

*Review*

## Representations of Kenyan history in oral literature: 1948-2002

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This paper discusses the representation of Kenyan history in oral literature between 1948 and 2002. The paper relied on library and ethnographic data. The ethnographic data included audio recordings of renditions of well known Mau Mau folksongs, popular and topical songs and a narrative. The play, *Ngahika Ndeenda*, by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Ngugi Wa Mirii was treated as an oral drama. The texts were translated from Gikuyu language to English and the content messages categorized for analysis. The analytical categories cover the literary representations of the Olenguruone land crises, the Mau Mau uprising and the independence era. The independence era is divided into Kenyatta and Uhuru and the Post Kenyatta era of 2002. The paper lays no claim to historical objectivity but interrogates the texts as literary artifacts. In the analysis and discussions, the Olenguruone land crisis emerges as the genesis of the armed resistance to colonialism and Kenyatta is represented as the collective wish for the de-colonization of Kenya. The paper further discusses the literary representations of the political changes surrounding the governance of President Jomo Kenyatta, President Daniel Arap Moi and the fight for democratic pluralism in Kenyan politics. This paper concludes that oral literature is a significant instrument in the reflection of change and innovations in politics. As a cultural artifact, it also becomes a form of national consciousness.

**Key words:** Kenyan, history, oral literature, Central Province.

### INTRODUCTION

This paper analyses and discusses the role that oral literature from among the Kikuyu people has played in representing and reflecting on Kenyan history between 1948 and 2002. The paper focuses on Central Kenya against the background of the wider Kenyan nation-state. In our discussion and analysis we shall view oral literary productions as historical and dialectical. Once they operate within historical contexts they become a political forum that expresses various aspects of political reality (Lihamba, 1994).

The broad background of this paper is the colonial experience in Kenya and its effect on the people of

Central Province. The focus on Central Province does not necessarily preclude the fact that colonialism affected the whole country. It is used here as a spatial and temporal unit that helps prototype the experience of the rest of the country.

The colonial history of Kenya began in 1885 when the country was declared part of the British East Africa Protectorate. In 1920 the country was officially named the Kenya Colony. Colonial transformation for the people of Central Kenya was a violent process. From the beginning it involved the pacification of the people through the force of arms. Armed resistance was met with punitive

excursions, which led to many deaths among the Kikuyu people between 1895 and 1905 (Edgerton, 1989; Meinertzhagen, 1977).

Nevertheless, the consolidation of colonial authority begot a rising political consciousness and demands for militant action against colonial occupation. In the 1920s, Harry Thuku formed and became leader of the Young Kikuyu Association and its successor, the East African Association. He led protests against forced labor, taxation, land grievances and the introduction of pass laws (*Kipande*). He rejected British rule and demanded political change.

He was arrested in March 1922 and exiled for many years in Kismayo, the present day Somalia and his association was proscribed (Murray, 1974; Presley, 1992).

Protests against British rule continued over the years exploding into the Mau Mau war of independence in the 1950s. Jommo Kenyatta and other leaders, who led the agitation for political independence, were arrested in October 1952. They were charged with leading the Mau Mau organization and jailed for seven years with hard labour. The country attained internal self-rule in June 1963 and full independence on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1964 with Jomo Kenyatta as the first president of the republic of Kenya.

The texts discussed in this paper are viewed as part of postcolonial literature. This paper uses postcolonialism as its main framework of analysis. Our discussion in the paper dissects how the texts under analysis react to legacies of imperialism and colonialism as a brutal system of deployment of power intended to differentiate, enslave, displace and even exterminate others due to physical or linguistic differences from those of the colonizer. The paper will further try to understand how the texts are part of the protest against colonialism and how they address the colonial legacy in Kenya (Hall, 2001).

The samples of texts are discussed and analysed as oral literary productions stimulated by the confrontation between the people of Central Province and British colonialism. Oral literature relies in the spoken word for actualization and transmission. The nature of oral literature also demands that there must be a living culture to carry on the creative tradition. Today, oral literature remains a major means of social communication in Kenya and in other parts of Africa. It is to a large extent still part of the traditional learning process in a rapidly changing social and physical environment. As a traditional media, the content of oral literature demands conformity. But at the same time the artist is expected to rise above the traditional. The artist can use traditional material but has the freedom to modify them to suit the audience, the time, place or the social need at a particular time.

This way, the oral artist becomes a modifier of traditional material. Through his/her creative ability, the new is

integrated into the old and henceforth it can exist as traditional material (Lord, 1965).

The study of oral literature is today well established in many African universities. In East Africa, the introduction of oral literature into the syllabus in the university and in secondary schools is credited to efforts by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Owuor Anyumba and Taban Lo Liyong. In 1968, they championed the introduction of the subject in the then Department of English at the University of Nairobi. They argued that there was need for African literature to take center stage in the department, so that other cultures could be studied in relationship to it (Wa Thiong'o, 1972). Their focal point was to make African studies central, enabling the students to understand the world from an African perspective (Lo Liyong Taban, 1973).

From these humble beginnings, the study of oral literature has flourished and is taught in at least eight universities in Kenya. The discipline is taught as a compulsory component of language both in English and Kiswahili based studies in secondary schools. Over time there has emerged what we can refer to here as the 'Kenyan School of Oral Literature', which finds expression in various publications cutting across thematic, theoretical and methodological approaches. This study seeks to broaden analytical insights of the discipline by studying oral literature as discourse on history.

Our sample of analysis will include oral poetry in the form of topical and popular songs, an oral narrative and an oral drama in the play, *Ngaakika Ndeenda*. These texts have been purposively selected in relation to their worth to the study. The samples of texts are discussed and analyzed as oral literary productions stimulated by the postcolonial condition.

This study is a practical and descriptive analysis of the texts in the context of cultural literary criticism. We shall focus on the historical and cultural contexts of the texts as well as their sociological and ideological dimensions. The analytical categories include literary representations of the 'Olunguruone land crisis', the 'Mau Mau uprising' and the independence era up to the year 2002. The independence era is divided into 'Kenyatta and Uhuru' and 'The Post- Kenyatta era.'

## OLENGURUONE LAND CRISES

The Olunguruone land crisis in 1948 stimulated the beginning of the creation of a corpus of oral poetry of resistance, which has come to be collectively known as 'Mau Mau songs'. The crisis has also been viewed as the prime indicator that the armed struggle against the colonial government was at hand (Throup, 1987).

The crisis had its roots in the displacement of the Kikuyu people from Central Province to give way for European settlement. In 1941, some 4,000 people who had been displaced into Narok District were moved to

Olenguruone settlement in Nakuru District. These people thought they had been given this land in compensation for the ancestral land they had lost in Central Province. However the government insisted that they were squatters and they were expected to follow laid down rules and regulations of farming and to plant specific crops.

