

**A CRITIQUE OF GOVERNANCE IN UGANDAN POETRY: A STUDY OF SELECTED  
POEMS OF HENRY BARLOW, TIMOTHY WANGUSA AND SUSAN KIGULI.**

**BY**

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**DECLARATION**

I, Julian Namiyingo, declare that this study is a product of my effort and it has never been submitted to any institution of higher learning for any formal award. All the cited sources have been acknowledged.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my late parents; Mr. and Mrs. Miyingo and my grandfather Mr. Kaguma. To my loving Aunt, Mrs. Mary Nalugo Sserufusa who has inspired me and worked so hard to see that I excel in my academic endeavours. May the Almighty God reward and bless you.

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the portrayal of governance in the selected poems of Henry Barlow, Timothy Wangusa and Susan Kiguli. The study used qualitative research methods and involved critical reading of the selected poems, compilation and analysis of relevant literature. Using the new criticism theory, the study analyzed the poets' use of figures of speech, linguistic, structure and graphological features to portray the subject of governance.

The study's findings reveal that Ugandan poetry is majorly a discourse on Uganda's state of governance. The three poets effectively portray bad governance characterized by political instability, dictatorship, corruption, poverty, injustice, neglect of duty by public servants, wanton loss of human life and excessive involvement of the security agents in politics. The figures of speech through which this state of affair is portrayed include: irony, personification, rhetorical questions, allusion, imagery, symbolism and juxtaposition in the portrayal of governance in Ugandan poetry. The study reveals that these features enable the poets not only to highlight evils of bad governance but also to underscore the fact that bad governance is due to bad leaders. The study establishes that figures of speech are used to criticize particular individuals and public institutions responsible for bad governance.

The study also analyses neologism, lexical sets, different languages and dialect, diction and register as linguistic features which the poets deliberately use to emphasize the subject of bad governance.

Finally, the study reveals that the poets describe the subject of bad governance using graphological deviation, parallelism, external graphology and meter. Through these features, the poets emphasize the bad governance in post-independence Uganda.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study is concerned with a critique of governance in the selected poems of three Ugandan poets; Henry Barlow, Timothy Wangusa and Susan Kiguli. The study addresses the poets' portrayal of governance. The study engages with aspects of governance such as political instability, disrespect of rule of law, excessive love for power, corruption, vote rigging, and neglect of duty by public servants, wanton loss of human life, poverty and excessive involvement of security agents in political affairs.

The study analyses the poets' portrayal of governance through the use of figures of speech such as; irony, personification, symbolism, imagery, illusion, juxtaposition and rhetorical questions. The poets' use of linguistic features such as; neologism, different language and dialect, lexical set, diction and register to portray governance is also analyzed. Lastly, the study analyses the poets' use of graphological and structural features such as graphological deviation, parallelism, external graphology and meter to portray governance.

### **1.2 Background to the Study**

Oral poetry is the basis of Uganda's and Africa's written poetry. Oral poetry is poetry recited verbally and preserved by way of transmitting it from one generation to another by word of mouth. Forms of oral poetry include proverbial verses, prayers, recitations, chants and songs. Oral poetry mainly existed in Uganda and Africa in general during the pre-colonial period. Poems were performed more or less like songs in homes in the evenings, at funerals and marriage ceremonies. The themes of poetry were mainly praising virtue and condemning vices in society.

When the British colonialists came to Uganda, they exposed Ugandans to the English language and a few Ugandans started to write poems in English. It is also noted that the first poets in Uganda like it is the case in the rest of Africa did not write about Uganda's issues and concerns but instead praised their conquerors; the British. Some Ugandan poets imitated prominent English poets like T.S. Eliot and W. B. Yeats as seen in Ayeta A. Wangusa's poem, "Reflection". According to Ken Goodwin in his critical book, Understanding African Poetry, the poetry of the first African poets can easily be appreciated when one considers the European models they imitated (Qtd in Okunoye, Par 4). Goodwin acknowledges that the first African poetry resembled European poetry in style and some thematic concerns. After a short while the theme of Ugandan poets soon shifted to the expression of the shades of colonialism which included, subjugation, discrimination, the inhuman treatment of Ugandans, forced labour and low wages as seen in Enoch Tindimwebwa's poem, "The White Pumpkin", Austin Bukenya's poem "Whititude", among others.

With time, Ugandans and Africans in general became conscious of their identity. On the part of artists; novelists, playwright and poets, this period is marked by the growth of the negritude movement with roots from Francophone colonies. The themes of negritude writers include; the conflict between indigenous and colonial cultures, pride in the African past, a growing sense of African personality, political and cultural identity, and disapproval of European subjugation. Owing to the negritude movement, therefore, African writers including poets resorted to writing works using African images to praise African physical features, beauty and ideas. Examples of negritude poets in Uganda include among others, Okot p' Bitek, Richard Nturu and Chandana Sengupta as seen in their poem, "Song of Lawino", "The Prophecy" and "The truth" respectively. These poets and other negritude poets incorporated many African traditional

features in their poems. For example, Okot p'Bitek in particular uses the song format in his poems borrowed from Acholi traditional songs. p'Bitek also incorporates Acholi proverbs, flora and fauna, foods, dances and beliefs. Besides, he contrasts the African culture with European culture with the view of highlighting Africa's beauty and cultural superiority. Besides the negritude theme, the quest for liberation and independence were other themes that characterised Ugandan and African poetry during colonial time.

With Uganda's attainment of independence in 1962, many new poets emerged due to wide spread literacy. Ugandans in this era wrote and are still writing in both English and other traditional languages. Austin Lwanga Bukenya in his critical book, Notes on East African Poetry, comments that, "a considerable amount of literary work including poetry, has been written in language like Luganda, Luo, Gikuyu, Kichagga, Kinyamwezi and others" (6). Hugo E.S Barlow is one of the Ugandan poets who has a poetry collection in Luganda entitled, Ab'oluganda Abenda Emu. Uganda's post independent poets and by extension African poets in line with colonial and negritude poets heavily use African features to enrich their writings. Tanure Ojaide in his article "Poetic Imagination in Black Africa" summarizes this practice by asserting that;

...African poetic aesthetics are unique in possessing a repertory of authentic African features. This authenticity manifests itself in the use of concrete images derived from the fauna and flora, proverbs, indigenous rhythms, verbal tropes, and concepts of space and time to establish a poetic form (qtd in Okunoye, par 6)

Unlike other previous eras where literature was mainly dominated by men, the post-independence era is also noted with the emergence of female writers onto the scene of Ugandan poetry writers. These include, Susan N. Kiguli, Mildred Barya, Kicooco, among others. Another aspect worthy of mention about post-colonial and independence Ugandan poetry is an insistent

depiction of Uganda and Africa's social, economic and political conditions. Ojaide clarifies this further when he says:

Unlike in the 1960s when the poets were culturally obsessed, nature-oriented and 'universal', today, old and young poets are addressing their national issues more aggressively than before . . . . In their desire to effect changes, they use the nation state as their starting point (qtd in Okunoye par 12).

In other words, post- independence poets are exclusively concerned with the representation of their national issue. Post- independence Ugandan poets, for example, reveal dissension and disillusionment with the current events particularly issues about governance.

The subject of governance in Africa in general and Uganda in particular has been a general concern of not only poets but also very many people from different walks of life. Politicians, theologians and social critics have discoursed on the way Uganda has been managed. While writing about the state of governance in Uganda, Apolo Nsibambi in Decentralization and Civil Society in Uganda: The Quest for Good Governance, states that:

Uganda is lucky to have president Museveni and dedicated public servants who are committed to implement good governance. Effective and democratic leadership at all levels of government has been a critical facilitator of good governance (144).

Despite Nsibambi's observation above, majority critics agree that good governance is generally still lacking in Uganda and Africa in general. Chinua Achebe in his book The Trouble with Nigeria, says that Africa's trouble is bad leadership (1). Yoweri Kaguta Museveni also in his polemic work titled What is Africa's Problem? agrees with Achebe that the problem confronting Africa is lack of good leadership which he says has led to the prevailing crisis in Africa (188). Adekunle Olowonmi in his article, "The Writer and the Quest for Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Transcending Post-Independence Disillusionment", compares African Colonial rulers and African Post-Colonial rulers and he concludes that; "where the white man ruled with a whip,

the post-colonial leaders ruled with a scorpion” (61). By this Olowonmi avers that post- colonial leaders are more tyrannical and rapacious than the colonial leaders. Like the other critics talked about, Olowonmi points to the bad leadership and governance that has characterized Africa since colonial period to the present.

