

**ACRITICAL ANALYSIS OF IMAGES OF WOMEN AND GENDER
ROLES IN ANKOLE PROVERBS AND FOLKTALES.**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my original and unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Literature of Kyambogo University. This dissertation has never been submitted to any other university for examination.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved daughters Arinda, Andinda and Trina, my husband Mr.

Mugume Nickson, my dear parents, sister, brothers and friends.

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I would like to thank the Almighty ALLAH for the success of this study. I know without His will I would not have reached this far.

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ABSTRACT

The study critically analyses the image of women and gender roles in Ankole proverbs and folktales. The study was guided by three objectives: the stylistic aspects of the paralinguistic features in performance of Ankole folktales and proverbs; the image of women in Ankole proverbs, and the portrayal of gender roles in Ankole proverbs and folktales. The study was both field and library-based, employing a qualitative approach. The study used sociological and performance theories to analyze data. The major tenet of the sociological theory is that literature is a reflective-mirror of society and social realities. As such, the images of women and gender roles depicted in the proverbs and folktales are a true reflection of people's perceptions of women in Ankole society. The study notes that performance is a very important ingredient in the appreciation, preservation and transmission of folktales and proverbs. Folktales are seen as a source of entertainment and a medium of instruction that enhances the young children's learning of the cultural values, customs and norms of their society. Folktales have special opening and closing formulae, and the closing style of Ankole folktales depends on the group of the Banyankole, and the ending of each group reflects its economic activities. The study findings reveal that women are portrayed as children, dim-wits, murderers, evil, unreliable, untrustworthy, and greedy. They are presented as trouble-makers not only to themselves, but the entire community. They are capable of causing discord and division among the community members; they seem not to distinguish between good and bad. The study also shows that cultural roles in Ankole community are distributed according to gender. There is a clear distinction between roles performed by men and those performed by women in Ankole society. There is no swapping of roles, everyone does the assigned role and cannot be swapped even in time of emergence. And finally, the study recommends that curriculum designers of primary and secondary schools put emphasis on the integration of oral literature in the literature teaching syllabus to help preserve oral literature genres.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION.

1.1 Introduction and background to the study.

The Kingdom of Ankole is predominantly occupied by two indigenous groups of people namely; Bahima and Bairu. These two groups of people are collectively known as Banyankore and they have lived alongside one another since time immemorial. The Bahima depend largely on cattle products for food, hence their main activity is pastoralism. On the other hand, Bairu are basically agriculturalists who till the soil for food, and they largely depend on millet bread and *matooke*.

Due to the nature of their livelihood, Bahima roam the semi-arid grassland of Eastern Ankole in search of pasture and water. Bairu prefer to live in areas where rainfall is most reliable on hills, and valleys of western Ankole. The two groups share clans (Enganda) and speak the same language with a slight variation in dialect. Bahima and Bairu also differ in culture, however, important to note, is that they share the same origin. In his text titled; *History and Culture of the Kingdom of Ankole*, Patrick Kirindi shares the story of origin of Banyankole. According to Nkore creation myth, Nkore society was founded by Ruhanga, (creator). He had three sons Kakama, Kairu and Kahima. Kairu was the eldest son followed by Kahima, and then Kakama. When Ruhanga was about to go back to heaven, he summoned his sons to give them a test which would determine the social, economic and political roles of his sons in the Nkore society. Ruhanga gave each of his sons a milk pot full of milk to hold on their laps from evening till dawn without spilling any.

During the night, Kakama dozed off and spilt some of his milk. In sympathy, both Kairu and Kahima re-filled their youngest brothers' pot. Towards dawn, Kairu slept and spilt all his milk and his younger brother kahima and kakama refused to share their milk with him. In the morning,

Ruhanga found that Kairu had spilt all his milk, Kahima's pot was not full to the brim since he had already given some of his to the younger brother, and only Kakama had passed the test with full marks since only his milk pot was still full to the brim. Relatively, this test spelt out the economic, social and political fortunes of the three brothers; because Kairu spilt all his milk, all his descendants were fated to become cultivators of land and slaves to Kahima and Kakama. Kahima managed to preserve half a pot of his milk, therefore, his successors would become cattle herders and would milk for descendants of Kakama. Kakama and his descendants would not only own cattle in plenty but would also rule over the descendants of Kahima and Kairu from whom they would always receive presents and gifts. This story gives the origin of Nkore's two groups of people. (2)

The Banyankole tribe is comprised of four major clans: Bahinda, Baitira, Bagahe and Bashambo. These clans are further divided into sub-clans, for example Bahinda- which was actually the ruling clan of the Banyankore comprised of *Abatukura maisho* (those with red eyes). This clan was responsible for producing kings (Abagabe) and every muhinda from this sub clan was entitled to the throne incase the king (omugabe) did not have heirs, such as sons, brothers or nephews to succeed him. The first muhinda to become king was Ruhinda who is believed to have founded Nkore kingdom. Ruhinda was a son of Wamala the last muchwezi king. After the disappearance of Bachwezi, Ruhinda automatically became the king succeeding his late father. Since then, Nkore was ruled by a number of Kings. The kings after Ruhinda for example Nkuba ya Rurama, Nyaika, Nyabugaro Ntare I, Ntare IV Kitabanyoro, Mutambuka, Ntare V, Ruginzi, and Kahaya II expanded Nkore kingdom by seizing the small neighboring kingdoms of Mpororo, Buhweju, Buzimba, and Igara.

When the British came, the name Nkore was changed to Ankole. During colonialism only two Kings ruled Ankole; Edward Suleman Kahaya II 1899-1944 and Charles Godfrey Gasyonga II 1945-1967. In 1967 president Apollo Milton Obote abolished kingdoms and declared Uganda a republic. Gasyonga was the last king (Omugabe) of Ankole Kingdom and he died in 1983. He was buried at Nkokonjeru in Mbarara Ankole Kingdom. When NRM government under president Museveni seized power in 1986, traditional Kingdoms were restored, but the Kingdom of Ankole has not been restored due to the fact that; Ankole is multi ethnic and each group wants its independence. The majority bairu, seemed and still appear cold footed about the restoration of the kingdom because it was alleged that the king and the court used their powers to marginalize bairu. Bairu suffered greatly during pre-colonial era and therefore, didnot want to face that nightmare again.

Before the formation of districts by the government, Ankole was comprised of counties of Nyabushozi, Isingiro and Kashari. During the re-organization of the country by the NRM government, Ankole was divided into ten districts that is Bushenyi, Buhweju, Mitooma, Rubirizi, Sheema, Ntungamo, Mbarara, Kiruhura, Ibanda and Isingiro. Ankole covers an area of about 16,912 square kilometers (10,570sq miles). It is located in western Uganda where there is a common border with Rwanda and Tanzania. To the East of Ankole is Lake Victoria, and to the West are mount Rwenzori and a number of lakes including Lake Albert.

Like any other group of people, the Banyakole have a culture. They have a set of norms and values that govern their society. Different perceptions towards different gender are also embodied in their culture. The perception and position of women in Ankole culture is evident right away from their story of origin. The myth of creation does not mention the mother of Ruhanga's three sons. In a version put forward by Kirindi the author of *History and Culture of Ankole*, in the story it is clearly

stated: “Ruhanga had three sons, Kairu, Kakama, and Kahima, who were born in that order.” (2) This suggests that, Ruhanga must have had a wife with whom he produced the three sons. But surprisingly the mother is not mentioned or even alluded to in the story.

D.H Moris’ version in *A History of Ankole* also asserts: “...while in Ankole, three sons were born to him, Kakama, Kahima and Kairu.” (6) The fact that this great woman who is responsible for the existence of the Banyankole today is not mentioned clearly highlights how the position of women was undermined and undervalued by the patriarchal traditional society of Ankole. Like his father Kakama had a son Nyamate, but the mother of Nyamate is not mentioned at all in the story. This also confirms the traditional ideology among Banyakole that all children belong to the man. Mothers and female children are very insignificant in a patriarchal point of view. This is why the myth of origin which explains the present day Bairu and Bahima’s existence of Ankole does not bother to mention the mother of Ruhanga’s sons leave alone his daughters. Indeed, even the recorded histories of Ankole do not bother to mention the wives of Kings but make it a point to mention their sons, an indication that the position of women in Ankole society was very much compromised.

The women of Ankole were expected to be humble, obedient, reserved, beautiful, courteous and modest. These qualities clearly explain the position of women in Ankole society. The qualities guarantee men superiority over women. Qualities like intelligence, strength, confidence or outspokenness were a preserve of men. This can simply mean that in a patriarchal society women do not need such qualities since they were and are supposed to be subordinates of men. Therefore in Ankole society under normal circumstances a woman could not participate in any sensitive issues, in the family, and society because the qualities of a good wife entail her not to do so. If she does, she is branded a bad woman, a title not fit for a munyankole traditional woman.

Among the Bahima of Ankole, the position of women was pre-determined to be a subordinate one. They were not allowed to own any property. When a female child reached the teething stage, a ritual was performed; she was sat on the ground and given the churning pot and would be told that her cattle are yonder (or in her husband's compound). Sad to note is that even at her husband's compound, a woman does not have any right to cattle. To ensure this, women are not allowed to get near the cattle, so major activities to do with cattle are done by men. Yitzchak Elam sheds more light on the above in his book titled the *Social and Sexual Roles of Hima Women* as he asserts;

A woman could not own anything and had no right to any property or her husband's property. (19)...they were prevented from holding property and were always prevented from utilizing it in order to support themselves and their children. (26)

The position of a woman is less significant to the extent that even her relatives are very much less significant in matters regarding property ownership and her children. Maternal uncles are consulted to intervene in a nephew's crisis if and only the crisis is minor or less significant. In case of major issues; paternal uncles and aunts are consulted. The maternal uncle just like his sister had no right whatsoever on the nephew's property as Elam asserts:

There was no even a measure of reciprocity in the sense of the mother's brother having right over his sister's and son's property. They did not have property i.e. cattle as long as her husband, their father, supreme head of the household and only owner of the family herd, was alive. (20)

The role of Bahima wives is to stay home while their husbands are out herding. While at home, they are supposed to receive and entertain visitors. They are totally prohibited from performing any activity related to cattle. On the contrary, the activities of Bairu wives are mainly outdoor since

they engage in digging, harvesting and planting. However, just like Bahima, the harvest is dominated by men even though women actively do the digging, planting and harvesting.

On the other hand, the position of women is also seen in a positive light. According to Kirindi;

Women are very much respected and are seen as role models of the society,

Every society honors and respects its women more than it does its men. Women are custodians and transmitters of cultural values and practices...women are seen as role models who set and sustain the standards and aspirations of society. (126)

In lieu of the above, not all is gloom for the female gender. Kirindi's assertion is an indicator of the fact that society had a fair share of positive perception of women. Women were and are still looked at as repositories and disseminators of cultural values and practices.

The Ankole community has a rich folklore: comprising of many oral literature genres, songs, *ebyevugo* (heroic recitations), proverbs, folktales, legends, myths. Of these genres proverbs are the most widely employed in a number of ways for different purposes. Over the centuries, several attempts have been made by different scholars towards providing an accurate definition of proverbs. For instance; Finnegan Ruth's definition "a proverb is more or less fixed form marked by shortness, sense and salt and distinguished by the popular acceptance of the truth tersely expressed in it." (383)

Similarly, in his book *African Oral Literature*, Okpewho defines a proverb as "a piece of folk wisdom expressed with terseness and charm." (226) Based on the above definitions, proverbs could be conceptualized as any wise saying or epigram that converts the central idea in a given context objectively and truthfully. In line with Finnegan's definition, since proverbs express truth, it means that the portrayal of women evident in Ankole proverbs is nothing but the truth.

Proverbs are considered the most common genre of folklore, found among all cultures of the world. They are simple and often short statements with deep meaning, guidelines for individual, family and village behaviour. Proverbs are not built from a vacuum, rather on repeated real life experiences and observations. They are mirrors through which people look at themselves.

Proverbs are the mirrors of culture in that they reflect the customs, traditions, values, opinions and beliefs of a particular society. Indeed by looking at people's proverbs, we can understand how they think and look at the world, their culture, values, behaviors, aspirations and preoccupation. By their nature, proverbs confirm societal norms and values indeed proverbs are the window through which one is able to see culture deeper. Proverbs carry with them knowledge which is transmitted from one generation to another through the word of mouth. Through proverbs, people of the community are taught how to live with other people in a given society. When children are growing, they learn through proverbs the accepted norms of their society and those that are seen as taboos.

The Banyankole normally employ proverbs in their daily situations as one of the most important and effective strategies of communication. Due to the fact that proverbs are used in everyday speech, the Banyankole assign great importance to them. Commenting on the importance of proverbs in Ankole culture, Charles Giriman Munyambabazi in his book *Learn howto say Ankole and Kigezi proverbs* asserts that; "A proverb is the ingredient which spices the speech to make it entertaining, attract the audiences' attention and keep them interested."(4)

On the other hand, a folktale is a literary genre which falls under the umbrella of oral narratives. Folktales are fictitious stories which summarize the people's contemporary life. The content in folktales is visible and tangible in real life. Therefore, folktales express the social realities, peoples'

perceptions, beliefs, norms and values. People express or pass on their cultural values through folktales for example, friendship, teamwork, hard work, responsibility, and respect for one another, honesty, generosity, and reliability. Similarly, laziness, dishonesty, cruelty, jealousy, selfishness, and creating discord, are highly condemned by showing how destructive they are not only to the offender but also the entire community.

Folktales are about people's everyday life, emotions, and what people think. An artist or composer is a creator of his culture through writing, painting, and storytelling. Folktales are a vehicle through which the cultural practices of a people are transmitted. Folktales are also a medium of instruction so whoever does wrong is punished severely hence a great lesson to the young. In his study titled; *The Social role of Oral Literature among the Bahororo* Alex Bangirana asserts; "in a general way, these narratives were / are a means by which the moral and social values of the community were passed on to the younger members." (70) because virtue was or is highly rewarded while vice or evil is highly punished. Therefore, folktales act as tools of harmonizing the society. The images of women embedded in the selected proverbs and folktales shade more light on how women are perceived and how they should behave in Ankole society.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Scholars such as Mushengyezi and Bangirana, have conducted research in Ankole oral literature. Mushengyezi examined Legends and Myths looking at how these two forms of oral literature have affected the psychological thinking of Banyankole today. Bangirana looked at the social role of oral literature specifically narratives among the Bahororo. Other scholars such as Kirindi wrote about History and culture of Ankole Kingdom. Yitzchak examined the social and sexual roles of Bahima women in the camp. However, none of the researchers cited

above delved deep into the analysis of the images of women and gender roles as portrayed in oral literature of Ankole specifically proverbs and Folktales. This study therefore, offers a new and fresh reading to Ankole literary canon by analyzing the Images of women and gender roles as portrayed in Ankole folktales and proverbs.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to analyse the portrayal of women and gender roles in Ankole proverbs and folk tales. The Specific objectives are:

- 1 To analyse the stylistic aspects of the Para linguistic features in performance of Ankole folk tales and proverbs.
- 2 To analyse the images of women in Ankole proverbs and folk narratives
3. To examine the portrayal of gender roles in Ankole proverbs and folk tales.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. How are Ankole proverbs and folktales performed?
- ii. How are women portrayed in Ankole proverbs and folktales?
- iii. How are gender roles distributed in Ankole proverbs and Folktales?

1.5 Scope of the study

The study analyses the images of women and gender roles in proverbs and folk narratives of Ankole. The researcher is interested in the folktales and proverbs that are endowed with images of women and distribution of gender roles. The researcher used interview guides and close reading to select folktales and proverbs within her scope. The study covers parts of Bushenyi especially Ishaka-Bushenyi Municipality and Rubirizi because the researcher knows these places well and therefore is aware of the respondents who are knowledgeable in Ankole folktales and proverbs. The researcher also covers parts of Mbarara, specifically Igongo

Cultural center because the place is rich with Ankole oral literature, its book store contains books and other reading materials which are useful to this study. Besides, Igongo cultural center has tutors who have good knowledge of Ankole oral literature.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study; *Acritical Analysis of Images of Women and Gender Roles in Ankole folktales and proverbs* is a great contribution to the already existing body of Ankole written Folktales and proverbs in the following ways:

This study is significant because it gives another dimension to the reading of Ankole oral literature since it makes an exegesis of the images of women in Ankole folktales and proverbs which had not been been comprehensively analysed by previous scholars.

It is also significant to feminist crusaders since it embodies ideas that debunk male chauvinism that is seemingly prevalent in Ankole.

1.7 Review of Related Literature

In his study; *Towards a Psychoanalytic Understanding of Folk Myths and Legends and Their influence on cultural Ideology in Ankole*, Mushengyezi's focus is on how Ankole legends and myths have psychologically influenced the ideological thinking of Banyankole today. He analyses the myth of origin of Banyankole which spells out the social stratification of Banyankole. The myth spell out the ideological thinking among Bahima that they are superior and a favored class than their Bairu counterparts. Bahima and Bairu are perpetual enemies because of the Ruhanga myth. Enmity between the two groups has existed for many years and it is still ongoing. He found

out that Bairu have created demeaning stories about Bahima as a let out of the repressed injustices inflicted by the Bahima. Mushengyezi not only analysed the psychological effect of legends and myth to Bairu and Bahima but also the effect of such narratives to the psyche of Banyankole women. Important to note is that Mushengyezi's study does not interest itself much with the fact that the mother to Ruhanga's sons is not mentioned anywhere in the myth. One may also wonder why Ruhanga has only sons not daughters. The study helps this researcher to establish the position and the perception towards Ankole women.

