Come I slash you and you slash me – Hoist the flag
 Let’s praise, this one! – I have learned it, when the-one-that-glitters dismantles
 systems.

8. NJEKI-MARIRŪ IKIOMBORA

1. Njeeki nīrīmaga riika riakwa mūigwe, No ndīrīmagīrūo
 nī mūdū, No ūtukū yonaga ta tochi, marirū
 ikīombora mītambo
 Chorus: Hutia ngoige ngere maitū na ngere baba,
 Ūtūarūo igoti-inī – Ngiri ūrī kweheria ciringi
2. Ndathire no ūtukū ngīnūka no ūtukū ta mbono
 yendetie kabuuti, gītoi nī kīūru kīraragia kīū
 njīra-inī – Marirū ikīombora mītambo
 Chorus: Hutia ngoige
3. Mūthuri wa itūūra ūkūnjīta maraya nī ūrīciara waaku
 tūmuone, ūnjagīre thoni naniī thire thoni ngwīre
 tūcamanie kīhaaro, marirū ikīombora mītambo
 Chorus: Hutia ngoige.....
4. Twaiguoi rūgongo rekei ndīmwīre tūcokire kīanda kūrūina
 Mūikūrūki kīanda nīatige egaira mūrū wa ithe
 Marirū ikīombora mītambo
 Chorus: Hutia ngoige
5. Mūkoima na nyondo wūi riika riakwa naniī Ndinū ngoima
 ona kūgucia kīnanda – Ndīrīūndu ngoiga kana gwītīkīra
 Mīaka itathiri ūte mūgwanja – Marirū ikīombora mītambo.
 Chorus: Hutia ngoige
6. Wona ndathiī kīanda ngūthii nyūmīrīrie njooke kū kīanda
 ndīrūine, Ngūkinya na mūtwe njooke ngurūrūke njooke
 ngaragare ndore kana ndorio nī mūdū – marirū
 ikīombora mītambo
 Chorus: Hutia ngoige
7. Mūtwaare kahora ningī ūkīmūcookie ūkīmenyaga wega
 Nī wa mbūri ciene na ng’ombe – marirū ikīombora mitambo
 Nī Ndinū nyombore o Kīnanda – Marirū ikīombora mītambo
 Chorus: Hutia ngoige

8. Nūmīria rūgambi mwana wa Gakūi na ngūrūmīrīe kīnanda
Ndirīūdū ngoiga kana gwītīkīra mīaka itathirīte
mūgwanja, No ngūinūka mūcii – marirū ikīombora mītambo.
Chorus: Hutia ngoige

8. **JACK – WHEN WONDER DISMANTLES**

1. Jack does not cultivate my agemates you should know
But nobody cultivates for jack, but at night it sees
Like a torch – when wonder dismantles systems

Chorus: Dare touch me, I tell my mother, I tell my father
You will be taken to court, “the-silent-one”, you have
removed the shilling
2. I went at night and returned by night like a “Mbono”
Who had sold his rain coat, “the-one-that-does-not-know”
Makes “The-one-that-knows” sleep on the way, while wonder is dismantles
systems.
Chorus : Dare touch me
3. Elder from the neighbourhood, you call me a prostitute
You will bear yours, we shall observe her
Be shameless, I be shameless, let’s meet in the field
While wonder dismantles the systems.
Chorus: Dare touch me
4. When we were set at the top, Let me tell you
We went back to the valley to dance
He who goes to the valley – Let him set a will to his brother
Chorus: Dare touch me
5. You will get breasts, Oh my agemates – mine will be only
pulling the accordion – there is nothing that I say nor accept
Before seven years are over – while wonder dismantles
the systems.
Chorus: Dare touch me
6. When I go down the valley, I will go courageously
Return to the valley to dance,
I will land with the head, then slide and slide
Then roll and roll – And see if anybody can question me
While the wonder dismantles the systems.
7. Drive her slowly, and then return her slowly
And know that she’s somebody’s – valued in goats and cows
When wonder dismantles the accordion – The wonder!
Let’s dismantle systems.

- 8 .Play for me the bell, I play for you're the accordion
I have no say before seven years have elapsed
I shall go home – when wonder dismantles systems.

9. **KŪMAKA KWA MWANAKE**

1. I mīhūni ngwenda mūthikīrīrie ndīna kaūdū ngwenda kuuga
Nyonete ūndū wa kūgeganīa ītarī ndona rīngī
Na mūmenye nī wa kūgeganīa baba anjītīte thaa kenda
Akanjīra Nabūū hingura tutukanie wendo.
2. I kīnanda gīakwa nī ngūkwendīa – ūnduite mwana wa mūthīni
Korūo ūnduite wa gītonga ndīagīre metha
I mūrītu niwoiga ūmene I ngīmenūo nī andū nī gūthīna
Njūūkīte ndī wa icaati rīmwe thīina noota wonje.
3. I ngūhoya Ngai anjītīkīrie maitū ndagakue ītarī na indo
Ngamūthīka na mūtharaba na indo ta cia comba
I kibīndo gīakwa nyegenyūka wū ndīkuona ngīrorūo manyira
Kībīndo ndīagūrīre nyama baba ti gītonga
4. I mūka ūyū wakwa angīgathūūka I ndīkooīa mūdū
Ngorīa baba nīwe wangūrīire thekeni ngari īgūita ūiro
I kuuma gūciarūo na kūigana ndīrī ndarīria mūka wene
No ūyū woiga nī athira thooni – nī ngūcina wanga
I no ūyū woiga nī athira thooni – nī ngūmuora ruoro.
5. I ndonire thīina mūcī Thīka – njagīte mūdū wa kūndeithīa
Tiga Mūhoro mūrū wa Jimmi wanjīre tonya
Ya akīnjīra Nabūū nīafīa wonūo ta ūmakīte
I ngīmwrīa ndīina thīina mūno ndīrī na mūdwarī
Naake akīnjīra ndūkamaake tuonanire naawe
6. I ndakīgucīrie mūcī Marīra mūng'ei ūkīragatha maitho
Mbīa ciatumītīe ciūmbane ciathekeire thīina
I rūkūngū rūnene rwonirūo rwa tūbia tūria tūnini
Tūkīra mbīa irīa ciathekaga buana mbaka nīoka
7. I rendī cīakaraga ta cīhūrīrūo rīrīa Nabūū
Mūrū wa Njei nīnī Ndinū ndagucagīa Kīnanda
Ndahanaga ta mūbia akībatīthīa rendī
Nī ūī mūmo ugaga mūbia abatīthagīa wīrīrīte

9. **THE YOUNG MAN'S FEAR / AWE**

1. Hey boisterous young men! Please lend me your ears
I have something that I want to say
I have encountered something stunning that I have never

seen before, and you should know it is stunning!
 My father woke me at 3.00 a.m., and told me
 Young man! Wake up! Let's "mix" love.

2. My accordion, I am going to sell you, You have made me son of a pauper,
 If you had made me the child of a tycoon, I would eat from the table.
 You girl- You show me contempt – while I am hated by people due to
 pauperism,
 For I have come with a 'solitary' shirt – Poverty is like invalidness
3. I will pray to God to allow me, my mother should not die
 before I have wealth, so that I will bury her with a crucifix/cross,
 and other things of the whites
 Oh my sword – stay put- I see somebody pouting at me
 I did not buy a sword for meat, My father is no rich man.
4. If my wife gets spoilt, I will ask none other than my father,
 He is the one who bought me a second hand vehicle that leaks oil,
 From the time I was born, And grew up, I have never
 wooed anybody's wife – But this one says she has no shame
 – I will burn the starch! But this one who says
 she's shameless – I will brand her a brand.
5. I encountered problems in Thika home, I missed somebody to assist me – It's
 only Muhoro son of Jimmu who welcomed me – He asked me – "Nabuu, why
 do you appear fearful? I told him "I have problems – I have no companion as a
 driver
 He assured me, "Do not worry, once you meet me!"
6. I prayed the accordion at home Mariira – Oh!
 The young ladies eyes twitched and dried
 Rats which were silent in readiness to woo – laughed out
 of desperation,
 A great cloud of dust was seen, drawn by small rats
 Which told "the –laughing-rats", Mr. Cat has come.
7. Yes! the ladies posed as if served with food
 When I Nabuu son of Njei was "pulling" the accordion
 I was like a priest baptising ladies –
 You know the youth says: "A padre baptizes whoever repents"

10. MWOMBOKO WA NDINŪ

1. I tondū Ndinū wūi nīangīra ciana nī icokio na mīgongo
 No ūria ūkūrīra athaithūo akire ndīna ūndū ngūgweta
 I tondū kīambīrīrīa kūrīra, mwena wa athuri ūgwatio taawa –
 tūtīgatukanīrio njoohi na mīthaiga
2. I tondū ciakinya thinacara ūtatuite mīrīo nī ethiire
 Tūtīgīrūo ici neema kūhia irī na wīra wa cio

3. I waigua mūthuru cūthū cūthū nīwa kang'ei akiuma ndūnyū,
Atigire mbūri cia mūrūme itarī na mīrīo
4. I mūthuri wīthambe ona yaitūo nīnyūi mūrendūo nī
tūreendi, Nīūdū wa itiina cia kahūa na ibuku rīa bengi,
Na wa twendi īiti ūtarī mūka nī arūme mbembe
akirīrīrie, mīaka yaake nī mīhītūku ya kwaria na reendi.
5. I tondū mūraigua gakīnūma ndakoire ndūnyū kagwīte
Huhagīrīrie na tūnyama – ngūrīte o Gakīndū
Ngūgatemania na twa nguthu – Kegaīre andū ao
6. I nī Ndinū tondū mwanayona, ndacambūrīrwo Mūrang'a
Mūng'ei ūgitunīha maitho – rendi mūgwanja ikīthhana
igūrū ria handū hakwa
7. I kwagīte mūthuuri mūkurū akīthuga maitū naniī mwarī
Naniī ndīmūhe mbūri ikūmi cia gūtiira nyondo
I Gaithuma nī tūrīkanīre, tūnyūe Mbanana na Rīmuru
Kīndu itangīenda ītheru nakīo, no mūka wa mūdū
Kana njuīrī yaaku ya mūtwe ihutio nī rūkūngū.
8. I kīmwana watūra Nairobi wehenereirio na thikati
Na rendi nī ciagayanirūo ūgakora mathuro
I kīmwana inūka ūkahikanie rangi wa mwīrī ūtanathūka
Rangi wa mwīrī ndūgūrāgwo ta rangi wa iratū.

10. NDINU'S MWOMBOKO

1. As Ndinu has come, Let children be strapped on backs
And the one who cries, be soothed,
There is something I want to say – For it has started “crying”
Light lamps where elders are,
So that our beer is not mixed with charms
2. When it reaches six O'clock, the one who has not
fetched sweet potato vines should leave
Let's be left with the “uncookables”
They have their own special work.
3. When you hear “mithuru” chanting “cuthu cuthu”
It is a “Kang'ei” woman who's leaving the market place
She left her husband's sheep and goats without sweetpotato vines.
4. Oh! elder, wash yourself, Even though beer is spilt
You are the ones admired by young ladies
Because you own a coffee and a healthy bank account
A twenty-eight year old bachelor guy – should munch maize patiently

His age outlaws him wooing ladies.