Literary scholars, novelists and dramatists have also been pre-occupied with the topic of governance. For instance Achebe in Anthill of the Savanna and A Man of the People, Ngugi Wa Thiongo in Petals of Blood, John Ruganda in his plays, The Floods and The Burden, Okot p’ Bitek in his poem, “Song of Prisoner”, among others talk about the subject of governance. As already noted, Ugandan poets; Timothy Wangusa, Henry Barlow and Susan Kiguli treat the subject of governance with prominence in their poetic works. These poets have been selected for this study because of the following reasons. Henry Barlow is a prominent Ugandan poet, he was born before Uganda’s independence in 1929; has pre and post-independence experience of Uganda and he has served in all the governments of independent Uganda. Besides that he once suffered due to participation in Uganda’s politics. Barlow has one poetry anthology; “Building the Nation and other Poems” (2000). Timothy Wangusa was born before Uganda’s independence in 1942 and he too has pre and post-independence experience. He has also actively served Uganda’s government as a minister of education, Member of Parliament and currently as a literary adviser to the president. Wangusa has a novel, Upon this Mountain (1989) and several poetry anthologies; “Salutation” (1977), “A Pattern of Dust: Selected poems 1965-1990” (1993), “Anthem for Africa” (1995) and “Africa’s New Brood” (2006). On the other hand, Susan Kiguli is one of Uganda’s most prominent female poet who started writing as early as her high school days at Gayaza High School. She has two poetry anthologies; “The African Saga” and “Zuhause Theibt in der Ferne Gedichte” published in 1998 and 2012 respectively. Kiguli has also had her

poems published in many anthologies like “Michael’s Eyes” (2005), “Gifts of Harvest” (2006) and Stand Magazine.

As far as criticism of Ugandan poetry is concerned, the critics who include among other few, Bukenya in his critical work Notes on East African Poetry and Fred Opali in his unpublished Master’s Thesis; Thematic Patterns in Contemporary East African Poetry, have not given the subject of governance the just criticism it deserves. Besides, they have not intensively analyzed the poets’ deployment of style and stylistics to depict the subject of governance. It is therefore against that background that this study makes a literary analysis of the subject and finds out how governance is portrayed through style and stylistics.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

Critical studies so far carried out on the poetry of Henry Barlow, Timothy Wangusa and Susan Kiguli emphasized themes depicted in the poems such as human rights, exploitation, hypocrisy of leaders, and demand for social justice as well as poetic devices the poets have used to advance these themes. However, critics have not examined the poets’ portrayal of governance and the specific literary style the authors have employed to describe this theme.

The current study therefore examines the poets’ use of figures of speech, linguistic, structural and graphological features to portray governance in their poems. Figures of speech analyzed include; irony, personification, imagery, allusion, symbolism, juxtaposition and rhetorical questions. Linguistic features examined include; neologism, lexical sets, different dialects and language, diction and register. Structural and graphological features analyzed are; graphological deviation, parallelism, external graphology and meter.

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on the critique of governance in contemporary Ugandan poetry of three Ugandan poets; Henry Barlow, Timothy Wangusa and Susan Kiguli. The study is limited to selected poems of Henry Barlow, Timothy Wangusa and Susan Kiguli which highlight the subject of governance. Barlow's poems include; "Building the Nation", " I Refuse to Take Your Brotherly Hand", "The Leader that Hang", "The Bullock", "Bear the Fools and the stupid Kindly", "Uganda" "Summit Fever I: Father to Son", "Summit Fever II: Brother to Brother" and "Summit Fever III: Epilogue". Wangusa's poems include; "The State is my Shepherd", "Portrait", "Statement: Seven Reasons Why", "Africa's New Brood", "Procession 1", "Africanology", "National Elections 2001", "The Walking Stick", "Edict I: New Nomenclature" and "National Skull Exhibition". Kiguli poems include: "I am Tired of Talking in Metaphors", "Crazy Peter Prattles", "Why Vultures Laugh", "I Laugh at Amin", "The African Saga", "Flat Topics", "Viewers may Find these Pictures Disturbing", "Fishers of Men" and "Somewhere in the Field". These selected poems are used to critique the subject of governance and how the three poets portray the subject of governance through elements of style such as figures of speech, linguistic, structural and graphological features.

The figures of speech include; irony, personification, imagery, allusion, symbolism, juxtaposition and rhetorical questions. Linguistic features include; neologism, lexical sets, different language and dialects, diction and register. Structural and graphological features analyzed are; graphological deviation, external graphology, parallelism and meter. The analysis of these elements of style helps to establish how style enrich the discussion of governance, help readers to appreciate the subject of governance and establish how style contributes to the enjoyment of reading the selected poetry in view of the subject of governance.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to make a thorough critique of the stylistic portrayal of the subject of governance in the poetry of Henry Barlow, Timothy Wangusa and Susan Kiguli.

The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the use of figures of speech in the portrayal of governance.
2. Analyze how various linguistic features are deployed to show the subject of governance.
3. Discuss the structural and visual features in the enhancement of governance.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

1. How do the poets use figure of speech to portray the subject of governance?
2. How do the selected Ugandan poets deploy linguistic features to portray the subject of governance in the selected poems?
3. How do structural and graphological features used to portray governance?

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

The study was guided by the formalistic approach to literary criticism in particular the British – based new criticism which is mainly represented by I. A Richards. According to Ross Murfin and Supryia M. Ray in their book, The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms, the origin of this branch of New Criticism is traced back to the essay entitled “Practical Criticism” written in 1929 by I. A Richards (238). Murfin and Supryia acknowledge Richards as the major British- based New Critic. The theory is relevant to this study because its major principles pertinently apply to this study. The new critics’ assert that the analysis of literary works should concentrate on the structure and visual qualities of the work. By this, the new critics infer that a literary text communicates through its observable features. Therefore, analyzing the literary

text's aspects of structure and other graphological features is a means to understanding the meaning and message of the text. In line with the new critics' principle, structure of the poem in terms of stanza and line length, arrangement and general layout of the poem are discussed. Also, visual features such as use of punctuation marks and capitalization are examined to show how they all contribute to the portrayal of the subject of governance in the poems.

Another argument put forward by the new critics that is fundamental to this study is that, the major value of poetry lies in its use of emotive language and expressions. This tenet implies that poetry and literature in general largely uses indirect words and language that can be understood according to the context in which they are used. Therefore, a particular reader's experience of reading a literary text contributes to its meaning and value. Besides, a literary text can be interpreted differently by different readers. As Dominic Dipio in her critical book, Theory and Criticism of Literature, assert that; "the words that the author uses evoke subjective feelings or attitude as a result of the connotations the words carry with them"(186). This implies that there is need to make a critical examination of the language of a literary text in order to come to its full meaning. Basing on this tenet, the study analyses the poets' use of language features such as neologism, lexical set, different dialects and language, diction and register in their poems to portray the subject of governance.

Significant to the study also is the new critics' emphasis of the relevance of art to reality. They critics argue that literature is a form of human understanding and has a part to play in human affairs. According to Dipio, the British new critics believe that literature contributes to the way of dealing with problems in the real world (185). The reader and critic, therefore, should pay close attention to the organic unity of the text in order to understand the author's experience and intention of writing. In view of the critics' belief, the study paid maximum attention to the poets'

use of irony, personification, symbolism, imagery and other figures of speech, linguistic features and the structure and how the poets use them to bring out their experience of governance in Uganda.

### **1.8 Review of Related Literature**

The subject of governance, that is to say the discussion of good and bad governance is of immense interest to social critics, politicians, academicians and literary critics. The portrayal of governance in works of art particularly poetry has been commented on by a few literary critics such as Okot Benge, Alex Bangirana, Austin Lwanga Bukonya, among others. Benge and Bangirana are Ugandan critics, poets and editors; who have observed that Ugandan poets have mostly written about their experience. In the Preface to the Ugandan Poetry Anthology 2000, the two critics argue that Ugandan poets have written about Uganda's happiness and jubilations, sufferings, disappointments and exploitation. They assert that:

The poems from Uganda is an attempt to bring to the world's attention the tears and cheers, the aspiration and frustrations, in fact the inalienable struggle with raw life, which the sons and daughters of Uganda have experienced and reflected upon over the various stages of their nation's historical development and social formation (viii).

What Benge and Bangirana highlight above is that Ugandan poetry reflects the experiences of Ugandans, their moments of happiness and sadness, hopes and disappointments and their struggle to survive. This observation is correct as far as Ugandan poetry is concerned. However, Ugandan poetry also highlights Uganda's nature of governance which has accorded some Ugandans flashes of happiness and suffering to others. Benge and Bangirana further claim that the imaginative and creative powers of Ugandan poets are influenced by the political, social and economic instability in Uganda (ix). Such an observation is true of Ugandan poets only that, it is not backed up by a critical analysis of any Ugandan poem. Besides, Benge and Bangirana's

assertion above, does not specifically point out that Ugandan poets depict Uganda's state of governance. This research, therefore, analyses the subject of Uganda's governance and how it is portrayed by Henry Barlow, Timothy Wangusa and Susan Kiguli.

Bukenya while analyzing East African poetry in Notes on East African Poetry, posits that the poets of the late sixties and early seventies were mostly pre-occupied with the experiences of their time which includes the portrayal of the state of governance of their societies. He states:

They [poets] protest bitterly against exploitation and injustice, especially in the urban areas, criticize, the greedy, hypocritical politicians, and frequently call for or predict drastic action to remedy the miserable state of their societies (12).

The above general comment by Bukenya aptly applies to this study. Similarly, Kiguli, Barlow and Wangusa protest against bad governance which is manifested through corruption, poverty, poor living conditions, dictatorship and all forms of bad leadership discussed in detail in chapter two.