Mushengyezi has also ventured in legends of Ankole and has found out that the patriarchal society has created folk tales, myths, taboos and legends which condemn women to total subordination. Men have created stories which practically deter women from power and politics, for instance, the legend of *kitami kya Nyahwera* where a queen willingly surrenders her power to Kamurari after having sex with him. The statement made by Kitami while surrendering power "Women never rule over men" sends a clear message to women that; they had power but willingly gave it to men hence subjecting themselves to the position of a subject and a master. Such legends are created by the patriarchal society to subjugate women for easy control. The patriarchal society clearly highlights the superiority of males over females, the fact that the study portrays women as people who are less gifted in maintaining power and authority as evidenced in Kitami's behavior makes it an immense contribution to this study. However, Mushengyezi's focus is on the effect of Ankole Myths and legends on the psyche of Bairu and Bahima today. He also endeavors to analyze the effect of the above genres on the psyche of women but in a brief detail, leaving this study with an enormous task to complete by analyzing the images of women and gender roles in Ankole proverbs and folktales.

In his study, *The Social Role of Oral Literature among the Bahororo*, Bangirana adopts a sociological perspective of oral literature among the Bahororo. Bangirana endeavors to discuss the role of oral literature forms specifically oral narratives, on the social life of Bahororo of Mpororo. He explores the role of oral literature in terms of Education and social behaviours among the Bahororo. According to Bangirana, oral literature is a discipline which is important in transforming youngsters from childhood to adult hood. Moral and ethical values of the society are passed on to the younger generation through oral literature. Due to its consonance with the sociological theory, presenting oral literature as a product and effect of society as Harry Levin avers, Bangirana's study is a monumental contribution to this study. Bangirana's study explores prose narratives but he too falls short of analyzing the images of women in the collected prose narratives which this study divulges in.

In his paper, *Gender representation in Acoli Oral Poetry*, Okot Benge provides a deeper Analysis of gender relations and ideologies in oral poetry of Acoli of Northern Uganda. Concentrating on oral poetry, Benge examines the question of gender in terms of history, political, economic, and social-cultural contexts. Benge also explores both negative and positive presentation of women in oral poetry of Acoli. Women are seen as trouble makers or even trouble itself, they are a source of evil and ill-fortune carriers. Among the Acoli, when a man marries a woman, he will have brought, evil, ill-fortune into his house. On the positive part of it when women are considered as useful members of the society, they are seen as a source of property or property itself. To illustrate the above point further, Benge asserts that;

... the patriarchal ideology hold it that the male's troubles, problems and ill-fortunes originate from the female. In other words, the female is the source of evil and as a result,

living in this world is hard, because there is no world without females (99)... a female is being evaluated in terms of the wealth her blood- relatives get out of her. (114)

Benge does not only represent the gender images and stereotypes portrayed in the oral poetry of the Acoli, but also, gives a critique of these images and stereotypes on Acoli women. According to Acoli Patriarchal society, women are gossipers who shouldn't be trusted with sensitive matters because they don't keep their mouths shut. Women are a source of evil, problems and ill-fortunes. Benge attacks these stereotypes and distorted images in his observation that;

The portrayal of the female in a negative light tends to serve the purpose of justifying the patriarchal ideology of male supremacy over female and enhancing her inferiority in society. If the female is truly what these gender ideologies would have us believe she is then it seems to be implicitly suggested that it is only right and fitting that male domination should prevail in society, and that the female ought to be kept under control by the male. All these work to justify patriarchy in society-an ideology that seems to be well inculcated into both males and females in the Acoli society. (100)

Benge's paper is very useful to this study because it provides related information on the images of women in Ankole proverbs and folk narratives. However, his major focus is on oral poetry and not proverbs or folk narratives, and his examples are drawn from Acoli not Ankole. This study seeks to use Ankole as a case study, to analyse the images of women in Ankole folk tales and proverbs.

In his study *Popular Cultural Forms*; Ogwang Ernest Okello explores forms of oral literature like proverbs and sayings, riddles, songs, and oral narratives, among the Langi people of Lira. Ogwang uses some of the popular forms to show the origin of the Langi people and the stereotyping of women propagated in these forms. He cites three myths which explain the origin of Langi, two of them question the role of women in the society. One of the myths, records how women are the first to cause the clan and ethnic dispersal. Atila, the first woman to brew beer, which the local chief

drunk up to the point of unconsciousness, was consequently killed by people who accused her of poisoning the chief. The two myths clearly show the patriarchal perception of women right from the beginning of everything. The women's role in society is negatively portrayed and to achieve that, the patriarchal society has to disfigure the image of women. On this, Ogwang asserts;

This helps in the appreciation of how the patriarchal system justifies and explains its social existence and location by disfiguring the role of the women in the social evolution of the people in question. (53)

Ogwang's text is a good illustration of gender representations in oral literature which this study espouses. However, Ogwang draws his examples and orature from Lango not Ankole.

Patrick Kirindi and Morris explore the history of Ankole kingdom starting from its myth of Origin to its current state. However, Kirindi does not stop at history only; he also tackles some of the cultures of Banyankole in his book titled *"History and culture of the Kingdom of Ankole."*

The major point noted in the Ankole culture is the injustice inflicted on the female species. In terms of punishment, women received heavier punishment than men regardless of the uniformity of the crime, as Kirindi asserts; "A girl who conceived out of wedlock or before marriage was drowned and the man or a boy responsible was banished from the kingdom." (32)

The above statement indicates two partners in crime but it is sad to note that one partner is condemned to death just because she is a woman, and another being a man is banished from the kingdom. "The man responsible" is not dead; one wonders how many more girls are likely to die due to his heinous acts. This clearly shows how women are undervalued and undermined by the patriarchal society. Patrick provides a comprehensive study towards understanding of Ankole culture and history. However, he does not venture beyond presentation of history and culture. Since

the culture of a people is reflected in their oral literature, this study analyses the images of women reflected in Ankole proverbs and folktales.

Ruth Finnegan in her book *African Oral literature* offers definitions of oral literature forms and their functions. She also offers differences between written and oral literature. Both genres of literature have words as their medium of exchange however, without performance; the words of any oral literature genre are empty words. According to Finnegan, oral literature squarely depends on performance for its existence. She also offers the role of the audience in African oral performances. The audience is part and partial of the performance and in some communities, the audience has a license to criticize, add, or correct the performer. Finnegan's research was majorly done in most parts of west and northern Africa, but did not entirely forget Ankole. In her book, she briefly mentions the Heroic Recitations (ebyevugo) of Ankole and how they are performed. She explains how omwevugi changes the word of a recitation to suit his motifs and themes. Finnegan's research is of great help to this study because it has paved the way for the researcher to understand oral literature forms and the relationship between performance and oral literature. However, her research concentrates in West Africa and only one literature genre in Ankole is mentioned. Most of the examples and demonstrations are drawn from West Africa this has left a gap in the field of oral literature that this research is yet to fill.

Okumba Miruka and Humphrey J. Ojwang provide a comprehensive explanation of oral narratives and proverbs respectively in *Understanding Oral Literature*. Although these scholars offer a trajectory for literature scholars to understand oral literature especially folk narratives and proverbs, they don't venture deep in analyzing the portrayal of women in the proverbs and folk tales cited.

In an article entitled “Images of Women and the Politics of Control” which was published in Austin Bukenya’s *Understanding Oral Literature* Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira presented a study on women in Agikuyu oral narratives.

In Gikuyu oral narratives, wives are generally portrayed among other things as: unreliable, disobedient, irresponsible, disloyal, disagreeable, adulterous, cunning, senseless, easily cheated, evil, tricksters, lazy etc. there is hardly any story among the Agikuyu that describes wives positively. As co-wives, they are ogres, cruel and malicious. (79)

The above argument is supported by Garunji Chesaina in her research titled; *Images of women in African Oral Literature*. Garunji carried out her research among the Masai and the Kalenjin of Kenya. She found out that the two societies greatly undervalue the intelligence of women as portrayed in the collected narratives. According to her research, the Kalenjin and Masai regard women as children. When a man says ‘my children’, he is also referring to his wife or wives. They are also portrayed as unreliable and untrustworthy creatures that cannot be trusted with secrets regarding crucial matters. Interestingly in Garunji’s research, women who are portrayed with positive traits like intelligence, they still have to rely on men or boys for physical strength.

The images that emanate from the analysis of narratives of three communities show that women occupy the lowest status in society and they are identified by nothing but negative character traits. This clearly highlights the negative image in which women are viewed and the bias created by the patriarchal society.

Step mothers in Masai and Kalenjin narratives are also brutally presented. The women’s jealous towards their step children leads them into the malicious and inhuman act of killing their step children. Garunji’s analysis of folktales on step mothers is not far placed from Bangirana’s analysis. Both analyses show that women are murderers, cruel, jealous and malicious. Bangirana’s

and Garungi's research show that there is no step mother who is capable of treating her step child as her own. The only thing the step mothers think of is to get rid of their step children. Such narratives may explain why even today, step mothers are viewed negatively. Therefore, the stereotyping of step mothers today is not created in a vacuum but spring from such folk tales. Miruka and Ciranji's analysis of the images of women is limited only to three Kenyan communities of Kalenjin, Masai, and Agikuyu. Alex's study is about Bahororo oral literature but his main focus is on the role of oral literature to the social life of Bahororo. Hence he too like Miruka, and Garunji do not underscore or delve into analyzing the images of women in Ankole narratives and proverbs.

Whereas all the above scholars give expansive background information in analyzing Ankole oral literature forms, they don't venture into analyzing particular forms specifically folk narratives and proverbs. None of the scholars analyses the images of women in Ankole proverbs and folktales, which this study seeks to divulge in.

1.8 Theoretical frame work: Sociological Approach

This study applies the sociological criticism to analyze the images of women and gender roles in Ankole folktales and proverbs. The Sociological approach examines literature in the cultural, economic, social and political contexts in which it is written or received. The Sociological approach also analyses the social context cultural, economic or political values as implicitly or explicitly stated in literary texts. The sociological critics have advanced many tenets but this study applies two tenets due to their relevance namely, literature as a mirror of the society and literature as a tool for advancing the society's ethical and aesthetic values.

Hippolyte Taine a French scholar is one of sociological critics who developed the approach in the mid nineteenth century but gained popularity in the twentieth century during the time of economic depression in Europe. Taine captured the essence of sociological approach with his pronouncement that: “literature is the consequence of the race, the milieu and the moment.” (qtd in Scott, 123) Taine’s statement emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between Literature and society. Literature is inspired by the prevailing conditions in the society and in turn, it affects society by exposing the society’s conditions to the world. Prose fiction, plays, poems or folk tales cannot be written and appreciated in a vacuum; instead, to write such literature, a writer will need history, cultural values and norms, economy and politics of the society. Literature is a mirror of what society is, the social realities are the backbone of literature. Therefore, a reader of folktales, proverbs, poems or plays, should be seeing the social realities in the text. The above assertion is materialized by Wilbur S. Scott in his book, *Five Approaches of Literary Criticism*: “Art is not created in a vacuum; it is a work not simply of a person, but of an author fixed in time and space, answering to a community of which he is important and articulate part.” (123) Scott’s assertion that art is not created in a vacuum is very much applauded. Literature and society are interdependent entities, one of them cannot exist without the other because society provides raw material for literature and literature uses language to expose economic and political challenges of that particular society. Since literature is a reflection of social realities, and is not created in a vacuum it means that the images and gender roles embedded in folktales and proverbs is nothing but the reality of Ankole society. Therefore the characters, events, perceptions of women by the society are a reflection of what happens in that particular society.

This study is informed by another tenet of sociological approach that is, literature should contribute in giving the society its ethical and aesthetic values. It argues that since literature derives its

material from society it has no option but to explore and expose its social values. Sociological critics assert that since time immemorial art has always contributed in evolving ethical and aesthetic values of particular societies. Art is a media through which cultural values and norms are consumed, disseminated and transmitted from generation to generation. A society without its literature is like a chick that has lost its mother. Oral literature forms for example proverbs and folktales, have helped in transmitting the Ankole values and norms that guide the Ankole traditional society. Today's generation is able to know Ankole cultural values and norms via oral literature materials. The relationship between society and literature is again emphasized by Harry Levin that:

... the relations between literature and society are reciprocal; literature is not only the effect of social causes; it is also a cause of social effects. (qtd in Scott, 126)

The above statement does not only reflect the prevailing social realities, but it can also affect what happens in a society once it is read. By causes, Levin alludes to behavior and by effects, he refers to the product of that behavior. Levin rhymes with this study since it is majorly an analysis of how society constructs the roles of gender and how the different roles affect the respective gender. For example this study has been influenced by proverbs and folk tales composed by the fore fathers who skewed them along the lines of gender.

The sociological theory is deemed crucial for analysis of this study because it offers a large scope of understanding or placing oral texts into their right context. It is essential because art and society are interwoven; society provides raw material to literature while literature exposes the social behaviours to the world. The sociological critics advanced a tenet that; literature is a mirror of society and indeed reading the folktales and proverbs one is actually looking at the realities of Ankole society.

The study further sought the guidance of Richard Bauman's Performance Theory which has been utilized by a variety of disciplines and has helped to catalyze a movement toward a performance-centered approach to verbal art. Emphasizing the multi-disciplinary nature of his theory, Bauman, a linguistic anthropologist, writes in the preface to his groundbreaking *Verbal Art as Performance* that anthropology, linguistics, literature and folklore "all share a fundamental interest in the aesthetic dimension of human existence." (vii) Where this "aesthetic dimension" for studies in oral tradition had focused in the past on the poem or narrative, the "work" resulting from performance. Bauman's interest is in the performance aspect of this verbal art, and exploring how the aesthetic and performative parameters are set up. Just like Bauman, the interest of this study was in the performance of folk tales and proverbs and how the parameters are set up in the respective Ankole tradition. The study situates its argument in a larger movement that looks at performance for a meaning that is enacted, rather than deposited.

This study was informed by Bauman's view that, "performance establishes a special, non-literal communicative "frame," which highlights the expressive mode. The act of performance itself draws the audience to focus on the metacommunicative -act of expression itself. (11); that is, a proverb and a folk tale is an experience that is shared, not simply a message that is transmitted. In in this study, performance is but one of many possible frames: apart from the literal, there are joking, insinuations and imitation frames. This performance frame is marked by "the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence as evidenced in the way the folk tales are narrated in Ankole. The study situates folk tales and proverbs in Bauman's monumental statement that "Performance is where the meaning is to be found." (11) For

Bauman, performance itself “becomes constitutive of the domain of verbal art.” Verbal art exists as enacted in that exchange. The interchangeability of roles between the speaker and the audience is further embedded in Foley’s description of performance keys as “the grammar of performance highlighting the idea of a specialized exchange between audience and performer governed by an unspoken understanding, all of which is lost in textualization.” (85).

Bauman and Forley’s views immensely underscore the significance of performance in oral literature. Premised on their views, it is clear that Performance is also frequently cued through paralinguistic features, which can be especially vital for purposes of audience participation.

1.9 Methodology

The researcher used qualitative research paradigms which is concerned with collecting, interviewing, observing, presenting and analyzing images of women in the collected proverbs and folk tales. Since the study was both library and field, the researcher visited Makerere University library, Igongo cultural center and Kyambogo University Barclays Library to acquaint herself with the information about Ankole and her history. The researcher used the library to collect the biggest chunk of the folktales that were endowed with images of women and gender roles. Close reading method was applied while reading the tales with the aim of highlighting the salient elements to this study which were the images of women and gender roles.

Field Research:

Field research formed the first part of the study which included performance of folk tales and proverbs and some folk tales. Five respondents who were knowledgeable about Ankole literature, were selected from Ishaka- Bushenyi municipality. Other interviewees were selected from Rubirizi, Mbarara, using purposive sampling technique. These respondents have been chosen basing on their knowledge of oral literature forms specifically folktales and proverbs. The

researcher also considered age, and sex of people while choosing the respondents. Respondents were old women and men between 50 and 70 years since the researcher was aware that oral literature was no longer emphasized as it used to be in the past. Sampling people of less than that age bracket was unlikely going to deliver the much desired results. It was the researcher's belief that the aged were knowledgeable and experienced in as far as Ankole folktales, proverbs and their performance is concerned.

Instruments:

The researcher used a recorder to interview the respondents: pens and notebooks were also used in the collection of data from the field. The researcher also used observation and interviewing methods to collect data from the field. The researcher designed interview guides which aided in the collection of data. Since the researchers' target respondents were old and some of them did not know how to read, the researcher would explain the question in detail to the respondent. The process of the interviews was face to face and the researcher in some instances especially proverbs and performance, jotted in the notebook the key elements. In case of bulky and long information like folktales, the researcher used the recorder to record and capture the exact tonal variations of the respondent. The interview guide questions were designed in a way that the answers given would be answering the research questions.

Data Analysis:

The researcher recorded, transcribed, translated and assessed the data using the key tenets of the sociological and performance approaches.

1.10 Organization of the work:

Chapter one is the introductory chapter. It focuses on Ankole as a region and much attention is paid to the history of Ankole as well as the position of women in Ankole traditional society. It also

illuminates the main focus of the study; folktales and proverbs. This chapter also comprises of statement of the problem, definition of terms, and purpose of the study, objectives, theoretical frame work, literature review and methodology.

Chapter two analyses the performance of folktales and proverbs. It is divided into four subsections; introduction, performance of proverbs, performance of folktales and conclusion. The chapter is generally about the performance of Ankole proverbs and Folktales. How and when they are performed, by who and the significance of these performances in Ankole culture and community.

Chapter three focuses on how women are portrayed in proverbs and folktales. It concentrates on the analysis of images of women embedded in the collected material. The chapter is divided into four subsections; introduction, proverbs, folktales and conclusion.

Chapter four looks at gender roles assigned to men and women in Ankole community. The beliefs of people are passed on through oral literature; the researcher uses the collected folktales and proverbs to unmask gender roles assigned to women and men in Ankole culture.

In chapter five, the researcher discusses, and concludes the findings of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

PERFORMANCE OF FOLKTALES AND PROVERBS.