They defied these rules and in November 1949, the government forcefully evicted 2,000 of the peasants who had refused to abide to a court eviction order. Their crops were destroyed and their livestock confiscated. They were transported in caged lorries to the dry land of Yatta, some three hundred kilometers away where they were detained (Furedi, 1989).

These experiences were articulated in new oral composition, which etched a place for themselves in the corpus of 'Mau Mau songs'. We shall analyze and discuss text no.1 *Kenyatta ni Agathirwo* ('Kenyatta was praised'), No.2, *Uhoru Uria Mwaiguire* ('The News you Heard') and no.3, *Tugakena Muno* ('We shall indeed Rejoice') as a representation of these experiences.

One of the immediate stylistic appeal of the songs is the depth of their emotional ethos. They evoke feelings of empathy from the audience portraying the Olenguruone people as a deeply wronged party for insisting on their rights. Nevertheless, the songs are not just lamentations from subservient beings but statements of defiance full of hope and promise. The opening of song no.1 illustrates this:

Kenyatta was hallowed  
By the children and the women  
As they were taken to be detained in Yatta  
When they arrived there  
Heavy rain fell, accompanied by thunderstorms

Around this time Kenyan nationalist, Jomo Kenyatta had returned from England. He assumed the leadership of the Kenya African Union (KAU). He had become the symbol of the future hope for the liberation of the Kikuyu people and Kenyans in general. The song opens by voicing this hope and confirms it further with the rain that falls when they arrive at Yatta 'to be detained'.

Yatta in the Eastern Province is a dry place where rain rarely falls. For the Kikuyu people, rain is always regarded as sign of blessing. The song then begins by foregrounding the images of hope before relieving the suffering, loss and tears that flowed when one of them, Josbaini, died and was buried in Yatta after eating buffalo meat. In their suffering and mourning they are however sustained by their solidarity and love for one another:

The Love that was there  
Of women and children  
When a bean fell to the ground  
They would divide it amongst themselves

The socialist image in the sharing of the beans lightens the stoic perseverance of the woes of colonialism. The brutality is balanced with love and togetherness in a moment of crisis. The second Olenguruone song (text no.2, 'The News you Heard'), builds on the theme of suffering but adds new religious dimensions. The song rejects the Christian God and proclaims the greatness of the Kikuyu God. This rejection of missionary Christianity is recognition of its role in sustenance of colonialism. In this rejection we can understand the genesis of Mau Mau's anti-Christian and anti-European sentiments. For the Mau Mau there was no difference between the colonist and the missionary (*Gutiri Muthungu na Mubia*).

By going back to the God of the Kikuyu, the song attempts to cushion the victims against their losses and give them the hope of regaining their land. Their God is a flexible God who caters for them in this moment of crisis. He allows them to break taboo and feed on wild animals and wild strawberry when the government agents destroy their crops.

The third song in our sample (no.3), 'We Shall Indeed Rejoice', narrates the journey to exile in Yatta through Nairobi and Thika towns. The song highlights the futility of the notion of racial dominance as a rationale of subjugation in colonialism:

The laughter we suffered in Nairobi  
When white children laughed at us  
They thought we would surely be vanquished

The subsequent messages in this song reject the perception of the oppressor and emphasize solidarity of the people. It draws inner faith for the oppressed from the mythical parents of the tribe (Gikuyu and Mumbi), expressing the hope that the people will surely regain their space and forever live in Kenya. The song shows an awareness of detention as a dehumanizing process meant to breach the spirit of resistance and one's self worth. Towards the end of the song is a pointer to the impending conflict. The oral poet uses idiomatic and euphemistic language to hint at the impending insurrection:

We have suffered in this world  
Our abode has been destroyed  
And our bodies further wrecked  
Do not now be afraid  
The moment you were waiting for  
Has now come

The message here denotes readiness for further sacrifice in the forthcoming war. Apart from their patriotic position, the Olenguruone songs also became a symbol of anti-colonial resistance and generated a melancholic discourse that was vital in stirring up nationalist emotion and the initiation of the armed struggle (Wanjau, 1971;

Gikandi, 2000; Mwaura, 2007).

## MAU MAU

Oral literature played a central role in articulating and communicating about the Mau Mau war for independence in Kenya. The creation of a Mau Mau consciousness, the quest for a transformation of power relations, the symbolic value of Kimathi's leadership and the experiences in detention centers are the key issues that emerge in Mau Mau songs.

The liberation consciousness in the Mau Mau movement recognized the need to increase education opportunities for Africans as basis of organizing the future society (Guy, 1974). Text no.4, *Kuma Ndemi na Mathathi* ('From Ndemi and Mathathi'), insists on this need even as the people fight for their land. The song begins by recognizing the changes that have taken place in society. The youths will have to play a different role compared to the ones they played in the traditional society. At the same time this song is also a rallying point for the creation of awareness of the struggle. It is a challenge to those who are yet to join the ranks. It urges them to take arms and protect their wealth:

How come you are not considering  
To volunteer with your spear and shield  
Brother, do not let go our wealth

In the creation of a new consciousness, the Mau Mau songs rooted for a black aesthetic by recognizing the God of *Kirinyaga* (Mt. Kenya) as the basis of the identity for the black people. Song no.5, '*Mwene Nyaga Twakuhoya* (God, We Pray Thee)', appropriates the Kikuyu God as the protector and the ultimate salvation of the people. This new consciousness that is re-emphasizing the authentic Kikuyu identity seeks a unity of purpose from the people in order to achieve liberation. The sustenance of this unity is sought through the evocation of emotive feelings of merging the self with the other in the larger Gikuyu Embu and Meru ethnic grouping.

Like most other Mau Mau discourses, this song identifies the role of indoctrination, which has led to the creation of a loyalist group that was opposed to the struggle and supported the British to ensure their collective interests (Elkins, 2005). This group known as *Kamatimu* (spear bearers) fought on the side of the Europeans. Its members were known for their brutality and ruthlessness towards the civilian populations. Mau Mau songs decry the ignorance of these people. They are presented as a group operating on a warped logic governed by greed. By fighting their own people they fight themselves in order to become even better slaves:

*Kamatimu* you fight for slavery

While our heroes fight for the country  
Our heritage from Gikuyu and Mumbi

The loyalists are people to be regarded with scorn but also with understanding. They have been brainwashed to a degree that requires pity. In *Mbaara ya Rui Ruiru* ('The battle of River Ruiru') (song no.6), where the Mau Mau fighters trapped a group of European soldiers and their African loyalists, the Mau Mau General gives an order that the black loyalists be spared:

The General gave a firm command  
That we only target European soldiers  
And let the black ones escape  
As they are guided by foolishness

The Mau Mau war can be regarded as the apex of anti-colonial feelings in Kenya.

The main quest of this movement was the need for a transformation of political power brought about by the colonial social- economic condition (Maughan-Brown, 1985; Edgerton, 1989). The songs reflect and articulate the aim of the movement as the repossession of the material and human status of the black man taken away by colonialism.

