

UNDERSTANDING GENDER THROUGH GENRE: ORAL LITERATURE AS A VEHICLE FOR GENDER STUDIES IN EAST AFRICA

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Introduction/Abstract

This paper attempts to preliminarily capture the relationship between gender issues and the form, content, performance and delivery of East African oral literary genres. It seeks to show that while gender issues have been included, discussed and even disguised *within* the various genres, it has not been the case in the discourses on the majority of those genres. The paper raises and tries to answer a few critical questions that posit gender studies alongside East African oral literature. For example, how do male and female narrators resemble or differ in the oral literature delivery process? How do male narrators depict female and male characters and how do female narrators depict the same in such a process? Are there any similarities and/or differences? If so, how and why? How does the listener perceive of such differences or similarities of treatment and portrayal? The paper argues that in trying to understand this process, one may need to unveil the symbolic meanings that are mediated through aesthetic impulses that are, in turn, prompted by a proliferation of various styles and a wide range of oral literary expressions, techniques and general worldview and outlook. As an illustration, the paper shows how the attempt to break the Adam-Eve metaphor from East African lullabies can shed some light on gender relations among the people of East Africa.

The paper's inquiry recognizes the relationship between genre and gender alongside the self-consciousness of the audience that involve systematic, culture-bound reflections on, and interpretations of, the different levels of abstractions obtained in oral literature. It is argued that further and deeper research into this area may aid a lot not only in examining the interdependence of belief and understanding in the whole enterprise of the delivery and reception of oral literature, but also in generic and gender studies in relation to various products of the cultural industries of the East African people.

The folklore of a people enables us to observe and behold, as though through telescopic eyes, such people's patterns of beliefs and their customs. In this way, a people's philosophy of life is revealed by way of their folkloric wisdom. The eyes of folklore characters can make one discern how people react to social pressures in their environment. The voices of the story characters in a folktale, for example, provide the means for us to share the moral precepts and principles guiding a people's social interaction. Moreover, the folklore of a people enables us also to enjoy a good story and, in the process, satisfy our aesthetic sensibilities. For example, the humor and witticism, buffoonery and amusement so typically found in folktales make us chortle and smile inwardly and even embarrassingly, as we sometimes see ourselves and our own follies, foibles and whims mirrored and reflected in the antics of the folklore characters.

Further, through such folklore genres like the folktale, a person's socialisation process in his or her society/community is not only metaphorically depicted but also effected. This is done through manipulation of various symbols that may even represent the *rites de passage* that imprint all the necessary qualities that a person is supposed to attain in order to graduate into adulthood in his or her community.

Our research into most East African folktales that specifically deal with heroes and heroines of adventure indicate that these qualities imprint the readiness to do service to the community and even to sacrifice oneself in doing so. Included here also is the necessity to value one's family in one's life. Such rites of passage as depicted in the folktales reveal social processes that sustain and modify the conduct and behaviour of individuals of a given community. The social processes do, in turn, involve conflict management or even mismanagement that would ultimately give indications of the resolution or non-resolution of such conflicts. This is a very important aspect of oral literary outputs especially in today's conflict-ridden world. It would make an interesting research to look into the way folklore items, especially the folktale, tell and re-tell the different conflicts such as the ones in war-torn zones, and, perhaps, discover the suggested resolutions that may help the mediators of such conflicts.

This paper however, focuses on a different issue altogether. It uses two Kiswahili literary genres to inquire into a gender view of the people that produced such pieces. First, it uses the folktale for an examination of issues of delivery and reception vis-à-vis gender issues; and secondly it uses Kiswahili lullabies specifically to see how gender matters can metaphorically be manipulated in the products of a people's cultural industries that are conventionally not meant to be used so.

Narrator vis-à-vis Gender Perspectives

The folktale in Appendix I tells how long, long ago there was a bad King. He was known as King Pride because he was so boisterous, self-centered and selfish. In fact he was so selfish that he wanted only himself to know the art of reading and writing and let his subjects remain totally ignorant. He, thus, sent his soldiers to scout around and ensure that no one tries to become literate. The overzealous soldiers went from house to house in search of those who would go against the orders of the King. After long and tedious searches they managed to catch one old man who was giving instructions to his daughter on how to read and write.