Besides Bukenya's general comments on East African poetry, he makes specific comments on two of Barlow's poems; "Building the Nation" and "I Refuse to Take Your Brotherly Hand". He asserts that the former poem is about the insincerity of people who hold big offices (represented by the Permanent Secretary) towards their subordinates like the driver. Barlow also says that the junior workers are the real nation builders because they do their work unlike the Permanent Secretary who spends most of the time eating and talking. However, the themes of insincerity, injustice and discrimination portrayed in "Building the Nation" as Bukenya observes are characteristics of bad governance.

According to Bukenya the main idea suggested in Barlow's "I Refuse to Take Your Brotherly Hand", is that: "one should not allow one's integrity to be compromised for any reason" (42).

Bukenya gives an impression that the poem is mainly about honesty. The poem, however, reflects other pertinent issues such as corruption, poverty and indifference of politicians. This study therefore seeks to examine in details the two poems and other poems of Barlow alongside Kiguli and Wangusa's poetry in relation to the subject of governance in order to establish how the poets portray the subject and their contribution to the discussion of governance in Uganda.

Shallon Atuhaire in her dissertation entitled, Human Rights Advocacy in the Poetry of Contemporary Ugandan Women Poets: Susan Kiguli and Mildred Barya, pertinently examines how Kiguli advocates for human rights in her poetry. Atuhaire's research considered civil and political rights, rights of a child, rights against torture and other cruel treatment, elimination of discrimination against women, economic, social and cultural rights and rights of all workers (2). It is worthwhile to note that although she discusses human rights in Kiguli's poetry, she does not comprehensively discuss the subject of governance. This study, therefore, focuses on the portrayal of governance in Kiguli's poetry alongside Barlow and Wangusa's poetry.

In Alice Kyobutungi's dissertation, Henry Barlow's Poetry: A Romanticist Analysis, analyses Barlow's poems and professes that it is highly imaginative, idealistic, nostalgic, and displays restlessness and the quest for the unattainable goals of the soul (9). Kyobutungi concludes that, Barlow is a romantic poet who, "unconsciously resorted to romanticism to minimize the harsh realities of contemporary experience" (15). For example, while analyzing the poem; "The Leader that Hung", Kyobutungi asserts that: "Chaos abounds the world of the poem. Order is gone and the poet seeks to restore it through fantasy" (15). I agree with Kyobutungi's view that Barlow's poems display chaos, disorder and restlessness. However, these are real characteristics of bad governance in Uganda. Barlow is a realistic poet who has not minced words in attacking the system of bad governance and those that have propagated restlessness, chaos and disorder in

Uganda. Barlow uses romanticism not to escape and stifle reality as Kyobutungi argues, but, he does so in order to provoke the disgruntled society to act against bad governance and to establish good governance. In “The Leader that Hung”, already cited, Barlow through the persona calls upon people to kill their leader who has become over ambitious, hungry for power, cunning, dishonest and deceitful in order restore peace, order and good governance.

Admittedly, many African writers or artists have written about the political affairs of their societies. They have therefore commented on the troubles, conflicts and the consequential state of hopelessness that result from the poor political policies. Arthur Gakwandi; a Ugandan novelist and critic in his book The Novel and the Contemporary Experience in Africa, claims that many African writers have become conscious of their political problems and this has prompted them to write about them (5). He asserts that; “Indeed political concern is a characteristic feature of African literature. The demand for freedom, social justice and equality runs through African literature before and after independence “(7). Although Gakwandi makes the above observation in relation to the African novel, the observation aptly applies to the poems under study. The above features identified by Gakwandi are characteristics of bad governance. This study makes a thorough analysis of these and other manifestations of bad governance with the view of establishing how the poets portray the subject of governance in their poetic works.

Chinua Achebe, a famous African novelist, poet and critic, also comments on the artist’s involvement in writing about the social, economic and political issues of Africa. In his critical commentary, The African Writer and the Biafran Cause, Achebe acknowledges that the African writer cannot engage in writing literature for the sake of it, instead, he advises that the writer should write about his own society; reflect the strength and weaknesses of his society. He says:

....any African who tries to avoid the big social and political issues of contemporary Africa will end up being completely irrelevant like that absurd man in the proverb who leaves his house burning to pursue a rat fleeing from the flames (78).

Indeed Kiguli, Barlow and Wangusa have proved themselves relevant by reflecting on the political, social and economic problems of Africa. Wangusa's persona in "Declaration" cries out to Africa which is engrossed in suffering and tears. Wangusa carries on with the same theme in the poem "National Skull Exhibition" in which he elaborately depicts the unjustifiable loss of life that characterizes Uganda's past and present in the poem. In the same vain Kiguli and Barlow depict autocratic rule, political instability, human suffering and death in "I Laugh at Amin" and "Summit Fever II" respectively. These and other poems are analyzed in Chapter two with the view of critiquing how the subject of governance is portrayed in the poems.

In discussing the importance of a literary artist and work in his critical work, African Literature: A Critical View, David Cook asserts that a literary artist should strive to be relevant by reflecting the concerns of his society. He says;

The burning importance of novels, drama, and poetry lies in the immediacy and force with which they convey our world to us. Its dilemmas and possibilities. We come to understand life around us more fully through the compelling interest with which literature communicates it to us (163).

In view of Cook's general comment about the importance of literary works to society, Barlow's, Wangusa's and Kiguli's poetry reflect the social ill of bad governance in Uganda through the use of creative style and stylistics as discussed in the following chapters.

Okot p'Bitek is another literary critic who has pointed out and discussed the importance of literary artists to their society. He says that artists greatly contribute to the discussion of the laws, political status and how people are governed in the society. In his critical essay, Artist the Ruler, Okot contends that artists create the thought system of the society and they respond to what is

happening in the society only that they do this in the most oblique language and style (39). Although Okot does not directly point to the poets under study, his observation above is relevant to this study. Barlow, Wangusa and Kiguli deliberate on how Ugandans are governed by the different post-independence regimes. For example, the three poets show neglect of duty, corruption, political instability, among other social ills that exists in their society through ingenious stylistic choices as the analysis in the following chapter shows.

## **1.9 Significance of the Study**

1. The study provides a literary analysis of how governance is portrayed in selected poems of Barlow, Wangusa and Kiguli by analyzing the poets' use of figures of speech, linguistic, visual and structural features. The study also makes an attempt to enrich literary critical analysis of the selected poems using a New Criticism perspective.
2. By analyzing the poets' portrayal of governance, the study highlights the contribution of poets in lawmaking and political commentary. Through the creative use of style and language, the poets identify legislators' strength and weaknesses. The study also creates an awareness of the state of Uganda's governance, what it should be and what can be done to achieve it.

## **1.10 Methodology**

### **1.10.1 Research Design**

This study is largely a qualitative library based research. Qualitative research methods are used because the study involves reading and analyzing both primary and secondary texts.

### **1.10.2 Primary Sources**

The primary sources data were selected poems from anthologies of Kiguli's "The African Saga", Barlow's "Building the Nation", and Wangusa's "The Pattern of Dust: Selected Poems 1965-1990", "Anthem for Africa", and "Africa's New Brood". Poems that address the subject of governance were specifically selected while others were left out.

### **1.10.3 Secondary Sources**

The study utilized books and articles from Makerere University main library, Uganda Christian University's The Hamu Mukasa Library and Kyambogo Barclay's library. Texts on the New Criticism theory and practice were examined in relation to the main texts. Literary texts on language and style were also consulted in order to have a better critical appreciation of the poets' use of style and language to portray the subject of governance. Other sources of data examined included; Encyclopedias, online Journals and articles, Masters and Doctoral thesis.

### **1.10.4 Procedures of data processing and analysis**

The methodological procedure of the study included the compilation and analysis of relevant literature related to the study. The selected poems were read, critically examined and interpreted in view of how they address the subject of governance. In carrying out the study, the researcher identified the stylistic features; figures of speech, linguistic and structural features of the poem and discussed how they are used to portray governance concerns. Some poems were quoted in the main discussion while others were simply referred to. All the poems used have been appended to the thesis. Relevant texts on the New Criticism theory, language and style and governance were also critically read and analyzed.

Data is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is introduction, chapter two analyses the poets' use of figures of speech such as irony, personification, rhetorical questions, allusion, imagery,

symbolism and juxtaposition. Chapter three examines linguistic features which include; neologism, lexical sets, use of different dialects and language, diction and register. Chapter four discusses the poets' use of visual and graphological features such as graphological deviation, external graphology, parallelism and meter. Chapter five is conclusion. The governance concerns portrayed by the above elements of style and language include political instability, dictatorship, poverty, corruption, political deception, injustice, vote rigging, excessive involvement of the security agents in political affairs, lack of accountability and transparency.

#### **1.10.5 Constraints**

The poetry of Susan Kiguli, Henry Barlow and Timothy Wangusa is not widely critiqued; therefore, the researcher had limited related literature. However, the researcher did her best to provide a serious critical analysis.