2.1 Introduction

Oral literature and performance are interrelated as encapsulated in Richard Bauman's Performance Theory which has been utilized by a variety of disciplines and has helped to catalyze a movement toward a performance-centered approach to verbal art. Being entirely an art that depends on oral utterances for its preservation, performance comes in handy to add its aesthetic flavor to oral literature genres and to preserve it from generation to generation as viewed in Bauman's statement that the interest is in the performance aspect of this verbal art, and exploring how the aesthetic and

performative parameters are set up (45). There is no oral literature genre that can survive without performance. Abdullah Kadir Ayinde in his Article *Aspects of African Oral Literature and Performance Aesthetics*, has shown the importance of performance to oral literature in the following statement; “performance is extremely important in oral literature because without it, oral tradition remains lifeless.” (298). Therefore, it is performance that gives life to oral traditions, to cultures and norms of African communities. Recording and preserving a people’s history, culture and traditions, using writing is novel to the African communities. The African pre-literate communities recorded and preserved their cultures and norms in songs, dances, oral narratives, proverbs, oral poetry, among others. Verbal utterances were the major medium of transition from one generation to another, and performance helped in giving life to these verbal utterances.

The Ankole folktales and proverbs were very popular in the ancient Ankole because they were used as media of instruction. The young people were taught the values, norms and beliefs of their society through folktales and proverbs. The fire place was the class room and the elders were the teachers. The fire place was either inside or outside the hut depending on the season. During the rainy season, performance of folktales was done inside the hut and on a well moon lit night, storytelling was done outside the hut after supper. It was not only done for education but also entertainment and pastime activity. Story telling was done by elders especially women to children, children to children, children to adults or adults to adults. Oral narratives were told to children after supper until the introduction of schools by the missionaries. The act of storytelling around the fire waned because children would reach home late in the evenings and they were occupied with homework. At first, the Ankole people did not want to let go of their traditions easily and therefore introduced story telling sessions in schools especially the lower primary. However, as time went on, storytelling in schools especially urban schools also waned and was replaced by

nursery rhymes. Today, storytelling is a tradition which has almost waned out. Parents and children are too busy to tell and listen to stories before bedtime. Even the elderly people who we expect to know these folktales claim to have forgotten them because they have no one to tell these stories to, a practice which would keep them fresh in their minds. However, Ankole is not totally devoid of her culture and traditions because of some patriotic scholars who have managed to record the folklore. Yusuf Mpairwe, Charles Giriman, Tumusiime Loy, Gordon Kamugunda, and Patrick Kirindi, have recorded Ankole cultures in folktales, proverbs and heroic recitations. Although the above scholars have recorded the narratives in books, their aesthetic appeal is lacking because they are read and not performed.

According to Bauman, “the act of performance itself draws the audience to focus on the metacommunicative -act of expression itself” (11). This means that the audience is central to storytelling because story telling performance requires the audiences’ participation and someone to listen. Terry Gunell asserts that: “there is no story telling performance without the audience marking out the space.” (qtd. In Mackiewicz 1) The audience in Ankole story telling performance was not just a group of people assembled by chance, but an audience assembled to listen to a tale for a purpose. An audience is a very crucial element in Ankole tale, because its’ participation is a prerequisite in Ankole story telling performance. To put it simply, the Audience in Ankole story telling session is integral. They are needed and necessary for the completion of the story telling session.

2.2 Proverbs.

A proverb is a short, precise and wise saying. Proverbs have no specific formula and time of performance because they are part and partial of daily speech as explained by respondent 4; who said; “proverbs are used at any time, according to an incident or situation.” Proverbs add flavor to

speech and also enhance language use. Proverbs carry deep meaning and whenever they are used, one has to think hard to decipher the meaning of the proverb used. Proverbs are purposely performed to educate the young. Apart from folktales, proverbs are another way the young ones are taught and educated. The norms, values and beliefs of Ankole society are passed on to the young generation through proverbs. In his book *Emicwe n' Emigyenzo y'Abakiga* Karwemera states:

Long time ago there were no schools, therefore children were taught through proverbs and oral narratives at night around the fire by their fathers, in house while preparing supper or in the garden while digging. (34)

Proverbs are also used to teach children their language. Young ones are taught how to use proverbs in the daily conversations. Speeches on different occasions are aesthetically made interesting by the use of proverbs. A speaker uses proverbs in his speech depending on different occasions and the proverbs used, corresponded with the theme of the occasion. For example, one can not say *rufu yaburwa enshoni reero omuziiki wabwerabwera* loosely translated as (death is not ashamed of taking lives the mourners shouldn't be ashamed of burying the dead) on a wedding or it was not proper for a speaker to say *enyamwonyo kweekura eribwa* which literary means that (when a girl grows old should get married) at a burial ceremony. A speaker has to choose words and proverbs carefully, to suit the situation.

Proverbs also serve as warnings to mischievous children and any other member of the society. Elders perform and use proverbs to warn children especially against unaccepted behavior in the society. A proverb like *bagambire ow'ahansi ngu owa'higuru ahurire* which is loosely translated as (when an elder warns the young he is as well warning the old) is a stern warning to the mischievous people in the society. Proverbs are also a way of passing very crucial information

from one person to another and generation to generation. Respondent 4 said that; “proverbs were told while educating people, especially language, when someone was angry, on different occasions like marriage and burial.” They are also used in daily conversations, warning someone especially the young ones. They are also a mechanism of passing on information to the people of the community.

The performance of proverbs in Ankole, was also marked during the story telling performances. In this case, the narrator would begin with the proverb which would be related to the content of the story he was about to narrate. For example, the proverb *enkora birungi ebizimururwa* starts a folktale; the meaning of proverb is very much realized in the story as the character is finally rewarded for his good deeds. *Kuri'ikubanze eitakuhererukye* is also another proverb which starts a folktale and the content of the story correspond with the proverb. For example, in this story, Mugisha becomes a very important adviser to the King after a painful suffering and miserable childhood. It is better to suffer at the beginning and triumph at the end. Respondent 5, gave the same information as above but added that, proverbs were also embedded in folktales for example, they were used to start folktales or would be used to warn, or instruct a character in the folktale.

2.3 Folktales:

2.3.1 Time, Narrator and the Audience

According to Respondent 4, Ankole folktale sessions started after supper, where an old person sat near the fire place with children and told them stories of the past. After having supper, the members of the family would gather around the log fire inside the hut and start story telling performances. In a munyankole hut, the log fire was lit in a room known as *eibanga or eiganiriro rya nyineka* (the room of the head of the family). *Eibanga rya nyineka* can be equated to a sitting room today. Story telling sessions were meant for relaxation and education after a tiring farm day. Storytelling

was done by whoever willed to narrate but in most cases elders narrated stories to their children. On a full moon, when the earth was well moon lit, folktale narrating was done outside the huts. An elder would sit on the wooden stool as children would sit on the ground in a semi-circle facing the narrator. In Ankole, storytelling sessions were done all year round but the most preferred time was during the dry seasons when the moon was full. The dry seasons were preferred because during this time, there was almost no work on farms. It was possible for children to comfortably sit on the ground without being cautious of becoming wet. The above is asserted by Abarry:

Night time provides a fantasy-inducing aura from the ethereal effulgence of the moon, or the wistful scintillations of the stars; and the dismal glow of the evening. (qtd in Agbada, 21)

According to respondent 4 and 5, Storytelling performance in Ankole had no permanent narrator, whoever knew a tale and was ready at the time of the session would narrate his or her story to the audience. However, in most cases, it was elders who narrated stories to an audience of children. In the evening especially after supper, an old man or woman sat near the fire place and narrated stories to the young ones. Children were expected by the elders to pick a moral lesson from the story being told. They were expected to learn a valuable lesson which would guide and enhance their personality in aspects of cultural values beliefs and norms like, bravery and courage especially on the side of the boys who were expected to protect the family and large herds of cattle. Laziness was and still is a detested practice in Ankole society, therefore from these folktales; children were expected to learn the value of hard work and the consequences of laziness. Generally good moral conduct was another lesson expected of children by elders during the folktale sessions. Cleanliness on the side of the girls was also highly emphasized through folktales.

Story telling performances were most of the time done by women. Men also participated in these sessions but on rare occasions. This is so because men were solely the bread winners of the family. Men would be out hunting wild animals for food. The Bahima men would be out in the night protecting the cattle and the camp against wild animals and cattle raiders. Important to note, men did not participate in these activities all year round, since they had time for leisure but their leisure time was spent on beer parties chatting with fellow men, drinking and merriment. This busy schedule of a man left him with no time to narrate stories to his children hence the mother, grandmothers, maternal and paternal aunties readily performed this role. Mothers were responsible for child raising and instilling the societal moral code of conduct into the children. Therefore it was only natural for them to narrate these stories since the stories were the medium of instruction. On the other hand, there were masculine stories which were meant for boys. Such stories were narrated by men and the audience was only men and boys. These stories emphasized the role of men in the Ankole society.

According to Respondent 2 and 3, In Ankole, storytelling would be done during the day while doing an activity that involved many people for example, during the millet harvest activity. In Ankole culture, millet is highly prized and during its harvest, women gathered and did it communally. For instance, a day would be given to one person until all the millet was harvested. To maintain enthusiasm at work, women narrated stories during this activity. As already quoted, Karwemera shades more light on this kind of storytelling performance. It was not only done during the harvest of millet, but also during any other domestic chore. So long as the activity was done in a group, folktale performance would come in handy.

2.3.2 Characteristics of Storytelling Performance

The Ankole folktales locally known as *ebigano* or *ebitebyo*, have a formulaic beginning and closure. Every oral literature genre of Ankole has a special way in which it is performed. As asserted by Ayinde: “oral literature is vastly enhanced and it is given its proper character by the manner in which it is performed.” (298) Suzan Kiguli in her article *performer- critics in oral performance in African societies* also underscores the importance of performance;

live performance is widely practiced in the different parts of Africa and one way of acknowledging its significance is by examining its environment, realizing that it demands its own intellectual space. (1)

The performer of a folktale begins by calling upon the audience’s attention as thus:

Narrator: *Mbaganire, Mbaganire*

I tell you a story

Audience: *tebeere*

Yes tell us a story

Narrator: *obwira n’ira, hakaba hariho omushaija hamwe n’omukazi we or hakaba hariho omushaija ya ’shwera omukazi we...*

Once upon a time there was a man and his wife or there was a man who married a woman...

Audience: *tebeere*

Yes, tell us a story

This procedure continues up to the end of the story. *Tebeere* is uttered by the audience at end of every sentence said by the narrator. The response of *tebeere* keeps the audience lively, participating and also gives the narrator a feeling that the audience is interested in what he or she is narrating. The audience only keeps quiet when the narrator is singing a song involved in the story. Since

folktales were majorly meant for instruction, children were strictly not allowed to interrupt the story teller until the end of the story. They were supposed to listen and learn from the story being told.

The story telling sessions of Ankole Folktale also start with time and setting which is popular in almost all Ankole tales. The time of action is normally indicated as *ira n' ira or obwakare na kare* (long time ago or once upon a time). There was no calendar, so the time action in tales is identified by two principle seasons of Ankole that is the rainy season and the dry season. This opening is followed by a phrase which exists in almost all Ankole folktales *hakaba hariho omushaija yashwera omukazi we batura batura, bazaara omwana...* (There was a man who married his woman...). If a tale consists of a couple who have been married for some time, the word *yashwera* (marry) is replaced by a conjunction 'and' thus; *hakaba hariho omushaija hamwe no 'mukazi we* (there was a man and his wife...). Alternatively, the narrator can also start with the name of the man, his wife and the children for instance; *Bagaine n'omukazi we Kebirooton'abaana baabo bashatu* (Bagaine and his wife Kebirooto and their three children) Importantly, the opening phrase of Ankole tales is the same be it fables or folktales thus; *hakaba hariho wakame na' warugwe* which literary means (there was Hare and Leopard).

The place of action in Ankole folktales is always mentioned by the narrator and the mentioned place of action is always distant from the narrator's place. In other folktales, the place of action is associated with the past or a narrator mentions a specific place of action and it is mentioned in the first sentence of a folktale. In some folktales, the story teller begins with the place of action or he mentions it after 'long time ago' phrase.

As Finnegan argues, paralinguistic features or resources are central to a folktale performance; she says: “the bare words cannot be left to speak for themselves for the simple reason that in the actual literary work so much else is necessarily and intimately involved.” (17)

A folktale performance is only complete when the narrator makes use of nonverbal expressions like face and body gestures, using hands, change of tone according to the mood and feeling in the folktale otherwise, without the use of these paralinguistic resources, the folktale is nothing but empty words. One would think that listening to a folktale is boring but it is the opposite. With a good narrator, listening to a folktale is more of watching a cinema than just plain listening as most of us would assume. A folktale is a composition of words and if the words of the folktale are re-told as they are in the folktale, then no one would dare come for folktale performances. As Okpewho states:

It is in story telling performance that we see the maximum use of innovation and manipulation. In most narrative traditions across the African continent, the storyteller simply has the bare outlines of the story and is expected to make the appropriate adjustments to the details in accordance with the interests of the audience. But the story teller does more. To make the narration more vivid and convincing the performer must accompany the words of the tale with the appropriate face and body movements to illustrate such things as fear, anxiety, delight, and the behaviors of various characters in the tale. (45)

The Ankole story telling performer is no exception from a performer of any African community. Narrators differ in the ability to match the paralinguistic resources with verbal utterances. However the good ones make the story so enjoyable and entertaining. The face, body and hands all do the speaking. Emotional situations like sadness, call for the reserved facial expression and when it is excitement the narrator too is excited. His facial expressions change according to the mood of the story.

The Ankole story telling performance is also accompanied by variation of tone depending on the situation. For example while observing the performance of respondent 1 who narrated the story of *The Old Woman and Hyena*, the researcher realized that she was changing her voice to mimic the three characters in the tale - Kente, the old woman and the Hyena. The above observation made the researcher agree with Ayinde in *Aspects of African Oral Literature and Performance Aesthetics*, where he states; “Performance encompasses the modulation of voice and tone.” In folktales where monsters are involved, the narrator mimics the monsters’ husky voice and the human’s so appropriately that one would think that two people are performing the folktale. For instance, respondent 3, the narrator of *Small Brown Beans and the Monster*, modulated her voice to mimic a monster and the human beings so well that one listening from a far, would think that two people were narrating the story. The change of the narrator’s voice is then accompanied by the facial expressions and the overall result is cinematization. In folktales whose mood is a mixture of somber and gay, a brilliant performer modulates the tone to fit sad and gay mood followed by appropriate facial expressions. After watching and listening to the performance of Ankole folktale I concur with Dale and Smith who observed that:

It would need a combination of phonograph and cinematograph to reproduce a tale as it is told... here was no lip mumbling, but every muscle of face and body spoke, a swift gesture often supplying the place of a whole sentence...the animals spoke each in its own tone...it was all good to listen to- impossible to put on paper. (Qtd in Okpewho 45)

Indeed it is well said without a video camera and a recorder, to capture the story as it told, it is virtually impossible to re tell it the way it is told. Every narrator has a unique style of storytelling performance, a style which cannot be easily adopted by another person.

The closure of Ankole folktale is done by statements on both the side of the audience and the storyteller. The closing statement of the narrator elevates the narrator into an omniscient narrator

or second person point of view. The narrator is somewhere observing every event taking place in the place of action, he or she has the license to enter the character's thought a reason that makes him or her omniscient narrator. The narrator concludes the tale by saying that; *kunatsigire okushemererwa kwagaruka omunju ya'Maguru ntyo nataragaza kubatebeza* (when peace and happiness was restored in Maguru's house hold, I ran back to tell you the story). The audience responds as follows: *webare webare munonga, n'obundi n'obundi ogume otuganire otyo* (thank you thank you so much, you should always tell us stories like that.). In other instances, the ending of the Ankole narratives depend on who is telling the story. If a narrator is a muhima, the ending phrase is poetic with rhythm and endowed with images of cattle as thus;

Kuntsiga bya bityo, nza owa Ntare,
 Amperereza enyana katara, ngifunyisa
 Omunyaafu gw'omutaratare, kumba nahika
 Omu ruhanga rwa Ntare, entare egirya nti
 yagirya ntare na ishe.

When it happened like that, I went to Ntare's home
 Who gave me a white calf which I drove using
 A white stick as I was getting near
 The valley of Ntare, a lion ate my calf and I said
 "The lion has eaten my calf and its father."

For Bairu group of Banyankole, since their main source of survival is agriculture, their ending reflects agriculture. For example; *Ku ntsiga Rwemengo yaaruga omu mashemererwa yaaza omumaganya, ngaruka owaitu kubagara ebihimba ebi naatsigire nibitegura*, (when Rwemengo suddenly switched from happiness to sadness, I came back to weed my beans). Alternatively, the narrator creates a concluding phrase depending on the theme of the story. For instance;

kunaatsigire abakyekyezi n'abanyabishuba baahwa Nyampikye, ekyaro kyagira eihoreere, nshara aha kutu ngaruka owaitu ahi naashangire baatandika kuteera engoma n'okutaagurira omu kunanukira ebyabaire nibigyenda omumaisho. (When Nyampikye was no longer a land of night dancers and lairs, I ran back home where I found people ready with drums dancing and singing, celebrating whatever was taking place). In Ankole folktales, the concluding phrase is the only part of the folktale where the narrator uses the first person pronoun.

A large corpus of Ankole folktales has a happy ending. The Ankole tradition maintains the motif that 'good triumphs over evil' a monster however mighty, it can never win over its hunter however tiny he maybe. For instance a monster in the folktale *The Monster and Small Brown Beans*, A very young boy manages to kill the monster single handedly after devouring all his family members. Like in classical literature, the role of gods in Ankole folktales cannot go without reckoning. They intervene in societal situations, a reason why, the audience need willing suspension of disbelief to appreciate and understand Ankole Folktales. In the example given above, the story has to end happily, before the monster dies, it instructs the boy to cut its index finger and when it is cut every person it has eaten comes out alive and kicking. Realistically, the above act is practically impossible but in oral folktales it is made possible. Therefore there is need for the audience to appreciate and understand folktales the way they are and what they convey to us without any question and that can only be realized when willing suspension of disbelief is employed.