5. Oh! though you hear her insulting me, I picked her from the market,
And then resuscitated her with bits of meat
Which I had bought at Gakindu – I will wrestle her down –
till she sets a will – To her relatives.
6. I Ndinu though you see me set, I was attacked at Murang'a
The young ladies' (Mung'ei) eyes reddened – six ladies
were whispering –because of my position.
7. Why is there no old man! Who can woo my mother as I woo his daughter –
And I shall give him ten sheep and goats, For supporting her breasts,
Oh! Gaithuma, let's agree, We take beer at Banana and Limuru,
The only thing I wouldn't like to joke with!
Is somebody's wife, or your hair being touched by anybody
8. Oh! Young man! You have lived in Nairobi,
You are cheated with skirts, Ladies have been shared, you will get leftovers
Oh! Young Man! Go home and marry, before you loose colour
The body's colour is not bought like shoe polish

11 NJOOYA NA MŪTHECE

1. Kūraya nī kūru angīkorūo nīnī ndahūūta ūguo
Nīnī ndahūūta ūguo na cia maitū iranungīra ikūmbī
Nīnī ndahūūta ūguo na cia maitū itirī na ūngī ūrārīa.
2. Ngūūku ūkuuma ndūnyū ya Mūthithi ikainūka gūkūga
I nanī ndoima ndaci ndī wa bote
Ngainūka kūrīra.
3. Njooya na mūthece īrī mūthece ndīyoyagīra īrīa īngī
Nīkīo ndīramwīra wanyīita ndūkae kūrekia
Yūmbūkaga na kīrīa īmeretie
4. Ndarīruo nī ciaū ngīthīi kuuhūo na ngītikanīra
Nangītikanīra ngīona cuuka wathimūo mūkono
Ndīroī no itherū gītambaya gīgīūka kīa arathi
5. Ndahūrīrūo nī awa ndomborithia mīrīo ya mwaro
Nawaigua mīrīo nī kairītu gatoimītie nyondo
I nawaigua mīrīo nī kairītu gatoimītie nyondo
6. Maitū aranjūrīrie mwana wakwa kā ūgūrūkīte
Kā ūgūrūkīte! Tondū woka na wagera ngero
Nanī ndīramwīra maitū wakwa ndūtige kūnjūria

Ndūtige künjūria ūrirū ūrī nja ndūrī mwītheemere

7. Naniī ndīroigire ngūkahikia ona karī kanini
Na karī kanini – thibitarī ithiaga mūrūaru
Thiaga mūrwaru – Nayo njera ithiaga wīhītie
8. Riika rīakwa narīo rīroririe – I Nabūū karī atīa?
Kaī ūtaroonā kaana gaka karīgwa na nyūngū
Naniī ndīrameera noko gakwa – Reke kagwe nayo
Wona kagwa nayo O hīndī ū ngagwa na mītheeko.
9. I gikī nī gīthīina, Nī g-ith-īina na kīnyamarīko
Nī kīnyamarīko ta kīngī ndonire kwa Inyathiū
Kwa Inyathiū gūkihīa kwambīrīrie itinga mūtīrīrī
I kwa Inyathiū gūkihīa kwambīrīrie itinga mūtīrīrī.
10. Nyonire rīaratha, rīgīthūa ndigana kūmenya
I nyonire rīa ratha, rīgīthūa rīthūire nakū?
11. Ingīathiī na ūtukū na ngue mūiko na karaī
Mūiko na karaī mwendwa wakwa ndīmūrugagīre.
12. I ti itherū nī athire mairīria kūdū atagacooka
I ti itherū nī athire mairīria kūdū atagacooka
I ndūraga na ciūria itarī anja no macokio nī maya
13. Ndīracūthīrīrīrio nī rūūi rwa Maragūa ngīina
Ngiuga ngūtobooka ndīthaambe na njike kihindiī
Na njike kihindiī njūrūri yakīrīrio nīkī?
14. Ndonire njūrūri itengeretie kairitu kanini
Nīguo īgīthaambe riika rīakwa na īgīke kihindiī
“irū wayo menya woimire na gwīka kihindiī.

11. THE-ONE-THAT-PECKS-WITH-A-BEAK

1. Oh! Far away from home is no good, If I am so hungry
I'm so hungry, Yet my mother's food is rotting in the granary
I'm so hungry, Yet my mother's food has none other to eat
2. A cock leaves Muthithi Market, goes home to crow
And I, I leave the dance still at "forty"
I go home to cry.
3. The-one-that-pecks-with-a-beak, the pecked one
doesn't peck for another,
That's why I'm telling you once you grip, don't let go
A bird takes off with what it has swallowed.

4. What ate me, I went to be wooed and compromised
I compromised and saw the sheet being fitted the sleeve
Taking it jokingly, The sheet came for archers.

5. I was beaten by my father for spreading sweet potato vines
And when you hear sweet potato vines, It's a young girl whose
breasts are yet to appear
And when you hear vines, it's a young girl whose
breast have not yet developed.

6. My mother questioned me – “My son! Are you crazy?
Are you mad? You have come and committed a crime”.
Then I answered, “Mother don't question me”
Don't ask me – For a wonder outside the homestead
is inescapable”.

7. I declared to marry her, despite being too young
Despite being too youngish, A hospital admits the sick
It admits the patient, while a jail admits the criminal.

8. My agemates questioned – what's it Nabuu?
Don't you see that this child will fall with the pot!
I answered, “She's my only one – Let her fall with it.
When she falls with it, Right away I “fall” into laughter”

9. Oh! this is great suffering, it is a tribulation
It's a tribulation like the one that beset Inyathiu
Inyathiu's homestead's burning, began the tractor “Mutiriri”
Inyathiu's homestead's smoke, started the tractor “Mutiriri”

10. I saw it rising, I had no knowledge of its setting
I saw it rising, where did it set?

11. I would have travelled all through the night
And carried a ladle and a Karai
Oh! a ladle and a Karai – My love – I be cooking for her

12. Oh! It's no joke – She dissipated
A demise without a point of return
I have questions without answers – Yet these are results!

13. I was gazed at by River Maragua while singing
I declared to immerse, wash and dive
And dive – what blackened the black beetle?

14. A saw a black beetle chasing a lass
So as to wash – my agemates - and dive
Its blackness originated from diving

12 MBAARA YA GITHIMA – INI

1. Kuma Mombasa nginya Nairobi
Naikuru, Githuumo Kakameega –
Cooka bürüri wa Giküyü woothé üiyürîte maithori
2. Mbaara ya Githima-inĩ kĩa ütũuro
Kĩrĩrĩmbĩ gwakana mucĩĩ –
Tondũ ithima ĩria cinyuagũo maĩ nyingĩ nĩcirũrite
3. Mũrimũ üyũ andũ aitũ ti ngoma
Üyũ ũrathereria kĩrĩndĩ –
Īndĩ ngoma nĩ andũ nĩo matũmĩte üiyũre bürüri
4. Üyũ noota mũiyũro wa rũũ
Na rũtwaraga mũthambĩri
Ekĩte kĩhĩndĩĩ akiuma kuo mwĩrĩ waake ũkagarũrũka
5. Mũkingo ti ngingo ya mwĩrĩ
Nĩ toboka! naniĩ ndobokeye -
Munju wambaate ũkũrũke tũgayanage maaĩ na thambĩri
6. Woonaa mũrorongo wa ngaari
Cicurĩĩtio bendera nduune –
Mũmenye kwĩ mũndũ mũhenerie, nĩakĩhandĩte ndaganu
7. Mũkui eragũo ndaarĩ ciĩgamba
No njigua ĩraguo ĩrĩ matũ -
Rekei twĩkũnye tuone kana nĩtũkoona njuĩrĩ njerũ
8. Kanyĩrĩ kainagio nĩ mwene
Nyama ya kĩmandi tigai –
Mũrĩithie cirongĩrĩcing'ĩ mwĩtha ndũgatwĩike gĩthaana
9. Nĩ kĩahe kĩnene andũ a Kenya
Tũngĩaga gũchenjia makinya –
Tũgũthira üyũ bürüri ũgooka gũĩkarũo nĩ athũngũ
10. Mwatũ ndũteagũo ũtarĩ mwatie
“gĩthũũya ũki ũmenyage –
Wahoota gũthooga njũkĩ ĩ kũrathe nginya wĩkĩrũo irima
11. Woonaa mũndũ ũragũthekia – thekia
Na mũtheko na ũhinga mũingĩ –
Mũnyerera ndũkae kũmbũria kĩhũ kĩrĩa umbĩkĩrũo
12. Ndiroiga mũtumagie ta nduuma

Mwĩthimagei na ratiri –
Bomura ya mathabu menyai nĩ kwĩhoka mwendwa waaku

13. Mũtikae kũmerio nĩ kĩama
Kĩa aregi a mbaara ya wĩyaathi –
Mwĩĩkarange ta ngũrũe ĩkarangaga na maguta mayo
14. Gĩthima ti gĩthima maaĩ
Marogetũo na makagwetũo –
Nĩguo ciana cia Andamu cianyua ikoona ũtheri wa nduuma
15. Ngũigua bũrũri wa Merikani, Athũngũ moimĩire ndirica
Rĩrĩa ndege ciahũrire nyũmba kici mwarabu
Osama agĩĩkena.
16. Mwaka wa naitini naite ĩĩti, Nĩ kĩroota ta kĩa Amerika
Mĩĩtu ya Osama yaikia mbomu tũkiona nduuma mũthenya.
17. Mbaara ĩno njerũ ya mĩĩtu yahoota gũciara ndamathia –
Kieha na maithori ciituike rũracio rwa Arabu na Athũngũ.
18. Tarimbani maarĩ na Othaama,
Nĩ ĩthĩramu rĩa banda – mĩtwe –
Rithimu mũcharĩ mũnene ũngĩhutia thĩ yoothe kaimana.