#### **1.11 Definition of Terms**

1. Governance: in this study, governance refers to a way in which political power is exercised to control the country's affairs.
2. Good Governance: in this study I maintain Ly Roy's definition of good governance as "the existence of legitimacy of authority, public responsiveness, public accountability, and public tolerance of other actors with a public character, information openness, and public management effectiveness" (qtd in Nsibambi 10).
3. Bad Governance is taken to mean diversion of public resources for private gain, failure to establish a predictable framework of law, excessive

rules, misallocation of resources and non-transparent decision making.

4. Determinants of governance refer to those things that decide whether there is good governance or bad governance in a country.

5. Rule of Law means adherence to the constitution, open government, presence of order and security, respect of fundamental justice, fairness, equality and absence of corruption.

6. Style in this study I uphold Murfin's and Ray's definition of style as "the way in which a literary work is written, the devices the author uses to express his or her thoughts and convey the work's subject matter"(385).

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE USE OF FIGURES OF SPEECH

#### 2.1 Introduction

Figures of speech is an aspect of style that involves use of indirect expressions to suggest ideas and moods which heighten the vividness and clarity of the language used in any piece of writing. According to Ross Murfin and Supryia M. Ray in their text, The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms, figures of speech are literary devices that “typically depart from the usual order of words or from their literal meaning to create an image in the reader’s mind”(129). This implies that figures of speech divert from ordinary language and expressions, they are used creatively by poets to create connotative meanings that can be interpreted according to the context in which they are used. Since figures of speech are indirect, they give poets freedom to talk about social evils resulting from bad governance. As Okot p’ Bitek observes, “ the artist proclaims the laws but expresses them in the most indirect language: through metaphors and symbols, in images and fables”(39). Okot also emphasizes poets’ use of indirect expressions and language to portray their intended messages which includes among others official decrees concerning political governance. The chapter analyzes the poets’ use of irony, personification, rhetorical questions, allusion, imagery, symbolism and juxtaposition to portray governance.

#### 2.2. Irony

Irony in poetry is identified when the speaker’s words and situations expressed in the poem suggest the opposite of their literal meaning. Irony can be detected at word and situation level leading to verbal irony and situational irony. Verbal irony is due to the contradiction in the words while situational irony is a result of the contradiction in the expected circumstances. In analyzing

the poets' use of irony to portray governance, the following poems are used. Wangusa's "The State is my Shepherd", Barlow's "Building the Nation" and Kiguli's "I Laugh at Amin".

Timothy Wangusa in "The State is my Shepherd" adopts an ironic point of view. This is due to the discrepancy between what the poem says and what the writer is actually saying. Wangusa's persona states that "the state is my shepherd, I shall not want" (1). This submission means that the persona is not in dire need of anything due to the guardianship of the state. The state is the able shepherd to the persona. A shepherd is a person who provides basic needs like food, water, protection, shelter and love to his flock. According to the bible, Jesus is the good shepherd who knows all his sheep and they know him and he is willing to die for them (John 10: 11). Psalm twenty three gives an account of the responsibilities of a shepherd; to provide basic needs, peace, strength, righteousness, and courage, protection from enemies, and love to his flock. The speaker speaks with confidence and boastfulness about his shepherd; "Surely your [shepherd's] goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, / and I will live in the house of the Lord forever" (6). The speaker asserts the infinite love and protection of the shepherd that he shall stay with the shepherd eternally. In Wangusa's poem, the state is compared to Jesus, the good shepherd;

It makes me to lie down in a subsidized house.  
It leads me into realms of political tranquility;  
It restores my faith in a business future.  
It leads me into paths of loans and pensions, for  
Its international reputation's sake.  
(...)  
It preserves for me a bank account, in the  
Presence of devaluation;  
It fills my pocket with allowances;  
My salary overflows.

Surely increments and promotions shall follow me  
All the days of my life; (2-17).

On the surface, Wangusa's poem shows that the state is a true shepherd to the persona because it provides basics like accommodation, political stability, gratified pockets, assured employment and job promotion. The ironic point of view is evident due to the fact that the state in Uganda is largely the opposite of what Wangusa's persona professes. Contrary to the poem, many Ugandans especially the ordinary people are in dire need of food, shelter and health care. According to the United Nations' report entitled, "United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Uganda 2010 to 2014 (UNDAF)", about 85 percent of Ugandans live in disadvantaged rural areas with hunger and food insecurity. As a result, 4.4 million people are malnourished (5). The Ugandan state, therefore, is a poor shadow of Jesus, the real shepherd. The poem also employs situational irony to highlight Uganda's state of bad governance. This is seen when the persona says "the state is with me; / Its guns and tanks comfort me" (10-11). In Uganda, due to the long history of insecurity, the mere sight of guns and tanks instinctively stimulate fear and psychological torture among many Ugandans. This is due to the fact that the guns and tanks remind people of their bloody history. Therefore, the guns are not a source of comfort to the people but as the late Janani Luwum put it ". . . the gun which was meant to protect Uganda as a nation, the Ugandan as a citizen and his property has been used against the Ugandan to take away his life and property" (Qtd in Adam Seftel, 175). The persona further makes reference to Kivulu, where he walks without fear of thieves. This is ironical to the reality of Kivulu, where thieves roam during day and night and steal for survival. The speaker also boasts of salary augmentation and job advancement that the state provides to him to ironically refer to low wages, lack of job promotions and job security. Due to the absence of a minimum wage in Uganda, workers receive any wage employers see fit to give. Unfortunately, policy makers are unbothered to set the minimum wage. President Yoweri Museveni told the nation on

May Day 2013 that the “minimum wage is not a priority for Ugandans” (Odeke, 3 May 2013). Therefore, in referring to the state as a shepherd, Wangusa ironically highlights the malfunction, indifference and irresponsiveness of the state. Besides using irony to underscore Uganda’s situation, irony aids Wangusa to portray his vision for a futuristic state which is a shepherd to its people. In doing this Wangusa is a genuine poet. A genuine poet according to Emmanuel Ngara in his book, Ideology and Form in African Poetry, “has a social vision expressed and encapsulated in an appropriate style” (199).

On the same note, Barlow in “Building the Nation” uses irony to portray public servants’ lack of seriousness and transparency. In the first place the title of the poem is verbally ironical, “Building the Nation” points to efforts to improve the social, economic and political welfare of the country, however, when one reads the poem, it points to the destruction of the country, since public servants and government officials waste time and the country’s resources in the guise of nation building. Nation building, therefore, as the title suggests, is ironically nation destruction since this so called nation building is actually a luncheon at the Vic. Verbal irony is also seen in the driver’s assertion that: “I drove the Permanent Secretary /To an important urgent function”(3-4). The Permanent Secretary as well without mincing words says: “I attended to matters of state / Highly delicate diplomatic duties you know” (20-21). It is incongruous to call a trivial issue of eating and squandering public coffers an urgent and important function. Worse still, it is absurd to refer to eating as a delicate diplomatic state duty. Later on to our utter dismay and anguish the Permanent Secretary has the audacity to describe his and other politicians’ expensive eating as, “The pains we suffer in building the nation!”(23). It is not painful to eat, to enjoy leisure and to be driven without incurring any cost. It is actually enjoying. The poem mocks government officials who in the guise of nation building squander national coffers for their selfish

aggrandizement. In Uganda, just like in the poem, political leaders and public servants whose prime mandate is to build the nation ironically spend resources meant for nation building on eating, enjoying leisure and putting up personal alluring mansions. Barlow further uses irony to show leaders' insincerity and lack of integrity. This is seen when the Permanent Secretary, knowing that his driver did not have lunch asks: "Did you have any lunch friend?" A question to which the driver satirically responds ". . . I had not, but was slimming!" The Permanent Secretary deceives in his response that;

Mwananchi, I too had none!  
I attended to matters of state.  
Highly delicate diplomatic duties you know,  
And friend, it goes against my grain,  
Causes me stomach ulcers and wind (19-21).

Barlow satirizes leaders who are even ready to deceive and fool their subordinates openly in order to maintain relationships with them. The word "friend" is used ironically because in actual sense the driver is not a friend to the Permanent Secretary for no friend can forget a friend when eating. The ironical utterances of the Permanent Secretary show the indifference, capriciousness and fraudulence of leaders or government officials to their subordinates. Unfortunately, this is Uganda's state where leaders are only concerned with eating at the expense of the ordinary people who vote them and pay taxes. As Charles Okwir observes in his book, Portrait of a Despot: The Modern Traits, "the eating culture for many elites and politicians in Uganda has sadly come to define what life and politics mean to them. Eating and eating; until they vomit on their shoes" (46). Okwir avers that leaders and public servants in Uganda consider eating tax payers' money as their prime mandate instead of serving the people. Unfortunately, public servants and leaders who behave like the Permanent Secretary can neither build the nation nor ensure good governance in Uganda. I contend with Tunde Obadina's assertion in his article,

“Africa’s Crisis of Governance” that “a ruling class that sees the state solely as a means of expropriating the nation’s limited resources is simply incapable of good governance. Most especially, such a class will by its character and mission abuse power” (Par 17).