The way the story develops and even ends, varies, and, interestingly, the variation is gender-driven. Most female narrators would end the story at the point where the daughter outwits King Pride to the extent of making him take off his royal robes and crown and giving them to her so that the people declare her their ruler. As a logical conclusion to the story, and by the incitement by the daughter, King Pride is killed by his angry subjects and the land flourishes under the new ruler's regimen. On the contrary, the male narrators would add a portion to the story to the effect that after outwitting the King and assuming all the powers, the daughter then hands the power over to her father, and the land flourishes under the latter's rule.

This kind of a twist in the folktale did produce a number of reactions from my students at the University of Dar es Salaam, based, again, on gender lines. Some of them argued that the twist by the male narrators is a logical conclusion aiming at maintaining patriarchal status quo. Others insisted that the assumption of power by the daughter symbolizes the emergency of a new, liberated woman in the face of a patriarchal society that has been all along reserving the right to access to political power to men. Since this is a very preliminary study that is still going on, and we are still collecting more data on the relationship between narrator and gender outlook within the narrated pieces, I will leave it at that and concentrate on an area whose research has been more or less conclusive. This is the genre of lullabies as sung or hummed by East African women.

Breaking the Adam-Eve Metaphor in Tanzanian Lullabies

Contextual identification is necessary in any discourse on a perceptual reflection of a society's social development presented in literary and other cultural industries. This is so since such industries are, by and large, categories of history that reflect a given people's mentality at a given time in their social development. Looking at Tanzanian oral literature vis-à-vis the upbringing of children, one notices that the child who was born in pre-colonial Tanzania was exposed to, and experienced various forms of literature from a very tender age when the mother, elder sister/brother or ayah/nanny sang lullabies to it. These lullabies aimed mainly at rocking the baby to sleep and expressing verbally the mother's joy of playing with her child or of having a child like the one presently carried on her back or lap. The lullabies were also used as a medium of instruction in language and music. However, as I have shown elsewhere, the genre had a number of other uses as well, which were, in effect, meant for adults.¹ Most of these uses can be summarised to be a way of talking to oneself, where mothers would like to have silent sympathies of their children regarding their adult grievances. This leads one to wonder whether most of the lullabies that we generally classify as children's literature are not, in effect and fact, veiled **adult** literature. I have stated in the same paper cited above, the following regarding this matter:

One can say that the lullabies are used here as a form of "talking to oneself", in spite of the dual audiences of the child and the father who might, indeed, not even be present at all when they are sung or hummed. These are the moments when a mother would like to have someone to listen to her and sympathize. The silent sympathy that the mother gets from the lulled baby seems to be the most appropriate. The lullabies, sung or hummed at such times, might contain some therapeutic values, which can, indeed, rival those contained in fairy tales.²

We are arguing therefore, that sometimes the women who compose and even sing the lullabies do not mean to have the attention of their children regarding the actual contents of the lullabies. Here is where one has a piece of literature whose form is meant for one audience (children) and contents for another audience (husbands/ayahs).

A few lullabies here from Zanzibar will serve for illustration.³

Lullaby 1: *Ukiwa wa Baba na Mama ("Loneliness Caused by My father and Mother")*.

Angole ngole mwanangu, mwanangu nakuchombeza
Usilie usilie ukilia waniliza, wanikumbusha ukiwa
Ukiwa wa Baba na Mama, kunioza dume kongwe
Halisafiri halendi, kazi lapiga matonge
Likiingia kitandani hunguruma kama ng'ombe
Likiingia mvunguni, lagongoresha vikombe.

(Hush, hush my baby, I am lulling you my baby

*Do not cry, for when you cry you make me cry
As you remind me of the bitterness and loneliness
Caused by my father and mother
Who have married me off to an old man
A docile, inactive and useless man
All it knows about is gluttony
And when it goes to bed
All it does is snore like a cow!
And when near the bed,
It knocks the utensils over.)*

Before we comment on this lullaby, let us look at another lullaby.