12. THE BATTLE OF THE WELL

1. From Mombasa upto Nairobi
Nakuru, Kisumu, Kakamega –
Return to Gikuyu nation -- It's all tears
2. The battle in the well of life
A flame burning in home(s)
For most of the wells! For drinking water – are bitter
3. This sickness our people is not a spirit
This that is drowning the populace
Though devils are people – they have enhanced the
spread in the entire nation.
4. This is like the flooding of a river
And it drowns a champion swimmer
Having dived – He leaves with the entire body changed.
5. Aids is not a neck in the body
It is immerse! – and I immerse
The mirk and mire raises! We share water with “thambiri”

6. When you see a motorcade of vehicles
Hoisted with red flags –
Know there is one being who has been “beckoned” at
And has planted widely spaced seedlings.
7. The dead one hears not the rattles –
But “That – which - hears” is said to possess ears
Let’s scratch ourselves – and see whether we can spot “white” hair
8. The “Kanyiri” dances with her partner
Leave the “group meat” alone.
Practice Zero grazing – the flesh milk may turn to colostrum.
9. It is sadness – all Kenyans
If we fail to adjust our footsteps
We shall perish – whites will come to dwell in this nation.
10. A bee hive is not discarded unless splitted
When harvesting honey you should know –
You may stir bees - They sting you till you
enter the “hole”.
11. When you see one who’s smiling at you
With laughter and much hypocrisy
Take care – you may exhume a mongoose buried for your sake.
12. I am not advocating you keep mum like darkness
Measure yourselves with mundane scales –
The formula for Maths – know it is -the trust of your love.
13. Don’t be swallowed by the party
of protesters of the battle of Uhuru
You’ll fry yourselves like pigs – It fries itself with its own fat
14. A well is not a well – water has been poisoned,
Then evil-eyed, so that the offsprings of
Adam take and see the lightness of darkness.
15. I do hear that in America, Europeans left through the windows -
When hijacked aeroplanes kissed buildings –
Osama the Arab was happy.
16. The year 1998 – is a nightmare like America’s
Osama’s terrorists bombed –
We saw darkness at daylight
17. This “War Against Terror”
Can sire a shark –

Sorrow and tears might be the bride price
of the Arabs and the whites

18. The Talibans and Osama
Are Islams who plant head-aches
A rhythm, a great "Muchari" that can touch the entire world.

13 MWOMBOKO WA FORTE

1. Kwambīrīria ūrīkū x2
Kwambīrīria mwene mūciī ūyū
Kwambīrīria mwene mucīi ūyū – Thimioni
Tigithia kūgocwo matatū ti ūru
2. Ndatūire Kiki Ronji ndatūire Kiki Ronji
Twakinya Kiki Roko Thuruthi akīhūrīrūo
thuruti nī mbogo – ikīhūra ngurubeni.
3. Ndathire na gūūkū mwena wa Raikipia ngīkora
Reendi imwe yetaguo Waceeke –
Ngīmūria Waceeke ūgūkoma na nguo nyondo nī
ngīraathi kana matumbī itigakue.
Ciugo: akīambambatīra, naniī ngīambambatīra
Tūkīiganania cuuka
4. Ngūūku itanagamba cia Nyīrī na Mūrang'a noguo
Twenjagīra kīhotoo, Noguo twenjagīra kīhotoo
Ndirī mayū maingī Ndithemba wa Gatonye
Nīamu ndathamīrio Manyani
5. Ndikanyua Kīraikū na muumo kīoragīra bunda
Kanyathira, kīoragira bunda kanyathira
6. Waceeke aroririo nī nyina mwana ūyū wakwa
"kagūrūo rī – na mītī ya ūrīrī watūranga
Na mīaro yoothe waikia riiko.
7. Naake Waceeke aramūcokeria nyina –
Nīndenyitīrūo nī mīhūūni -
Nyomboragūo ūtukū nīguo rwenje
Ciugo: Nanī kīomboro, Nanī kīomboro
8. Ndereba cia mbaathi no hīndī ikūinīrūo
N = jimuthi wa Njama na Ngaarī wa Mūkunji
Kīongo wa Tigiti, mūthuri ūmwe ūtūruga gwa
Kauti kanjū Kīmondo wa Ngūūnji

9. Hũũni cia Kĩngobu mũriega, Hũũni ngiethĩrio Ikuua
Ngemi na Mũhia hamwe na Mugeithi
Kamau wa Mbirũri I na mũraata wakwa Maina.
Ciugo: Maina na Mwomboko! Nĩ mũhiũ ta thaathi
wa thenge – I yoonete gachungwa
10. Maina wa Kĩng'ora, Maina wa Kĩng'ora ngeithĩria Wangai
Mũtũũraga naake na ndũũrĩ wamũikia nja
Wa Gatonye nĩ ngwaria
Ciugo: Mwendane ta gĩkwa na mũkũngũgũ
12. Kariũki wa Gĩchaaro, Kariũki wa Gĩchaaro
Nĩwahonokire – Mũkui akĩhanda ndaganu
13. Rĩrĩa gĩkũgamba mũrutage mbecha macengo gũtirĩ mũgũnda,
Na ciana noiikwenda gĩthoomo,
Na ciana no ireenda gĩthoomo.
14. Twakabĩrũo ngeng'i twĩ ngiri na meerĩ mũtitũ wa Ndei
Tũgĩthĩ Manyani wathiomu twathire wathiomu
biringani icurĩtio ciande
Tigai kũmaka cia Nyĩrĩ na Mũrang'a, matigari ma
njirungi Kĩnyata nĩokite.
Ciugo: Tetu wa mbũri, thĩrĩ maai, "thaya, wa Kĩraikũ
Na mbaathi, Mathĩira ma gĩthomo, Agũthi iitũ
njamba cia ita – mũturi wa mwaki kũrĩa
kwambĩrĩirie kũhia -----!

13. THE MWOMBOKO OF 1940

1. Whom shall begin with x2
I will begin the owner of the home x2
Simon Tigithia – To be praised thrice is no badness.
2. I was staying at Creek Lodge
I was staying at Creek Lodge
3. When we arrived at Creek Rock –
Thuruti was saluted by buffaloes
That were setting binoculars.
4. I went to Laikipia –
I met a lady whose name was Waceeke
I queried her, "Waceeke! Why do you sleep in clothes?
Are breasts glasses or eggs that they will clash?
Words: She adjusted herself upwards – And I adjusted
Myself upwards – We straightened sheets.
5. Before the hens from Nyeri and Muranga crowed
We were digging for truth – We were digging for truth

I do not have much December son of Gatonye
For I was detained at Manyani.

6. I will never take "Kiraiku" with the youth
It killed the donkey's - appendix
It killed the donkey's - appendix.
7. Waceeke was questioned by her mum, My child
When shall you be married – And you have split the bed
furniture - And the rafters - all you threw in the hearth
8. Waceeke retorted to her mum,
"I was hijacked by the boisterous young men
I am 'set upon' at night – To make it shave!"
Words: This is "a-dancing-game"
This is "a-dancing-game"
9. Bus drivers! It is your chance to be praised
James son of Njama and Ngaari son of Mukunji
Kiongo son of Tigiti, One elder who worked with
County Council – Kimondo son of Nguunji.
10. The youth from Kinangop – "How are you?" the youth!
Salute for me Ikuua – Ngemi and Muhia and Mugeithi
Kamau son of Mbiruri and my friend Maina.
Words: Maina and Mwomboko! He's hotter than a he-goat's soup –
That has set eyes on "a-small-fruit"
11. Maina son of King'ora x2 Salute for me Wangai
You live together – Never have you ejected him outside
Wa Gatonye I am speaking!
12. Kariuki son of Gichaaro, Kariuki son of Gichaaro
You got saved - When Mukui was beckoned at
And planted widely spaced (seeds)
13. When it is sounding – donate money
There is no shamba at Majengo – Yet children need education
Yet children need education.
14. We were ganged up – a thousand and two – Mtito Andei
To Manyani – My friend – we went my friend
Guns hoisted from shoulders

Narration: Don't you worry – You from Nyeri and Murang'a
The survivors-of-bullets – Kenyatta is coming
Tetu where there are goats, the silly ones, Othaya,
Where there's "Kiraiku" and buses, The Mathiira
famed for education - Our Aguuthi – our
freedom fighters - the source of fire – when it began burning -----!

14. MBAARA YA RŪŪI-RŪIRŪ

Kiambiriria

Tathikiririai ndimuririkanie hicituri ya mbaara ya Rūūi-Rūirū – Nī Wa Gatonye
 ūramutariria na njira nguhī – wega! Mūriega atūthikiriria a Kirinyaga!
 Tegai matū mūigwe – cia nginyanirio nī njūru.

1. Kwarī mūthenya wa firī tūrī itūūra Karuuthi
 Tūgīthuugunda meciria twaigua tūri akabire
 Tūgīthuugunda meciria twaigua tūri akabire
2. Twaigua ūguo nītwaamakite, tondu twoimite Agūthi
 Rūgendo rwa thikū ithatū na tūtiahurukaga
 Rūgendo rwa thikū ithatū na tūtiahurukaga
3. Mūtumia ūmwe nīokire na ribooti na ndubia
 Agītwīira ciana ciakwa gūūkū nī gūthūkire
 Agītwīira ciana ciakwa gūūkū nī gūthūkire
4. Tūkīmwīra ūmīrīria twī haha nja ngaitaita
 Rithaathi marigū-igūrū ciatuthaga macooya
 Rithaathi marigu-igūrū ciatuthaga macooya
5. Twahūūruga gatua-ūhoro othe magakomerera
 Makahūūra kībūnūka ithuothe tūgakaba
 Makahūūra kībūnūka ithuothe tūgakaba
6. Na hīndī ūo tūgīkaba hakuhi na mūgumo
 Rong'u akīhūūra bebeta thuruthi ikīgīa igūrū
 Rong'u akīhūūra bebeta thuruthi ikīgīa igūrū
7. Chui nīwe warī menja mūrūithia wa mbaara
 Agītongoria mīrani igīkīra Rūthaagatī
 Agītongoria mīrani igīkīra Rūthaagatī
8. Na twakinya hau Kīangi tūgīkora ciakaba
 Andū oothe makīūmīrīria tūgīcikabūrithia
 Andū oothe makīūmīrīria tūgīcikabūrithia
9. Cinda-Reri oiga rūkemi thirikari ikīmaka
 Moigaga nīwe njenūrū wa kūrūithia mbaara
 Moigaga nīwe njenūrū wa kūrūithia mbaara
10. Karība akiuga na ciugo cagūrai o mūthūngū
 Mūtige mbarī ya Nyakairū nī ūrimū marī naguo
 Mūtige mbarī ya Nyakairū nī ūrimū marī naguo
11. Thīrikari yaarī nyingī yarutitwo Nanyuki

Ne írĩa íngĩ ya Tùmũ Tùmũ na írĩa ìní Karatina
Ne írĩa íngĩ ya Tùmũ Tùmũ na írĩa íngĩ Karatina

12. Thũngũ nyingĩ ní ciorire irorete Kĩamacimbi
Kũũ ciaragia na oba ciĩtanage Nanyukiĩ.
Kũũ ciaragia na oba ciĩtanage Nanyukiĩ.
13. Mũthikĩrĩria wa oba naake akĩmacokeria
Rũai o inyuĩ mũrĩkuo kũũ tũtingĩoneka
Rũai o inyuĩ mũrĩkuo kũũ tũtingĩoneka.

Kugana:
One hau nĩho mwandĩki wa makoroni aragia
na gĩthũngũ I kĩwanja-inĩ kĩa ndege
Mr. Rickingstone akoiga, "The stability of Kenya
government has been destroyed by
Mau Mau terror"
14. Bebeta twarĩ nanyingĩ raibũ itingĩtarĩka
Nguruneti twarĩ nacio na tũtiahũthagĩra
Nguruneti twarĩ nacio na tutiahũthagĩra.
15. Gateru arathũo rĩthaathi njamba-goti ya ciande
Chui akĩrakara mũũno agĩkĩrekia na ngaara
Chui akĩrakara mũũno agĩkĩrekia na ngaara.
16. Wendo wa bũrũri wiitũ nĩguo mũri wa itimũ
Wĩyaathi mũtĩ twahanda ũgĩĩtĩrĩrio thakame
Wĩyaathi mũtĩ twahanda ũgĩĩtĩrĩrio thakame.
17. Athũngũ nĩmatwarirũo ní mbaara ya wĩyaathi
Gwata mbaara Rũũi-Rũirũ na íngĩ itangĩtarĩka
Gwata mbaara Rũũi-Rũirũ na íngĩ itangĩtarĩka
18. Mũingĩ wa bũrũri wiitũ nĩwakenire mũũno
Twahaicia bendera ngemi na hĩ cikĩgũa igũrũ

Ciugo: Mũingĩ wakenete ta urũmĩtio mũkenia
19. Thũkũmũ cia ngeretha nĩkarĩrĩra Mombatha
Cikĩhaica meri ikoiga "Twatiga iria na ũkĩ"
20. Thũ cia bũrũri athũngũ airũ nĩgacoonoka mũno
Ciona arĩa ciarumga na gũthĩnia magĩathana.