Kiguli also underscores the subject of governance through irony. In her poem “I Laugh at Amin” Kiguli highlights the political instability in particular the wanton killing of people which characterised Amin’s regime. The irony starts right from the title which states: “I Laugh at Amin”. The speaker is actually not laughing but rather annoyed with Amin, one of Uganda’s former despotic leaders. The irritation is further expressed mockingly when the persona says that, he laughs with all the skulls, the victims of the 1977 firing squad, bullets wasted, heads of schools and the ghost of Kay Amin (1-15). One cannot laugh with skulls and ghosts; therefore, Kiguli’s persona sheds tears for the unnumbered people who died during Amin’s regime. However, due to the fact that tears and direct words are inadequate to ably express Uganda’s nasty experience, Kiguli decides to use irony to attack and criticize Amin for the death of many people. In her other poem “Crazy Peter Prattles”, Kiguli also widely uses irony to expose and attack bad governance. The title itself is also verbally ironic because it states that the persona, Peter, is out of his senses and he is talking foolishly. The title also suggests that Peter’s foolish talk is tediously lengthy and does not deserve our attention. However, the above impression as made by the title is not correct; the reverse is true. Peter is a very sober and sensitive person and his talk is full of wisdom. There is no madness and foolishness in talking about bad governance as depicted in the various forms of social injustice. In the last stanza, Peter, ironically, claims that: “Anyway I only remember these things/ When I drink/ They are indeed tipsy explosions” (25-27). Peter means that he only remembers the vice of social injustice when he is boozing and that his observations are drunken outbursts emanating from a drugged mind. This is also not true

as I have argued above. Peter remembers soberly differential treatment between the poor and the rich, negligence of duty by doctors and nurses, artificial scarcity in hospitals and other injustice. He claims to be crazy and tipsy because this is what the stupid leaders – who do not want to hear his bitterest criticism- take him for. Kiguli, therefore, lends force to her attack of bad governance by saying the direct opposite of what she actually implies. This has enabled her to task our brain to decipher her veiled attack and message. She does not want us to indulge in mental laziness while reading her distilled message.

Additionally, Kiguli uses situational irony in assaulting bad governance. She portrays our leaders and civil servants doing the opposite of what they are supposed to do in certain situations. For instance, in the event that a woman is raped, we do expect a judge to listen to the evidence in order to administer justice. We expect the state to represent the victim legally by providing an advocate given the magnitude of this criminal offence. This is what is expected in good governance. Ironically, the judge throws out a case of defilement of a seven year old minor on the ground that the child has failed to adduce evidence. The state does not perform its constitutional mandate of protecting the victim of defilement. The culprit, therefore, is left to go scot-free and he is at liberty to sue for defamation from the poor child. Furthermore, the nurse in the fourth stanza is professionally, dutifully and ethically mandated to save life by attending to the sick. She is supposed to provide healing, comfort and care to the sick-for that is what nursing the sick precisely means and calls for. However, she ironically commands fainting mothers in a terse voice to stand up or else leave the line and go away. Through irony Kiguli succeeds in drawing a vivid picture of the weak judicial system, lack of professionalism and neglect of duty in Uganda. In a report, Positive Practice Environments: Enhancing Health Workers and Health System Performance, Charles W. Matsiko notes that in Uganda “the professional values and

ethical practices have been eroded” (28). As Kiguli portrays through irony, Matsiko adduces evidence that health workers have low morale, poor attitude to clients, low productivity and absent themselves from duty. I agree with Matsiko’s further assertion that poor management at all levels is a major cause of inadequate health workforce performance (28). However, poor management and inadequate workforce performance extends to other sectors of Uganda’s economy and Kiguli succeeds in providing an eye opener about its existence through irony. In doing this, Kiguli alongside Wangusa and Barlow fulfill Cook’s declaration that:

Whatever else a poet is, he is honest and does not lie to himself or to others about his feelings and a poet must be prepared to expose his inner self so that to play safe is a denial of his role (39).

Through irony, Barlow, Wangusa and Kiguli have been honest to themselves and the society in revealing the misdemeanors of institutions and politicians of their societies, therefore, fulfilling their social role.

### **2.3. Personification.**

Personification is a literary device which gives human characteristics to non – human objects or abstractions. Personification is one of the devices that enable poets and writers in general to indirectly comment about real human experiences without attracting criticism from the public. In analyzing the poets’ use of personification to portray governance, the following poems are used. Barlow’s “The Leader that Hung”, Kiguli’s “Why Vultures Laugh”, and “Viewers May Find these Pictures Disturbing”.

Barlow in the poem “The Leader that Hung” portrays bad governance through personification. In the poem, Suspicion is given human attributes of immeasurable strength, sharp and ugly teeth which it uses to fight, bite and over throw gentle trust which is also personified to speak with gentle pleading words. Suspicion meets Hatred and gives birth to their child Fear. The three;

Suspicion, Hatred and Fear convince the leader to crave for absolute power. Due to the strength of the three personified aspects, all the good qualities of the leader disappear, that is;

Love slowly bled to death  
Forgiveness was starved  
And Honesty slowly stifled  
But Fear, Suspicion and Hatred grew and grew (28-31).

In the extract above all the good qualities of the leader are personified with human qualities of permanent extinction for example, love dies, forgiveness is not fed and so it also dies and honesty is also subdued. In the absence of good qualities of leadership, the leader governs badly. With time, the leader becomes inseparable from Suspicion, Fear and Hatred, and people unanimously decide to destroy the leader and his misrule. This conforms to Said Adejumobi's declaration in his article, "Africa and the Challenges of Democracy and Good Governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" that democracy and good governance are not given; rather, they are a result of the physical political struggles waged by the subjugated factions in the society (10). Barlow intentionally gives human qualities to fear, hatred and suspicion as explained above because they have been influential aspects in Uganda's governance. For example, Milton Obote, one of Uganda's past presidents due to fear and suspicion of the Kabaka of Buganda ousting him from the highest political seat, ransacked the kingdom and forced the Kabaka into exile. Furthermore, due to fear and suspicion, Obote still suspended other political parties because; as Barlow notes, Suspicion, Fear and Hatred had conditioned him into having a: "craving ambition for absolute power for ever (27). The leader, therefore, could not afford to share power with anybody because he suspected all of them as possible contenders for the highest political position in the land. Suspicion, Fear and Hatred continued to be reigning factors even during Idi Amin's regime. According to Adam Seftel, editor of the book, The Bloodstained Pearl of Africa and its Struggle for Peace, Amin massacred

thousands of Acholi and Langi soldiers in 1971 and 1972 because he suspected them of being loyal to his predecessor Obote (105). Besides killing Luo speaking members of the army, Amin and his henchmen also wantonly killed other Ugandans who were suspected of being dangerous to the government. These included, Uganda's Chief Justice Ben Kiwanuka; horribly murdered because "he ruled that army personnel had no power to arrest and detain somebody without an arrest warrant" (Qtd in Adam Seftel, 112). Also, the Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, several ministers, Anglican Archbishop; Janan Luwum, and many others were killed (Kasfir, Par 1 and 3). Suspicion, fear and hatred have been rife during Museveni's glorious regime as well especially during election periods when Museveni's diehards and army men suppress opposition leaders and their supporters. Okwir records that in 2001, Kakooza Mutale, a senior serving army official and Presidential Advisor on Political Affairs together with his Kalangala Action Plan (KAP), viciously tortured supporters of opposition leader Dr. Kizza Besigye in the different suburbs of Kampala. Another senior military officer drove through Besigye's supporters along Kampala-Jinja highway killing some and injuring scores. In 2006 elections, a one L. Ramathan Magara shot through Besigye's supporters who had gathered at Bulange Mengo to have a glimpse of Besigye who had gone to pay a courtesy call on the Kabaka. Magara killed three people and caused collateral damage to others (82-85). In 2012 there was a walk to work strike in Uganda in protest against increasing commodity prices. Besigye, still Museveni's most formidable political challenger, was sprayed in the eyes with red pepper and only an eye operation saved him from possible blindness. All these atrocities committed by senior military officials and at one time by a presidential advisor are no doubt a result of the incumbent party's suspicion and hatred of political opposition and fear of losing public support. I agree with Okwir's declaration that mistreatment of opposition not only reduces and demoralizes opposition support but is also an infamy to democracy and good

governance. Barlow's personification of hatred, fear and suspicion is therefore pregnant with meaning.

In her poem "Why Vultures Laugh?" Kiguli also uses personification to comment on Uganda's state of governance. Right away from the title of the poem, the Vultures are personified as laughing. On further reading of the poem it becomes evident that vultures are laughing at the human society which is represented by the "we" pronoun for failing to achieve freedom, characterised by happiness and success. In the last stanza Kiguli's collective human persona sadly comments:

But we have stayed by the well  
Soaked in frustration  
Our arms heavy stumps  
Our hearts shriveled nuts  
As the water defies our pots  
Little wonder then  
The vultures laugh at us. (11-17).