Dedan Kimathi Wa Wachiuri was one of the central figures of the armed struggle. Between 1950 and 1954 when he was captured, he emerged as the overall military leader of the Mau Mau forces in Nyandarua and Mt. Kenya forests. He was sentenced to death and hanged at Kamiti prison near Nairobi in 1956.

The literary representation of Kimathi in the struggle displays a mythical magnificence of the hero as the chosen one and the inspiration of the movement. In the song no. 7, *Riria Kimathi Ambatire* ('When Kimathi Ascended the Mountain') Kimathi's ascent of Mt. Kenya draws a parallel with Moses going up Mt. Sinai and Jesus on the Mount of Olives. Kimathi ascends the mountain alone from where he is given courage and strength to defeat the Europeans:

When our dear Kimathi ascended  
Up on the mountain alone  
He was bestowed with strength and courage  
To defeat the Europeans

The opening of this song seeks to establish a close relationship between Kimathi and the God of the Kikuyu, *Ngai, Murungu Mwene Nyaga*. By going up the mountain, he retraces the steps of the birth of the Kikuyu nation. The climb, symbolizing an act of going back to primordial genesis of the people, is a justification for the fight against colonialism. In the Kikuyu myth of origin, this is the locus where God gave the Kikuyu people their territory. By going up the mountain he is seeking the rebirth of the nation, which has been destroyed by

colonialism. But beyond this, the ascent also stands for the indestructible nature of the human spirit.

The mountain's Kikuyu name is *Kirima Kiri-Nyaga*, which is in a way synonymous with God. As Amuka (1990) observes, it concretizes the communal unity and continuity of the Kikuyu people in its physical and permanent presence. By climbing up this mountain Kimathi moves to the 'center of the Kikuyu universe', which also makes the mountain the symbol of the enduring spirit of resistance (Ogude, 1999; Njogu, 2007).

Our discussion above illustrates the role of oral literature, especially song, played in the communication of important aspects of the Mau Mau movement as an innovative phenomenon. The songs represent a dynamic interaction between oral literature and social change in the society in a particular historical moment. The Mau Mau movement is represented as an imaginative discourse of liberation; a theme embraced by many postcolonial writers in Kenya, notable among them is Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1964, 1967).

## KENYATTA AND UHURU

The release of Jomo Kenyatta from detention in 1961 heralded the coming of political independence in Kenya. Over the years Kenyatta had emerged as the symbol of nationalism and liberation in the country and especially so, for the Kikuyu. His political career emerges in 1929 during the female circumcision crises. He was then elected the secretary-general of the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA). By this time Kenyatta was already calling for self-government in Kenya (Aseka, 1992). Kenyatta travelled to England twice to present the grievances of the Kikuyu people on land, labor and political representation to the British government. During his second visit, he stayed in Europe until 1946. When he came back, he took over the leadership of the newly created Kenya African Union (KAU).

On the outbreak of the Mau Mau war, Kenyatta and five other leaders of KAU, Paul Ngei, Achieng Oneko, Kung'u Karumba, Fred Kubai and Bildad Kagia were arrested. They were transported to Kapenguria, some four hundred and eighty kilometers from Nairobi, to face trial. On April 1953, they were found guilty of managing the Mau Mau, conspiring to force people to take oaths and for inciting disaffection against the government. They were imprisoned for seven years each, with hard labour (Bailey, 1993).

In the oral literary texts in our sample, Kenyatta is represented over the years as the collective wish for the de-colonization of Kenya. He is a reincarnation of Waiyaki Wa Hinga and the fulfillment of the prophecies of Mugo wa Kibiro. In the literary presentation he transcends realism and becomes a mythic figure while still alive. His folkloristic representation even corresponds to the heroic

pattern proposed by Lord Raglan (de Vries, 1963). This pattern can be discerned from the song no.8, *Riria Kenyatta Aciarirwo* ('When Kenyatta was born') and general folklore surrounding Kenyatta.

The heroic plot pattern generally ascribes divine origins to the hero. The hero is then exiled after which he returns to his country of birth, conquers his enemies and establishes benevolent governance of his people. The song attempts to assign Kenyatta a divine destiny even as he is born:

When Jomo was born (conceived)  
By his father and mother  
He was born a *Muthamaki* (ideal leader)  
And even his father and mother did not know  
Only God knew

In the song Kenyatta starts to fulfill his destiny from an early age. When he goes into 'exile' in Britain he is there as a seeker of truth, which will eventually liberate his country:

Jomo grew up and as he matured  
He began to think  
How this country, Kenya, will be  
In days to come

In other songs discussed above, Kenyatta is represented as 'the promise of God', the 'beloved of the nation' (*mwedwo ni iri*) and the hero who will deliver the country from British rule and bring independence. His depiction in oral literature idealizes his nationalistic consistency and his life becomes the embodiment of the political struggles in Kenya during the colonial era. Even in detention Kenyatta attained the status of the undisputed political leader in Kenya. During his last months in detention he is said to have 'become a god-like figure' (Aseka, 1992).

The Kenya National African Union (KANU) was formed in 1960 when political parties were allowed to operate legally for the first time since the declaration of a state of emergency in October 1952. After his release from detention in 1961, Kenyatta took over the leadership of the party. He retained the leadership until his death in 1978. The party led the country into internal self-rule in June 1963 and full independence on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1964 with Jomo Kenyatta as the first president of the republic of Kenya.

The expressions of disillusionment with the gains of the liberation struggle began to appear in oral compositions soon after the attainment of independence. In song no.9 by H.M. Kariuki, the singer attempts to come to terms with the emerging post-independence state. The title of the song, *Kenya, Tugucira na Karamu* ('Kenya, Let Us Reason with the Pen'), alludes to the need for a non-violent means of solving the problems creeping into the country. The song's literary presentation identifies these

problems as the lateral and vertical divisions engulfing the country soon after independence. The song further understands the creation of the class and ethnic groupings as a deliberate effort from certain sections of the society, no doubt its leadership. While stating everyone's entitlement to the state, the singer expresses his disillusionment in the strong language he uses to condemn the architects of the divisions:

Kenya belongs to us, all of us  
And now some are saying that  
We divide it into pieces  
May the divider of Kenya (ns)  
Break his backbone?  
And may his children  
Be smitten by leprosy

The divisions that emerge are condemned in the song as individualistic pursuits that neglect the common good and ignore the needy members of the society.

The song identifies the needy as the orphans alluding to the neglect of the children whose parents died while fighting for independence: The disillusionment and the condemnation of the current social setting find its heightened expression in the curses that the singer utters. He invokes for divine intervention, and the curse of the Mau Mau as the possible deterrent to those who are dividing the nation. The reference to the walking stick leaves no doubt that the singer is addressing those in leadership:

May his walking stick lose hold on the ground  
And may his children inherit the curse  
And may the great curse be upon him  
The curse of those who fought  
For the country with their blood  
And those are the Mau Mau, who spoke and said  
May the divider of Kenya  
Be cursed by the soil

The curses in this song express the bitterness of unfulfilled hopes and dreams. The last lines calling upon the curse of the Mau Mau hint at the feelings of betrayal. As an understanding of the post independence reality, this song performed in the early 1960s, communicates changes, which would become a reality for many years in the country's future.