14 THE BATTLE OF THE BLACK RIVER

Prologue:

Lend me your ears, I remind you the history of the battle of the Black River – It is wa Gatonye who's explaining in brief – goodness! nicely!

How are you listeners from Kirinyaga. Set your ears right – you hear whatever you are informed from a second party is distorted.

1. It was the second day,
In the valley at Karuthi neighbourhoods
We were planning our strategy –
After learning that we were closely covered
2. When we heard so we were much worried
We had only left the neighbourhoods of Aguthi
A three days' journey – Yet we never rested.
3. An elderly woman contact
Brought us report and sugarless tea
Tearfully she said: “My children you must flee,
Danger surrounds you”.
4. We told her to take heart – we are set like “ngataita”
Bullets were flying across the banana fields
They pounded the fibres.
5. We'd fire our Gatua – uhoru –
They'd all drop down in fear –
When they fired their bazooka
We all took cover.
6. We had laid in ambush near the Mugumo tree
Rong'u fired his machine gun – piah!
We all took cover.
7. Chui – “The-Leopard” was the Major General, Commander in charge
He led the guerrillas – as they crossed Ruthaagati
8. When we arrived at Kiangi
We learned that the enemy was in ambush
From the rear we caught them by surprise
They all scattered and ran.
9. Cinda-Reri ululated a ululation – The government was
scared, they were saying – “It's the General – Commander
in charge of battle”.
- 10 The commander, one Kariba said:

“Concentrate on white soldiers,
 Leave the black puppets of Nyakairu alone
 They are simply ignorant of the cause.

11. Many mercenary colonial forces were there
 Brought from Nanyuki
 Others from Tumu Tumu
 And yet more from Karatina.
12. Most of the enemy white soldiers took to their heels
 Heading for Kiamacimbi
 They were using radio call desperately
 Calling Nanyuki for reinforcements.
13. The radio signaller answered them:
 “Fight you who are there – We can’t come there”
 “Fight you who are there – We can’t come there”
 Narration: That’s when the colonial secretary talked
 in English at the airport –
 Mr. Rickingstone was saying, “The Stability of
 Kenya government has been destroyed
 by Mau Mau terror”.
14. We had many machine guns – Rifles were countless
 Grenades, we had them – yet we never used them
 We had grenades – Yet we never used them.
15. When Gateru was shot at his shoulder’s jumper-coat
 Chuui was excessively annoyed, He lay facing heavenwards
 Chuui was excessively annoyed, He lay facing heavenwards
16. Patriotism for our nation is the tap root
 Freedom! – We planted a tree - And was watered with blood
 Freedom! – We planted a tree - And was watered with blood
17. The Whites were drowned by the battle of freedom
 Say - The Battle of Black River-and other countless ones.
 Say - The Battle of Black River-and other countless ones.
18. Masses of our nation were overjoyed
 When we hoisted our flag – ululations and clappings
 set in the air,
 Words: The populace was as happy as if it was
 fed on “Mukenia”
19. British Imperialists will weep at Mombasa
 When boarding ships – they will utter tearfully:
 “We have left milk and honey.”

- Words: They will be like fish tossed into dryland
 20. Enemies of the nation – “Black Europeans” will be ashamed
 When they see the ones they cursed and tortured
 Ruling the Nation.

15. **MACHI NENE**

1. Tondū Mwamunda gūikaikania kīnya tondū īrī gūtū ī
 ūrī kūgwa – Nī maitho tuunīte ta ngarī –
 Angīkio no mūtuone
 Mūkirite mūi no itherū mūtūmīrūo njeshi
2. Ngwamba mūcii kīrima-igūrū-ndarora Embu
 Ngoona Ikamba – būrūri ūrīa ūkanjagīrīra nokuo ngūwatūra.
3. I rītwa rīakwa nīrīmenyeku gwa kūraya
 Rīgatigaria mairo igīrī rīthīī ingirandi
 Kūuma Ngong’u nginya Nyīrī nonīī wa Gatonye.
4. Nyondo ici mūroona cia matiimū nocio iratwaara
 araūme njera – Nacio ici ihaana mīraatina
 ikagarūra rangi.
5. Ingīoherūo nyondo na ikūnia ndingietha mūdū
 wa kūdwarīa – Ndetindīka ota mairū ikūmi kaba
 ngwe rūrīī.
6. Twanyuire njoohi kwa Wambūgū Waigumo akīūruga ikombe,
 Mbīa ciatumītie ciūmbane ciathekeire thīīna –
 Nīūdū wa mīago īrīa cionaga īrītūo ni mīhūūni,
 Na īrīa cieohete matai ciona mbaka ikīūra
 Karīa kahūruga ndarama gatiogire thaayū.
 Ciugo: Ūka ūūūū! Kura waya! Mmh!
7. Wa riika rīitū ūtarī ī mūūka niarūme mbembe
 Akīrīrīrie – mīaka yaake nī mīhītūkū ya kwaria na rendi.
8. Nīafīa Thitibini wa Chiūri ūngīruta bunjo itarūtīte
 Na ndininaga thikū ithaatū itokīte gūkuona
9. Kūu kwa Macharia Warūng’ae mūdū nīenyitie kabuti
 Tondū arīkundaga mbegi gatua akagūa harīa aikaire.
 Ciugo: One nī hīndī x3
10. Ona magūrū mairū mangīūka, mena magūrū mana
 Na maceng’era – kūnyua nī tūkūnyua yahīa ndīrī teene.
11. Ndacambūrīrūo Kīrūgūya I mūthuri ūgūituo Kibebe

Rendi Mariamu akĩrũgama agĩthũngũthia irinda
Akiuga “Wuuu! Ūka nĩ mũru kũigwa Kibebe nĩwathĩ
itanagũikia mooko”.

12. Rĩu ndeeto nĩ ireheete kũmenya – mũndũ arũmie
Gaake – mũrimũ wa gũkima mwĩrĩ – ũkiite na ũgeetwo
Ūkimwi.

15. **THE GRAND MARCH**

1. As you have started shoving -The gourd's ear has dropped.
We have been eying keenly like a leopard –
If he is pushed, you would see our colour
Being silent, and joking! An army will set on you.
2. I will set a home on a hill-top-when I view
Embu I view Kambaland,
The nation that suits me – I will live there.
3. Oh my name has been known - It is known a far
It's only two miles from England
From Ngong upto Nyeri – it is only wa Gatonye
4. These breasts you see – of spears – Are sending men to jail
And these, which are “Miraatina” - like, change colour.
5. If I was given a sackful of breasts – I wold seek no
assistance from anybody –
I would push on by myself for ten miles – Better I fall in
the wilderness.
6. We took beer at Wambugu's, Waigumo broke cups
Rats, which had kept mum – to woo – Laughed out of desperation –
Cause of the joys that were “eaten” by the youth
And those with ties – saw the cat and ran
The little – one, which was beating the drum – never
Bid peace on dissipating.
- Words: Come this way! Eat the wire! Mmh!
7. Our agemate who is wifeless – should munch maize
in tolerance – His age outlaws him from wooing ladies.
8. How are you Stephen son of Chiuri? Why cause chaos – before I do –
and I never exceed three days before seeing you.
9. There at Macharia son of Rung'ae's, one should tightentime their raincoats –

Because after gulping a “gulp” - One will spit and fall at their positions.

Words: See it's the time x3

10. Even if black legs come, with the four wheels
And the chains – We have to take it –
Drinking time is never fixed.
11. I was attacked at Kerugoya – by a man-known as Kibebe
Lady Miriam stood and shook her skirt and said
“Wuuui! Wifhood is bad - If Kibebe, You have
left before I set my hands on you.”
12. Today, Talks are beyond knowing! Grip your own!
The disease that “clashes” the body –
Has come and it's dubbed Aids.

16. KINANDA WARĪRA ATĪA?

1. Kīnanda warīra atīa ta kūrī Njamūhūri?
Kīnanda warīra atīa ta ūkwenda tūrīe ranji?
Wega Wega Wega Wega worīre mambarita
2. Gwa Gathu wa Waceera nīkuo ndutīte rendi
Reendi yakwa nī rūgaano, ng'anaga o mūthenya
Miario: Njūī ciaku nī ndunda rendi
Na ūmwe nī gīchichio, ikai nī nyanya
Maitho nī tochi, kanua nī kameme, iniūrū
Nī gīchungi, gīthūūri nī muuto, na nyondo ni
Machungwa, mbaaru nī gīkerenge na nda
Nī gīkabū īndī mūkonyo nī nati- Rūūhī nī
thaani na ciara nī ciūma, kūgūrū nī tarimbo
na ikinya nī tāiri ke ngūheage ūhorō.
3. Ndikūūria ndīkīgaathe ta nyone gīkīgathūo
Core Core Core Core wa nda yakwa
Gīiki nīndagīthomeire.
4. Na Njūthia Mūchiri ndūke ūtongorie rwīimbo
Rwīimbo rūrū, rwa Mwomboko, Mūchiri rūtigakua

Ciugo: Aikaraga T. Falls – Nī cinia nduraiba wa D.C.
Wakinya Nyīrī Karatina ta ngeithīria Njoroge ūrīa
Mwendia wa ndawa ya mīthemba yoothe ya
Kūhonia borio na tīmbii na athima kana Gakara wa
Wanjaū ūria wandīkīte kabuku karīa koigaga –
“Ngwenda ūnjūrage”
Mūchabithia wa mabuku – Gakara wa Wanjaū
Marīganie na Njoroge – Njoroge Agoci
Na Citibini wa Ciūri – Ndūkoige ni ūriganīre

Kana Joseki wa Hothea

5. Kīnanda warīra afīa to ūkwenda ndiricaci
Wega, Wega, Wega, Wega worīre I Mambarita
- Kugana: Ngīūria Kirigo kwī merī matatū mangīrō nī wa
Gatonye – akīnjīra abana
Ngīthoonga mbeere – Ndakinya honi ngīhoona
Ndakinya Mūiga – ngīga, Ndakinya ka Matongu
ngītonga – na hau noho ndakoraga bunda njerū
mūtong’oe ngoria! “Ino nī ikamagūo?”
6. Rūhiū rūrī kūririkana, na Rūhīu rūrī kūgīa magecha
No hīndī kīagwata ngwatīro,
No hīndī kīagwata ngwatīro.
7. Na rūhīu rūrī kūririkana, rūhiū rūrīkūgīa magecha
Rūrī kūgīa mang’era ng’era, Ngūria nyama rūngīruuta kū?
8. Kīruru kīa ūtūuro ona riūa rīngīthūūa, Rūgano rūheanūo mūdū aingīra irima,
Gīthoraga, Gīthoraga ngoro itakinyīte mburīki.
9. Mūrīmū wa mūkingo menyai ndūkingaga
Mūrīmū ūtarī ndawa ni kīhuumo gīa thīna.
10. Mūrīmū ti kīng’ūki, kīng’ūūki kīa būrūrī
Therera thererai na Gatheru nī athitaga
11. Ngūkiūria nūū ūngīūka, ahonokie kīrīndī
No mwathani, No mwathani, Ngai baba twakūhoya.
12. Gatiba iitū Kenya, mūingī ūrute mawooni
Kenya wiitū Kenya yothe watho ūgitīre mūingī.
13. Ūmūtū na ūcangiri nītwamūkūma kūma
Thayū, thayū, thayū Kenya nī ihooya rīrīa twahooya.
14. Kīnanda warīra afīa ngengere ya akiricitiano
Rīra, rīra, rīra weega I – nyondo no ikona wa gūcionga.
16. **ACCORDION ! HOW DO YOU CRY?**
1. Accordion! How are you crying, as if it’s Jamhuri?
Accordion! How are you sobbing, as if you want us to take lunch
Goodness! goodness! goodness! Goodness dissipated beyond the roof.
2. My Lady hails from Gathu wa Waceera’s place
My Lady is a story, I narrate everyday.