2.3.3 The Aesthetic Aspects and Technique of the Ankole Folktales.

Oral literature genres depend on verbal utterances for its aesthetic quality. Oral narratives for example depend on storytelling performances as the major medium of exchange. The story telling performance becomes aesthetically successful when the narrator matches the right words with the right themes of the folktale. Part of the aesthetics of the Ankole folktale lies in its characterization

and personification. Animals, birds, monsters and ogres, rivers, pebbles, trees among others all speak, think and reason like human beings and human beings can converse with these non-human objects. For instance in the tale Nzima and Njunju a pebble holds a conversation with the two sisters;

Akakurungu: *“Nzima-ya Nyonga, naiwe Njunju Rucwekana; abaana benda ya taata; mugume mungambire eby’omwishwa nanye mbagambire eby’omuka. Abaana b’enda ya taata haza mutarigamba ngu akabare kagaamba.”*

Pebble: Nzima-ya Nyanga, and Njunju Rucwekana, my father’s children, you should always tell me what happens in the grazing grounds and I tell you what happens at home.

Akakurungu *“Baishiki b’enda ya taata, mungambire eby’omwishwa nanye mbagambire eby’omuka. Abaishiki bagarukamu bati: “Twariisa enyana za Ruhogo; twarya obukaanja n’entagyengyera; twarya amamuuna; twayeza amaino; kandi twazaagiza empiimba.” Akabaare nako kabagambira eby’omuka kati, “Bayeyera emitavu ya Ruhogo; bayariza eyojwa y’omukabaare; haza baashaakiira Nzima-ya-Nyonga.”*

Pebble: My father’s children tell me what has happened in the grazing area and I tell you what has happened at home.

The girls: we have grazed Ruhogo’s calves, we have eaten wild berries, and we have cleaned our teeth.

Pebble: they have swept Ruhogo’s droppings, they have cleaned the pebble’s place and they have put something in Nzima’s milk.

The above conversation is between the pebble and the two sisters. In the same, folktale, the bird also speaks out magic words that help to join the branch that is holding Nzima. The bird does not only reason like human beings but also saves Nzima's life. The pebble too saves Nzima by telling her about the poison in the milk that has been prepared by her step mother. On the other hand, monkeys in Bahendwa and Bamiza are able to reason out that Bamiza is not just hungry but also scared. They offer wild fruits to Bamiza and even show her the way out of the forest. The characters are non-human but they play a very significant role in the story they are portrayed as even more human, kind, understanding and reasoning than some of the human characters in the story for instance Njunju's mother. However, like Emenanjo said;

“One really requires a willing suspension of disbelief to comprehend and appreciate what happens there in: with animals speaking and behaving like humans, with the elements speaking and behaving like men, with men being born and reaching maturity within the twinkle of an eye” (qtd in Ayinde, 30).

I concur with Emenanjo, without willing suspension of disbelief a reader of a folktale will never understand or appreciate the beauty in the folktales.

Naming of characters in the Ankole Folktales is also very significant. The technique of nomenclature is very much employed; characters are given names which suit their actions as in tales; *Akaze Komuntu Kacubwa Empitsi* (ones' habit is deterred by a hyena). The main character in this story, is so selfish and whatever he does, can only be described in one word *Beyendeza*; his name. Whatever Beyendeza comes across, he wants it for himself he is never satisfied with what he has. Noss in his study of Gbaya folk tales observed that; “names may be a device for telling the reader something about the character bearing the name” (qtd in Ayinde 30). In other folktales characters reflect their names for example, Nyabucureera and Nyabwangu in a tale *Nybucureera and Nyabwangu*. Nyabucureera is a very humble and disciplined girl who ends up marrying a king.

On the other hand, Nyabwangu is just like her name, she is jumpy, undisciplined, impatient, and she is a girl who has been pampered by her mother at the expense of Nyabucureera. Due to the nature of her character, Nyabwangu ends up marrying a king's dog Rukamba and even begets 'children' with it. Some names in Ankole folktales are symbolic for example Nyabucurera is a symbol of good morals and uprightness, a girl or any member of the society who is morally upright, is categorically referred to as Nyabucurera. The opposite is true about Nyabwangu.

Another prominent symbol in Ankole tales is the step mother. A step mother is a symbol of evil, malice, brutality, cruelty and murder. There is no step mother who treats her step child as her own. The only thing step mothers in Ankole Folktales think of, is ways to get rid of their step children and the way is always murder.

The story telling performance also achieves its aesthetic qualities through the use of hyperbole which is a predominant technique used in Ankole folktales. The story teller tries to employ any skill or technique available to him in his delivery. The effect of hyperbole is clearly brought out through paralinguistic features (use of hands, head, eyes and even breathing). The combination of these wraps the folktale into a very beautiful package that every other member of the audience cannot move an inch from his or her seat until the end of the tale. The effect of hyperbole is emphasis but I have observed that in Ankole folktales, it also creates suspense. For instance, in a tale; *The Dumb Woman*, the speaking of un-born child is hyperbolized for emphasis but the audience cannot settle in their seats until the end of story. The beauty of art and technique are intertwined, art cannot be aesthetically qualifying when the technique is not well used. As a novelist or playwright requires appropriate use of narrative and dramatic techniques to produce catching work, a work that can entice the readers to read it, the story teller also requires catching

techniques coupled with the use of tonal variations, gestures, and other extra verbal resources to produce a very entertaining and beautiful tale.

The song is another device used by storytellers to enhance beauty of a folktale. A song adds value to the tale by breaking monotony of narrating and hence entertaining the audience. The songs in Ankole folktales carry with them information that is very significant to the development of a folktale and the overall result. It is also a symbol of re-union with the loved ones and sometimes the song is composed depending on the theme of the folktale. As a symbol of re-union in a tale *A Cruel Step Mother*, Mugisha unites with his lost brother Barakaboona through a song, Njunju and Nzima finally unite through a song, in *Maguru and the Monster*, Maguru is able to save his mother through a song. Therefore, song in Ankole tales is not just for entertainment but there is a lot therein. In relation to a song is heroic recitations (Ebyevugo.) Ebyevugo is one of Ankole traditions that have stood the taste of time as it is still widely used today. Heroic recitations were also used by a narrator in a story telling session to break boredom. *Mbaganire Mbaganire* by Yusuf and Kahangi, shades more light on use of Ebyevugo in Ankole story telling; “in order to make a folktale more interesting or to wake up those who were sleeping, a part or parts of a folktale would be sung or recited.”(Ix). A story telling session or performance was not just for instruction but also an exuberant way of entertainment and heroic recitations coupled with songs makes it so good to watch.

2.4 Conclusion

Performance is a very crucial component to oral literature, without it, oral literature genres are just a file of words with no life in it. Most of Ankole oral literature genres have survived on performance, and those cultures whose traditions are still intact and strong regardless of the many social changes and education is because performance has kept them alive from generation to

another. The performance of Ankole folktales was made more catching by use of songs and heroic recitations. This was done to break boredom among the audience and to wake some members who were dosing.

Like any African community, Ankole has many categories of oral literature that is; Ebyevugo (heroic recitations), songs, dances, (ebitaguriro), proverbs, riddles and oral narratives. Most of these genres are surviving today for instance, heroic recitations, songs and dances and are popularly performed on introduction, wedding and any other form of a party. Proverbs are still popular because they are very crucial in every day speech. Folktales were majorly for instruction of the young and entertainment but new forms of education and entertainment were introduced reducing the importance of folktales.

Presently, it is very hard to come across a child who knows how to tell a story. Worse still, even the old people whom we expect to possess the knowledge of the past say that they don't know or have forgotten. The British in the name of civilization replaced our indigenous education which included folktales with the formal education. Today, Ankole scholars have tried to record some of the folktales in books and now instead of performing the story telling sessions, children just read from the books. Reading and performing are totally two different aspects, children read and understand but they miss out the aesthetic component of a folktale which is created by a song, paralinguistic features employed by the narrator while narrating and the heroic recitations embedded in the folktales.

The relationship between folktales and performance are so interwoven that expunging the latter, renders the former redundant and inactive. The above point explains the fact that Ankole folktales are hard to land on. Performance keeps folktales alive therefore elusory of performance, has almost

rendered the death of Ankole folktales. The folktales would still be circulated if the elders had audience, but unfortunately, children who were the major audience are at school and have no time to listen to stories told by old women and men. Introduction of schools, televisions and radios has rendered folktale performance a service that is no longer required.

A folktale on paper can be likened to watching a movie on screen with no sound; the viewer will only see action but no sound to enhance the credibility of a film. A written folktale is just like those pictures without sound. The reader will read the words of a folktale may understand their meaning but may not enjoy and even appreciate the beauty of a folktale and oral literature in general.

CHAPTER THREE

IMAGES OF WOMEN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the images of Women as portrayed in selected Ankole proverbs and folktales. The chapter shows and highlights how the traditional Ankole viewed and perceived women. Proverbs and folktales are analyzed separately under subtitle headings, a proverb is written in italics while its translation is enclosed in brackets. The analysis of selected proverbs is categorized under five themes that is Marriage and Procreation, Women's immorality, Women as sex objects, Women as a weaker sex, and women's beauty and physical appearance.

Like proverbs, Folk tales, are also discussed under themes; women as dimwits, women's greed, women's jealousy, women's rivalry and women as evil. The researcher discusses each theme referring to a related folktale which is named as appendix A. The folktales are appended on this book and numbered as A1, A2, A3

3.2 Proverbs

3.2.1 Proverbs in relation to marriage and procreation

In Ankole community, marriage is deemed a pertinent precursor of societal advancement and further as an ebullient expression of an individual attainment of maturity and responsibility. Pursuant to the above, both men, and women have a prescribed biological age at which they should marry or get married. In Ankole, when a woman does not get married and produce children she is scorned by the society, to the extent that when such a person dies, rituals are performed before her burial; for instance, her body is not passed via the front door but the back door and is buried with a banana flower. This is an indication that she has not left anyone behind to carry on her legacy. Kirindi shades more light on the above assertion when he says that:

Among Banyankole, like among many African societies, marriage was and still is one of the three vital stages – birth, marriage and death – in the life of an individual, man or woman. Marriage was a crucial aspect of culture that united families and clans and sustained procreation and social and cultural continuity. (126)

To emphasize the fact that at a certain age a woman should get a partner and a family, Banyankole composed a proverb that “*Enyamywonyo ku’ ekura eribwa*” (When a banana ripens, it should be eaten). This implies that when a girl is mature enough should get married and produce children. However, important to note is that women who do not conceive are highly scorned, mocked and blamed for failure to conceive than their male counterparts. Evidenced by the folktale titled the *Barren Woman A6* “...for years the wife could not get pregnant and bear him a child. Because of this, no family member liked her. The husband also threatened her with divorce.”

Marriage and motherhood in Ankole society are important aspects, because the two signify the sense of maturity and responsibility for both men and women. It is also a fulfillment of the wishes and aspirations of one’s parents, kins and members of society at large. The important aspect about marriage is that, as soon as it takes place, women are expected by in-laws, parents, kins and the

entire society to bear a child. Among Banyankole, it is children who hold the marriage together. A marriage devoid of children is a lifeless marriage. A woman was expected to produce as many children as she could and failure to do so, she was insulted and abused by the society. Having children is so much valued that a woman who produced only one child was as good as a barren one. The above notion is cemented in a proverb; *Omwana omwe tamara nyina o' bugumba* (bearing one child does not save a mother from barrenness). Procreation is a responsibility of two people who are supposed to bear any misfortune that befalls them as far as having children is concerned. However, in the above proverb, the man's inability to impregnate a woman is not questioned at all. The society ignores a man and only looks at a woman who bears the blame alone. Traditionally, having many children earned a munyankole man respect. To achieve this, the society composed proverbs which demanded women to produce as many children as they could, for example, *Omukazi arangwaengozi* (a woman is identified by the baby's swaddling cloth) implying that the worth of a woman lies in her ability to bear children. The more children she bears, the more she is respected and valued. When a man marries, he expects his wife to produce as many children as she can because a man in Ankole tradition is also highly respected depending on the number of children he has. A man who has many children is considered masculine and virile by the community. In regard to the above, a woman is seen as 'a tool' to earn respect for a man in the community. In traditional Ankole, a man is the head of the family and thus, everything and everyone in the household belonged to him. He handled all the family as a businessman would handle his property. The notion of a woman being viewed in the image of a property is partly attributed to the paying of the bride price. This is why women are seen as property and therefore producing many children for a man is a way of paying back the bride price, which bride price is enjoyed by the woman's parents and brothers but not herself. According to the sociological theory,

literature is a mirror of society meaning that the content in the folktales and proverbs, is a reflection of society. The society's beliefs, norms and values are exposed to her people through oral literature genres like proverbs and folktales. Basing on the above theory, one can logically conclude that the images embedded in the above proverbs is exactly a true perception towards Ankole women.

3.2.2 Women's beauty and physical appearance:

In Ankole culture, the woman's beauty is highly valued in the same measure as it is cautioned. There is a stern warning to all those men who would want to marry beautiful women. The warning meant to educate young men that not all beautiful women are morally upright; hence a proverb *Oburungi bw'omukazi tigwo mutima* (the woman's beauty does not necessarily reflect her behavior). The above proverb reflects the various images silently pronounced by the patriarchal society. This explains the fact that a woman is seen as evil, wicked, cruel, unreliable and untrustworthy. It is a warning to men and the entire society not to rely on a woman or even trust her. The external physical appearance of a woman may be attractive while she is 'a snake' internally. To emphasize the warning against beautiful women, Banyankole have another proverb that: *Omurungi taburwa kamogo* (beauty is not without a flaw). Implying that even the most beautiful has something bad about her. Like Taine the key proponent of the Sociological Theory emphasized the symbiotic relationship between literature and society through his famous statement that; "Literature is the consequence of the race, the milieu and the moment" (qtd in Scott 123). Since literature is not created in a vacuum, it means that composers of proverbs and folktales derive the material from the society. Therefore, the above proverbs contain true images of women silently pronounced by the Ankole society. It is like all women have issues; the beautiful ones are not morally upright inside while those who are upright their external appearance is not attractive.

Efakazi nto tebura yagishwera (a young widow, cannot fail to get a marriage partner). Unlike previous proverbs about beauty and physical appearance, this proverb does not caution the beauty of women. The proverb seems to suggest that only a young widow can remarry. As there is age limit of widows to remarry, there is no age limit to widowers who wish to remarry.

3.2.3 Proverbs related to women's immorality

Immorality refers to wrong behavior that is contrary to the society's moral and ethical standards. Banyankole women were expected to be modest, shy, quiet, obedient, reserved among others. Therefore, if a munyankole woman behaved contrary to the above qualities, she was considered immoral and if a husband to such a woman passed away early, she would have no one to inherit her. The sociological theory tenet which states that literature is seen as a way of exposing the society's Ethical and Moral values is materialized in the proverb that *Omukazi wamaryo tahungurwa* (a stubborn woman is not inherited). In Ankole culture, when a woman lost her husband, to utilize the bride price, the widow was taken on by her brother-in-law. Since proverbs are seen as a way of training the Ethical Standards of the society, the above proverb is meant to uplift the ethical morals of women. The above proverb requires a munyankole woman to be modest, obedient and quiet, a good wife or woman is expected by the society to be submissive not only to her husband but also to her in-laws. To maintain this, such proverbs were composed to make women submit to men. A woman whether married or not had to behave uprightly to get a man. However, the above proverb translates the image in which women are viewed by the patriarchal society. First and foremost, payment of bride price has commoditized women. The fact that women are inherited just like property is a clear indication that they are viewed as property or objects. Just like they had no say in choosing their marriage partners, they had no say on who inherited them, implying that this was done against their will and consent. It is natural not to pry for the object's feelings, will or consent before using it. But women are human beings who have

emotions. Therefore, imposing things on them including men can only imply that they were viewed as good as objects ready for whoever willed to use it. Important to note however, the culture of inheriting women among Banyankole has been abandoned due to breakout of sexually transmitted diseases.

The Ankole community has a phobia for stepmothers. According to them, there is no stepmother who is morally upright or “good hearted.” All stepmothers are portrayed as brutal, evil, jealous and murderous. This image is highly upheld in a proverb *mukasho taba nyoko* (your stepmother can never be your mother). Biologically, the above proverb is true. The society views step mothers as the worst kind of people. According to society, there is no step mother who can treat a step child as her own. However, any society comprises of moral and immoral people but society has adamantly refused to acknowledge the fact that there are morally upright stepmothers as there are bad ones. One can logically reason that step mothers are portrayed in such derogatory image just because they are women.

In Ankole society, a woman is mandated to one partner, a girl is supposed to abstain from sex until she gets married. It is a crime for a woman to have sexual intercourse with more than one man. However, males are legally allowed to have more than one woman or sexual partners. Traditionally and among banyankole moral code, men are free to be promiscuous, but women are prohibited for example, the above notion is held in a proverb that; *omukazi ruboro aburwa kizika* (a promiscuous woman has no husband to burry her) a woman whose sexual promiscuity is high is seriously warned that she will not be honorably buried. Such a woman fails to get who to bury her because she does not belong to any particular man. Such a woman according to the moral code of

banyankole lacks identity and address and therefore will be buried un honorably or fail to get people to bury her at all. One wonders what is likely to happen to a man who is even more promiscuous than a woman. It is important to note that in society there are men who are loose even worse than women but the society does not question their immoral behavior but the same society has the right to question and condemn a woman of the same behavior. A promiscuous woman is given all sorts of names and painted in a derogatory image by the society. For instance, in the proverb above she is referred to as *ruboro* an image which brands her a sex monger. Harry Levin a Sociological critic, emphasises the fact that oral literature materials have a great effect to the readers once they are read. The above proverb, has influenced the modern Ankole, to describe promiscuous women in derogatory images such as *ekigali kyabegi* implying that every amateur willing to master the act of sexual intercourse, can carry out practice on such girls or women. Injustice is in the fact that male sex mongers are not described in such derogatory images instead they are praised for their virility and power as men for instance, in modern Ankole such men are referred to as *empaya sharp* an image which praises men's sexual prowess.