This quotation shows that human beings are upset, helpless and feel useless and this propels the vultures to laugh. In her other poem, "Viewers may Find these Pictures Disturbing" the vultures in the poem speak. The birds watch from a distance deserted homesteads, scenes of mutilated human bodies and torrents of blood referred to as "Red flags"(6) and curse the people responsible for human massacre saying: "Their blood be on their heads"(6). The vultures are made to curse the people who killed others in multitudes to the extent that there is no one left to mourn and bury the dead save the vultures. Uganda's history is marked with scenes of dead bodies littering the battlefield, police station, streets and road sides. Seftel provides a devastating picture of heaps of corpses lying in dust around Simba Barracks (130). In a similar case, Moses Isegawa in Abyssinian Chronicles, provides an account of dead bodies in Luwero Triangle where "the troops found only ghost towns and deserted villages loaded with the stench of the dead and

the decay caused by aerial bombardment”(385). Leaders responsible for the death and mistreatment of the dead are cursed and laughed at by the vultures. Through personification, the poets fulfill the social critics’ view that art is created in a social context and reflect the experiences of the society (Scott 123).

#### **2.4. Rhetorical Questions**

A rhetorical question is an element of style used by the poets to highlight the subject of governance. A rhetorical question is a question asked for effect but with no answers expected. Rhetorical questions in a speech or piece of writing are intended for emphasis and to create a particular effect about an idea that is raised. To analyze the use of rhetorical questions in the portrayal of the subject of governance, Barlow’s poem, “I Refuse to Take your Brotherly Hand”, Kiguli’s “Crazy Peter Prattles” and Wangusa’s “Africa’s New Brood” are used.

In “I Refuse to take your Brotherly Hand” Barlow uses rhetorical questions to emphasize the forgetfulness, indifference and corrupt nature of leaders. Barlow’s persona, an honest and sincere person asks his brother, a leader the following questions:

Have you entirely forgotten Brother  
The fragrance and comfort of clean hands?  
The confidence, the peace you have when you know  
You’ll leave no ugly sludge upon the sheet?  
Don’t you remember the repulsion you had  
When you shook hands with fat dirty men  
With their dirty clammy palms? (34-40).

The persona in the first question reminds his brother that he was once honest and wonders at the fact that the brother is now so corrupt. In the second question, the speaker is startled that his brother no longer cares about being sincere. In the third question, the persona is shocked that his brother is no longer disgusted with keeping company with corrupt people. The above questions attract our attention to the nature of politics in Uganda and Africa in general, where leaders come

into power with dreams to liberate their societies from the evil of corruption. But Alas! Once in power the leaders forget their humble background, humble people, and beautiful dreams. Soon or later, leaders follow their predecessors and they also start to enrich themselves at the expense of their people and the entire nation. For instance, President Museveni and his National Resistance Movement (NRM) at the start of the regime in 1986 were clean. Point number seven of the Ten Point Programme of the NRM was the “Elimination of corruption and misuse of power” (Museveni 217). From the onset, the NRM established legal frameworks to fight corruption. These are; the Inspector General of Government Statute (1988), the Anti-Corruption Act (2009) and the Enforcement of the Leadership Code of Conduct Act (2002). However, despite these efforts corruption and misuse of power is still so rampant in Uganda. According to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) on the reach of corruption in Uganda, “corruption is now institutionalized”. In other words, corruption is deeply ingrained in almost all major sectors of the economy. For example, NRM diehards and officials are enriching themselves at the expense of the ordinary people. Joel Barkan in his article, “Uganda: Assessing Risks to Stability”, cites the ownership of Entebbe Handling Service Ltd by Uganda’s foreign Minister; Samuel Kutesa. He also affirms that the Prime Minister and some Members of Parliament like Janet Museveni have some business holdings (10). It is not wrong for Cabinet ministers and other government officials to own lucrative businesses, what is wrong is using public offices and time for official government duties to amass personal wealth. Barlow’s poems alongside Kiguli’s and Wangusa’s, therefore, reflect in great detail the characteristics of the Ugandan society.

Kiguli in “Crazy Peter Prattles” also grapple with the subject of bad governance through the use of rhetorical questions:

So what is the hullabaloo  
About the minister's ailing son  
That he makes boiling news?'

How come it was not even whispered  
When Tina's hospital bed crawled with maggots  
And her eyes oozed pus  
Because the doctors lacked gloves?

What about Kasajja's only child  
Who died because the man with the key  
To the oxygen room was on leave? (1-10).

These rhetorical questions invite and compel us to seriously ponder over the state of the nation as we search for answers. The very first question underscores bad governance. The persona wonders why the minister's sick son is treated so delicately; because he is sick, everything else comes to a standstill. The second and third question in the second and third stanza respectively causes us to further wonder about social injustice, negligence of duty and utter discrimination between the rich politicians and the ordinary poor people. One wonders how a whole government can fail to provide mere gloves to doctors and how a person can go on leave with a key to the oxygen room. If it was the minister's child in need of gloves or oxygen, doctors would do everything possible to get them or the minister would buy them immediately and the oxygen room would be broken into without any second thought. The answer to all the above questions is that people are treated differently; the rich and the politicians are favoured while the Tinias, Kasajjas and ordinary mothers are disfavoured. No wonder then, Tina rots in bed, Kasajja's only child dies and the mothers faint from long queues and are snappishly shouted at. The rhetorical questions, therefore, enable the poet to express her disgust about the social injustice in government institutions such as hospitals and the judiciary. Besides treating politicians and their families with utmost care, senior servants, politicians and their families are referred abroad for treatment even for minor ailments. According to Barkan, Uganda spends 150 million dollars

every year to send its privileged citizens abroad for treatment (28). As a result of misusing colossal amounts of money on a few people, health services remain poor, health workers are not well remunerated and as such many flee the country for greener pastures. On the other hand, the poor and the disadvantaged are left to die of treatable diseases.

In “Africa’s New Brood”, Wangusa also deals with the subject of bad governance through the use of rhetorical questions. Wangusa’s persona rhetorically asks Museveni:

Why Alice Lakwena of the Spirit Movement?  
Why Joseph Kony of the Black Ten Commandments?  
Why the inconsolable captivity of Aboke schoolgirls?  
Why the unspeakable Atiak massacres  
The unthinkable Mukura human incineration  
The nightmarish Kichwamba holocaust  
And the infernal Kanungu conflagration?

Why the blood-deep corruption in exalted places  
And national referendum on prehistoric birthrights?

Why the perennial penury among the toiling majority

And why Katwe Radio’s reported  
Export of war to Congo? (47-58).

The questions in the first stanza emphasize the political instability that has characterised Museveni’s regime despite the fact that he vowed to fight against it at the start of his reign. These questions suggest that Museveni has failed to prevent upheavals in Uganda caused by first, Alice Lakwena, then Joseph Kony leading to death of many people and other human rights violations in places where rebel activities prevailed. In the second stanza, the questions point to the wide spread corruption especially in top political offices and the takeover of traditional chiefdoms by the central government. In the third and fourth stanza the questions portray the constantly recurring abject poverty of the ordinary people and Uganda’s involvement in foreign wars respectively. This is against Museveni’s 1986 swearing in message recorded in his

publication titled What is Africa's Problem, that, "no one should think that what is happening today is a mere change of guards: it is a fundamental change in the politics of our country (21). Unfortunately, Museveni and his regime, has not fully fulfilled their promise. The rhetorical questions in Wangusa's poem are propelled by the re-occurrence of instability and other social injustices which typified the regimes of Museveni's predecessors. Barkan underscores this when he says; "Museveni has failed to break the mold of Ugandan politics" (1). Although Museveni and his regime have succeeded in establishing peace and economic growth unrivaled by Obote and Amin's regime, Barkan's comment above and the rhetorical questions in Wangusa's poem are relevant for they not only point to the instabilities that mired Museveni's regime but also forcefully portray corruption and abject poverty of the ordinary people that characterize Uganda up to date. The poets ask questions while implicitly asserting their comments on Uganda's state of governance.

## **2.5. Allusion**

Allusion is when a speaker or writer uses references, words or illustrations from other sources such as the bible, world history, speeches and particular literary or non-literary works, to enrich their speeches or works and to emphasize certain points in their speeches or works. To highlight Uganda's governance Wangusa uses allusion in his poem "Portrait" and Kiguli in her poems "I Laugh at Amin" and "Fishers of Men".

In "Portrait", Wangusa uses historical allusion to highlight the nature and characteristics of bad leaders. In the first six stanzas, the poet shows the leader's inconsistent and unpredictable character. For instance, the leader befriends and kills young beautiful girls, promotes and executes intellectuals and civil servant. While the public adores and praises the leader openly, the leader covertly kills many of his most devoted supporters. In the sixth stanza the leader is

described as cheerful to the extent of swimming in a popular swimming pool while being watched by ordinary people and the media. The protagonist of the poem is also depicted speaking a variety of corrupted English. For example, when a foreign journalist asks the leader whether he blows his own trumpet, the leader responds;

You street beggar!  
You pink boy! You are not know  
That ayam no Mistah but My Excellency?  
I play trumpet very good yes  
But also I play accordion very very good! (40-44).