Lullaby 2: Salamu za Siri (“Secret greetings”)

Ukenda nisalimie
Kwa jina usinitaje
Mlangoni pana watu
Kidege nitapitaje?
Ukenda nikonyezee
Jioni mwambie aje.

*(When you go pass on my greetings
But do not mention my name
There are many people at the door
How can I, poor bird, pass through?
So, when you go there give him a wink
Tell him to come in the evening.)*

In the first lullaby the singing mother is not only protesting against forced or arranged marriage, but also that the fact that she is married to an old and useless man makes her condition worse. The protest is hidden in the second lullaby in which the woman portrays herself as a chained, imprisoned bird, unable to go out and meet her loved one. The lullaby is, thus, a veiled speech of a veiled woman. Notice the use of the word “it” for the husband, which reduces the man to a thing rather than a human being.

The next lullaby is actually sung while a woman is doing some work at the same time trying to silence the baby on her back. It is very similar to Lullaby 2 quoted above as it expresses a longing faced by a lonely woman:

Lullaby 3: Kile Nini Ng’ambu ya Mto? (What Is That Across the River?)

Kile nini kilicho ng’ambu ya mto?
Hakiita hakiitiki kazi kunipa majuto
Majuto ua kungumanga na ndiko roho iliko
Nangojea maji yatoke nende huko.

*(What is that on the other side of the river?
I have desperately called for it
All it has given me are regrets,
Regrets in a nutmeg flower⁴
Where my heart resides.
I await the water to reside
Then I will go there)*

We shall elaborate on the meaning contained in the above lullaby later. Since East African lullabies seem to play a double role as both children and adult literature, perhaps it is important here to state that the adult part, the non-cradle part that deals with the man-woman relationship, revolves around what one can term, for lack of a better word, the Adam-Eve metaphor, and the delicate institution of marriage. If one needs to go beyond the lulling role to the child and the protest function to the adults, one needs to break open the delicate Adam-Eve metaphor and, perhaps, in the process, replace it with another. The following part gives a summary of the attempt to do that tricky exercise that I have done elsewhere.⁵

The Psychology of the Adam-Eve Metaphor

In these lullabies that can be re-named East African Blues, are the expressive qualities of speech – rhythm, inflection and intonation. These, plus the use of soft liquid vowels, among other speech qualities, are important for lulling the baby to sleep. However, it is these same qualities that are important in matters of sexual behavioral relationships aptly applied to, and operative in, the Adam-Eve metaphor. In examining this metaphor, we want to know the relationship between two phenomena: the woes of Eve and the reception by Adam. We want to see how much the “high” values expressed in one variable (Eve) are associated with the corresponding values of the other, and how the “low” values in the other variable (Adam) correspond in the same manner. Definitely, from the lullabies that have been collected so far, it is clear that there are very few matches of *high* \Leftrightarrow *high* and *low* \Leftrightarrow *low*. The Eve side is crying out for mercy and help, showing how, the other side, the Adam side, is the source of the woes. Let’s take a look at some more lullabies. These are shorter ones that are repeatedly and, thus, *emphatically*, sung.

Lullaby 4: Uchungu wa Kuzaa (Birth Pangs)

Nichombezapu mwanangu
Mtu halipati langu
Maji moto na uchungu
Nauona peke yangu.

*(When I lull my baby
No one can interfere,
I single-handedly
Faced hot water and the birth pangs)*

Lullaby 5: Ngumi Hailei (A Punch Does Not Bring Up a Child)

Hailei hailei mama, ngumi hailei
Ukinilea kwa ngumi mama, wanitia maradhi
Kukosea si kugwa, ni kwenda mbele.

*(A punch does not bring up a child, dear mama
If you bring me up using punches, you cripple me mama,
To err is not to fall; it leads one forward.)*

Lullaby 6: Na Leo Pia (Today Too)

Na leo ukalale
Ulikolala jana
Usambe uongo
Paondoka jino
Pakaa pengo.

*(Today too, go and sleep
Where you slept yesterday
Don’t think it’s a lie
When it is said,
“Where a tooth departs
A gap resides)*

Lullaby 7: Nakuuliza Mwenzangu (I ask you my mate)

Nakuuliza mwenzangu
Nakosa kitu gani?
Mja hukosa kwa Mola
Akapata Samahani
Yawache uliyo nayo
Tuishi kama zamani.