Narration: Your rivers are fruits. Oh Lady!
 One of them is the mirror, the cheek is a tomato,
 Eyes are torches, The mouth is a radio,
 The nose is a sieve, the chest is a mattress,
 And breasts are fruits, Ribs are a cage
 The stomach is a basket, the naval is a nut,
 The palm is a plate, fingers are beads,
 The leg is a driller, the foot is a tyre
 Let me tell you the information

3. I wont demand to pull it, but see it being pulled
 Sorry, sorry, sorry, the-one-of-my-stomach
 This one – the accordion - I have learnt it.

4. And Josiah Muchiri come and lead the song.
 This song, *Mwomboko*, Muchiri! It will never die.

Narration: When you arrive at Nyeri, Karatina salute Njoroge
 He who sells drugs/medicine of all types
 For healing polio, tuberculosis and asthma or Gakaara son of
 Wanjau - He who has written a book that says – “I would like
 you to kill me”
 A publisher of books – Gakaara wa Wanjau
 He neighbours Njoroge – Njoroge from Aguthi.
 And Stephen son of Chiuri – should not say is forgotten
 Or Joseck son of Hoseah

5. Accordion! How do you dry? – as if you want “ndiricaci”
 Goodness, goodness, goodness, goodness dissipated beyond the roof.

Narration: I asked Kirigo – Are there two, three eggs that can be eaten
 by Wa Gathonye - she said “no”
 I trudged on forwards – On arrival at River Honi
 I got healed – when I reached Mweiga I made a reserve
 I kept, when I reached Ka Matongu I became
 rich - And that’s the place I met a donkey with a
 white tail – I asked “Is this one being milked?”

6. The sword has remembered, the sword has a blunt blade
 It is the time the handle has hottened up
 It is the time the handle is hot.

7. And the sword has remembered, The sword has a deformed blade,
 The sword has “twisted twisted” blade
 I am asking, “Where can it get meat?”

8. The shadow of life! Even if the sunsets- A story of entering the tomb
 It never disappears, It never dissipates till the heart

Slums the brakes.

9. The HIV/AIDS! Know that it doesn't show elegance!
A disease without a cure, is the origin of misery
10. This disease is no fate, The fate of the nation
Swim, swim and swim and know "the-clean-one"
Will once get dullish.
11. I am asking: "Who can come, and save the congregation
It is the lord, It's the lord, Oh! Almighty Father
We pray to you -----.
12. Accordion! How are you crying?, The Christians' bells
Cry, cry, cry, cry nicely ~
The breast will get somebody to suckle.
13. Our Kenyan constitution, the people should give views
Our Kenya, she the whole nation, Law should protect the populace.
14. Terrorism and thuggism, we all ridicule him
Peace, peace, a peaceful Kenya is our prayer.

17. NYINA WA NDARI

1. Nĩ ũru mũno na thoni nene
Mũndũ mũgiima akoomete karungubĩ
Karungu bĩ kanyũmba – inĩ ka magooto
Mĩtheeko. Haha! Haha! Haha aaa!
2. Njũkĩire kĩaanda wa Gatonye njũkĩire kĩaanda
Kwaria ma ngĩtega huuko
Nerĩa ya mbeere igwatirio nĩ Tĩrĩthia
Nĩ Tĩrĩthia wa nyina na maĩ ndari
Ciugo: Nĩweegaaaa!
3. Njaamba cia arĩmi ũngĩũrĩo woiga ũĩ ũũ na ũũ
Njũĩ wa Tailor na Mwangi mũrũ wa Kĩhuro
Mena Kĩmari mũkũrũ wa Njeri,
Njooya wa Kĩago atongeretie.
4. Kũu Nyĩrĩ ũngĩũrĩo ũĩ ũũ na ũũ
Nĩ injinia Gatende nĩ mũmũĩ - mena Macharia
Mwana wa Rung'ae
Ciugo : Nĩwegaaa!
5. Ngeithĩrio Kanyi ndĩnama ngeithĩrio Kanyi
Ndagĩta Kanya I ngeithĩrĩo Kanyi

6. Ngĩthiĩ kwa ndari nyambaga kūhoya Ngai
 Ndigacemanie mūrata na ithe wa ndari
 Tondū nyina wa ndari ti mūru ta ithe wa ndari
 Nyina wa Ndari ekūnjĩtia mūrĩngĩti,
 Naningĩ kīrikanĩro, namingĩ teeni ya mbakĩ.
 Ciugo: Yĩ ndūkĩũĩ nĩ rūũni.
7. Na ithe wa ndari akanjĩtia ngiri ithaatũ
 Ngūruta nakũ wa Gatonye kĩama kĩa bara
 Nongūmūtiga mwarĩguo ona ngĩmwendaga
 Ciugo: I don't speaking like a child
8. Na Karatina Onethimathi Njoroge mwendia wa mĩti
 Wakĩthĩtie harambee! Thibitarĩ ya harambee!
 Thibitarĩ ya harambee ĩrĩ Kĩrĩnyaga
 Nĩ kĩenyũ kĩa Ngai – watuka kĩa rūũni.
9. Nĩndarathire kwa Njoroge mwendia wa ndaawa
 Arĩ na ndawa cia kūhoonia kwao
 Arĩ na ndaawa cia kūhoonia porio,
 Na Timbii na athima.
10. Nĩwamurega na ũũĩ nĩ wa inita
 Na mĩrĩngĩti ĩrĩ gwake ndĩngĩtarĩka
 Na maguuta gwaake no ca! Ca! Caca!
 Ngakĩũria wa kĩmbĩrĩnji ekũragũo no wa iniita
 Ciugo: don't be silly!!
11. Wanjĩita nũũgu nogaga igūrũ rĩa ndari
 Wanjĩita ngoma ngomagĩra coomo ndaarĩ
 Wanjĩita cenji njengagia rendi ta ngia
 Wanjĩita ngiitĩ ngĩtĩrũo ni mwene nyaga
 Wanjĩita kĩihũ njihũragĩrũo na kĩihũri.

17. MOTHER TO MY DARLING

1. It is too bad, It is shameful!
 An adult sleeping in a minute cubicle
 A minute cubicle made of banana fibres
 Laughter: hahaha!
2. I came along the valley, Wa Gatonye I came
 through the valley,
 To be truthful I was trapping moles
 The first one was nubbed by Teresia

Teresia a sister to my darling.

Words: It is gooooooood!

3. Heroes of farming ! In case you are asked:
Whom and whom do you know?
I know wa-Tailor and Mwangi son of Kihuuro
Together with Kimari, the eldest of Njeeri,
Njooya son of Kiago – is leading.
4. In Nyeri – In case you are questioned:
Whom and whom do you know?
It's engineer Gateende – do you know him
And Macharia son of Rung'ae
Words: It is go-o-o-o-o-o-d!
5. Salute Kanyi truthfully salute Kanyi
Doctor Kanyi salute Doctor Kanyi
Words: Our place is U.S.A. – United States of Aguthi
U.S.A. – United States of Aguuci – Green village.
6. When I visit my darling – first I pray to God
That I may meet not – my friend, with the father to my love.
Cause the mother of my darling isn't as bad as the father
The mother to my darling demands a blanket, and it's the promise
And ten-cent coin for tobacco snuff

Words: yes! You know it's a loan
7. My darling's father demands three thousands
Where can I fetch that – The road council?
I will leave your daughter in spite of my love.
Words: I don't speaking like a child
8. And Karatina! Onesmas Njoroge – Herbs dealer
Has put up through harambee! A hospital constructed through harambee -
A hospital constructed through harambee in Kirinyaga
He's a piece of God – A spell of a loan!
9. I went to see Njoroge – who deals with drugs
He has medicine to treat “their place”
He has medicine to treat polio
And tuberculosis and asthma
10. You have rejected the person - an intermediate person
And blankets at this home are countless
And cooking flat simmers – caca! Caca!
I am asking you: if a Cambridge graduate is rejected
What of an intermediate?

Words: don't be silly.

11. If you call me a monkey, I tire on my darling
 If you call me a spirit, I sleep on "Coomo ndari"
 If you call me uncivilised, I change ladies like gears
 If you call me a dog, I am protected by God
 If you call me a mongoose, I am served with a calabash!

18. MURURUMO WARI MANYANI

1. Nūu wonire wa Gatonye na thūrari nduune Manyani
 Njikīrīite njaketi njirū ya mooko maraya
 Hutitie rūgendo na ndoo ngīthiī Kamūkūnji
2. Kīraikū ndaiguire kīrūrū no kīrīa ndanyuire Manyani
 Hūūni ciothe ikīndigīcīria na ikombe cia maaī.
3. Wa Gatonye ngūmaka mūūno ndūire Manyani
 Njīragūo ngūthondekūo ta ndī wa kibaba
4. Mūrurumo mūneṇe ndaiguire ndakinya kambī ya Manyani
 Thaani na gīkombe ikīūrania kaana no tūriihūūna

Ciugo: Twahūtite īī

5. Nī muonire Mwangi Njūthia tūrī nditīni ya Manyani
 Arī kwao agīthūndia ekuīre mbaū na ndoo
 Akīhūrūo na nyahunyū – akiuga ndagatiga gūteta
 ngombo itohoretūo.
6. Wa Ithabera agīcambūrīrūo ndambire kūigwa "this one"
 Ngīcoka kūmūcūthīrīria ngīona ndarī caati.
7. Reendi ndonire Tūmū Tūmū yī īrī kini kīīru ta kīa Nandī
 Mūciī ūcio nonginya ngatūra nengage thithinda
 Thithinda yaarīkia gūthira hatage o kūu nja
 Na kūu nja nakuo gwathira haate makūmbi-inī
 Mūthenya ngahūngūo mahūri, haama ciakwa ngūnje.
8. Korūo wega nī ūkarangagūo wa Mwangi waaguna andū
 Na inyuī Kanū mūgathīrīrie Ngai amūikarangie
9. Mwangi nīwe taawa wa kūmūrīkīra kīrīndī
 Nī njamba ya bururi ītarī kanyama ka ūcuuke
10. Kunda tūkundane wanyu wakinī, ta andū mekūnyua chai
 Chai wa kūhiūhia būrūri – rīu tūūri ihenya-inī.