In the Ankole community it is believed that a bad woman is ominous to her husband. This attitude is upheld in a proverb; *Omukazi mubi nenkwita hoona* (a bad woman is an impediment to progress). A man cannot achieve anything good or even progress economically if he has a bad wife. According to Ankole moral code of conduct, banyankole women are supposed to be modest, quiet, obedient and submissive to their husbands. Therefore a woman, who behaves contrary to the above qualities, is considered erratic. A woman, who cannot listen to her husband, can hinder his progress in every aspect and purportedly, nothing good comes out of such woman. A bad

woman cannot raise children honorably hence a proverb; *omukazi mubi tomwihaho mwana* (a bad woman cannot raise a good child)

The above proverb implies that if a woman is badly behaved, the behaviors are likely to be inherited by the children for instance, a lazy woman is likely to raise lazy children, and an abusive woman is likely to produce abusive children. Since children are taught by their mothers, the morality of a wife or mother is paramount. As earlier noted, there are bad men as there are bad women but the sad part of it, is that society only looks at women. Bad or evil men are not questioned or cautioned by the traditional Ankole society.

3.2.4 Proverbs related to women as a weaker sex

Sociological critics believe that Literature is not created in a vacuum and therefore composed art is a reflection of the society, their beliefs and norms are all grounded in their oral literature. Therefore, the fact that Ankole women are perceived as a weaker sex than their male counter parts, is clearly embedded in their proverbs. Due to this attitude, men were looked at as natural leaders, head of families who made all the decisions without consulting their wives. To emphasize the above attitude the Banyankole assert that: *Mememe tezaaza mwojo* (pampering does not yield a boy). Implying that becoming extra careful while producing a baby boy may not help in yielding the required results. This is to emphasize the fact that men are naturally stronger than women from birth. Therefore it is just natural for men to become leaders while women are their subordinates.

The man's strength and woman's weakness is again elaborated in the following proverb

Efuuni yomushaija nekira eijembe ryomukazi (a small hoe of a man is better than the big and new hoe of a woman). *Efuuni* is a small old hoe while *eijembe* is a big new hoe. *Efuuni* is weak and cannot do the tilling of the soil very well like *eijembe* or new hoe. However in the proverb it is clearly stated that a small hoe is far much better than a big new hoe. The performance of the two

hoes depend on who is using them. It does not matter whether the hoe is old and very small so long as it is a man using it, it will still perform better than the new one. The performance of a new hoe however big and strong, may be hindered by the fact that its user is a woman. The images of *efuuni* and *eijembe* juxtapose the physical strength of men and women. Men are perceived to be naturally strong even if they are provided with scanty tools they still perform better than a woman who has the best of tools. The above proverb is an assertion of the patriarchal perception of women. In their ideological thinking, women are a weaker sex who constantly need the strength of men to rely on.

Decision making, settling disputes both at family and community level, was the duty of men. Women were meant to listen and implement the decisions made by men. However, at some point, women could also settle disputes as expounded in the proverb; *ahu abashaija batari, omukazi acwa orubanja* (in the absence of men, a woman can also settle disputes). Denotatively, the proverb seems to project the positive role of women in the society. However on close scrutiny, one cannot help but observe that the proverb is a re-assertion of female's dependence on men. The use of plural *abashaija* and the singular *omukazi* in the above proverb, loudly spells out the position of women in Ankole society. Logically, all the men in the society cannot be absent at the same time, and there is no society that is devoid of men. At least there is a man somewhere who can probably help in settling the dispute at hand. A woman is entitled to one man not men, therefore using plural *abashaija*, means the proverb is referring to men of the whole community. This can imply that even when a discord occurred in a certain family in the absence of the husband, a male member of the community was called upon to settle the dispute other than the woman in that particular family. So when will that time ever come when 'men' are not around so that a woman can also get a chance

to exercise her wisdom? The above proverb is another indicator that women are not only weak physically but also intellectually. A woman is only entitled to settle disputes in absence of men, meaning that in the presence of men, a woman is not allowed to air out her views concerning the matter at hand.

3.2.5 Women as sex objects

The patriarchal community of Ankole viewed women as tools to please and entertain men. A man had to be satisfied sexually for a woman to receive favors from her own husband. This attitude reduced women from being wives to sexual objects and playthings. To emphasize this, banyankole have a proverb that; *Omukazi atenda birungi arara omumpare* (a woman who does not want good things sleeps in her knickers). In traditional Ankole, especially among Bahima, women were not allowed to go out for grazing, their role majorly included staying in the camp and entertain visitors. The word ‘entertain’ is connotatively used to mean sexual intercourse with whoever came to visit. The above assertion can be supported by Elam’s observation in his research among the Bahima;

But when the wedding ceremonies ended, and the bride assumed the regular functions of a married woman, her sexual favours could be legitimately shared by her father-in-law, the husband’s brothers and sisters’ sons, by clansmen, friends and by neighbors. (211)

The above proverb and the above quote, show that a woman had no say as far as sex was concerned. She had to avail herself at any time a man needed her. The proverb “*Omukazi atenda birungi arara omumpare*” could paint a woman in different images for example, a woman is a sexual object, and she is prostitute because it is a prostitute who gives sex in exchange of something material. For women to get good or material gains, they should or must sleep with their knickers off. This patriarchal ideology dominates Ankole society and Africa at large. A woman was seen as a sex object and that image has not changed at all as far as the ideological thinking of the young generation is concerned. The above proverb shows how the image of women is down-played by

the patriarchal society. The proverb almost suggests that if a woman wants get something from the husband she should sexually please him or else gets nothing as if the men do not enjoy sex. The above view is cemented by Elam in his study carried out among the Bahima of Ankole. Elam observed that the amount of inheritance from father to son was sometimes determined by the extent in which the daughter-in-law pleased her father-in-law sexually as evidenced by the following statement;

One aspect of this power was embodied in the widely held opinion that in matters of inheritance a father may favour a son whose wife treated him well. It became evident, in conclusion, that modes of ownership and inheritance were closely bound to sexual privileges over one's daughter- in- law. (218)

The above statement emboldens the fact that women were viewed as the 'other' by the Ankole patriarchal society. To patriarchal ideological thinking, women are objects, tools used by men or husbands to receive a reasonable inheritance from their fathers.

3.2.6 Proverbs which portray women in a positive light.

As already seen in the major analysis, the Ankole community largely marginalized women and use oral literature to further their selfish whims. Predominantly, the presentation of women in the proverbs is rather derogatory. However, to a smaller extent, the women in Ankole were given a few positive attributes as seen in a number of proverbs.

Among the Banyankole as it is still, the mother is supreme. All the children are expected to pay due respect and trust to her. They believe that whenever one trusts a mother, there should never be room for doubt as seen the famous proverb that warns against mistrusting mothers; *"Ku ota nyoko endugu, toyorekyerezayo rumuri."* Loosely translated, the proverb means that (when one trusts a mother with anything, he/she should not bother to supervise what she is doing for him/her). The

proverb does not put trust in the father figure but the mother, meaning that the community views mothers as the most trustworthy and very much unlikely to betray their children.

The Ankole community largely views it as a responsibility of women to raise the children. The men are tasked with other activities. This role made women so attached to the children that the society constructed a proverb that; “*ekyaakiza nyin’omwaana embabazi, buri nikyenda kumurya.*” The proverb means that (whatever is more merciful than the child’s mother, then it wants to eat the child). This means that the Banyankole believed that the mother was superior in terms of child care and genuine love to the child than the father and any other member of the family or community. By this proverb, it could mean that even a father may harbor malicious intentions against the child. Had it been that both parents were equally merciful to the child, the proverb should have indicated *omuzaire* (parent) not *nyina* (mother).

Another proverb that reveals the positivity of women in traditional Ankole was; “*onyetsire n’eishenkazi, tamanya ekimwiniize.*” Loosely translated, it means (whoever grows with an aunt as a peer does not know what may bring a curse to her). *Aunt* refers to a sister of one's mother or father or the wife of one's uncle. In different cultures, both the terminology and the social significance of an aunt's role in a kinship network vary considerably. The Banyankole believed that an aunt did a great deal of blessing and cursing to the children. The children are expected to be humble and fully respectful to the aunt. By and large, the proverb underscores the positive role of the aunt in the life of a child. As already discussed in this study, women were solely responsible for child bearing and grooming. According to Beattie, James;

among the Bunyoro, Swazi, and Ashanti in Africa, as well as Australian aboriginal tribes, for example, the father's sister may discipline her brothers' children, commands the same

respect and authority as her brother, and arranges her nephew's marriage or may forbid it if the nephew chooses an unacceptable mate. (37)

The above postulation by Beattie underscores the pivotal role of aunts in communities. The Ankole community was never to be an exception.

In *omukazi taba mugyenyi* (a woman can never treat herself as a guest), the Banyankole underpinned the woman's hardworking ethics. Unlike their male counterparts who sit and wait to be served, the women instantly join in the available chores. This proverb is used by the mothers and aunts to instill hard work among the female children.

Another proverb that positively embeds women in societal activities in Ankole was; "*abashaija ahu batari, omukazi acwa orubanja.*" Loosely translated, it means that (in the absence of men, women can judge and settle disputes.) This clearly shows that albeit the masculine pseudo superiority over women, men knew, deep inside themselves that women were equally intelligent and capable of performing intellectual tasks.

3.3 Folk Tales

Several folktales have been selected for the purpose of this study. The selection has been carefully done; they show how women are portrayed or perceived in Ankole. A few of the collected stories portray women in a positive image. Women are presented in a derogatory, demeaning and negative image. They are portrayed as brutal, unintelligent, cruel, evil, murderers, and jealous.

3.3.1 Women's jealous.

In Ankole proverbs and folktales, women are presented as cruel, brutal, malicious and murderous which is born out of jealous for their step children. Folktales; *Bahendwa and Bamiza and the Cruel Step mother* (A9 and A6) are a clear evidence of the above assertion. However, the causes of

cruelty differ. In the first story, Bahendwa and Bamiza, the stepmother becomes cruel because she is jealous of her step daughter who is more beautiful than her own. From the beginning she is good to Bahendwa but after realizing that Bahendwa is more beautiful than her own daughter Bamiza, she thinks of all the possible ways to get rid of Bahendwa. The decision she finally makes does not only prove to us that women are cruel but also murderous.

To prove to the society that women are indeed evil and cruel, the reason as to why Bayoroba must kill Bahendwa is too trivial. Killing a person because she is more beautiful; to me is hyperbolized to emphasize the cruelty and the evil nature of women. The punishment for Bayoroba's crime is also shared by her innocent daughter Bamiza. Bahendwa ends up marrying the son of a head chief compared to Bamiza who ends up with a good for nothing Kihosho. Bamiza marrying Kihosho is retribution to Bayoroba for the sins she has committed. On the other hand, Bakunda is portrayed as an understanding, caring and loving husband who does not harass the wife in anyway. In traditional Ankole, a man is the head of the family, everything and everyone is controlled by the head of family. The head of the family, rules his household with an iron hand, his presence is assertive and whatever he decides, is unquestionable and above all he is the protector of his household. However, when one juxtaposes a typical munyankole man and Bakunda in this tale, is bound to realize that Bakunda does not qualify to be a head of the family. Bakunda is portrayed as an irresponsible father, he has only two daughters, but when one of them goes missing, he does nothing. The composer does not show Bakunda being serious and assertive as far as looking for the daughter is concerned. What kind of a father would not react when he realizes that his child is missing? Importantly, Bakunda's irresponsibility and negligence is not the problem, the real problem is that the composer dwells so much on painting Bayorobo in a demeaning picture and ends up neglecting Bakunda's weaknesses. His weaknesses are totally ignored by the composer; his mistakes are not

questioned at all. The author portrays Bakunda in a sugar coated way but makes it a point to show the world how evil a woman can be.

In lieu of the above, women's over whelming greed which breeds their evil nature, is highly and clearly drummed up in the folktale *The Cruel Stepmother* (A6). The patriarchal society show the society that a woman can do anything including murder in order to achieve what she wants. The woman's cruelty is peaked when she decides to beat up her stepson to nearly death and then throw him in the flowing river. The reason as to why this woman does this villainous act is very clear because she wants her son Mugisha to inherit his entire father's property. It is sad to note that five folktales about stepmothers collected from the field, there is no woman who is portrayed as a human being, and the actions of women in these tales place them in the class of monsters. It is also posited in these tales that in cases where girls are involved, the stepmother becomes jealous of the stepchild's beauty, who is automatically more beautiful than her own daughter. Jealous, propels a woman to commit the cruel act of murdering the step daughter for instance, Bamiza and Bahendwa, Njunju and Nzima, Nyabucurera and Nyabwangu. In cases where boys are involved, the step mother is cautious about the inheritance of the property. Therefore, to let her own son inherit the entire property, she has to get rid of the stepson. The two folktales mirror the Banyankole culture; beauty is very much valued because it attracts the best suitors while boys are heirs of their father's property. It is also clearly posited that women are so unintelligent and unrepentant in A6, Mugisha's mother does not learn from the punishment her husband gives her. She wants to go ahead and look for charms to get rid of Barakabona and his father so that she and the son Mugisha inherit everything. However during her evil intended expeditions, she meets her death. A very big warning to every evil woman out there, the punishment of any kind of evil deed does not only stop

by a beating and divorce but also death. The evil women are not only punished by their husbands and the society but also gods.

Women's jealousy is also clearly presented in folktale *Nzima and Njunju* (A13) like in A6, Njunju's mother plays a role of a mother to Nzima until she produces her own daughter who is a bit uglier than Nzima. Njunju's mother is so jealous to the extent that she smears her own daughter oil, and smears Nzima mud and then places them by the roadside to find out from passersby who of the two is more beautiful. The answer she receives is not what she anticipated so as a solution she tries to murder Nzima. Only women are capable of such heinous acts. It is as if men are gods who are exempted from making mistakes or even committing heinous crimes. Men are so good to the extent that they try by all means to contain their evil wives, for instance, when Nzima, Barakabona and Bahendwa get lost, the fathers do not harass their wives for the whereabouts of their children, they are presented as tolerant people who understand and even trust their wives. However, women seem not know what is good for them as they go ahead and do evil acts that destroy their lives. In other words, women have many different ways of destroying themselves. The above folktales clearly explain the existence of Ankole proverb that "*Mukasho taba Nyoko*" (One's stepmom can never be one's mom).

3.3.2 Tales related to women as dimwits

The intelligence of women is highly compromised in Ankole folktales for example *The Barren Woman and the Monster* (A6) a barren woman picks a monster child on the river bank. Puts it on her back and carries it home. Considering the havoc that was caused by monsters during that time, how could a grown up person in her right mind pick up a monster child well knowing that it is not human. In the story desparacy of the barren woman to have a child is very much emphasized. The family members, society including her husband have all rejected, isolated and abused her just

because she cannot have a child as if it is her choice. However much this woman is very desperate, how could she carry a monster child home well knowing that it is not a human child?

How can one describe the above other than the fact that the patriarchal society meant to undermine the intelligence and reasoning capacity of women. Such misconceptions on women are meant to show that men are superior to women since women do not reason at all. In the folktale, the monster child does not even pretend to be human it is in its original shape;

“on her reaching the well she saw a monstrosity of an infant. The creature had huge eyes, long claws for finger nails and was crying. Then she said to herself “how lucky I am! I am going to take this child home, may be the family will accept me. They will like me.”

but the woman still decides to carry it on her back well knowing that it is not a human child. One wonders how a grown up person despite the situation, could carry a creature described as above on the back. However, in the patriarchal society it is possible for one to do such a stupid act and that is none other than a woman. Patriarchy is advertising the fact that women are un intelligent and therefore it could cause havoc if they are trusted with important issues. Hence subjecting women to the position of subject and master. A misconception on women that they are trouble makers, the actions of a barren woman do not only lead to self destruction but also the entire family. A6 also projects how the barren woman is desperate to be approved and accepted by culture and the society. The culture and society that demands women to produce children make the barren woman so desperate, to the extent of carrying a monster child home. In short, the barren woman is the victim of society and its culture.

In Ankole community, children are the center of marriage for without children, marriage is like an empty shell. Children are as important as stated by Patrick Kirindi in his book *History and Culture of Ankle*:

In some cases, a childless couple adopted a son of the husband's brother to help out in day-to-day cattle rearing chores. Such adopted son would inherit the property of the childless couple." (116).

Considering the above, there is no couple that would want their property to be inherited by a stranger. A woman is as desperate as a man to have an heir as they are both in the same predicament but sad to note, is that the inability to have children is squarely a woman's fault. A man is never blamed at all for not having the children. The victim (woman) is not only abused by her family members but also the entire society. However, at the end of the story, it is not only the woman who receives punishment for carrying the monster child home but the entire society as well face dire consequences. After killing the monster, the whole homestead is swallowed by a lake as if punishing society for pressurizing and harassing an already suffering woman who has no hand in the situation she is in.

Having children in Ankole community is very much valued actually when a couple produces only one child, they are considered a childless couple. They believe in producing as many children as possible, however, the unfair part of this culture is that it is only women who receive the brunt of the failure to bear children. It is interesting to observe that in the story the *Barren Woman*, in an effort to portray the husband as a good (loving and caring), the composer ends up portraying him as the most unintelligent. Sleeping with a person every night and you don't realize that she is pregnant is out of question. When the woman brings the 'child,' he does not bother to ask how and

where his wife has given birth from. Instead he blindly slaughters a goat to celebrate the birth of the ‘child’

The intelligence of women is again compromised in the folktale *Orwesigitsire Arushoma* (A8). The folktale projects how women are viewed in the society. Women in the above folktale are trouble makers, their reasoning capacity is very low and they do not only cause discord among themselves but also the entire community. Kanjunjuure; a witch is the engine of discord among families, friends and the whole community. Kiragaju and Bishuba consult Kanjunjuure’s “divinity” on everything that happens in their lives including the most trivial and insignificant events like; many birds gathering in the compound, a goat going back home by itself, cutting a finger while peeling or being cut by a sugarcane while eating it. Stylistically, hyperbole has been employed to emphasize, how feather brained women are. How can a person in his or her right mind consult a witch just because she has slightly cut her finger while peeling? It is also evident in this story that women do nothing except provoke and fight each other. Kiragaju and Bishuba are ever quarreling over trivial matters a fact that makes them daily visitors of Kanjunjure. Knocking one’s feet while walking or being pierced by a thorn is enough to lure Bishuba to seek for spiritual guidance. The patriarchal ideology is very clear in this picture that enlists women dimwits who cannot even reason that it is normal to stumble while walking. It is also normal to get pierced by a thorn depending on where one is. However these ‘stupid’ women cannot reason it out that instead they visit Kanjunjure who uses the chance to deceive them. This deceit fuels enmity between Kiragaju and Bishuba.