*(I ask you my mate
What wrong have I done?
A man errs to God
And yet he is forgiven.
Forget the misgivings you have
Let’s live like before.)*

It is in these lullabies that a negative correlation manifests itself. Except for Lullaby 7 in which the woman admits to have done something wrong – although my informers tell me that it can as well be just a false admission for the sake of peace, harmony and reconciliation, in the rest of the lullabies high values of one variable are constantly associated with low values of the other. Perhaps, in order to break this metaphor, it is important to ask why this relationship of high-low is so one sided in most of these lullabies.

Lullaby 5 is a veiled commentary on either domestic or socio-psychological violence, and is, very likely, directed at the husband rather than the mother. It is a very sad song in which the mother, pretending to be the child, cries out for help against the “punches” of the mother on the child that are in reality, representative of those from the husband. At the risk of stereotyping and generalizations, one is tempted to delve into the socio-cultural view of such violence. The reasons for the violence are definitely not instinctual nor do personality or pure brain traits cause them. Rather, they stem from the socio-economic realities that determine matching social and cultural rules about when to aggress and against whom. It is important, therefore, to identify the situational, economic and cultural factors that encourage such anger and aggression between sexes. Thus, invariably, the reduction or elimination of such violence would require not just individual change of Adam’s heart but general social and cultural change.

A work of art is a consequence of the social milieu. Social and economic contexts shape every aspect of human behavior that is captured metaphorically in works of art, and we must emphasize here that the social component of a socio-cultural perspective at the same determines the feminine-masculine relationships within and even without the institution of marriage. Should one wish to break the metaphor of such an institution, therefore, one needs to concentrate on that perspective. I have tried to use this method elsewhere, and I think that the results were a good basis for generalization. In the paper on lullabies that is cited above, I collected lullabies from matrilineal societies in Tanzania and compared them with those from other societies like the Zanzibari one, which are predominantly patriarchal. I will quote just two short examples of lullabies from the Kaguru people from Morogoro, Tanzania mainland, to illustrate the comparison that I made. The lullabies are in Cikaguru, a language of the Kaguru people.⁶

Lullaby 8: Saga, saga, saga! (Grind, grind, grind!)

Saga, saga, saga; saga, saga, saga
Sagile dilume dyangu, saga
Didie sinda simeme, saga
Kigana wakwe dyalima, saga
Kumbe wa mai na baba, saga

(Kiswahili translation)

Saga, saga, saga; saga, saga, saga
Ngoja nilisagie liume langu, saga
Ili lile hadi lishibe, saga
Kama kwamba ndilo lililolima, saga
Na hali ni baba na mamangu, saga

(English translation)

Grind, grind, grind; grind, grind, grind
Let me grind for (it) my husband, grind
So that it eats to its full, grind
As if it's the one that worked for this, grind
While it's my father and mother's work, grind.

Lullaby 9: Chidiage chisumuke (Let's Eat Fast)

Chidiage chisumuke
Chidiage chisumuke
A malume genghali genda
Hona gejile
Amalomo gwaya.

Kiswahili Translation

Hebu tule harakaharaka
Hebu tule harakaharaka
Wakati wanaume wanarandaranda kijijini
Na hapo watakapowasili
Midomo yao itakuwa ikigwaya.

English Translation

Come let's eat fast

Come let's eat fast

While the men are roaming the village over

So that when they return

Their (hungry) mouths will be drooping.

These two lullabies actually mock the man, they poke fun at the men in the village, and they clearly indicate how the woman in this society is independent and self-confident since she owns even the land on which her husband built their house. Never at one time during this research among the matrilineal societies, was found a lullaby that shows the woman as a docile creature who is at the mercy of her husband's whims. The social, cultural and economic realities of the Kaguru society, when it was still a real matrilineal society did not allow for such kind of a woman. Conversely, such realities in Zanzibar and other similar patriarchal societies do not only allow but they condemn the woman to the docile position at the mercy of her husband. Breaking the Adam-Eve metaphor, therefore, would mean entering and breaking open the social and economic fabric of the relevant society, and changing it so as to bring along a *high* \Leftrightarrow *high* variable relationship.