11. Būrūri ūyū wiitū wa Kenya nīwaitirūo thakame nyingī
Nī itungati ciarī no ūchamba wa mūrūthi itioī rūciū.
12. Mūgumo wīragūo ūrī kūgūūka, Hau nīho hamerega ithaare
Tondū Kahiī ka mūgwimi wūi kagwīimaga ta ithe.

18. THE RUMBLING AT MANYANI

1. Who saw wa Gatonye in a red trouser in Manyani?
I had donned a black jacket – Long sleeved
With a bucket in readiness to go to Kamukunji
2. The “Kiraiku” I ever puffed - and was bitter – is that of Manyani
All the young men surrounded me with cupfuls of water.
3. Wa Gatonye, I am shocked, I have been in Manyani for five years
I am being advised that I be treated mental illness – Like I am an epileptic case.
4. The great rumbling I had at Manyani Camp
The plate and the cup asked, “Are we to get satisfied?”
5. Did you see Mwangi Josiah – When we were in Manyani?
At his place appearing – Carrying timber and a bucket
He was whipped with a “Nyahunyu”, he said: “I will leave politicking when
slaves will be set free”.
6. When Son of Isabel was attacked I heard, “This one”
When I looked at him, he had no shirt.
7. A lady I saw at Tumu Tumu, had gums as black as a Nandi’s,
I will set foot in that home, I be pruning Cider trees.
When I am through with the Cider – I be sweeping outside
And when I am through with outside – I sweep under the granary
The date my “lungs” are sought, I will fold my tents.
8. If goodness is to be fried, Mwangi’s would benefit people
And you Kanu - support him and let him live long.
9. Mwangi is the lamp for showing the populace the way
A national hero without a “small meat” or an iota of doubt
10. Sip and I also sip my friendly agemate
Like people taking tea – Tea to warm up the nation
Now we are on the run.
11. In our country Kenya, much blood was shed
By courageous patriots, Lions who weren’t scared of tomorrow.

12. When a fig tree gets uprooted, at that spot an “ithaare” grows
For a hunter’s boy hunts like his father.

19. MACHI NINI

1. Mami wakwa nyūmīrīrīa, mami wakwa njugīrīria marakara
ndaga gūkua nī makaya
2. Ndenyitīrīire Nyagīthong’o marakara rendi merī nīguo
moigaga I nīguo,
“hutie maregerū mūihwa, ūhutie maregerū kūngū
Marakara, ihutagio mbaaru igakeka, mbaru ciakwa nī cia njīthī.
3. Wandeng’eri wanjīkatīa, wandeng’eri wanjīkatia marakara
Ngwenja ngwacī ūkīnganania, nī thiriti tūthiaga
Nī thiriti tūthiaga wa nda yakwa kana nī kinyararano
Ngamuongerera mūrū NJocua aranjīrīrī mbaga rūgū
Marakara tī ndīriaga takataka.
4. Ngombe Njirū ndīrī ngore mūmba arūme ndombaga aka
Mwendwo nī aka ndarī mbūri
5. Ngeithiria Gītaka wa Wambūi ūrīraga maithori ma mbaakī
Maithori tī maithori nī iria, Endete nyondo agethūūra
6. Na Mūchiri wa Kaguuchia mūthi ūngīkahenerio wa nda
Yakwa, Kīnanda akarīra Wūi! Nginya magīthire kīongo.
7. Hutia ūnūmie mūihwa marakara hutagio mbaaru igakeka
Muona ūrirū ti gūkūra, ti kuona ūrirū ti gūkūra.
8. Aa Bitā Ndegwa thikīrīria marakara wa nda yakwa ya mūgongo,
Watemirūo na ūgītheeka, ūkiuga “nī iria Wathiomo”!
9. Ndarīthirie na mūinainio marakara mbūri ikīūra ndiramenya,
Ndarīthirie na mūinainio.
10. Wa Gīchūrū rīu ūrī ha? X2
Ndīgūgwetha ūrī kūrīra igūrū I wega
11. Mūnini nī anehaga, nyongi naayo Ikagimara marakara
Kinya ikinya tūrīkinye wa nda yakwa –
Mūkinyo wa ikinya ti wa mūtokaa.
12. Rūru rwa mbūri na ng’ombe x2
Mūhiki notūkahikia marakara, wa nda yakwa tahorerera wega

19. THE MINOR MARCH

1. My mother! Encourage me, my mother ululate for me

Anger! If I don't die of wails

2. I was gripped by Nyagithong'o – Anger – Lady Mary
That's what they said.
Touch "maregeru" my cousin, Touch "maregeru" cousin!
"Kungu!" Anger, ! The touch makes my ribs to shake,
My ribs are for the raw.
3. Wandeng'eri? What have you done to me? x2
Anger! I uproot sweet potatoes – You stretch!
Are we colleagues? Are we colleagues, you-of-my-stomach
Or is it hatred and contempt –
I will add Black Joshua – He told me "mbaga rugu"
Anger! That I don't eat rubbish!
4. A black cow has no hair on its arse
He who woos men doesn't woo women
He who is loved by women has no goats for dowry.
5. Salute Gitaka son of Wambui – who cries "tobacco tears"
Tears aren't tears! It's milk - He loves breasts
And hates himself.
6. And Muchiri son of Kaguuchia, The day you'll be beckoned at
You of my stomach!
The accordion will cry, Wui! The head will be empty of tears.
7. Touch and tighten my cousin, Anger!
Once my ribs are touched! They shake
Encountering wonder is not determined by old age
Yes! To encounter wonders- you need not be old.
8. Aah! Peter Ndegwa! Pay attention – Anger!
You-of-my-stomach: strapped at the back
You were cut and you laughed,
You exclaimed: "This is milk my pal"
9. I grazed with too much shaking – Anger!
When the goats got lost – I never knew
I grazed with much shaking.
10. Wa Gichuru! Where are you? x2
I have searched for you, you disappeared in thin air.
11. The small one matures, That suckles matures – Anger
March the movement, we march; you-of-my-stomach
The marching of footsteps – is unlike a motorcar's.
12. The herd of cattle and flock of sheep

The bride! – We shall marry; You-of-my-stomach
Rest nicely

20 COKIA MŪRANGO

1. Cookia mūrango na ūhiinge na itī x2
Kwanyu Unīthī ndūkanyoona rīngī x2
2. Kīnyararithia kūrī andū a itūūra
“kīmenithania na andū a maitū
Nīkio ndoigire kwanyu ndigacooka x2
3. Cookia mūrango nohinge na itī
Kwanyu Unīthi ndūkanyoona rīngī.
4. Kīmenithania na cijana ciitū
Nokimenyaga nī thakaame yakwa
5. Cookia Mūrango nohinge na iitī
Kwanyu Unīthi ndūkanyoona rīngī.
6. Reke njikaare itaarī mūnyeendi x2
Mūnyeendi wakwa no Ngai mūnyūūmbi x2
7. Cookia Mūrango nohinge na iitī
Kwanyu Unīthi ndūkanyoona rīngī.
8. Wakinya kwanyu ūthiī wīre andū anyu
Wahiika Ikamba kaana Gīthuumo
Nīī wa Kīai ndigakūria kīūria
9. Cookia Mūrango nohinge na iitī
Kwanyu “nīthi ndūkanyoona rīngī.
10. We ūrī irigū rītari ikūrū
Kaana ichungwa rītakerua
Itunda rīthī rīīyūire ūgagatu
11. Icembe rīanakīgīa magecha
Mūrīmi nīaroruhaaga mooko
Na mūrīmi uī ndakiunagūo mooko.
12. Cokia mūrango nohinge na iitī
Kwanyu “nīthi ndūkanyoona rīngī
13. Namo makūūrū matina rwīimbo x2
Kīndū gikūrū kiega ma no irigū x2
14. Cokia mūrango nohinge na iitī

Kwanyu Unĩthi ndũkanyoona rĩngĩ

20. SHUT THE DOOR!

1. Shut the door! And reinforce with seats x2
You will never see me at your home place – Eunice!
2. You caused hatred in my neighbourhood
You caused hatred to my mother’s siblings
That’s why I said I will never set foot in your home.
3. Shut the door! And reinforce with seats x2
You will never see me at your home place - Eunice
4. You made me misunderstand my siblings
Yet you know its kinsfolk blood.
5. Shut the door! And reinforce with seats x2
You will never see me setting foot at yours - Eunice
6. Let me stay without a lover
My only lover is God who created me.
7. Shut the door! And put a pile of seats
Eunice! You will never see me set foot at yours.
8. When you reach your home, tell your people
If you get married in Kambaland or Kisumu
I son of Kiai will never ask you a question.
9. Shut the door! And close with seats
Eunice! You will never see me at yours.
10. You are a banana that will never mature
Or like a fruit that will never ripen
A raw fruit full of sourness.
11. Shut the door! And close with seats
Eunice! You will never see me at yours.
12. If a Jembe’s blade gets deformed and brunt
The farmer’s hands blisters
And you know a farmer’s hand should never be broken.
13. Old oil is never used for dancing, it does not go for a dance
The best-matured thing is only a banana.

14. Shut the door! And close with seats
Eunice! You will never see me at yours.

21. **MBAARA YA WAIYAKI**

1. Mbaara ya Waiyaki noyo ya mbeere
Ona gūtuika nī yarī nene īī
Waiyaki ametaga akamooria, “mwareka ithaaka ithiī
ciana ikagunūo nīīkī – atī mwareka ithiī ciana ikagunūo nīkīī?”
2. Nī inyuī mwerirīīrie kūgarūrūka mwaga kūmīrīria
Tūhoe ngai – mwegīīra heho – na ikuū cia thīīna
Magetha manyu na īnyuī mūkagetha gīkuū x2
Nītwanyitirūo mūūno na tūkīhūrūo mūno
Na tūkīīgīrīrūo mahiga maritū - Nīguo tūtikagie
Njamba īrī hinya – Ciakūhoota kuuga “nītwatunyirūo
Ithaaka” Atī cia kūhoota kuuga “nītwatunyirūo ithaaka”.
3. Mūtaari mūūgī ma naake Waiyaki
Acari nao moigaga atī ona cio ngombe itionagūo nī ithayo,
Naguo Wīyathi ndūkonuo nī mūcukani
Atī naguo wīyathi ndūkonūo nī mūcukani
4. Gīkeno twakenire twohorūo mīnyororo
Irīa ya ūkombo twatūruga naayo
Nīūdū wa būrūri wiitū kūrūra
Makīona maingatuo matikona gwa gūthiī
Atī makīona maingatūo matikona gwa gūthiī
5. Mbaara ya Waiyaki na mūbeberū
Waiyaki nī onanirie ūchamba mūingī
Athūngū magīthiī makīmūkomia Kībwethi
Nīatūtīgīire kīrumi tūtikanendie būrūri.
6. Nī inyuī mwerirīīrie kūgarūrūka,
Mūtikae kūrora kīūga kīa mūthūngū, no ūthiū wa thakame,
Mūthūngū nī rūtungu rūrīa rwatūrāgūo na tindo,
Marungo maake mekwenda gūtinio ta kīgwa kīa mūirū.