The understanding of these new realities also finds expression in the existentialistic abstractions in the religious discourse of the performances of P.C.E.A Gathaiti Church choir. This group has performed in Kiambu District since the 1970s and recorded many songs. Two of their compositions, *Mai Ni Maruru* ('The Water is Bitter') text no.10 and *Ng'aragu ya Ngoro*, ('The Famine of the Heart') no.11, present an interpretation of this disillusionment from a religious perspective. In the

innuendoes and insinuations of the texts, there is an apparent indictment of the post-independence leadership in Kenya. This is for abandoning the original aims and ideals of the struggle against colonialism and leaving the people in a state of hopelessness.

In the first song, *Mai Ni Maruru* ('The Water Is Bitter'), the performers begin by re-visiting the deliverance theme. It recalls the experience of Moses and the children of Israel as they journey towards Canaan from Egypt. At one point on their journey in the desert they have no water to drink and the only water available is bitter and unfit for human consumption (Exodus: 15:22-25). God instructs Moses to dip a piece of wood into the water to cleanse it for the people to drink.

In the leadership images that we have discussed elsewhere in this paper, Kenyatta was viewed as the Kenyan Moses who would deliver the masses. He would deliver them from the Egypt of colonialism and lead them to the Canaan of plenty in independent Kenya. But the process towards the achievement of the economic and social Canaan seems to have stalled. The Kenyan Moses apparently has refused to dip his staff in the water to remove the offending taste:

The other song, *Ng'aragu ya Ngoro* ('The Famine of the heart'), articulates the anti-thesis of the people's expectations in the image of the heart that suffers famine. Dwelling on the existential plane, the song translates into a commentary on the dispossession and alienation of the people both at the material and the spiritual level. The song sets out to recognize the existence of this lack in spite of efforts to conceal it:

Now that this famine has become all pervading  
And it has been baptized many names  
So that people may not know  
There is the bread of Jesus  
Just observe and see what is happening  
To the rich and even the poor and children  
They are staggering all over  
Because of the famine of the heart

The song moves on to attack the vanity of the rising African middle classes, which has concentrated on hoarding money for themselves and grabbing land. The unraveling theme of the song is that self-interest and greed existing in post-independence era is anti-human and can lead to the possible annihilation of the society. The ultimate image of the possibility of this human ruin is in the allusion to the image of the three women; the two Samaritan women who ate their children because of hunger and the other woman who salvages the hammock instead of the child being swept away by the river (Holy Bible, 2 Kings.6:25-29).

In essence these songs are an attack of the rising middle class and the way they perceived the realities of independence. Their priorities are a logical negation of

the kind of society the country sought after independence. In the new setting, human value is replaced by material accumulation and the song views this as the wrong perception; the lack of knowledge and the truth that endures.

The meaning and messages in these two songs are cleverly shrouded in quasi-religious images and suggestive Christological solutions. Their euphemistic representations are however clear to the local audiences in that they articulate the moral, material and spiritual dispossession of the people after independence. They allude to a journey that was never completed. They indict the Kenyan middle class leadership and seem to suggest that the solution to the arrogance and the corruption of those in power is another Moses who can free Kenyans from these problems (Chekwony, 1987; Njogu, 2007).

The theme of dispossession and betrayal finds even more explicit expression in the oral performance of the late 1970s. The play *Ngahika Ndeenda (I will Marry When I Want)*, by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi Wa Mirii, was first published in 1980. It was initially conceived and presented as an oral performance in Kikuyu language. According to the authors the play was a collective effort between them and members of the Kamirithu Community Education and Cultural Center (Sicherman, 1990). The play's content and form was greatly influenced by the actors making it an important form of oral expression that integrates the community and the individual in artistic presentation (Meyer, 1991).

The play depicts the consolidation of classes in the country using the Central Province as the microcosmic setting. Those who were loyalists during the struggle for independence have replaced the colonial settlers. Those who fought for independence continue to live in unending dispossession. In *Ngahika Ndeenda*, the play ends with a rallying up of workers' consciousness, which might possibly consolidate into action against their oppression and exploitation.

*Ngahika Ndeenda*, which was first performed at Kamirithu, Kiambu District in 1977, can be viewed as a milestone in the use of the oral literary forms in the communication of change and innovations in politics. As Gikandi observes, the play was an innovation both at the stylistic and the discourse level. Through its oral publication, it was able to overcome the gap that separates art from politics by communicating directly to the intended audience. As an oral performance in Kikuyu language the play achieved a degree of subversion that Ngugi had not achieved with his earlier works in English (Gikandi, 2000).

In our discussion so far, we have illustrated the response of oral literary performances in song and drama to the changes that took place with the coming of independence. The discussion here demonstrates the topical sensitivity of oral texts. Oral texts were able to respond to development of new social political conditions

which are depicted as a reversal of the expectations and hopes of the anti-colonial struggle. While some of them may seek naive solutions to the problems of neo-colonialism, to which they essentially are reacting, they do articulate the loss the country has suffered. The following section continues to analyse these contradictions but within the context of a new relationship, which further accentuates the loss.

## THE POST-KENYATTA ERA

The final aspects we shall deal with in this paper surrounds the post-Kenyatta era between 1978 and 2002. The section will particularly focus on oral literary productions dealing with issues leading to the re-introduction of multiparty politics in Kenya. The section derives its analytical material from an oral narrative, topical and popular songs by various composers from Central Province.

Lonsdale has observed that during the reign of Kenyatta, state power was more dangerous to those who wielded it than the subjects. After his death state power threatened those who dared to criticize it. Freedoms continued to diminish and the state became increasingly authoritarian and could not tolerate any level of criticism or dissent (Lonsdale, 1992). While most other forums of political expression including the press withdrew into conformity and self-censorship oral literature continued to communicate the political realities of the time. This literary media also supported the few courageous activists who dared to stand up against state repression and demand human and political rights for Kenyans. The artists in the songs address the political issues as they affect the people of Central Province in particular and Kenya in general. Among the political issues that these songs communicate are political repression, oppression, corruption nepotism and tribalism. It is against this background that the artists also voice the need for cohesion and demands for political change and constitutional change and a reintroduction of multi-party politics.

The song, *Thina wa Kamiti* ('The suffering at Kamiti') no.12, by Sam Kinuthia, relives the unexpected woes a man suffers after innocently attending an illegal (unlicensed) political meeting. The meeting was on the seventh of July 1991, a date politically referred to as *saba saba* (seven, seven). The persona in the song is an ordinary citizen who goes to attend the rally convened by opposition leaders demanding the re-introduction of multiparty politics in the country. The police break up the meeting and the man is arrested. He is falsely charged with 'throwing stones at policemen' and jailed for six years. He is incarcerated at the Kamiti maximum-security prison.