The above extract is one of the highlights of the poem that shows the leader's inability to express himself in correct English. The protagonist of Wangusa's poem alludes to Amin, one of Uganda's past dictators. Amin had an incoherent and unpredictable character; he was brutal, cruel and ultimately terrifying but occasionally lively and jovial. Amin's deadly character propelled him to commit atrocities while hiding in the mask of his good traits. Through historical allusion, Wangusa paints an indelible picture of bad governance that characterised Amin's Uganda.

Kiguli in "I Laugh at Amin" also highlights instability and its effects through historical allusion. Kiguli's persona reminisces about the many people who died during Amin's bloody regime. The persona states ironically that she laughs with the unnumbered skulls of people including the victims of the 1977 firing squad, civil servants, and the ghost of Kay Amin (1-18). This is a true historical account of Amin's evil mayhem. In her other poem, "Fishers of Men", Kiguli points to the bloodshed that characterised Amin's reign through biblical and literary allusion. The title of the poem "Fishers of Men" alludes to the bible scene when Jesus, finding Peter and Andrew throwing a net into the water to catch fish, tells them to cease fishing fish and instead follow him and become fishers of men (Matthew 4:19). Peter and Andrew become Jesus' disciples and

preach the Gospel. Kiguli uses the biblical phrase; “Fishers of men” to refer to the circumstance during Amin’s reign when fishermen instead of catching fish caught human bodies. In other words, fishermen become fishers of men. This is well postulated in the last stanza of the poem: “Full of the moonlit harvest/ As the silver wonder/ Turns into bullet riddled chests / And water logged eyes!” (8-11). In particular the last stanza relates to John Ruganda’s The Floods where a fisherman, Kyeyune catches in his net a body of a murdered army man with three nails in his skull, genitals stuffed in his mouth and a big stone round his neck(14). The allusions highlight bad leadership characterised by abhorrent and inhuman carnage of people to the extent that dead bodies ended up in fishing grounds. As Henry Kyemba in his book, A State of Blood: The Inside Story of Idi Amin, states:

Three sites were used- one just above Owen Falls Dam at Jinja, another at Bujagali Falls near the army shooting range and the third at Karuma Falls near Murchison Falls. The intention was for the bodies to be eaten by crocodiles. This was an inefficient method of disposal. Bodies were frequently swept to the bank, where they were seen by passersby and fishermen (53).

Therefore, through historical and biblical allusion, the poets substantiate the wanton massacres that characterised the murderous regime of Amin. In doing this, the poets fulfill Percy Bysshe Shelly’s pronouncement in her essay Defence of Poetry, that “a poet considers the vices of his contemporaries as the temporary dress in which his creation must be arrayed, and which cover without concealing the eternal proportions of their beauty”( 12). Kiguli alongside Barlow and Wangusa use the weaknesses and failures of their society as raw material for their poetry.

## **2.6. Imagery**

Imagery refers to a descriptive figurative language used in literary works to create mental pictures based on the five human senses, such that one can see, hear, touch, smell, taste or feel the things that are being described. In analyzing the use of imagery to portray governance, the

following poems are used; Kiguli's "Why Vultures Laugh" and "Viewers May Find these Pictures Disturbing". Wangusa's "Statement: Seven Reasons Why", and Barlow's "Bear the Fools and the Stupid Kindly", "Summit Fever I: Father to Son", "Summit Fever II: Brother to Brother", and "Summit Fever III: Epilogue".

Kiguli in her poem, "Why Vultures Laugh", earlier cited, uses imagery to show the failure of Uganda to attain full independence due to bad governance. Attainment of independence is a collective responsibility of all people represented by a collective persona denoted by the "we" pronoun in the poem. Independence is equated to a well where all people are supposed to draw from. The partial effort to attain independence is compared to the image of dipping half-fired pots in a well. Just as the half-fired pots break into pieces when dipped in water, people's efforts to attain freedom become fruitless. The collective persona compares citizens' efforts of attaining independence to vultures dipping their beaks in rotting carcass. The second stanza shows the success of the vultures' efforts

At least the vultures harvest  
Chunks of stinking slippery flesh  
Which sail gently  
Down welcoming throats (7-10).

On the contrary, human beings though greedy, exploitative and opportunistic like vultures, do not attain independence. Human beings remain hopeless and disappointed, their arms and hearts are metaphorically "heavy stumps" and "shriveled nuts" respectively (13-14). Through imagery, Kiguli shows that independence is an unfulfilled promise. In Uganda, independence gave birth to tyrannical leaders like Milton Obote, Idi Amin and others who turned Uganda into the blood stained pearl of Africa. In her other poem "Viewers May Find these Pictures Disturbing", Kiguli

uses grotesque images to represent the brutality of leaders. These images are seen in the second and third stanza:

Grass grows through  
Open sockets  
Blades sprout  
To cover lone bones

A little girl  
Walks on four  
Eating with monkeys  
She wears a crown  
Of roasting flesh  
And rotting remains (8-17).

These images are intensely disconcerting as the title suggests. They concisely and precisely show a distorted image of the world characterised by disrespect of human life. People are massacred; their bodies littered all over the place, decompose and fertilize the grass. Children lose the touch of humanity and instead are brought up by monkeys. These images help the reader to recognize the fundamental absurdity of human life under tyrannical leaders.

Wangusa in “Statement: Seven Reasons Why” also heavily uses beautiful imagery to corroborate the subject of bad governance. The poem gives an account of the reasons as to why the people represented by pronoun “We”, were forced to oust their leader. In the first stanza, the leader is described as “a man eater;” and “a four legged cannibal.” These images are used to imply that the leader massacred scores of people and in doing this; he violated many people’s right to life. In the second stanza, the leader is described as a “crocodile” which implies that the leader is deceptive and a hypocrite who stopped people from free expression. In the third stanza, the leader is described as “a lecherous dog” who satisfies his sexual ego with women in every city of the country. This image shows the leader’s lack of moral integrity and because of this, the people overthrew him for they could not stand him. In the fourth stanza, the leader is described as “a

vain pig” that surrounded himself with “sorcerers and wizards” which “. . . fattened like hogs”. The animal images heighten the leader’s wanton killings and of his henchmen who also kill people without any restraint. In the fifth stanza, the leader is described as “a greedy hyena”. He is insatiable and self-centered and ensured that all infrastructural developments such as hospitals and roads as well as industries are concentrated in his home area only. This imagery shows that the leader promoted economic and social inequality due to his selfishness, nepotism and greed. In the sixth and seventh stanza, the leader is described as “a crafty serpent” and “a sadistic goblin” respectively. Like a cunning and venomous snake and aggressive elf, the leader eliminated all possible contenders, discarded innocent potential young leaders to the wilderness where they were rendered politically impotent. The leader subjected mature political opponents to debilitating torture. The metaphorical description of the leader portrays bad leadership. Unfortunately, the images, although a bit exaggerated, are true characteristics of some of Uganda’s past leaders who Museveni also describes as “night-dancers” (meaning witches); “biological mistakes”; “savages” and so forth (Okwir 8). Uganda has been so unfortunate to have leaders with animal traits. By their nature, the leaders could not ensure good governance.

Barlow also uses imagery in his poem “Bear the Fools and the Stupid Kindly” to highlight characteristics of bad governance. In the poem, the ordinary people are metaphorically referred to as sheep. The persona claims:

Sheep, all sheep!  
That’s the problem  
Herds and herds of sheep  
Blind stupid  
Thoughtless followers  
The whole lot of us!  
Fools that can be led (1-7).

All people who are led the poet inclusive have the foolishness, ignorance and imprudence of the sheep. Like the sheep; the ordinary people follow their leaders obediently without complaining, they talk about slogans they do not understand and do whatever the leaders tell them to do without thinking about the possible consequences. Nevertheless, just as the sheep's foolish nature is advantageous to man; the ordinary people's foolishness is as well advantageous to leaders in societies that are politically unstable. Barlow shows this in the last stanza when the persona exclaims:

So bear the fools and the stupid:  
The unthinking blind followers, kindly.  
Maybe they too contribute to some sanity  
In our already troubled humanity! (27-30).

Barlow's persona postulates that unknowledgeable and unenlightened people should be sustained because they contribute to peace in areas tinted by political instability. It should be noted, however, that ignorance is a characteristic of bad governance. Bad leaders intentionally keep their electorate ignorant and uninformed about the importance of education. Besides, bad leaders use abstract political slogans whose meaning they do not explain to the people. All this is intended to keep ordinary people ignorant and imprudent. This practice is against the dictates of good governance which emphasizes knowledge especially civic education. Okwir agrees that civic education is fundamental in any democratic process because it "opens the eyes" and "liberates the minds" of the electorate. Okwir further observes that, unfortunately, education is assaulted by despotic leaders in order to ensure their continued stay in power (96). Regrettably, when people are like sheep, they cannot criticize their leaders and cannot make outcries against bad leadership.