21. **THE BATTLE OF WAIYAKI**

1. Waiyaki’s battle was the premeire one
Though it was a great one
Waiyaki would call his people and ask, “If you let land go - what will benefit
our children?”
2. You are the ones who willed to change
If you aren’t tolerant that we pray to God
You fear coldnesss - and miserable deaths

Your and your harvest! You will harvest death
 We were arrested and beaten very much
 Heavy stones were laid on us – that we miss grooming
 Powerful heroes - who would proclaim:
 “Our land was grabbed”

3. A good counsellor Waiyaki was
 Parents also said! “that cows were not won by lazy bones.”
 Freedom will never be won by betrayors
 Yes! Freedom! Uhuru! Won’t be won by traitors.
4. Happiness! We were joyful when we were unchained,
 Of slavery that was best on us
 Due to the bitter spells of our nation
 They knew! If evicted – would never get a home
5. The Battle of Waiyaki and the “billy-goats”
 Waiyaki depicted great courage and fortitude
 The whites went and made him sleep at Kibwezi
 He left a curse: “Never sell our nation”.
6. Are you the ones who willed to change?
 Don’t be cowed by the white’s stature - And his bloody face,
 A white is a log, which is split with a chisel
 His organs should be dismembered like a black sugarcane.

22. MAMI NYAMBURA

1. Mami Nyambura makena ndũkarĩre
 Tondũ niĩ ngakuuma na thoome
 Mami Nyambura ũriganĩrie mathĩĩna.
2. Twanyitirũo nĩ thigari nyingĩ
 Ciarĩ nyingĩ cioimĩte na rũgũrũ
 Na iria nyingĩ cia cio cioimĩte Mũgumo-inĩ.
3. Cia Mũkũrwe-inĩ nĩ ciarutaga ũira
 “yũ nĩwe Mbenandi Gĩtahi wa Nyambura toto
 Mũtigathiĩ gwetha ũngĩ.
4. Nĩtwanyitirwo na tũgĩkagio na nja ta mabuthu
 Mami Nyambura nĩaringirũo nĩ tha cia wĩyaathi
 Akiũria thigari “Kaĩ ciana cieka afĩa?”
 “Watho nĩ mumu, umĩte rũraya kwa Ngatha Nyakerũ
 Watho ugĩite manyiitũo na mathaamio.”
5. Twathianga ndehũgũra na thutha
 Ngĩona mami makena noararĩra
 Ngĩhooya rũtha njarie naake hanini

Ngĩrũo ndingĩaria ndĩ korokoro thĩ-inĩ.

6. Twairaire theero tũkĩrokio igoti-inĩ
Haekoti thĩiniĩ gũtiarĩ na kĩũria
No mĩaka mũgwanja na ibooko ikũmi na inya
Njera Naivasha nginina mĩaka ĩtaano
 7. Wa gatandatũ ndaninĩre kamĩtĩ,
Wa mũgwanja ngĩninĩra kĩng'ong'o
Njerekeirio gwiitũ mũcĩĩ wa mũkũrwe-inĩ
Njera icio ciothe ndiarĩaga kĩndũ
No maaĩ ma cuumbĩ na mũtĩ kĩraikũ.
 8. Mami Nyambura makena ndũkarĩre
Tondũ niĩ nĩndakuuma na thoome
Nyambura mami I ũriganĩrie mathĩĩna
 9. Rũgaano rũrũ ngũkũganĩra maitũ
Njeera icio ciothe ndiarĩaga kĩndũ
No maaĩ ma cumbĩ na mũtĩ kĩraikũ.
 10. Hiti nĩ nyamũ nono ciarie gĩthũngũ
Ciameririe tĩĩri wa bũrũri wa Kenya cikĩũnina
Ikiũria, "Ngombe nĩ yaũ?" Ciathũgũnire mũtwe
nginya mũtong'oe
 11. Tuoe mahĩndĩ tũmacokanĩrĩrie
Kĩama kĩringũo mũndũ ũgwiitũo wa tĩĩri
Eting'ũrie gwiitũ tũmwitage wa Kenya
Ndũgũ cia ngũine nĩguo Kĩnyata oigaga.
 12. Mũhuhi coro ndooke ahuhe na ihenya
Tũkĩoe nyũngũ nĩguo tũgĩe na iruuga
Nyakerũ mooka makĩrĩage twara-makoiga
"Tũtigĩriei kenyũ kanini Kenya".
22. **MY MOTHER NYAMBURA**
1. My mother Nyambura - "The-happy-one; Don't cry"
Once I will emerge from the gateside
Oh Mum Nyambura – You'll forget all tribulations.
 2. We were arrested by many askaris
Quite many – From the west
Most of them – Had emerged from Mugumo-ini
 3. Those from Mukurwe-ini were giving evidence
"This is Bernard Gitahi – Son of Nyambura – a child!

Don't go looking for another".

4. We were reprimanded and thrown like the "rotten ones"
Mum Nyambura was awe struck by a mother's grace
She asked the askaris, "What have the children done?"
"A decree has been declared, From the prudent lady – "The-White-one" of Europe" – The order says – "Let them be arrested and be detained."
5. As we went I looked back
So that mum – "The-happy-one" was crying
I sought permission to talk to her a bit.
I was told – that I couldn't – I was in custody.
6. We spent night in the custody and taken to high court – morning hours
Inside high court! There was not a single question
It was seven years and fourteen strokes
In Naivasha prison – I spent five years.
7. The sixth year – I spent at Kamiti
The seventh one – I struggled at King'ong'o
On my way to Mukurwe-ini – my home
All those prisons! I ate nothing –
Only water with salt and a stick of "Kiraiku".
8. Mum – "The – happy-one" don't you cry.
For once I have emerged from the gateside
My mother Nyambura – Oh! You forget the tribulations.
9. The story I am narrating to you mum -
All those prisons! I never ate anything
Only water with salt and a stick of "Kiraiku"
10. Hyenas are animals, Yet they can converse in English
They swallowed the soil of Kenyan nation – completely,
They asked, "Whose cow is it?"
They licked the head upto the tail
11. Let's take bones and bundle them together
A miracle be set – a person – son of the soil
To emerge in our midst - let's call him son of Kenya
The friends (brothers) on firewood – Kenyatta used to say!
12. You the Coro – blower ! - come and blew it immediately
We take pots and make a feast
When Nyakeru come – they will lick their fingers?
And utter: "Give us a piece of Kenya".

23. **GWITŪ NYIRI KWA RUBAATHI**

1. Gwiitū Nyīri kwa Rubaathi X2 haya
Mūrū wa Kīai Mwendwa nī irī hingūrīra kīgambe
2. Mwathiī Nyīri mwerirūo atīa?
Mwathiī Nyīri mwerirūo atīa haya
Mūrū wa Kīai twerirūo “ciana nīithome kīgambe”
3. Kariūki nīwa Wawerū x2
Mūrū wa Kīai haya mwendwa nī irī – Hingūrīra kīgambe
4. Gīthoomo nīkīo mūthingi – Gīthomo nīkīo mūthingi haya
Mūrū wa Kīai aciari tūthomithie ciana kīgambe
Ngemi: aririririri
5. Norīa ūkūrega gīthoomo, Norīa ūkūrega gīthoomo haya
Mūrū wa Kīai agūthomithio nī būrūri kīgaambe
6. Nyonio kwa mbarī ya Kīnja x2
Mūrū wa Kīai, kūrīa gūthoomithie ciana kīgaambe
Ngemi: aririririri
7. Ndingirii nī kīheo, Ndingirii nī kīheo haya
Wa Nyambura – aciari tūthomithie ciana kīgaambe
8. Mūdū arūmie wīra waake x2
Mūrū wa Kīai, mūdū arūmie wīra waake kīgaambe
ciugo: Mūhūri wa kīnanda nīarūmie kīnanda, wa ngengere
nīarūmie, wa ngita eketaguo.
9. Gūtīrī utaarī na baina – gūtīrī ūtaarī na baina haya
Mūrū wa Kīai haya – nogūkorirūo kīgūūta kīgambe
10. Gwiitū Nyīri kwa Rubaathi x2
Mūrū wa Kīai mwendwo nī irī hingūrīra kīgaambe
11. Mwathiī Nyīri mwerirūo atīa x2 haya
Mūrū wa Kīai twerirūo ciana nīithoome kīgaambe
12. Kariūki nī wa Wawerū x2 haya
Mūrū wa Kīai mwendwo nī irī hingūrīra kīgaambe.
13. Kīongo kīega ma nī ūtonga x2 haya
Mūrū wa Kīai – Roko iitū nīyeyathire mūraata.
14. Nengerūo kīongo kīa mūcukani x2 haya
Mūrū wa Kīai – ndīkīenje gīthūngū na njoora kīgambe.

15. Gĩthoomo nĩkĩo mũthingi, gĩthoomo tikĩo mũthingi haya
Mũrũ wa Kĩai – na gĩtikagĩa njũgũũma kĩgambe
 16. Mũti ũyũ waririe ũkiuga x2 haya
Mũrũ wa Kĩai – magongoona mütigaate andũ aitũ kĩgaambe
 17. Mũngĩkĩ na Kamjeshi, Mũngĩkĩ na Kamjeshi mũthoome
Mũrũ wa Kĩai – mütige kũruagĩra matatũ kĩgambe
 18. Tigai gwĩtua Osama x2 haya
Mũrũ wa randeni – mũchiari wa thĩĩna na irĩro
- 23. OUR HOME PLACE NYERI - AT RUFUS' JURISDICTION**
1. Our home place – Nyeri at Rufus' jurisdiction x2 haya
Son of Kiai – “He-that-has-and-is-loved” Open-Let it sound.
 2. What were you told when you went to Nyeri? x2 haya
Son of Kiai – We were told to let children get educated
Okey! Let it sound!
 3. Kariuki son of Waweru x2 Okey
Son of Kiai – Okey! “He-that-has-and-is-loved”
Open for me and let it sound.
 4. Education is the foundation x2 Okey!
Son of Kiai – Parents - let's educate children
Let it sound!
Ululations: aririririri
 5. And the one who refuses education x2 Okey
Son of Kiai, will be educated by the government
Let it sound!
 6. Show me the house of Kinja x2 Okey
Son of Kiai – Where children have been educated
Let it sound!.
 7. A degree is a prize, talent! x2 OKey
Son of Nyambura – Parents, Let's educate children
Let it sound!
 8. One should stick to their jobs x2
Son of Kiai, One should respect their jobs,
Let it sound!

9. None hasn't a profit x2
Son of Kiai – Okey – unless one is lazy
Let it sound!
10. At our homeplace Nyeri at Rufus' jurisdiction x2
Son of Kiai, He-who-has-and-is-loved, open for me
Let it sound!
11. What were you told when you went to Nyeri?
Son of Kiai, we were told, "Let children be educated"
Let it sound!
12. Kariuki son of the whiteness x2 Okey
Son of Kiai, He-that-has-and-is loved, open for me
Let it sound!
13. A bright person has wealth x2 Okey
Son of Kiai, Our location has ruled itself –
Oh friend!
14. Give me the head of a traitor x2 Education is not the foundation!
Son of Kiai – I shave it the English style with my - sword
Let it sound!
15. Education is the foundation x2 Okey
Son of Kiai – though it doesn't throw a club –
Let it sound!
16. A tree talked and said x2 Okey
Son of Kiai – Sacrifices! My people should not abandon
Let it sound!
17. Mungiki and Kamjeshi, Mungiki and Kamjeshi – get educated
Son of Kiai – stop fighting over matatu industry
Let it sound!
18. Stop acting Osama x2 Okey
Son of Laden, The parent to tribulations and tears.