In the imagination of the song, it is from his

incarceration that he is sending a message to his mother and wife to reassure them that he is still alive. In reality scores of people who attended the rally on that day were shot dead by security forces. The song communicates the reality that Kenyans cannot wish away the political problems of the time. It would be like trying to avoid fate or an accident. Any moment you utter the truth you become an opponent of the political system. For this singer, the solution to the political problem can only come through a cleansing process by the God of Kenya:

God of Kenya let it rain  
 Let rain fall everywhere  
 Even where witches and wizards live  
 For Kenya has become a punishment arena  
 Like hell  
 If you speak the truth  
 You will be killed or if you are not killed  
 You end up in Kamiti (jail)

The artists during this era attacked the increasing levels of repression and poor political leadership and governance that inverted values and social economic priorities.

In song, *Tiga Kiunuhu*, ('Stop This Malice') no.13, the singer continues to analyze the state of leadership in the country. The song condemns the leadership for thriving on the creation of fear and despondency among the population. It is depicted as a leadership, which is always preparing for war with its citizenry. In the words of the text, it is always 'carrying clubs', 'sharpening spears' and 'preparing shields'. It is a leadership that seeks to deny its own people chances of self-fulfillment and blocks their attempts at material advancement. In the idiom of the shaving razor and the rain in season, the leadership is depicted as contradictory and even malevolent:

You refuse that I get shaved  
 While the razor does not belong to you  
 Nor does the beard shaver belong to you  
 If you were the one who  
 Makes the rain fall  
 It would never fall on our farms

The songs reveals the intention of those exercising powers as to vanquish the people by ensuring that they are denied access to resources. The message in the image of the hyena is further extended to illustrate the proportions of greed in the new ruling class. In the words of the singer, it is ready to eat both the 'honey and the hive' and will 'milk the cow until nothing remains in the udder.' The song presents the greed in a hyperbolic extent that goes beyond that of the proverbial hyena:

Who is this new hyena  
 That chews all the bones into smoothers  
 While others do not

The innovative significance of this song lies in its understanding and reflecting the invention of a new ethnicity in post-independent Kenya. The song further presents an understanding of the way this ethnicity affected the people. As many scholars have noted, modern ethnic perceptions in Africa are a creation of the colonial state. They have little to do with the pre-colonial tribal relationships. They were a result of a deliberate political and economic re-organization by colonialism. Post-independence political administration has continued to perfect the process (Leys, 1975; Bienen. 1974).

In the 'donkey that is being forced to move at the same pace with the horse', the song resists the new ethnicity that deliberately seeks to impoverish his ethnic group and hence thwarts its participation in the country's political processes.

The song is decrying what Lonsdale refers to as 'political tribalism', invented to serve the interests of the ruling groups and fostered through official discrimination and patronage by those in power (Lonsdale. 1992).

Stylistically, the messages communicated in this song are shrouded in figurative language and deeply rooted in the Kikuyu language and experience. The symbols and the metaphors express an awareness of the systematic forces that have destroyed what had emerged as 'a self-sustaining dynamic peasant agricultural community' (Throup and Hornsby 1998) for political expediency. The song seeks a solution to these problems in the veiled threats.

It calls for the hunt of the predators that are likened to the jackal that is spreading the fire of destruction and the trapping of the leopard that has ventured into the compound.

The story of *Kiumi*, by Njagi Njuki, is another example of the communication of changes in the political mainstream. The narrative continues to explore the theme of the new 'tribalism' in the country as a phenomenon of the post-Kenyatta era. In this story tribalism is presented in a new light whereby people identify other oppressed people as the source of their insecurity and economic hardships. The ruling classes ensure that tribal identity and kinship provide the individual with his only hope of opportunities and material survival.

In the story, *Kiumi*, the narrator removes the protagonist from the traditional setting and places him in the contemporary political and social environment. This version follows the structure and the motifs of the original traditional story but is adjusted to fit the narrator's thematic exposition. *Kiumi*, the hero in this version is a great eater just like the one in original versions. The ogre in this story is characterized as *Kiumi's* mother. This is departure from the traditional versions, whereby the ogre is *Kiumi's* antagonist.

In the overall image of this text, the mother can be read to mean *Kiumi's* tribe. *Kiumi* is also portrayed as an outsider from the other tribe. He comes to the community



with sinister intentions. He is a spy who seeks employment here as a cover to his true intentions of stealing these people's resources and taking them back to his people. He joins the guild of young men and when they buy oxen for a group feast, Kiumi suggests they should eat the animals in the plains without flies. But instead of leading the young men to the plains, he leads them towards where he came from. He also secretly carries flies trapped in his quiver. Every time they slaughter a bull, he secretly releases the flies and the meat is abandoned. They would move on and after some distance Kiumi would pretend that he has forgotten something and would go back and feast on the meat and leave the rest for his tribesmen.

He does this repeatedly ensuring that his fellow-tribesmen eat all the meat. The members of his guild become so hungry that they start feeding on wild bushes and some of them become too weak and even die.

When there is only one bull remaining and it is slaughtered, Kiumi leads the other young men to their death by sending them to fetch fire from his mother's hut. The ogre-mother kills them. Only two other men survive the journey. It is only after they manage to escape and are back home that they realize Kiumi wanted them all dead so that it could be easier to steal their resources.

The narrator in this story has consciously embellished it with the theme of tribalism in the post independence and post Kenyatta era in Kenya. While he does not explicitly situate the theme, his allusions are clear. He narrates the story from the point of view of the community, which Kiumi victimizes. Kiumi can also be interpreted to refer to the ruling class, which dispossesses the people of their property, taking it for themselves and leaving some for their fellow tribesmen. The adaptation of this story to the contemporary situation confirms the continued use of oral literature to abstract and communicate change and the contradiction of the post-independence era.