What the discussion above implies, then, is that one needs to approach this metaphor by placing the questions of the politics of culture at the centre of its corresponding products. There is a need to rethink the current discussions of cultural production that compartmentalize such products, so that we put emphasis on community construction and disjunctures vis-à-vis identity politics built on gender lines. Through this, the different *voices* of high versus low can be discerned and elaborated on in a round and cross-disciplinary manner that takes into account all forms of cultural production. Again, in order to break well that metaphor, one needs to go beyond the cradle. Doing so may show how the other folkloric modes have dealt with the matter of socio-cultural power relations that would be critical of the issues of domesticity as an ideology that, in turn, confines the woman to the roles of a bitter wife, a sad mother, and a broken homemaker.

Lullabies 4 and 6, though, indicate some kind of change in the metaphor that we have been talking about. Lullaby 4 designates the mother's love and possessiveness to her child – a mother instinct kind of love that reminds one of the possessiveness of the chicken to its chicks. The mother relates the possession of her child to the birth pangs that necessitated her being massaged with hot water to try to reduce the pain. It is these birth pangs that make the mother proud and possessive. The fact that no man knows the extent of this pain makes woman superior to man, and it gives woman the secret, superior power that no man can exercise. This same stance is seen in Lullaby 6 where the singing woman dares, like in the matrilineal societies, to tell her husband off as she insists that he must return to where he spent the night, which is presumably, at another woman's place. The emergency of many lullabies of this type in recent times is indicative of the changes that seem to be taking place between these two sides. Invariably, this means that if this is the trend, then, perhaps there is no need to try to break open the Adam-Eve metaphor. The social changes taking place in society are, themselves, breaking open that metaphor.

Perhaps, as a way of concluding our enterprise, we should stir some further comparative discussion concerning the lullaby as literature for adults. Isidore Okpewho, in his book, *African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character and Continuity*⁷ quotes an example of a lullaby from the Akan of Ghana taken from Nketia's 1979 work, "Akan Poetry"⁸, that is sung by a mother to her child in the cradle. We would like to quote the lullaby here for the sake of comparison. Unfortunately Okpewho has just given us the English translation that goes as follows:

Someone would like to have you for her child

But you are my own.

Someone wished she had you to nurse on a good mat;

Someone wished you were hers; she would put you on a camel blanket;

But I have you to rear on a torn mat.

Someone wished she had you, but I have you.

Okpewho says that the lullaby is just a touching expression of the love of a poor mother to her child. He touches on the fact that this poor mother wishes that her child could have the benefits of all those comforts that a child in a rich household enjoys. The mother is, still, proud to have the child, her poverty-stricken life notwithstanding. One is tempted to urge Okpewho to develop his theory of the lullaby further to show that in instances like the quoted lullaby, there are veiled cries of the lower class, of the have-nots against the rich who own it all. It would seem that the lullaby, like all the other "innocent" literary modes, is used in a veiled manner to express class and gender issues in a manner that satirical literature would generally do.⁹

General Conclusions

Basically, the above kind of examination is, in effect, a scrutiny of a people's worldview that accrues from their literary outputs. A worldview and, thus, philosophical tradition is, first and foremost, an idealism that ultimately identifies itself with reality. This worldview that may just be presented through abstract imageries and symbolism, is reflectively meditated upon through the word, through metaphoric language. One then needs to examine closely the workings of *story* in the minds of its listeners. In this case, the mind's eye that is infused and permeated with the capability and norms of literary and artistic sensibilities, has the authority of churning metaphors that are culture-bound to produce images of a people's reality. An inquiry into a worldview of a people is, necessarily, an investigation into that people's culture shaped by the social and historical contexts, which gave birth to, and nurtured the accompanying artistic products, including literary outputs.

Let me end by reiterating that the arts and the humanities play a major role in liberating the mind. Without liberating the mind, the psyche, the imprisoned world outlooks, the beliefs, the attitudes that often effect self denial and denigration, no positive gender awareness can be achieved and, thus, our research efforts and ensuing discussions in symposia like this one will end up as mere theoretical deliberations that will be of no use to the majority of the stakeholders in this enterprise, especially the women in the rural communities who are the most affected.