24. MŪTHI ŪRIA JOMO ANYITIRŪO

1. Mūthī ūrīa Njomo anyitirūo nīatigire atwīra atīre
Tūmūnyitīre rwathatha baba na inyūi mūrūmie mateke
2. Na ithuī nītwamūcookeirie nī tūkūrūmia mateke I
Na tūmīrīrie rūkūngū baba būrūri wa Kīrīnyaga.
3. Mwaka ūrīa Njomo anyitirūo nītuonire thīina mūingī

Nĩũndũ wa arũme gũthamio na atumia makĩnyitũoi
Makĩhingĩrũo Kamĩti baba tũgitigũo ciana mĩciĩ

4. Mwendwo nĩ irĩ na irĩri nĩatigire atwĩra atĩrĩ I
Mũrũgamĩrĩre ihooto baba wĩyaathi ũkonũo nĩ ihooto.
5. Mũthi ũrĩa Njomo arekirio kwarĩ mweri ikũmi na inya I –
Agĩchukĩra Kahũwa agĩkora Ngaara akinya, tũtanamũgeithia
na guoko Mboya agĩcooka agĩkinya , Agĩcokia njaara
mũhuko baba akĩmũnengera bendera.
6. Nĩatwarirũo nĩ birithi erekeirio ya Gatũndũ I
Na Mboya amumĩte thutha baba nĩguo akahorerie
Mũingĩ, Yuthi yoothe ya Gatũndũ yaikarĩte kĩhingo-ĩnĩ I
Ya Nyĩrĩ ĩgaikara mũciĩ baba yetereire mũtongoria.
7. Mũthi ũrĩa Njomo anyitirũo
Mũkararia ngwenda ũmenye kangĩrega nyina gatihonaga
Nĩu-gakuundio gĩkombe gĩa thakame ya ũhuru.
8. Ka mũingĩ koyaga ndĩrĩ ituungati nĩ cioigire I
Ngarĩ irĩ gĩchegu rĩa mbũuri nomenyagage ndwara ciaku.
Tũgakonoora mũthenya, Hamwe na magego maaku
Wageria kũria gĩtheri, wĩre andũ anyu nĩ kagooto.
9. Kĩrĩndĩ gĩtiarĩraga no nĩ gĩaitaga maithori
Ma karũmia thiimbũ, O hamwe na ndotono
Cia kũingata ngarĩ, mbarĩ ya Nyakerũ
Nĩguo mabuuĩria tũrĩe na twĩthaambe ndia-ini ya wiyathi.
10. Mbaarĩ ya Nyakerũ menyai, Arĩa mamũthabootaga
Mena kĩrumi kĩnene bũrũri wa Kĩrĩnyaga
Mũrimũ ũyũ wa ũbeberũ, Tũtikaũrwara rĩngĩ
Mũthiĩ na mũirĩrie biũ na mĩri ya mĩkongoe

24. THE DATE JOMO WAS ARRESTED

1. The date Jomo was Arrested, He told us he would
grip the throat, As we grip the kicks.
2. And we answered him, “we will grip the kicks
And persevere dust, Father in the nation of Kirinyaga.
3. The year that Jomo was arrested
We were subjected to many tribulations
For men were detained and women arrested
Confined at Kamiti – Father - Children left home.

4. "He-that-is-loved-and-has-and-glitters", he told us
Follow truthfulness Father- Freedom will be achieved
through truth and justice.
5. The date Jomo was released, It was the 14th
He alighted at Kahawa, He met Ngara had arrived
Before we saluted him, Mboya then arrived-
Went back to the pocket, and gave him a flag
6. He was escorted by the police to Gatundu
And Mboya followed him; Father – To pacify the masses
The youth from Gatundu, kept guard by the gate
The youth from Nyeri, was inside the home
Father – waiting for the leader
7. The day Jomo was arrested
The opposer, you should know, That a kid which rejects
Its mother does not survive,
"You will be made to take a cupful of the blood of uhuru"
8. "When the masses are united – they lift a mortar," the fighters said
"You leopard in the goatshed, eat goats, But know that those claws of yours -
we will uproot them in broad daylight, Together with your teeth,
When you try to eat "githeri", you tell your people its ballast".
9. The multitude wasn't crying, but it was shedding tears
Due to gripping of clubs, and the gigantic *rungus*
For after evicting the leopard, the house of Nyakeru
For after eviction, we shall eat and bathe in the sea of *Uhuru*.
10. House of Nyakeru – You should know, Your supporters
Have inherited a great curse in the nation of Kirinyaga
The disease of "billy goatness", We shall never contract again
Dissipate and disappear, completely with the sisal roots.

25. TWAGŪTŪMA RŪRAYA

1. We kīmwana twagūtūma rūraya
Ūgatūgīrīre ndingirii rūraya
Ya gūkūria būrūri wītū Kenya
2. We kīmwana twagūtūma rūraya
Ūgatūgīrīre ndingirii rūraya
Ya gūkūria būrūri wītū Kenya
3. Wariganīirūo nīkī wehe kīmwana
Twathiī teene twathiaga gūtaha
Mūdū akainūkia indo icio kūrī andū ao

4. Ükìhenererio nĩ mĩago ya rūraya
Ya mũchecherũ ya airitu a Nyakerũ
Na ithuĩ aitũ a Kenya njerũ tũkamaroria kũ
A Nyakairu meena gĩthoomo na ndingirii nyingĩ.
5. Ükìhenererio nĩ mĩago ya rūraya
Ya mũchecherũ ya airitu a Nyakerũ
Na ithuĩ aitũ a Kenya njerũ tũkamaroria kũ
A Nyakairu meena gĩthoomo na ndingirii nyingĩ.
6. Ügĩcuuka ndege twarũngĩ Embagathi
Ndingirii yaaku tũtianona, muru wa Nyakairu
No mũirĩtu wa mbaarĩ ya Nyakerũ
7. Mwahutanĩtie mooko mũrĩ naake
Mũkĩranaga “harũ! harũ! ndaari!”
Mbeere ya aciari ndaring’i nĩ kuuga atĩa?
8. Ügĩcuuka ndege wahanaga thenema
Ta mburiki-ndaũni ìguucĩtie kĩroori
Ikĩnyuuga mũraatina hamwe na cuba ya bia.
9. Gĩthoomo ti gĩthoomo ùngĩthoomora mĩtugo
Wendo ti wendo ùngĩcurio ta mĩrĩo
Irĩa irĩagũo nĩ mbũri mĩhĩrĩga yoothe.
10. Mũka ti mũka angiũka na kĩng’ũũki
Aciari moige, ùngĩroheha ngoro
Ndangĩgĩa mwana angĩtwĩkata nyũmbũ.
11. Nĩ mbica irĩkũ wahũũra mbeere ya andũ
Nĩ ya kĩrengo kana nĩ ng’ima ng’ima
Cookia kamera icio ciaku rūraya.
12. Wakorũo tiũguo, mbeca iria twahotheete
Tĩ chaai wa gĩthoomo ùcookie cĩĩ na bainda
Ükagaĩrũo mũgũũnda nĩ Nyakerũ.

25. WHEN WE SENT YOU ABROAD/EUROPE

1. You young man! When we sent you abroad
To fetch a degree for us in Europe
To develop our nation of Kenya.
2. You young man! When we sent you abroad
To fetch a degree for us in Europe
To develop our nation of Kenya.
2. Why did you forget you young man

Long ago we went to raid
One took wealth to his people.

4. You got swayed by the joys of Europe
Of the whiteness of the daughters of "the-white-one"
And what or where shall we take our new Kenya's girls
Of "the-black-one" who are educated and have many degrees.
5. You got swayed by the joys of Europe
Of the whiteness of the daughters of "the-white-one"
And what or where shall we take our new Kenyan girls
Of "the-black-one" who are educated and have many degrees.
6. When you alighted from the plane - We stood at Embakasi
We never saw your degree! You son of Nyakairu
Only a daughter of the house of Nyakeru
7. You held hands the two of you
You yapped! "Hello! Hello! Darling"
Before your parents - What's the meaning of darling?
8. When you alighted from the aeroplane
Like a break-down towing a huge lorry
Taking "Muraatina" together with white man's beer
9. Education is not education, if you subtract educational mannerisms
Love isn't love, if suspended like sweet potato vines
Which are eaten by goats of all clans
10. A wife is no wife, if she brings ill fated behaviours
Parents will curse: "May your heart get cold"!
She cannot get an offspring, she will be a mule.
11. What kind of photograph have you taken in front of people
Is it a passport size or a full full one
Return your cameras to Europe
12. If not so! - All the money we had donated.
During the Tea Party for your education, pay it back with profit
Then inherit land in Europe -.

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW SCHEDULEQuestions for Mwomboko Singers

1. What is your (a) Age..... ? (b) Place of birth.....?
(c) Occupation ? Date
2. How did you learn about *Mwomboko* ? When was it? Where?
3. From whom did you learn? When did you start singing?
4. What does *Mwomboko* mean?
(a) To you in life? (b) As a name?
5. Who taught you to play the accordion?
(a) How? b) Where?
6. Who taught you to play the bell (Karing'aring'a)?
(a) How? b) Where?
7. Why do you like playing *Mwomboko* songs?
8. What motivates you to compose a song?
9. From where do you draw your ideas?
10. Is singing a trait in your family?
11. Did you get any training on how to compose *Mwomboko* songs?
12. What songs do you sing, and for whom?
13. What time was *Mwomboko* performed?
14. Why was this time chosen?
15. Was this time ideal for all singers and dancers?
16. Where in particular did the dance take place?
17. Were there structures/ shelters designed for the dance or did it take place in an open place?

18. How was the dance conducted? Was there a (a) an organiser/producer?
(b) Soloist?
19. What kind of formations were used?
(a) An introduction.....? (b) Chorus? (c) Climax?
(d) Recapitulation? (e) Denouement?
20. Who took part in dancing?
(a) Men? (b) Women? (c) or both?

Questions for *Mwomboko* Dancers.

1. What is your (a) Name.....? (b) Age.....? (c) Place of birth.....?
(d) Occupation? Date
2. When did you start dancing *Mwomboko* ?
3. Who taught you the dance formations and movements?
4. Do you enjoy dancing *Mwomboko*? Why?
5. Who was involved in the dancing? (a) Women? (b) Men? (c) or both?
6. Were there any limitations against the age group that participated in dancing?
If any - why?
7. What kind of costumes were used by the dancers?
8. What were the costumes made of?
9. What makes wearing of costumes appeal to dancers/audience?
10. What type of identity is entailed in the costumes?
11. Were there any props used by the performers?
12. Would you recommend the youth of today to learn how to compose, sing and dance *Mwomboko*? Why? Why not?
13. Would you like to see changes in *Mwomboko* performance? Why? Why not?
14. Do you think *Mwomboko* embraces national aspirations?
15. Is it appropriate to teach *Mwomboko* art form to pupils/students in Kenyan Schools/Colleges? Why? Why not?

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