It is these contradictions of a lost ideal that drive singer, Albert Gacheru, in song no.14, *Ndi Mukenya* (I am a Kenyan), to seek solace in the possibility of a dream creating a single Kenyan tribe. In this song, the artist adapts the melancholic tune and structure of the Mau Mau songs. He attempts to recreate and reclaim the political ideal and spirit of the anti-colonial struggle in Kenya. He begins by titling the song 'I am a Kenyan' (*Ndi Mukenya*), in a series of appeals to recreate a nation that is now fragmented, the artist views the eradication of political tribalism as the first step. Such a process recognizes the strength in the diversity of linguistic differences:

The first thing people of Kenya  
We begin by ending tribalism  
Let everybody know that they are Kenyan  
...And know that different language

Is not the deterrent  
For the nation to be united

The appeal in this song attempts to create an all nation inclusive discourse as opposed to the exclusive political practice of post independence leaders who have emphasized the vertical divisions of the society. He attempts to recapture the spirit of the Mau Mau oral poet and embrace a wider national space that is Kenyan and African:

Let everybody glance sideways  
And see that all your neighbours  
Are fellow Africans  
The Europeans were visitors in Kenya  
Come friend, let us reason together  
That the darkness in our country  
May come to an end

The fulfillment of the possibility of Gacheru's romantic ideal of a Kenya devoid of political tribalism can be the only justification of the loss and suffering that people endured during the struggle:

When we defeat tribalism  
I will wear a Kenyan garment  
I will wash and smear myself with oil  
...Then never will I weep again, knowing that  
I never sacrificed my first born-sons in vain  
When I believe that I am a Kenyan

The significance of the song's search for the Kenyan ideal is the realization that it cannot be achieved within the parameters of colonialism and the post-independence inheritance. The basis of rejuvenating a Kenyan identity lies in recognizing the strength of African traditional values if the current problems of tribalism are to be solved. By appealing to the Kenyans to go back to their cultures and traditions in order to deal with current ethnic problems, the song understands the current forms of tribalism as a creation of the same forces that the people fought during colonialism:

The last thing Kenyans  
Go back to your traditions  
Your Kenyan traditions  
And Stop following Western cultures  
Traditions and culture make a people  
If you neglect your culture  
Darkness will never end in this country

The song, *Tondu wa Minyamaro* ('Because of the Suffering') no.15, parodied once more on an earlier Mau Mau song, reflects the feelings that the solutions to the current problems of governance and leadership in the country can be rectified through constitutional change.

While the country may have riveted back to the multiparty politics, ethnic discrimination continues as before. In the current neo-colonial situation, the song understands the ruling class as a combination of the colonial hegemony and the loyalist class that is transient:

This clan of grabbers  
They are visitors  
From Leadership, they will vacate  
I wonder where they will go  
When a new constitution is put in place

The song hence recognizes the cosmetic changes that were brought about by the introduction of multiparty politics in 1992. It concurs with the observations of Throup and Hornsby that the advent of multiparty politics did not alter the Kenyan life profoundly. 'Alternative centers of power emerged creating a climate in which there was freedom without substantive changes at the structure' (Throup and Hornsby, 1998). It is in this understanding that the singer seeks inspiration in the prophecies of Mugo wa Kibiro and the curse of Waiyaki Wa Hinga respectively to propose that a new constitution be the bases of true liberation of Kenyans. In envisaging the new constitution, the song rejects the house that was constructed at independence (for Kenyatta) as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Mugo wa Kibiro. The song insists that, that house has to be re-built in the form of a new constitution that will presumably protect all Kenyans irrespective of ethnic origin:

So that darkness in the country  
Can come to an end  
The house at Kia-Wairera  
Must be rebuilt again  
And a new constitution put in place

In spite of the limitations of the multiparty politics reflected in the oral literature discussed above, its introduction broadened democratization and level of social freedom. Political awareness and freedom of political expression increased compared to the period of single party politics. The songs discussed above reflect on these realities. While on the whole they convey an accurate picture and critique of the political situation during the post- Kenyatta era, they tend to see the solution to the current impasse in a return to the ideal fought for by the Mau Mau.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper we have sought to understand how the texts are part of postcolonial protest literature and how they have reacted to the destruction of indigenous cultural traditions, economic, social and political systems. The

texts analysed give us critical reflection into the colonial and post independence political processes for a period of 52 years. The analysis also indicates how the texts attempt to understand and recover the loss by offering solutions to the postcolonial problematic.

In our discussion and analysis of change and innovation in politics, we have broadly situated oral literary productions and performances within specific historical contexts. In each context oral literature has emerged as the cultural product and artifact that wrestles with the realities of the time.

We can conclusively say that our study confirms the notion of literature (art) as a form of consciousness (Lihamba, 1994). Over the last century, as an embodiment of a consciousness, the oral literature from Central Kenya emerges as a resilient instrument of resistance to cyclic episodes of oppression and domination. In the texts, the resilience rests on the hope of the realization of a future restoration, even when it is repeatedly overturned.

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## Appendix

1. **Kenyatta Ni Agathirwo** (Kenyatta was praised) **Rendition:** by Joseph Kamaru  
 Kenyatta was praised By children and women  
 When we were taken to Yatta To be jailed there  
 When we got there Heavy rain fell  
 Accompanied by thunderstorms

Pray to God Pray  
 God is the same forever  
 Tears that flowed  
 After we had been there for three days  
 And the children were all crying  
 One woman died of constipation  
 After eating buffalo meat  
 Pray to God pray  
 God is the same forever  
 A White man came  
 With his people carrying spades  
 When he saw us trying to burry her  
 Tears that flowed When at last her clothes  
 Were passed on to her sister  
 A telephone call from Githunguri  
 From Jomo, who wanted to know  
 Whether we had arrived  
 And we told him  
 The only sorrow we had  
 Was because of Josbaini's death  
 Pray to God pray  
 God is the same forever  
 The love that was there  
 Between women and children  
 When a bean fell to the ground  
 They would divide among themselves  
 The tears that flowed  
 From women and children  
 When being forced to dig trenches  
 Pray to God pray  
 God is the same forever  
 Kenyatta the beloved  
 The protector of the nation  
 May God bless him  
 Mbiyu the teacher of our children  
 We pray you will get a helper

2. **Uhoru Uria Mwiguire Na Matu** (What you heard). **Rendition:** by Joseph Kamaru  
 The name of the God of Kikuyu  
 Is pure and sacred  
 He told the Kikuyu that his name  
 Should not be mentioned in vain  
 Because it is powerful  
 The messages you heard with your ears  
 And what you saw with your eyes  
 The ability of the Kikuyu  
 They could not be stopped  
 They did what they had planned  
 Children in Olenguruone saw for

themselves Cows and goats  
 confiscated  
 The priest was the witness  
 When Olenguruone was destroyed  
 The property, the savings  
 And the hope in Olenguruone  
 After being brought out of the valley  
 They were taken to the office

Where they were finger printed  
 After that they were taken to Yatta  
 And others to Nakuru  
 To be jailed over land  
 Do not give people information  
 By the roadside  
 Do not agree to sign anything  
 The rights of the Kikuyu  
 Will be their defense everywhere  
 The crying that was in Olenguruone  
 By the babies due to the cold  
 Heavy rain fell  
 And the children cried together  
 As their houses had been burnt  
 When the maize was cut down  
 God saw the suffering of the children  
 He blessed the wild animals  
 And the wild grapes  
 And told us to eat them  
 School children were taken to the school  
 Their mothers and fathers were all arrested  
 And taken to Yatta, others to Nakuru  
 To be jailed because of the land  
 When teacher Kiurigo was arrested  
 He told the policemen  
 I cannot leave the children  
 Like the children of the wilderness  
 If you want to take me in  
 Find me at the school  
 And arrest me together with the children

3. **Tugakenya Muno** (We Shall be Happy Indeed)