It is also clearly posited in the above tale (*Orwesigitsire Arushoma*) that women are like children who need elders all the time for guidance. After reading Egara Stanely's PhD Dissertation; "*The Construction of Gender through the Narrative Process of the African Folktale*", I concur with him when he said that: "constant guidance for wives is critical for the well being of the family (118). Stanley's observation is logically placed in this story, when Ketabaza tempts to fight Bishuba for spreading false rumors against her; it is her husband who instructs her not to fight Bishuba because it would bring shame and embarrassment on their family. The patriarchal logic of this story is that women are like children who need constant guidance from the elders who are men. When a woman is left to do as she wishes, she is capable of destroying not only herself but the entire community and its moral fabric. Women have to be treated with an iron hand otherwise they bring shame and embarrassment upon the family. For instance, Mbeeta and Basiima are so passive about their wives' activities that they end up migrating due to shame. Unlike men, women in this story are portrayed as dimwits, unreliable, deceitful and untrustworthy. Men understand, that is why Ketabaza's husband is not bothered by Bishuba's rumours even if the rumour is about his demise. However his wife Ketabaza is over the top with anger she cannot just understand that its one of Bishuba's baseless rumours. Men are tolerant, actually according to this story, they are 'saints', any man in Mbeeta's or Basiima's situation would have divorced or married another woman. Bishuba and Kiragaju are misfits of the society they have ashamed their husbands but their husbands do not divorce them instead; they migrate to where they are not known and stay with their wives. The above perceptions of women are not out of vacuum but a true reflection of the society because oral literature is a reflection or mirror of society. The community's beliefs, norms, cultures and perceptions are transmitted through oral literature genres like proverbs, folktales, songs, and dances. Women being presented like in the above folktale is not just to make a story

aesthetically perfect, but a true reflection of people's way of life and perceptions. Therefore, we cannot rule out the fact that the patriarchal society greatly undermined women's intellectual ability. The patriarchal logic of this story is that for peace and harmony to be preserved in the society, women have to be guided constantly and treated with an iron hand. They cannot be trusted with anything very crucial because women are perceived not to bear any aorta of reasoning. In the same folktale, it is mentioned that some men also consult kanjunjure's divinity however; the tale has deliberately ignored them. It does not dwell much on such men but instead concentrate on women and the havoc they are capable of causing.

In Ankole folktales, women are presented as dimwits, stubborn and myopic; this is clearly projected in the folktale *Otaratinire Bakuru Taritinwa Bato* (A10). Kenyonyi is very confident she will die early and therefore will not disturb the young people in her old age. In Kenyonyi's opinion, when a person grows old should die and not disturb the young. Kenyonyi's level of reasoning is as good as that of a child, implying that women are viewed in the image of children. They are myopic and cannot reason and thus, need constant guidance from men for harmony and tranquility of a family and the entire community. Tayebwa tries to talk to his wife about the way she is treating her mother-in-law, but Kenyonyi, adamantly refuses to revise her behavior. Due to her behavior, Kenyonyi is hated by her family members and the entire village; she has no friends because people think that she is a witch. Most of folktales on this study corpus present two categories of women; bad women and good women. In A10, there is a very a sharp contrast between a bad woman and a good woman. Bateeta is a true image of a good woman, she loves people, she is very generous, and she is not a rumor monger as many people including some men trust her with their secrets. When Bateeta dies, the whole village mourns her death, because they

have lost a very important and good person. Her funeral is attended by people from all corners of the village. Kenyonyi on the other hand, is not only harsh to her step children, but also the village children. Komuhanda and Maani do not have playmates unless they are at their grandmother's home. She does not have friends; she does not respect elders as she feeds her mother-in-law on goat's droppings and stones. Kenyonyi's retribution is very harsh; since the gods do not side with the evil doers they don't wait for old age to punish Kenyonyi for her crimes. Kenyonyi injures both her legs and her right arm, and the person helping her to move around also dies suddenly when he is not even sick. After the death of her husband, Kenyonyi is left an 'orphan;' she is alone without any caretaker. Her home becomes a habitat for snakes and rats. Eventually, she dies from a snake bite. Unlike Bateeta's funeral, no one mourns and even burying her is a chance as she is buried by only those who have come to her rescue after hearing her alarm. Sad to note is that her own brothers did not have an ounce of care for Kenyonyi because of her behavior so she dies a very sad and lonely death without a care taker. A very innocent person Tayebwa is sacrificed in a bid to punish Kenyonyi. The patriarchal logic and message is very clear in this story. A wife had to respect and take care of her husband's relatives, children and the mother-in-law. Failure to do so, she would not be punished by fellow human beings but divine powers. I am sure a woman in the category of Kenyonyi that listens to this story is obliged to change her behaviour because no one would want to end like Kenyonyi.

Kenyonyi is a bad woman but her actions especially her behaviour towards the old woman are hyperbolized. Feeding the old woman on goats' droppings and stones, and then starving her when Tayabwa and Maani are a way on a marriage expedition, is a patriarchal's technique to show the world how evil women can be. Three folktales have been used for this section to mirror the true perception of the patriarchal society towards women because literature is a mirror of the society.

Taine emphasised the fact that literature is not created in a vacuum, it exposes the social realities of a certain community. Therefore, one can logically conclude that the images embedded in the above folktales are nothing but a true perception of Ankole society towards her women.

3.3.3 The portrayal of Women as evil.

The notion that women are a source of evil or evil itself is drummed up in folktale *Ishungisa and the Monster* (A4). Ankole folklore has many versions of stories about *Orusa Mpeekire*, but the researcher has used the above tale because it is more outstanding as far as the women's image is concerned. It is not by mistake that an evil monster which has terrorized a village for so many years turns out to be an old woman. Why not an old man, a child or even just a monster?

Like the sociological theory asserts, folktales are a reflection of people's way of life, beliefs, norms and perceptions. This is another evidence to support the fact that the patriarchal society views women as a source of all evil, inauspicious and destruction in the society. The child whom this story is referred is a girl, who could not let her mother rest, could not let her sisters and brothers enjoy folktales told by their mother because she is ever on her mother's back and crying just like *Orusa Mpeekire* or a monster. After finding out that the monster is an old woman, we are not amazed at the fact that it could not kill or even attack two people. According to the patriarchal society, a woman is a weaker sex even if she turns herself into a monster. It is also no wonder that the infamous monster is killed by the weakest man on planet, a man who is despised, rejected and isolated by society manages to become famous by killing the woman monster.

The evil nature of women is again projected in a tale *Orutengyera Nto Rwita Nkuru* (A5). It is clear that the Ankole folktales clearly reveal women as brainless, evil, and cruel and they never learn from the mistakes they have committed. The above point is clearly illustrated in the above

tale. Kentwiga Bindeba's first wife does not concur with her husband's decision to marry a second wife when she fails to produce a second child. Due to jealousy and the fear that she may be chased away from her home, instigates her to stop the marriage between Kabumba and her husband. Kentwiga does all she could to kill her co-wife but instead her niece Bonabana drinks the porridge meant for Kabumba which almost costs her, her life. When Bonabana becomes okay, she swears never to charm any one or even try to kill another person using poison. However after some years have passed she proves to the readers she has never learnt from the past and has no intention of learning. Kentwiga intentionally abandons her own only son Munanura to the lions thinking that it's Ntwire her co-wife's son. Very early the following morning she is so shocked when she realizes that the person she refused to offer help last night is not Ntwire but her only son Munanura. Kentwiga hangs herself because she could not stand it.

Kentwiga does not only destroy herself but her innocent son and her husband who almost loses himself to grief and shock of losing two people at the same time. Kentwiga is brainless because when she stops Kagarura from helping the stranger, she does not ponder about the fact that what happened to Bonabana could happen again. She is mesmerized by the fact that Ntwire will be no more and importantly, Kentwiga is not the murderer. The patriarchal logic is very clear in this story, jealousy is destructive therefore any jealousy woman is likely to end up like Kentwiga. In Ankole tradition, a wife was not supposed to be jealous of his husbands' wives and she had to play an important role in settling in her co-wife. To make sure that women were kept in check such folktales had to be composed to intimidate women and keep them in a position where they could easily be ruled.

3.3.4 Women's Greed

Greed in Ankole folktales is also portrayed as a vice for women for example the tale *The old Woman and the Hyena* (A1) features a woman who is as greedy as a hyena. She is greedy to an extent of committing the most heinous crime in the name of securing meat from the hyena. One wonders how a human being with all the senses decides to exchange mere meat with the child who is not a stranger but her own blood. However, in a patriarchal society, it is possible so long as the perpetrator is a woman. The folktale *The Old Woman and the Hyena* (A1) shows that women are not just greedy but also dimwits; a transaction with an animal is a death warrant in case one fails to pay. However the old woman does not ponder about this as she is carrying out a transaction with the hyena. In the same folk tale, women are portrayed as murderers; this is supported by the old woman's repeated tricks to offer her granddaughter to the hyena as payment for the meat. The actions indicate that the old woman is determined to offer her grandchild to the hyena, throughout the story, the old woman does not show any sign of remorse of what she is doing.

Related to the above, is folktale; *The old woman and the sea shell* (A2) a very poor old woman who does not own a decent shelter, no food and no children is suddenly endowed with wealth from a sea shell. The sea shell provides her with everything she lacks, a palace for a house, plenty of food, jewelries of all kind, many servants and a prince. The old woman's life is comfortable. However there is a condition for her to keep the riches and whatever she has acquired. She must never tell anyone about how and where she acquired the riches. Like in the A1, the old woman is also greedy she has a lot but she is still craving for more. Her greed cannot be kept in check when a merchant approaches her with a glittering necklace. The old woman wants to buy the necklace although the seller does not want money but the secret of her wealth. The old woman indulges the secret and everything disappears she is now back to her original situation. The two old women

have common characters traits and because of their characters they face dire consequences. A2 seems to suggest that women do not know what they want. The old woman has everything a person could ever need but exchanges it with a single necklace. This act also renders her brainless; her reasoning capacity is portrayed as very low as that of a child. She cannot distinguish what is useful to her from what is not, the condition for living a comfortable life is very simple, but the old woman cannot adhere to it due to greed. The patriarchal society is sending a message to its listeners that women cannot be trusted with secrets and therefore fit to be in a subordinate position. This can also be supported by Okot Benghe as he posits that; “Stereotypical notion is used to exclude the females from the secrets of the family, the homestead and the clan- purportedly because they cannot be trusted to keep their mouths shut” (96). The patriarchal ideology is clearly illustrated in A2 if females cannot keep a secret concerning their own welfare, how could they be trusted with serious matters concerning a family, clan and the community. It is against this background that females are expected to play the subjugate role while men are leaders of the community and heads of families. In both folktales, women have a knack for destroying themselves in one way or another. Both women destroy themselves as a result of overwhelming greed which has overpowered their superego and reason. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that the patriarchal society portrayed women in such a negative image to demean them and keep them in a subordinated position.

3.3.5 Women’s rivalry

The sociological critics were right when they avered that literature is not created in a vacuum, that it is a reflection of social realities. A common saying nowadays that women are allergic to one another, is clearly grounded in the folktale *The dumb woman* (A3), cannot help but realize that women’s rivalry has not started recently but was there since time immemorial. The above tale has made me conclude that Susan et al is right when she posits in her study titled *Unmasking the*

Rivalry of Women in Cameroonian folktales that, “women are rivals and enemies of each other” (18). This notion is clearly grounded in folktale, *The Dumb Woman* (A3). The grandmother and the mother of the dumb girl are ever quarreling to the extent of provoking an unborn baby to speak and ask her mother that “why is it you are ever quarrelling with grandmother”. The mother answers her thus “if you are a girl you will see it but if you are a boy, you will not” The speaking of unborn child is hyperbolized to emphasize the hatred, rivalry and the conflict between females. When the unborn child asks the mother why she is ever at loggerheads with the mother-in-law, the answer the mother gives confirms the patriarchal perception of women. It also confirms that men have no time for such rivalries; such behavior is only fit for women. In an effort to make her daughter-in-law hated by her son because she is dumb, the mother-in-law of the dumb woman commits the outrageous act of exchanging the children of the dumb woman with her daughter’s children. The dumb woman is capable of producing boys who are favored over girls. To drive her daughter-in-law out of the home, she maliciously exchanges the dumb woman’s sons with girls. She does this without hiding because she knows that the secret will never be revealed since the only eye witness is dumb. The point stressed here is that women are natural enemies to each other and cannot live together in peace and harmony. For instance the dumb woman does nothing to her mother-in-law to deserve such a heavy punishment. However, the mother-in-law is determined to see her out of the way. Hyperbole is used in this folk tale to emphasize the nature of women, to emphasize the vice and the natural enmity among themselves. The mother-in-law does not exchange one or two children but four children. One wonders at the possibility of such act however, in the patriarchal ideology, women are very much capable of such heinous actions.

On the other hand, Ankole folktales also present women who are good. Therefore, not all women are presented in a derogatory image there are women who act to the expectations of society and

such women are rewarded. Some folktales, present the fact that not all women are dimwits, malicious, evil and murderous there are women who are very intelligent as in tales; *The Old Woman and the Hyena* and *The Dumb Woman* (A1 and 3). A1, the young girl Kente, has no protector (who is always a male character) but manages to survive her grandmother's plots to be served to the hyena. Kente survives not because of physical strength, but because of her intelligence. From the time her grandmother brings the meat home, Kente suspects that something is not right but does not confront her grandmother out rightly. She instead finds ways of dodging death without the old woman even suspecting that Kente knows what is going on. The old woman is very shrewd because the errands which she sends Kente to are a deal with the hyena but Kente survives these deals courtesy of her intelligence. What surprises the old woman and even the reader, Kente does all the tasks but the hyena does not see her not even once as described in the story. On the other hand, however much the reader recognizes Kente's intelligence; it is a disservice not to realize that Kente has been used as a tool to expose the brutality of another woman.

The stereotypical notions that women are dimwits and evil is again proved wrong in folktale *The Dumb Woman* (A3). The dumb woman takes the investigation upon herself to find out why her mother was ever quarreling with her grandmother. To do that, she plays dumb since childhood and when she gets married, she is forced to face an evil mother-in-law who maliciously exchanges the children of her daughter-in-law with those of her daughter as described in the story. While the villain is exchanging the children, the dumb woman is watching but decides to keep quiet and see the end. However, the evil mother-in-law has no plan of resting until she has completed the mission. The evil mother-in-law is also very confident that her villainous acts will never be known since the only person who is aware of her heinous crimes does not talk. However, to everyone's

surprise, the dumb woman finally talks and reveals the villainous deeds of her mother-in-law to every family member. A stereotype that women are enemies to each other, is again proved wrong by the dumb woman, she does not destroy her mother-in-law and sister-in-law but forgives them and even offers two cows one to her husband and another to her father-in-law so that they don't punish the two villains. An important observation in the two folktales is that the intelligent women are victims of their fellow women. Their intelligence breeds as a mechanism to survive their fellow malicious women.

In other folktales, it is clearly grounded that there are good women as well, for example, folktales *Bahendwa and Bamiza* and *Nzima and Njunju* (A9 and 14). In A9, the two girls Bahendwa and Bamiza are totally innocent and very good girls. Bamiza does not at any point connive with her evil mother to mistreat Bahendwa. When Bahendwa suddenly disappears, Bamiza is sad and tries to look for her sister in vain. Njunju and Nzima in A13 are also not evil instead; they are victims of evil women. Bahendwa and Nzima's survival is identical as both girls are helped by benevolent creatures. Bahendwa is helped by monkeys to survive in the forest and to finally find shelter with an old lonely woman. Nzima on the other hand is helped by the bird which helps to direct Nzima's father to the tree in the middle of the lake where Nzima was confined. However much the girls are good in character, the patriarchal logic in these stories could be that girls or women cannot survive on their own in absence of men; they are helped by other creatures to overcome the hardships they are in. They lack intelligence and physical strength to survive on their own. All the folktales, the good women are victims of bad women, and at the end of it all, good women are rewarded; Bahendwa marries a son of a village chief, Nyabucurera marries a king while Nzima marries a prince. On the other hand, bad women are punished for their wrong deeds. It is logical to say that the patriarchal society presented women in this way to subdue them.

In a sub-text, almost all folktales collected for this study, there is no single male character that is presented in a negative image, and instead they are presented in an image of Angels and saints. In folktale *Otaratinire Bakuru Taritinwa Bato* (A10), Tayebwa diligently takes care of Kenyonyi regardless of what she has done to his mother. Unlike folktales I have read from other communities, Ankole folktales present their male characters in a way that they cannot even beat their wives despite the weight of the crime committed. Kenyonyi feeds Tayebwa's mother on goat's droppings; a typical munyankole man would have beaten Kenyonyi to near death, served her with a divorce and would have married a good woman to take care of his mother diligently as a normal dutiful wife. However, Tayebwa does not take any action and Kenyonyi continues to mistreat her mother-in-law.

Pursuant to the above, is folktale *Orutengyera Nto Rwita Nkuru* (A4), Bindeba is presented as flawless, he is portrayed as a man who understands and not harsh to his wife, he cannot beat up his wife even if she does wrong. Bindeba knows that Kentwiga is a very bad woman but he does not question her actions, like a caring, loving and understanding husband, he lets Kentwiga do whatever she wills. Towards the end of the story, Bindeba loses his son Munanura to his passiveness. If he had taken action, he would have stopped Kentwiga from committing more villainous crimes. From the time Bonabaana drinks the poison meant for Kabumba, Bindeba stupidly assumes that Kentwiga's evil actions will always backfire only on her. Little did he know that the next backfire would affect him as well.

3.4 Conclusion:

This chapter sought to examine the portrayal of women in selected Ankole folktales and proverbs. Important to note is that Ankole women are portrayed in a subjective and derogatory manner. Most proverbs and folktales portray women as dimwits, source of evil, brutal, unreliable and murderous.