¹ See my paper, "Viewing Gender Through Tanzanian Lullabies." In Myrna Machet et al, eds, *Other Worlds Other Lives: Children's Literature Experiences* [Proceedings of the International Conference on Children's Literature]. (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 1996) pp. 119-136 The ideas in this paper have been expanded significantly in my forthcoming book, *A Gift of Truthful Lies: A Critical Bilingual Anthology of Lullabies, Riddles and Fables from Tanzania*.

² op.cit., p.135.

³ Again, for a fuller analysis of lullabies from Zanzibar, see the forthcoming book mentioned above.

⁴ I am told by one of my informers that since some East African coastal women use the nutmeg as an aphrodisiac, the reference here could, therefore, be sexual. Which means that the woman has, among other longings, sexual yearning for the man "across the river." The flower here represents the open, waiting woman who is still in the prime of her beauty, the nutmeg is a sexual symbol that would consume that beauty as it happens in nature too where the flower has to be "consumed" by the fruit, and the river represents and, therefore intensifies, the distance between the two lovers.

⁵ See my forthcoming book mentioned above in footnote 2 above.

⁶ Thanks to Prof. Penina Muhando-Mlamba who made these lullabies and their Kiswahili translation available to me.

⁷ (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 139.

⁸ J.H.K. Nketia, "Akan Poetry", in U. Beier, ed., *Introduction to African Literature* (London: Longman, 1979),p.27.

⁹ Chapter 6 of my other work, *Let the Story and the Lies Come: A Critical Bilingual Anthology of Folktales from Zanzibar* (forthcoming, Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota) explores further, the use of the satirical mode in Zanzibari oral literature.

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APPENDIX I

MFALME MAJIVUNO

Muda mrefu uliopita alikuwepo mfalme mmoja aliyekuwa akiitwa Mfalme Majivuno. Mfalme huyo alikuwa ni mwenye kupenda anasa. Kajenga na kiburi kwa hivyo akawa hamthamini mtu mwingine yeyote. Kitu kikubwa alichokuwa akiringia ni elimu yake, hivyo alijiona ana akili nyingi kupita wote.

Mfalme alikuwa akiishi katika nyumba yenye kila mambo ya mastaajabu ya kuvutia. Nyumba hiyo haikufanana na nyumba yoyote pale nchini. Tofauti iliyopo baina ya nyumba ya mfalme na raia zake ni sawa na mbingu na ardhi. Katika mazingira ya nyumba kulikuwa na bustani za aina aina. Watumishi kutwa wapo katika kusafisha na kuchuma maua ya kila aina kwa ajili ya mfalme na mkewe. Maua hayo yalikuwa na harufu laini kwa kutuliza pua. Isitoshe upepo uliopita katika maua hayo ulibeba harufu hiyo na kuisambaza nchi nzima. Hapa kitaluni pakawa ni masikani ya ndege wazuri, hivyo nyimbo nzuri zilikuwa zinaimbwa na denge hao. Watu waliokuwa wakipita hapo walihusudu bustani hiyo. Hapa ndipo maskani makubwa ya Mfalme ambaye wakati wote huupoteza hapa.

Siku moja alikuwa amekaa kwenye bustani yake, mara akapata lepe la usingizi. Wakati akiwa katika mang'amung'amu ya usingizi, mara ndoto ilimjia. Alihisi kuwa watu wanajifunza elimu, jambo ambalo kalikataa katakata kusikia mtu anajifunza elimu.

Baada ya kushituka akahamanika sana kwa ndoto ile. Akawatuma askari wake kumfanyia upelelezi kuhusiana na jambo la kufunzana elimu. Katika pita pita za askari wakagundua mzee mmoja anamsomesha mwanae elimu aliyopata zamani kwa siri. Mzee huyo alikuwa na mtoto wake mmoja tu wa kike. Kwa kugunduliwa na askari, hoja nyingi na mwisho vurugu zilimiminika kama mvua kichwani kwa mzee. “Yalaa! Yalaa!” Mzee aliomboleza. “Hapana cha msalie mtume hapa. Twende kwa Mfalme!” Askari walimfokea. Mzee na mwanawe walipelekwa kwa mfalme.