**Rendition:** By Joseph Kamaru  
 When we left Olenguruone it was around 4 P.M.  
 We found cattle in the plains,  
 At gandarani, many men gazed at us  
 As we were taken to be detained

When we left Nakuru early in the morning  
 We got to Thika around mid-day  
 We were given three tins of water  
 And that was our breakfast

We shall really rejoice  
 When the House of Mumbi  
 Gets back its land  
 We are very sad  
 House of Mumbi  
 We are feed with worm-infested flour

We were taken to Yatta to die  
 We were taken there never to come back  
 The laughter we heard in Nairobi  
 When white children were laughing at us  
 Assuming we would be vanquished  
 Never to be seen in Kenya again

The wailing that was in Olenguruone  
 As we tried to put our things together  
 We were being told to make haste  
 Not to forget we were under arrest  
 When we left we bade each other goodbye  
 And said we were being taken to jail  
 At the place of black rocks  
 White clan know this  
 You are jailing us because of our land  
 We shall live in Kenya forever  
 Our heritage from Gikuyu and Mumbi

The placid place is Kikuyuland  
 Here in yatta there is no rest  
 A place of stones and sand  
 We were brought here to die  
 A place where there is no rain  
 We were brought here  
 So that our dignity is stripped off

We have been suppressed all over the country  
 Our homes have been destroyed  
 And our bodied further violated  
 Do not fear, you used to ask  
 When will the moment come.

White people came from Europe  
 So that they can destroy the House of Mumbi  
 They have been here destroying us  
 What will take them back to Europe  
 We have to suffer in this world  
 And our homes have been destroyed  
 Do not be afraid,  
 The moment you were asking for  
 Has now come

4. **Kuma Ndemi Na Mathathi** (from Ndemi and Mathahi)

**Rendition:** by Joseph Kamaru

Since Ndemi and Mathathi

I have not asked for feast oxen  
That is why now  
I ask you for an education  
Brave men these days  
What they need is education  
I need nothing else

Mother, Father  
I just want an education  
Since fools have never  
Accumulated cattle (wealth)

Cattle has become depleted  
Goats are becoming fewer  
I won't ask you for a feast ox  
Brave men today have all come  
together  
So that they can protect the land

Mother, Father  
I just want an education  
Since fools have never  
Accumulated cattle (wealth)

How come you are not considering  
To volunteer with your spear and  
shield  
Brother do not let go our wealth

Our great hero, Kenyatta  
Beloved of the House of Mumbi  
Jomo has broken the tape  
Mother, father, I just want an  
education  
Since fools have never  
Accumulated cattle (wealth)

Our people, our country  
Was protected by warriors  
By people with shields and spears  
From Ndemi and Mathathi  
I have never asked for a feast oxen

Mother, father, I just want an  
education  
Since fools have never  
Accumulated cattle (wealth)

**5. Mwene Nyaga Twakuhoya (God  
we pray Thee)**

**Rendition:** by Joseph Kamaru

God, beloved the protector of the  
army  
Who accepts the sacrifices and

offerings  
Of the black people  
God in front of us  
The enemy cannot defeat us

God, 'owner of the ostrich', we pray  
thee  
We pray for love and respect  
And sympathy to the beloved of the  
nation  
The unity of Gikuyu and Mumbi  
'Owner of the ostrich', we pray thee

We pray that we shall all meet  
From Ngong to Garbatulla  
That day sadness will be lifted  
From all the fighters and our parents

Kenyatta haste up independence  
And Mbiyu, bring our share of  
Knowledge  
The whole of Kenya is full of tears  
Longing for the day we shall be  
independent

Loyalists you fight for slavery  
When the patriots fight for the country  
Our Heritage from Gikuyu and Mumbi  
'Owner of the ostrich', we pray thee

Kenyatta haste up us independence  
And Mbiyu bring us our share of  
knowledge  
God when you are in front of us  
The enemy shall never defeat us  
'Owner of the ostrich', we pray thee

**6. Mbara Ya Rui Ruiru**

**Rendition:** By Wa Gatonye

Listen all, I narrate to you,  
About the battle of Rui Ruiru  
It's me Wagatonye, telling you  
The story in the proper way  
Greetings to you all  
Defenders of Kirinyaga  
Lend me your ears  
And get the information first hand  
It was on a Tuesday and we were at  
Karuthi  
Consulting after we were told  
That we have been waylaid  
When we heard that, we got worried  
Because we had come from Aguthi  
Journeying for three days without rest

A woman came to us with that  
information  
And told us, "my children, things are  
really bad"  
And we told her, "take courage we  
warriors are there"  
As bullets poured over the banana  
plants like rain

We would shoot with shot gun  
And they would all go flat on the  
ground  
And they would reply with the  
machine gun  
And about that time we advanced  
near a fig tree  
Long used the bren gun  
And they started blowing the whistles

Ngige was the major, the commander  
at the battle  
He led the warriors until they crossed  
river Ruthagati  
When we got to the open ground  
We found the enemy waiting  
We all took heart and dispersed them

By that time the government got  
worried  
By the power of our commanders  
General Kariba said with his voice  
Select only the Europeans  
And let the black people to escape  
As they are guided by foolishness

The government soldiers were many  
They had been brought from Nanyuki  
And others from Tumu Tumu and  
Karatina

Many white soldiers ran off towards  
Kiamachingi  
Where they were talking over the  
radio Calling for reinforcements from  
Nanyuki  
The one who recieved their radio call  
replied  
Fight you who are there, we cannot  
come

It is at then that the colonial secretary  
Mr.Rennikson spoke at the airport  
and said  
*The stability of the Kenya  
Government  
Has been destroyed by Mau Mau*

*terror!*

We had many Bren guns and uncountable rifles  
Hand grenades we had but were not using them  
When Gateru was shot through the shoulder  
Chui got so angry he downed the white soldier

**7. Riria Kimathi Ambatire** (When Kimathi Ascended)

**Rendition:** by Njagi Njuki

When Kimathi ascended  
The mountain alone  
He was given strength and courage  
To defeat the white man

We are crying because we are black people  
We are not white and not part of their heritage  
Our God is ahead of us

He said all the footprints that I have implanted  
On them yours will be implanted  
And you will drink from a same cup as me

Do not fear repression and detention  
To be disposed and to be killed  
Our God is ahead of us

We shall pray for God to help us  
So that the European goes back to his country  
As a tree that bears no fruit  
Is never planted in the garden

Until and unless our hearts are destroyed  
Jomo will never abandon us  
Because he also was never abandoned by God at Kapenguria

**8. Riria Kenyatta Aciarirwo** (When Kenyatta was born)

**Rendition:** By Joseph Kamaru

When Jomo was born by his mother and father  
He was born a leader

But his mother and father did not know  
Only God knew

*Uui* There is much suffering  
Hunger and imprisonment for no reason  
And this land is ours