A few women who are presented with positive qualities are victims of cruel women for example Bahendwa and Nyabucurera. When a woman possesses qualities like hard work, obedience, caretaker of the family, and submissive, is considered a good woman or wife. Qualities which qualify females as good wives and women, cannot allow them to participate in sensitive matters, these qualities are meant to lure a woman to work hard, make women obedient and submissive so that they are easily controlled by men. In folktales analyzed above, every evil woman receives a heavy punishment. The composers created evil characters as women gave them heavy punishment as a lesson to other women, with the main intention of controlling women. They are lured to work hard, to be obedient so that men enjoy the patriarchal dividends. However, one observation is clear, in an effort to portray men's characters as good, their role in these stories seem passive even where they should have been active; they are too good and do not act as heads of families until the end.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENDER ROLES

4.1 Introduction.

Gender roles refer to the way a community defines what it is to be done by a woman or a man. Each community expects women and men to look, think, feel and act in certain ways, simply because they are women or men. In most African communities, Ankole inclusive, women are expected to prepare food, take care of husbands and children, take care of the home by doing all the household chores like cleaning, laundry, ironing among others. In their article *Unmasking Women's Rivalry in Cameroonian Folktales*, Susan observed the roles assigned to women and men;

Women cater to their husbands, carry out homemaking tasks, perform subsistence farming and sell palm oil. Their husbands are in charge of hunting, soldiering, communal decision- making, and consulting the gods to promote family welfare. Producing and raising children for their husbands, male children in particular, are mandated requirements of true womanhood. (18)

Most African communities have almost similar gender roles assigned to men and women. Men in Ankole culture were expected to be strong since they engaged in outdoor activities like hunting, fishing, and building. Laziness among men in Ankole culture is highly condemned and such a man is despised by the entire society and is seen as an outcast.

Gender roles in every community are passed down from adults to children through oral literature forms that is; folktales, proverbs, songs among others. This transition starts from the time a child is born. In Ankole, birth rituals are performed on children, such rituals differ according to the gender of the child. For example in *History and culture of Ankole kingdom* by Kirindi, it is asserted that;

When a female baby reached the teething stage, she was seated on the ground, given a gourd and told that 'your cattle are yonder' meaning that she would find her fortune and wealth in the home of her future husband. A baby boy at the same stage was made to sit on the back of a heifer and lifted unto another meaning that his fortune was in the home of his father. (117)

By giving the baby girl a gourd indicates that her role is to churn butter. While the ritual of the baby boy indicates that his role is to look after the cattle. When children grow up, they are taught what they are supposed to do, for instance girls are taught by their mothers and aunties how to cook, clean, do laundry, take care of the husband and children. While boys are taught by their uncles, fathers and grand fathers how to protect their families or homes fend for their families, build houses. Among the Bahima, boys are taught how to look after the cattle because girls are not supposed to own cattle both at their fathers' place and husbands' place. The Bahima men do all the work related to cattle including cleaning the cattle's kraals. A muhima woman is not allowed anywhere near the cattle. Her role is to stay home entertain visitors and churn butter while men and the boys go to graze.

In most African communities, women are expected to be mothers and wives, hence their roles description is highly dominated by taking care of the husband, children and the entire family. In Ankole when a woman gets married, she is expected to produce as many children as she can because the value of a woman is measured on the number of children she has produced. Because the community considers producing children a role of women, when women are unable to produce, they are blamed and less valued by the society. The above ideology is engineered by Susan et al. in *Unmasking Women's Rivalry in Cameroonian Folktales*: "Women who do not produce biological children are regarded as unwomanly, laughable, untrustworthy, evil and outcasts." (18)

Gender roles of Women and Men differ according to the communities in terms of thinking, right away from childhood, men or boys are taught that showing emotions like fear, sadness, or

tenderness is “unmanly” so they hide these feelings. When a man shows such emotions he is viewed as a woman by the society. For instance in Chinua Achebe’s *Things fall Apart*, Unoka and other title less men are referred to as *efulefu* which means useless and worthless person by the society because he cannot fulfill the roles required of him as a man. Despite his tragic end, Okonkwo is held in high esteem by his society. The fact is; Okonkwo is never a strong person, but only fears to be seen as weak. Display of emotions in most African societies Ankole inclusive is a role of women not men. Thinking and planning for the community is also highly considered a masculine role. Women are discouraged from speaking or even forbidden to attend or speak at community gatherings. This clearly shows us that the community only hears what men think. Therefore in the role description of women, thinking is exclusive because even if a woman has the best solution to the problem at hand, she is not allowed to air it out and no one will be willing to listen to her. This can again be cemented by Francis Imbuga in *Aminata* Jumba cannot listen to his wife’s advice because she is a woman. Actually he does not find any value in Rosina’s words at the beginning of the play as he says; “women’s talk. I have grown up with it.” (4) Referring to Rosina’s words as women’s talk is a clear indicator that women’s reasoning is undervalued and therefore, whatever comes out of a woman’s mouth is useless idle talk. However, in *Aminata*, Imbuga reveals to the society that women’s talk is not just women’s but they are words containing great wisdom that can guide even great men like Jumba if respected.

As earlier noted, gender roles are passed down from adults to children; they are taught to children by adults. Every community has a medium through which the young ones are taught. In Ankole, Oral literature forms such as proverbs, folktales, songs, among others were used as a medium of teaching the values, beliefs and norms of the society to the young. Following the above statement,

this chapter seeks to examine the gender roles embedded in Ankole folktales and proverbs. As also observed by Kamwendo and Kaya in their research titled; *Gender in African proverbs*;

The influence of proverbs on African thought is so strong that even the construction of gender as a social concept gender, that is male superiority and female subordination is articulated in proverbs. (94)

4.2 Proverbs

The researcher has already explained a proverb in chapter one. A few proverbs have been selected to examine the gender roles of Ankole community. Every community has assigned roles to its people depending on sex, men and women are not supposed to do the same work, think and feel the same way. The young ones are taught these gender roles and they are also preserved and transmitted from one generation to another through oral literature for example proverbs.

4.2.1 Mothers as Custodians of Children's Morals

In Ankole, Mothers are responsible for the upbringing of the children. Children are taken care of, taught the norms and cultural values of their community by their mothers. When a child is not well brought up, the mother is entirely blamed for the poor conduct of the child. To uphold this responsibility and role of a mother, the Banyankole assert that; *Omwana mubi ajumisa nyina* (a bad child brings ridicule to his/her mother). The above ideology is captured by Kirindi;

Women are custodians and transmitters of cultural values and practices, that's why society attaches great importance to women as role models who set and sustain the standards and aspirations of society. (126)

In accordance with what is stated above, a mother whose child misbehaved could not be tolerated by the community. It was logical and deemed fit to blame, mock and punish a mother whose child

misbehaved as asserted by Kirindi. “In extreme cases mothers were also divorced as a punishment for the offences committed by their children.” (117)

Mothers being custodians and transmitters of cultural values and practices, they have to try so hard and make sure that their children’s conduct is up to the standards of the society. Failure to do so, mothers face dire consequences together with their children because raising children and their conduct in the society is a role or responsibility of mothers. Important to note is that this trend has not changed in African societies particularly in Ankole. Both parents may be blamed for the child’s misconduct but the mother takes the biggest share of blame. However much the world has changed and the traditional practices are no longer valued; the upbringing of children is still a mother’s role. The above proverb concurs with the sociological theory that literature should give back to the society by exposing the ethical, beliefs and values of the society since literature derives its raw materials from the society. Morals are highly valued in the Ankole society and it is clearly emphasized in the proverb that it is a mother’s role to make sure that children are brought up according to the ethical standards of the society.

4.2.2 Men as Heads of Families.

Men in Ankole community are considered the heads of families, therefore their role or responsibility is to provide for the family, protect and set rules for his family. This notion is upheld in a proverb that, *ahu Nyineeka Atari ebikyere bitemba enju* (when the head of the family is away, frogs climb the house) meaning that in the absence of a man (who is head of the family), everyone in the family does whatever he or she wishes because the one who set rules is absent. Even those who fear the house or family because of the head of the family will be encouraged to come. The implication of this proverb is to highlight the role and responsibility of a man as head of the family. In his absence “*Ebikyere bitemba enju*” (Frogs climb the house) an image which is used to imply

to people, family members, who would wish to exploit the opportunity of the head's absence and act according to their wishes. This is a clear indicator that the head of the family is the custodian of the rules, law and order in the family, and his absence gives family members an opportunity to break the rules. In traditional Ankole, a man's role was to protect his family and entire nation against enemies and wild animals. Therefore, his absence in the family meant the invasion of wild animals or an enemy because the most feared and respected person is absent.

A man as the head of the family and the custodian of law and order, is again emphasized and re-asserted in another proverb; "*Garuk'aha ogiheebwa Nyineeka*" (the freedom to visit again is permitted by the head of the family). The proverb seems to suggest that it is the man or head of the family that has the monopoly of inviting or hosting visitors. It suggests that it is only '*Nyineka*' (head of the family) who is capable of commanding and be listened to. That is why in the previous proverb, it is clearly stated that in his absence everyone did however he or she pleased, if "*Garukaha*" is a command given by only the head of the family, it means the wife is ruled by that command and is not authorized at any point to take part in the ruling of the family. She is subjected to a subordinate role where she is supposed to receive commands and implement them. This notion is captured by Nchube and Mayo in their research *Portraying Women as the Other in Ndebele proverbs*;

A man is the undisputed head of his family and his wife occupies a subordinate position. The man is the master in his home. The society expects a typical Ndebele man to make the woman always conscious of her rightful, subordinate status. (vol. 5, no. 3 135)

The positive role of women as partners in the family and as beings who could positively contribute to the development of their families and society is highly downplayed by such proverbs and ideological thinking of the patriarchal society.

4.2.3 Woman as the Caregiver of her husband and the family.

A woman is a mother and a wife implying that she had to fulfill the role of being a good wife by taking care of her husband. At the same time, she has to play the role of a mother by looking after the children. To give credence to the above notion, the Banyankole say that: *Omukazi womururu tamanya gabo ya' iba* (A greedy woman does not consider her husband's share). In her role of taking care of the entire family, the husband is the priority of the wife, before everyone else is served the husband has to be served first. The role of a woman as a mother is posited in the following proverb *Omwana aziringa nyina omuka*, (a child delays the mother at home). The proverb clearly highlights the role of a mother towards the children. When the husband goes for outdoor activities, a mother is supposed to remain at home and look after the children. In *Construction of Gender through Narrative process of the African Folktale* Egara Stanley Kabaji posits that: "Thus a woman is worthy only if she realizes her potential to play the role of wife, by extension, the mother." (116) Harry Levin underpins the above argument in his assertion that "the relations between literature and society are reciprocal; literature is not only the effect of social causes; it also a cause of social effects." (qtd in Scott, 126) Levin's assertion is an emphasis of the fact that literature does not only derive its material from society, but it also affects the society once it is read. For example, the above proverbs are still referred to emphasize the role of women as the caretakers of their families.

4.2.4 Procreation and Fertility

Procreation is a role shared by a man and a woman, but important to note is that a woman carries the heaviest part of this role. In case a couple fails to bear children, a woman squarely suffers the blame as if it is her choice. This ideology is also captured by Nchube and Moyo;

On fertility, it is also observed that the Ndebele traditional Language and culture has never considered the possibility that infertility could be laid on the man's door; there is no male correspondence for a man's sterility. Sterile women are scorned, spurned and disparaged for a condition not of their own making. (vol.5, No. 3 135)

To emphasize the fact that procreation is a woman's role Banyankole assert that: "*Omwana omwe tamara Nyina obugumba*" (one child does not save the mother from barrenness) in other words a woman who produces only one child, is equivalent to a woman who has not produced any child. The proverb also suggests that it is the role of a woman to produce as many children as possible. Another proverb which cements the above role is that: *Engumba Ekanyampira ekitete eti; Nigwo naihiremu* (A barren woman farted for a lemon grass and then said "that is all I was left to do.") Therefore the above proverb implies that, in case a woman failed to fulfill her major role of producing children, then her only worthwhile role left for her perform is to fart.

In proverbs which posit the role of procreation, the image of a man is not encountered anywhere and yet a man and a woman are interdependent as far as procreation is concerned. The corresponding proverb about men on procreation is *Omushaija taba ngumba* (A man is never sterile). The ideology in the above proverb explains the fact that failure of a couple to bear children, a woman is squarely blamed. Therefore, a proverb like "*Omwana omwe tamara nyina bugumba*" instead of *Omwana omwetamara Bazaire be Bugumba* is a very clear cutline which indicate that procreation is largely considered a role or responsibility of a woman deliberately shunning the fact that a woman cannot conceive without a man. Psychologically, women are made to believe that they are useful in society only if they are able to bear children this is why this barren woman who farts at a lemon grass can only lament that her only worthwhile role left for her in society is to fart.

4.2.5 The Conjugal Roles

In Ankole society, pleasing a man or husband is also a role of a woman. It is the woman's duty to make sure that her husband is satisfied sexually. In case a woman failed to fulfill this role she could not get favors from the husband and that is why Banyankole say: *Omukazi atenda Birugi arara omumpare* (a woman who does not want good things sleeps dressed in knickers). The above proverb rules out a fact that women also need sexual satisfaction just like men and it is a man to provide such sexual satisfaction to a woman. The patriarchal society thought it was just enough if a woman was provided for in terms of food, protection, clothing etc, issues like "sexual satisfaction" were allergic to women. To get the above mentioned favors, a woman had to make sure that her husband is satisfied sexually. The notion is again cemented by Nchube and Moyo; "It is also observed that Ndebele society never interrogates the sexual fulfillment of women in marriage." (vol.5, No.3 131)

In the Ankole proverbs, there is no correspondence of the above proverb for men, the worst part is that a woman receiving favours from a husband depends on how well she performs the act of making her husband happy in bed, Mayo and Nchube again cement the assertion that: "Marriage accords women little space and it disempower them, reducing them to objects that are acted upon by men the subject." (vol.5 No.3 131).

Conjugal roles are a responsibility of a husband and a wife, but the above proverb excludes the husband from the above responsibility. Initially, a man is the provider of the family and is supposed to fulfill this role as head of the family without question. However, this proverb implies that sex is a condition for a woman to receive favors from her husband.

4.2.6 Women as workers.

Hardworking is one of the greatest qualities considered among Banyankole while choosing a marriage partner especially among the bairu. For a man to marry a woman, he has to first confirm whether the woman in question is capable of providing food for the family through digging. A woman who ensures that the granary is ever full of food is the ideal woman for marriage. A hard working woman is praised in the following proverb *Omukazi ohiinga hamwe na'iba taba mugara or Omworo* (A woman who works or digs with her husband is never lazy). A woman is only adored and admired by her husband and the entire community if she can keep up with her husband's zeal in working. A woman has to prove her worth by working so hard on the husband's farm. The plight of women is again observed by Susan Etal in their research on gender in Cameroonian folktales;

The end all of a woman's being is to be under the protection /domination of a man, handle household management tasks, and work on a farm earning money for family maintenance. (18)

A woman works hard to earn money but she is not allowed to handle or control or even share the profit. The money and the power of control is entirely a man's role. The above proverb seems to praise hardworking women in Ankole society; however the patriarchal society coined such proverbs to subjugate women. Such proverbs are meant to entrench women in doing work of which that work only and only benefit men. Such proverbs not only place women in the position of submissiveness and subordination but also of slavery to their husbands.

4.3 Folk Tales

Ankole has a rich folklore, Beliefs, customs, values and perspectives of Banyankole are all embodied in their Oral literature. Gender roles in particular are reflected in legends, folktales, myths and proverbs which are traditionally transmitted from one generation to another through the

word of mouth. Folktales under discussion in this chapter are richly endowed with gender roles as assigned according to sex among Banyankole.

In African communities, activities like cooking, taking care of children and taking care of the entire family are roles assigned to women. In African communities, the woman is expected to play a role of a mother, a wife and a care giver. This notion in Africa as whole is evidenced by Susan et al on their research in Cameroonian folktales

Sanctioned roles for women in Cameroon include those common in most of west Africa: wife, mother 17... cater for their husbands, carryout home making tasks, perform subsistence farming producing and raising children for their husbands. (18)

An African woman is supposed to perform the above roles without question because they are her responsibility and unique only to her therefore she must fulfill the obligations of the society. Egara Stanely also observes the role of women in his study; *The Construction of Gender carried out on Maragoli people of Kenya*.

In Maragoli estimation can only be defined in relation to her designed role with attachment to children or a husband, father or mother, Thus a woman is worthy only if she realizes her potential to play the role of wife, and by extension mother. (116)

The above citations are extracted from two different African communities but the results of gender roles for women are very much identical. Ankole community being an African community is no exception to the identification of Gender roles as far as women are concerned. Ankole Gender roles are not identical to the above just because it is also an African state, but the evidence is entrenched in the folktales hereunder;

4.3.1 Care giving and Children Upbringing

Children upbringing and care giving is predominantly a role of women in Ankole community as presented in folktale *Otaratinire Bakuru Taritinwa Bato* (A10). Tayebwa loses his wife when his

two children are still very young. Because he cannot take care of the children, he decides to marry another woman Kenyonyi who unfortunately is barren. Kenyonyi is a very bad woman who beats up Tayebwa's children with no good reason, feeds her mother-in-law on bad potatoes and porridge and even goat's droppings. However Tayebwa does not do any daring measure to save his own mother from such situation. In this folktale there is a clear distinction between gender roles, in the first instance; Tayebwa has to marry another woman after the death of his first wife, purposely to take care of the children. This clearly indicates that looking after children is a role assigned to women. Tayebwa is very much aware that Kenyonyi mistreats his children since they quarrel everyday about it but he does not take any action in fear of carrying out a woman's responsibility of taking care of the children.