Mfalme alipopelekewa watu hawa alifurahi sana. “Ha! Ha! Wewe unataka kuwa kama mimi, unajifundisha elimu. Hujui kama hilo ni kosa la jinai katika nchi yangu?”

Mara mfalme akaamrisha ipigwe mbiu ya mgambo. Ngo! Ngo! “Mbiu ya mgambo ikilia kuna jambo! Watu wote wakusanyike kwa Mfalme, kuna mambo makuu!” Hapo tena asomwana aeleke jiwe. Mbio kwa Mfalme. Umati ulikusanyika kwa mfalme kama siafu.

Nae Mfalme Majivuno akawatoa wale watu waliokamatwa, akawaeka juu ya jukwaa kama samaki wanaotaka kutiwa ‘felisi’ mnadani. Hapo Mfalme akatoa hoja zake kwa washitakiwa, “Nina suala langu mukilijibu nitakuachieni mkishindwa mtauwawa.” Mfalme akauliza “Mwenye enzi Mungu amesema kwamba kila siku kutatokea shani mpya mpya. Je, mwaka huu tulio nao kunatokea shani gani? Nipeni jibu haraka.” Mzee alipigwa na butwaa asijue afanye nini au aseme nini? Kuona kimya yule binti yake akanwambia, “Baba wewe nyamaza nitalijibu mimi.” Msichana akasema “Mfalme suala lako nitalijibu mimi, lakini nakuomba uniazime hilo vazi lako la kifalme kwa muda wa dakika tano, baadaye nitakujibu.” Mfalme kwa kujiona kwake alicheka sana, “Ha! Ha! Unataka vazi langu ndio ujibu? Kuvyaa vyazi langu hakutokusaidia kujibu hoja.” “Litanisaidia,” mtoto akachagiza. Mfalme akajivua vua majuba na malemba akampa yule mtoto. “Jee mimi nimekaa kama mfalme?” Mtoto akauliza umati wa watu.

Watu wenye huzuni wakasema,, “Ndio” huku wakiitikia kwa huruma. Msichana aliendelea kusema, “Basi kama ndio, hili ndilo jibu la swali la Mfalme. Shani afanyavo Mungu muda huu huu ni kumtoka yeye Mfalme ufalme wake. Na kuanzia sasa mimi ni mfalme, naye huyo Majivuno muuweni!” Pale pale watu walimrushia Mfalme upanga kama mithili ya radi na umeta. Hapo hapo Majivuno alifariki dunia na yule mtoto akawa mfalme. Watu walifurahi kwani walikuwa wamechoka na takaburi ya mfalme huyo. **Baadaye yule msichana alimkabidhi baba yake ufalme. Watu wote walimpokea vizuri sana na kumpa hadhi kamili ya kifalme. Na nchi sasa ikawa kila mtu kupewa hifadhi ya kibinadamu na pia kuwa na uwezo wa kusoma na kujiendeleza atakavo alimradi havunji sheria. Tena nchi ikawa mithili ya pepo.**

Gender Roles in Literature. Gender behavior is significantly influenced by the processes of socialization and social forces than by natural or innate differences. Gender roles depend on society, culture, geographic location, politics and more. A similar study was done in 1987. It showed little improvement, but the characters in the books were still portrayed in traditional gender roles. According to the 1987 study, most of the female characters had no particular behavior. The way in which gender is represented in children's books and in literature as a whole is so important because most readers tend to identify themselves with the characters in books of their own sex. Literature's influence is especially strong with children. Members of African societies learnt through their interaction with their physical and spiritual milieus, as evidenced by their design of tools which they used mostly in their agro activities and in fighting for resources. The other area in which learning took place was that of spirituality or mysticism, as some superstitious members of African communities were believed to have powers of communicating with their ancestors. Oral literature encompasses fables, folktales, legends myths and proverbs. Education was seen as a vehicle through which western cultures can be fostered or promoted in the African continent by its colonizers. Higher Education Studies. Vol. 3, No. 4; 2013. society, including African societies, became much complicated during the past million years.