Jommo grew up and matured  
And he began to think  
About the future of this country Kenya  
In years to come  
Who are those singing loudly  
On the other side of the ocean  
Singing for Jommo and Mbiyu  
The seekers of truth

**9. Tuguciira Na Karamu** (We shall Reason with the Pen)

**Artist/ Performer:** H.M. Kariuki

The cock that crowed, crowed three times  
The first cockcrow was Waiyaki  
The second Cock crow was Harry Thuku  
And the third cockcrow was Jomo  
Who told the Europeans it was already dawn  
Now they could go home and leave Kenya

In Kenya we shall now reason with the pen  
Today we shall reason with the pen  
In future we shall reason with the pen  
We shall always be reasoning like intelligent people

I had not come to know but it appears you know  
You from the know-it-all clan  
Know about the issues that pertain to you  
You will never know about Kenya

I will deliberate on Kenya during the day  
But when it comes to the case of foreigners  
I will do that in the evening  
As I split firewood

Kenya is a country for us all  
Some of you say we divide it into

pieces  
Whoever splits this country into pieces  
May his bones crush  
And may leprosy inflict his offspring

As for the one who creates conflicts  
Here in Kenya  
We shall pray that his eyes burst  
and beseech God that he dies alone

This person who creates conflicts  
It appears you are very happy  
When your children  
Are feeding on buttered bread  
While orphans cry in poverty

When the prayers by the children  
Are received by to God  
I will not deceive; I will tell you the truth  
Those prayers are already there  
You will vomit whatever you have stolen

May the partitioner of Kenya  
Break his backbone  
May his staff become unsteady?  
And may his children be cursed

And a great curse was left in Kenya  
By those who fought and shed blood  
And those are the Mau Mau who said  
May the partitioner of Kenya be cursed by the soil

**10. Mai Ni maruru** (The water is Bitter)

**Performers:** Gathaiti P.C.E.A. Choir

Moses in the wilderness  
At the spring of Mera  
The water was bitter  
Unsuitable to drink  
The crowd asked Moses  
Now that the water was bitter  
What shall we drink

Even now the water is bitter  
From the homes to work places  
From children to adults  
The water is bitter  
What shall we drink

Moses prayed and God told him  
To dip his staff and cleanse the water

When he dipped the staff  
The water was purified  
The crowd drunk and it was satisfied

A wife and a husband  
Are quarrelling over minor things  
Telling each other, it is not you  
I wanted to marry  
Because the water is bitter.

When you go to the office  
In need of help  
You find the officer is angry  
If you want to get in  
He says he is busy  
Because the water is bitter

Promiscuity is increasing  
Murder, theft and robbery  
Trying to satisfy the physical body  
Because the water is bitter

Like what Moses was told by God  
To dip his Staff to purify water  
Let us call upon Jesus to save us  
To straighten where it is bad  
That we may drink the water

**11. Ngraragu Ya Ngoro** (Famine of the heart)

**Performers:** Gathaithi P.C.E .A Choir

Now that the famine is widespread  
And it has been baptized many names  
So that the people may not know  
There is a bread of Jesus

Just look around  
The rich and the poor  
The children and the adults  
They are staggering all over  
Because their hearts are hungry

Many houses and huge tracts of land  
A lot of money and high education  
Cannot satisfy the heart of a human being  
Only the bread of Jesus can

Two women from Samaria  
Ate their children to wad off hunger  
They could not consider the glory of children  
Because of the hunger in their hearts

One woman only salvaged the hammock  
Her child was swept away by the river  
If we lack wisdom  
We cannot be wise  
To take Jesus with us to heaven

Everybody search your hearts  
So that you do not get lost with your testimony  
So that you do not continue calling him Jesus  
And it's a Jesus of rumours

Our names attained the status  
Ready to go to the wedding in heaven  
You may eat the bread or not  
Jesus will still come back

**12. Thina Wa Kamiti**

**Artist/Performer:** Sam Kinuthia

Problems, problems dear mother  
My love, I was arrested  
On the seventh of the seventh  
And was jailed in Kamiti  
Tabitha my wife, this is my message  
I am alive, I am not dead  
I was arrested on the seventh of seventh  
And jailed in Kamiti.

On that day I had gone  
To Kamukunji to see Matiba  
At noon, problems started  
And I was arrested and jailed  
It is difficult to escape some pitfalls  
I was accused of throwing stones at the police  
I denied the charge  
And was remanded for two weeks

After two weeks I had suffered enough  
I agreed to the charges  
I was jailed for six years  
They were merciless  
Tabitha tell my young child I will come home  
Show her my photograph so that she may know me

God of Kenya let it rain  
Let there be showers  
Even where witches and wizards live

Kenya has become a punishment arena  
If you speak the truth you are killed  
Or taken to Kamiti, a real hell on earth

**14. Ndi Mukenya** (I am a Kenyan)

**Version:** By Albert Gacheru

The first thing people of Kenya  
Begin by ending tribalism  
Let everybody know they are Kenyans  
And other tribes are like the Kikuyu  
And once again Kenyans  
You must know that  
Speaking different languages  
Is not a deterrent  
For the nation to be united.

Come friend, Come friend  
Let us reason together  
We are sad because of tomorrow  
That the darkness in our country can be lifted

If you are asked whether you are Kenyan  
I would raise all my two hands up  
And declare that I am truly Kenyan

Then once again people of Kenya  
Let us serve the country  
Everybody do your part  
And at the end, come together

Before I end people of Kenya  
Glance side and side  
And see that all your neighbours  
Are fellow black people  
The white people were  
Visitors to our country

When we defeat tribalism  
I will wear a Kenyan garment  
I will wash and smear myself with cream  
From the milk of our cattle  
Then I will know I never sacrificed  
My firstborns in vain  
I will never again weep  
When I believe I am truly Kenyan

The last thing Kenyans  
Go back to your traditions  
And stop imitating Western culture

And do not leave before I tell you  
That tradition and culture is the  
people  
If you neglect your culture  
The darkness in this country will  
never end

15. **Tondu wa Minyamaro** (Because  
of the suffering)

**Version:** By Albert Gacheru

Our people, the foolish and clever  
Who can fail to see the discrimination  
By the people of the clan of K  
And the many things full of darkness  
This our country Kenya  
From Mombasa to Lake Victoria  
God blessed it for us  
And said we should never abandon it

Our people, all of us have problems  
Brought about by the leadership  
But stop crying and weeping  
God is going to help us

This house of grabbers are visitors  
To leadership and they will leave  
I wonder where they shall go  
When the country has a new  
constitution

When they took Waiyaki away  
Before he was buried alive  
He left us with a curse  
That we should never sell our land  
And now we are giving it away

Mugo wa Kibiro prophesied  
That the elder's house at Kiawairera  
Once it was built and completed  
That is when the white man would  
leave  
So that darkness in the country can  
end  
That elder's house at Kiawairera  
It must be rebuilt again  
And a new constitution put in place