In another instance, it is clearly indicated that the role of care giving, cooking is unique to only women. Before marriage, Tayebwa's daughter takes the initiative of taking care of her grandmother, the role she performs diligently without any complaint. After her marriage, Bateeta's agony starts her daughter-in-law Kenyonyi feeds her on bad food, goat's droppings and stones. However important to note is that Tayebwa and his son Maani are aware of what is going on. Tayebwa himself has so far found his own mother twice eating undeserving food and goats' droppings. However, sad to note is that considering the situation the old woman is in, Tayebwa cannot take the initiative of looking after his own mother. He does not Endeavour to take action like cooking for his mother which would have been the best solution to rescue his own mother from suffering and misery. Bateeta's suffering and misery is not caused by her bad daughter-in-law, but the society which draws a sharp line between roles of men and women. Tayebwa is very much capable of taking care of his mother by cooking for her and cleaning for her but he would rather let his mother eat the goats' droppings than do women's role or work.

In a bid to portray Tayebwa as a good husband and Kenyonyi as the worst kind of wives, Tayebwa does not perform his duty or role as expected of him by the society. He does contrary to what is expected of a true Munyankore traditional man. The Banyankole proverb that; *Ahu Nyineka Atari ebikyere nibitemba enju* (in absence of the head of the family, frogs climb the house) is not realized in this folktale. Ironically in folktale A10, the frogs climb the house when Tayebwa (the head of the family) is very much alive and kicking because Kenyonyi is left to do however she wills, to the extent of making her mother-in-law miserable.

In traditional Ankole a man is the head and master of his family, a woman has just to take orders from the man hence a saying: *Ogambe gumwe ngambe kabiri*, (you speak once I speak twice) meaning a woman is not supposed to talk back to a man, when a man speaks a woman is supposed to keep quiet and listen. Heading a family with an iron hand is very much expected of a man in traditional Ankole. This notion is shared by most African communities as asserted by Nchube and mayo.

A man is the undisputed head of his family and his wife occupies subordinate position. The man is the master in his home. The society expects atypical Ndebele man to make the woman always conscious of her rightful subordinate status. (vol.5, N.03 135)

The dominant role assigned to men in Ankole community is head of the family and head of the family must be vigilant to maintain peace, law and order in his family. However Tayebwa fails to do this for his family, his children are beaten every day, his mother is fed on goat's droppings but as head of the family does nothing to restore peace in his homestead. All this bounces back to the society which makes it a point to paint women derogatively and mask men's bad behavior. In an effort to portray men as good husbands the composers end up portraying men as gullible and passive contrary to what is expected of them.

4.3.2 Procreation and Fertility.

Bearing of children is every woman's role and responsibility in Ankole community. This point is well illustrated in folktale *The Barren Woman and the Monster* (A7). A woman is respected or held in high esteem, if she bears children. Bearing of children is so much valued to the extent that if a woman produced only one child, she was as good as a barren woman, this is evidenced by a proverb; *Omwana omwe tamara nyina obugumba*" (one child does not save the mother from barrenness). Considering that bearing of children was held in such high esteem, a woman who fails to bear children, is scorned, abused, and considered an outcast by not only her husband but also the entire family and the community. Among the Banyankole, production of male children was also held in high esteem to the extent that if a couple failed to produce male children they are considered as childless and a man is eligible to marry another woman as asserted by Kirindi.

A couple without at least two sons was regarded as childless; Among the Bahima having no male issue was a good justification for a husband to enter a polygamous relationship by marrying another wife. (116)

If a woman who produces only girls is regarded as childless, how about that one who does not have any. This helps us imagine the pressure exerted on the woman in A7 by her husband, her family and the entire community.

The situation in A7 indicates that production of children is entirely the woman's role. In the story the husband of a barren woman is not scorned or blamed at all, instead it is the woman who absorbs the whole pressure of them not having children. On a sad note her husband is also among those who blame the woman for not fulfilling her role or responsibility. The husband keeps on intimidating his barren wife with a divorce if she does not want to produce children forgetting that he too is supposed to share the blame. Banyankole belief that a man is never sterile is also held by Ncube and Moyo who posit that:

it is also observed that the Ndebele traditional language and culture has never considered the possibility that infertility could be laid on the man's door, there is no male correspondence for mans sterility. Sterile women labeled "Inyumba" and are scorned, spurned and disparaged for a condition not of their own making (vol.5, No.3 135).

Likewise Banyankole have never considered the fact that a man can also be sterile that is why a proverb "*Omushaija taba ngumba*" (a man can never be sterile) is coined. With such patriarchal thinking a woman has to face consequences, carry the blame because she has totally failed to fulfill her duty, role and responsibility of bearing children.

4.3.4 Man as the Protector and head of the family

The role of a man as a head of the family and protector of his family is clearly highlighted in the tale *Maguru and the Monster* (A13). Maguru is the only male in a family of 11 females. As it is in African tradition protecting the family is one of man's numerous roles, when the famine hits the land and family is barely surviving, Maguru decides to leave home in search of good welfare for his family. It is clearly pointed out it is a man's duty to look for suitable solution to the problem at hand. It is also made clear that women have to depend on men. A13 also reflects man as the protector of his family. It is so emphasized to the extent that as soon as Maguru leaves home, the Ogre attacks his family. One can logically conclude that the ogre could not attack Maguru's family for fear of the male in the house. A man as the protector of his family is again reflected through the old woman who constantly harasses the daughter-in-law for failure to produce male children. And when the ogre attacks, the daughter-in-law faces it hot because the old woman harasses her even more for not producing the boys who would have protected the family in such situation. The gender role that a man is the sole protector and provider of his family is clearly defined.

Women and girls are rendered useless and defenseless in the absence of a man. Maguru is the hero of his own family, after many years of absence; he suddenly appears and is able to rescue his mother from the claws of death.

Related to the above, is the tale *The Ogre and Small Brown Beans* (A12), the man's role as the protector is much hyperbolized that the ogre is killed by a mere young boy after devouring all his older sisters. Like in many folktales, the young boy is able to recover all his sisters. Logically in patriarchal view, girls are victims of ogres while men and boys are their rescuers. This observation is not only grounded in Ankole folktales but also in folktales from other African communities for example, in a research conducted by Egara Stanely Kabaji on the Maragoli people of Kenya he observes that girls and women are rescued by boys and men from claws of death especially the ogres or monsters (117). In A12 the young boy disguises his voice and speaks like a girl, the shocking thing is when ogre comes out of its hiding, ready to pounce and realizes that it is a boy not a girl, suddenly runs for its life. However, the boy is quicker than the ogre and manages to kill it. Even the monster fears a man regardless of his age and size.

In Ankole society, man being the head and protector of his family, he must also guarantee good welfare of his family. The above notion is clearly illustrated in folktales *Ishungisa and the Monster* and *Enkora Birungi Ebizimurwa* (A5 and 11). A man is supposed to work hard to feed his family, protect his family and provide shelter. In A5, Ishungisa is despised by the entire community because he could not do anything. He is an energetic man but he cannot even build a nice house for himself. He does not own anything, goats, hens and land; he is just a loser of a man. Because Ishungisa cannot fulfill the obligation required of him by the society, everyone despises him, he is isolated abused and treated as an outcast. He cannot even readily marry, because he has nothing that gives him a title of a man and pay bride price. In A8, Nture is quite the opposite of Ishungisa.

Nture being an orphan has nothing, he faces it tough when he marries. But Nture attacks his responsibility head on as a man. He looks for work, works so hard eventually he earns himself a pregnant cow. From this, Nture graduates from being a poor orphan to a rich man. In Ankole a man has to work hard for his family and has to be capable of solving problems pertaining his family, just like Nture. A man thinks, protects and plans for his family while the woman takes care of her husband children and the entire family; therefore, she has to act according to the husband's rules, regulations and wishes.

4.4 Conclusion

The communities' perspectives, beliefs, norms and cultures are passed on from generation to generation through oral traditions. The gender roles discussed in the above folktales and proverbs are not coincidentally carved in but a true definition of Banyankole men and women, these are the gender roles required of men and women. In accordance with the above analysis, women and girls are supposed to cook, bear the man's children, take care of husband, children and the entire extended family, and are supposed to be obedient to their husbands. While men, most of their activities are out door, hunting, fishing they are the heads of their families, breadwinners, protectors and custodian of rules that govern the home. The gender roles are changing and perspectives towards women have also changed. For example in traditional Ankole, when a woman disobeyed the husband or misbehaved, a man was allowed to beat up his wife to restore marital harmony.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The main objective of this study was to examine the portrayal of women in Ankole Folktales and proverbs. This study also recorded and documented the performance of Ankole folktales and proverbs. It also critically analyzed the images of women and gender roles as portrayed in the collected folktales and proverbs.

5.2 Main Findings and Conclusions

The findings of the study on performance reveal that proverbs did not have a specific time, narrator and specific audience. It was a genre which was part of life just like a person cannot eat millet bread without sauce, the Banyankole elders and the entire community could never conduct a speech, conversation without the use of proverbs. Proverbs have hidden meanings; therefore they were used to caution and teach the young. Proverbs are one of oral literature forms that are still widely used. The Banyankole still use proverbs during casual conversations, speeches, and they are not only used by the elders, but also the young. It is rare to conduct a speech, a conversation, without the use of proverbs.

Proverbs did not have a formula for their performance. They were used in speeches, conversations and teaching so long as the proverb was related to the topic under discussion. However, they were performed or used to start folktales. Some of Ankole folktales, have proverbs as their titles for example, *Akaze k'omuntu kacubwa emptsi*, and in such folktales, the content had to reflect the meaning of the proverb. Use of proverbs was and still is popular not only among the elders, but also the young. To a larger extent, proverbs are an oral literature genre that has withstood the test of time. It has endured colonialism and its implications because it can be performed anywhere; in class, in church, political rallies, speeches of all kind and importantly, in daily conversation.

Unlike proverbs, folktales were performed around the fire in the evenings. Folktale performances were majorly done for the purposes of instruction. The storytelling sessions were conducted by mothers, aunties and grandmothers, in other words, storytelling performance, was a role of women. Men told stories but on rare occasions. However, since folktales were meant for instruction, men had specific stories for boys and such stories, emphasized the roles of men like hunting, protecting families and the entire community, hard work and stories about the brave warriors. Such stories

were meant to inspire young boys. Likewise girls were told stories meant to inspire them become good wives and mothers. The audience was majorly comprised of children who were expected to listen and learn from every story. Storytelling performances were carried out after twilight, the narrator would sit on a stool near the fire and the audience would sit in a semi-circular way to listen to his or her tales.

The researcher also found out that story telling performances were not only done during night but also in day light when people gathered to do a certain chore. One instance when the narration was done during the day was during the millet harvest since it was communally done. It was also done while doing any other chore as long as it was a group.

The narrator began by calling out the audience using a formulaic phrase. Whoever was interested in the performance, would respond, and gather around the narrator and the story telling session would begin. Mbaganire Mbaganire (I tell you a story) was a phrase used to start the folktale and the audience responded with *Tebere* (yes tell us a story). *Tebere* was a signal to the narrator that the audience was interested in listening to his tale. The beauty of Ankole tale was enhanced by the use of extra verbal resources, facial expressions coupled with gestures made the tale very interesting. Tonal codes, was also another quality which made the folktale interesting. A good narrator would mimic every voice in his tale for example, voice of monster, child, woman, and man.

The closure of Ankole folktales, depended on the group for instance, the closing phrase of Bahima's folktales was endowed with images of cattle. On the other, the closing phrase of Bairu was exuberantly endowed with agricultural images. Most of Ankole folktales had a happy ending

as good always triumphed over evil. The offenders, for instance monsters, step mothers and other bad characters were severely punished while good characters were rewarded.

Ankole folktales achieved their aesthetic quality through song and heroic recitations. Songs and heroic recitations played two roles; they were used to break boredom and wake up those who had started dosing off. They also added an aesthetic quality to the folktale a fact that made it more interesting and entertaining. The song was sung by the narrator while the audience listened. The words in the song could as well have been narrated, but they are sung for the purposes of entertainment and making the tale beautiful.

The composers of Ankole folktales used various techniques to achieve the aesthetic quality of a folktale. Nomenclature, hyperbole, characterization and symbolism were commonly employed. Non-human objects were personified for instance, stones, monsters, animals, birds, rivers; mountains all speak and think like human beings. Due to the nature of characters in Ankole folktales, a reader or audience must employ a willing suspension of disbelief for him or her to comprehend and appreciate folktales. Characters were also named according to their behavior; the name was just a reflection of a certain character's behaviors and actions. Hyperbole was employed for emphasis especially where the author wanted to emphasize the evil and destructive nature of women. It was well employed, that one would be unintentionally made to believe that all women are evil and destructive and that nothing good came out of them.

The study also found out that women were largely portrayed in a derogatory image in Ankole proverbs and folktales. The perception of the patriarchal society on women is clearly enhanced in the folktales and proverbs collected for this study. Women were portrayed as murderous dimwits, greedy, malicious, witches and evil. Women who were presented in a positive image, they were

used as a technique to emphasize the evil nature of other women. In the collected folktales, the good women were portrayed as good because they were suffering at the hand of their fellow women. In collected folktales, there is no woman who is suffering at the hands of a man hence; the patriarchal society emphasised the fact that women cherish rivalry against one another.

In addition, the study findings reveal that women especially step mothers were capable of committing malicious acts of murdering their step children. The researcher collected five folktales about step mothers, but none of the folktales portrays them in a positive image. Step mothers were portrayed as people who can claim a person's life due to jealousy and greed. In the folktales where step children were girls, step mothers would get rid of them just because they were more beautiful than their own daughters, while for boys, greed for wealth was the cause of malicious acts. Male children were valued because they were the heirs of their fathers' property and for female; beauty was a prerequisite for attracting the best suitors.

Similarly the images of women portrayed in proverbs are basically negative and help males to subdue females. Most proverbs were composed for the purposes of subduing women. Women must rely on men for survival intellectually, and emotionally. Other proverbs are meant to warn women of immoral actions and misconduct in the society. Maintaining the moral standards of the society was a role for every member of the society. However, in Ankole society, this role was squarely left to females, men were never warned of misconduct. As there was a proverb that warned promiscuous women, there was no a counter proverb that warned men with the same character. Instead, such men were praised for their virility and sex prowess. Women carried the burden of observing the moral code of conduct alone. In other proverbs, women were reduced into the 'other' they were seen as property, sex objects, playthings and tools for enhancing men's respect, power, wealth and virility in the society. These derogatory images left no room for women to participate

in any crucial event in the society or even her own family. It gave men power over women and subjected women to a subordinate position.

On the question of gender roles, the findings reveal that roles were assigned according to sex. There were certain roles assigned to women which were not supposed to be done by men and the reverse is true. The study found out that cooking, cleaning, laundry, churning butter, taking care of the family and farming (for bairu women) was a role of women. Men only did outdoor activities like hunting, grazing the cattle, farming and building. Women were not allowed to play intellectual roles like participating in politics, making decisions for the family, and leadership roles. Leadership and politics was a domain for men. Men were also heads of their families and all the decisions concerning the family were made without consulting their wives.

In the proverbs, it was clearly asserted that males were the heads of their families and their decisions were undisputed. However, this study also found out that men do not actually play the role of a head of family as they should. In folktales, males' portrayal clearly contradict the proverb that; *ahu nyineka Atari ebikyere bitemba eju*. They are potrayed as gullible and too good a fact that hinders them to perform their duties as heads of families. Women are left to do whatever they wish and their husbands do not question their actions. Men only act at the end when the effect of women's actions is too late to reverse.

The study also found out that child bearing and grooming was a role of women. As soon as the woman got married, she was expected by the husband, family and the entire community to produce children. Failure to produce, she was scorned, abused and even treated as an outcast. Much as child bearing is a role of two people, men were never blamed for failure to have children. According to Ankole perception, a man is never barren. Women bore the pressure from the community alone.

Mothers were supposed to raise their children as per the societal norms and values. The mother was squarely blamed for the misconduct of her child. In extreme cases, the mother was also served with a divorce from her husband as a result of her child's misconduct. As much as children were a product of two people, mothers were the sole custodians of children's upbringing and therefore for any misconduct of a child they had to bear the blows.

On the sad part of this, is that a child who misbehaved was always associated with the mother and a good or clever child was always associated with the father, yet all the children were brought up by the mother.

Domestic chores like cooking, cleaning, churning butter, and laundry were the role of women. It was women's role to make sure that the home was always clean and hospitable and they had to make sure that their husbands, children were well fed. It was a woman's duty to make sure that the granary was never devoid of food. Among bairu whose main source of survival is agriculture, the wife had to make sure that her husband's calabash was ever full of millet porridge. Among bahima, while men were out grazing cattle, women stayed at home churned butter and entertained visitors. Since their main food was milk, men milked the cows and provided milk to their wives. It was observed in this study, men did not at any time perform the duties of women for instance, in tales where a man lost his wife, he immediately married another woman because he could not manage the roles of cooking and cleaning for the children. The children were taught their respective roles from day one. In traditional Ankole when a man cooked for a woman he was considered unmanly and was severely scorned by his fellow men. Also, such gesture was interpreted as witchcraft, in other wards a woman was accused of bewitching her husband. In other wards no man in his right mind would cook for the family.

The study findings reveal that men were the protectors and bread winners of their families. The family depended on a man for food and wellbeing since they were the head of families. Some folktales and proverbs indicated that men were sole protectors of their families and the community. Actually it is clearly indicated that in the absence of men that is when the ogres or monsters would attack the family and the village.

The study also revealed that wives were expected to make their husband's needs first priority. The husband was a king in his home. In fact, traditionally a woman was not supposed to utter out her husband's name. A wife was supposed to cook and serve her husband and above all, she had to make sure that he was satisfied sexually.

5.3 Recommendations and areas for further research

The researcher recommends that the curriculum designers of primary and secondary schools should put emphasis on the integration of oral literature in the syllabus. This will help in preserving oral literature genres.

The researcher recommends further researchers to carry out a study on the tripartite relationship between form, content and context in Ankole oral literature.

Further researchers, can also look at how the changing portrayals of women in present day proverbs and folktales that is to say, how these oral forms have responded to the increasing power that women hold in society as members of Parliament, head teachers, medical doctors and ministers.

Further Researchers can also look the role of proverbs and folktales in solving conflicts in Ankole.

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