Barlow further uses the image of a sheep in his other poem "Summit Fever II: Brother to Brother". The leader metaphorically calls himself a shepherd who cares and provides good life to his flock. The same leader describes the people he leads as sheep. This shows that the people he leads are fools. As a savior, therefore, he cannot leave power because like sheep, the people cannot lead themselves. The leader asserts;

But then, I always recognize with shock  
That the stupidity of sheep,  
Is an innocent type of stupidity;  
That I should accept them as they are  
For they were meant to be led or pushed;  
And it is the shepherd's responsibility  
Whether they go the right or wrong way.  
I recall my avowed promises to them,  
To lead them to more succulent pastures (54-63).

By the leader considering himself as the only wise, capable and foresighted shepherd of the people who are like stupid, unenlightened and short sighted sheep, Barlow shows the tendency of some African leaders who are corrupted by power and rule according to their whims in the pretext that they are the only ones who can rule. In Uganda, some leaders have tried their level best to keep ordinary people illiterate and ignorant in order to ease and extend their leadership. For instance, Amin in an effort to avoid the criticism of knowledgeable people gruesomely murdered the intelligentsia. For example, Ben Kiwanuka - chief justice of Uganda (1971 to 1972), Janan Luwuum- Archbishop of Uganda (1974 to 1977), University lecturers and secondary school head teachers and teachers, among other educated government officials (Seftel 112). Besides that, Amin prompted many learned people to flee the country. Kyemba records about fifty learned people who left the country from 1971 to 1979 (282-283).

Barlow also uses imagery in "Summit Fever I: Father to Son" to show bad governance and its effects. Through the persona, the poet imagines that excessive obsession for power is a disease

that kills many leaders in Africa. The poet uses imagery to show that obsessive love for power is as dangerous as a fever. The poet uses the image of a leper to show that a leader who overstays in power is alienated from people just like a leper who is socially ostracized due to leprosy. The persona asserts that:

Summit fever is a cruel disease  
A killer disease that does not kill  
But gradually alienates you from your own;  
Ostracizes and makes a leper of you (103-106).

Barlow shows that summit fever kills slowly like a cat which postpones the death of a lizard. Just as the cat finally kills the lizard, so does obsession for power slowly lead to the leader's downfall and alienation. In "Summit Fever II" Barlow reechoes the image of the leper, showing that, the leader is isolated by his close relatives; first the father and then the brother. Finally, like a leper who is ostracized from society, the leader in "Summit Fever III: Epilogue", has no one to speak to. His desire for absolute power is a fever which has completely destroyed him. The person who was once at the summit has been removed from the summit and is now nursing his broken heart from exile. The image of an isolated leper also relates to some of Uganda's past leaders who were banished from Uganda.

## **2.7. Symbolism**

Symbolism is the use of an indirect expression which provides hints on the subject. The reader can guess at the hidden meaning or implication of the words by examining the given hints. Barlow's "Building the Nation", "The Ballock" and "I Refuse to Take your Brotherly Hand" and Wangusa's "Political Skulls" are used to show the poet's use of symbolism to portray the theme of governance in Uganda.

Barlow in “Building the Nation” uses symbolic characters to highlight the extremes of bad governance. For example; the Permanent Secretary represents civil servants who squander the government treasury on their leisure instead of serving the people. The driver is a symbol of the exploited low status people, who despite the fact that they are the real nation builders, they are neglected and forgotten when it comes to access to national resources. For example, the driver drives the Permanent Secretary to Lake Victoria Hotel for a luncheon but nevertheless he starves the whole day in the car. The poet also uses symbolic setting; lake Victoria Hotel, a posh and expensive hotel, symbolizes wastage of the nation’s resources. This is due to the fact that while in an expensive hotel, politicians do not spend government’s resources on their leisure. Besides, these places are restricted to the rich and powerful who can afford to pay for them. Through symbolism, therefore, Barlow is able to portray the exploitation of the ordinary people, misuse of the nation’s resources, hypocrisy of leaders and man’s inhumanity to man which are all characteristics of bad governance. In his other poem, “The Bullock”, Barlow uses the symbol of a castrated bull to represent the exploitation and oppression of the workers by their bosses symbolically represented by the farmer. The castration of the bull symbolizes the ill treatment of the ordinary workers with the aim of getting maximum profits from them. The decorations and meager grass given to the castrated bull symbolize the empty praises, meager pay and little or no food given to the workers. The castration of the bull signifies the physical harm inflicted on the workers; often times they become automatons because they lose human feelings and work tirelessly to accomplish all tasks, with little or no pay. In Uganda, the workers symbolically represented by the bullock are undeniably paid low wages and they are hurt while fulfilling their duties but nonetheless they continue working.

In "I Refuse to Take your Brotherly Hand" Barlow also uses symbolism to highlight corruption and misuse of power by leaders. Barlow uses the symbol of the unclean hands whose nails are black with dirt and the palms clammy with sweat to represent corruption, selfishness of the leaders and embezzlement of public funds for private gain. The speaker who happens to be the brother of the leader with filthy hands detests the hands of the brother on account of their being dirty. He says that;

I refuse to take the hands you extend in help  
I shall not join hands with you brother  
For unclean hands make me uneasy  
For filthy fingernails rob me of my pride (3-6).

The hands in the quotation represent some of the embezzled money the brother attempts to give his brother as a way of helping him to get out of poverty. However, the speaker insists that he cannot take the money extended to him because it is coming from unclean sources- "unclean hands"- and taking it will damage his clean personality. The speaker accepts the fact that the dirty hands of his brother and others were once dirt free and clean. He goes on to prophesy that soon all people's hands shall be dirty "For 'everybody' is delving and digging/ And all shall have hands dripping with dirt. / That nobody shall know what clean hands look like/ and there shall be comfort in the dirty crowd" (10-13). The action of all people digging signifies that all people are misappropriating funds and therefore, with time all will have misappropriated funds denoted by dirt. While some people's hands are filled with dirt, the speaker reminds his brother that, ". . . hands of many are too weak with hunger (21). Weak hands represent the many people who are suffering from hunger, sickness and hopelessness due to misappropriation of public resources. Through symbolism, Barlow highlights the reality in Uganda where several leaders have been implicated in dipping their dirty hands into national coffers. A study by the Uganda Debt Network [A Dossier on Corruption in Uganda: 2000-2012](#), shows that of the Ushs.2, 374,844,000

advanced by Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization to carry out immunization activities, Ushs 1,892,104,000 was unaccounted for. Ministers Jim Muhwezi, Dr. Kamugisha, Capt. Mike Mukula and State House official Ms. Alice Kaboya were implicated. Hon. Muhwezi and Dr. Kamugisha were absolved, Ms. Kaboya was fined 20 million and Hon. Mukula prosecuted and sentenced to four years in prison (32). Although action was taken against the implicated politicians and officials, it remains on record that politicians and public servants misuse their offices and government resources. Because of this, ordinary people remain condemned to suffering and death.

## **2.8. Juxtaposition**

Juxtaposition is when two or more things or situations are placed side by side in order to identify the similarities and the differences that exist between them. Kiguli's "Crazy Peter Prattles", Barlow's "Summit Fever I" and Wangusa's "Portrait" are analyzed to show the poets' use of juxtaposition to highlight the subject of governance.

In her poem, "Crazy Peter Prattles", Kiguli uses juxtaposition to highlight social injustice and discrimination and the abhorrent treatment of the poor ordinary people with the careful, humane and expensive treatment of leaders. The poor are abhorrently treated in hospitals. For example, Tina is neglected on the bed to rot to death because doctors lack gloves and as evidence for this, 'Tina's hospital bed crawled with maggots/ And her eyes oozed pus (6-7). Kasajja's only child dies due to lack of oxygen because the man with the key to the oxygen room is on leave; the mothers lining up for medicine in the long queues are commanded tersely to stand up when they faint or else leave the line and go without treatment. On the contrary, the rich and the politicians are treated with care. For example, the sickness of the minister's child makes news.

Barlow in "Summit Fever I" uses juxtaposition to show the devastating effects of dictatorship and megalomania. Barlow's persona contrasts the life in the plains with the life at the summit. In the plains, life is characterised by hard work, suffering, ill health and poverty amidst regular happiness and warmth. The speaker notes that, "The laughter and tears/ These are the real essence of life!" (61-63). On the contrary, life at the summit is characterised by grandeur, wealth, protocol and luxuries but it 'is stone dead' (67). The father therefore advises the son to leave the summit and come back to the lowly plain because one can have a long happy stay in the plains. On the contrary, the summit ". . . is certainly no place/ for a prolonged and happy stay;/ for its glories and joys/ are precarious and short lived" (75-78). Through juxtaposition, Barlow shows that people who are power hungry make the summit; the highest position of leadership deadly, evil and lifeless when compared to the lives of ordinary people.

Wangusa also uses juxtaposition in his poem "Portrait" to bring to light the deceptive nature of Africa's leaders in general and Uganda in particular. The leader in the poem is described as one with double faced character traits, for example, he is:

The darling and scourge of damsels  
The patron and poison of scholars  
The envy and despair of diplomats.

He carried in his immense bulk  
Promise and doom in one  
Charming while most erratic  
Commanding devotion while he killed (4-10).

In the extract above, the leader's good traits are juxtaposed with bad traits. For example, while the leader seduced beautiful young women, he terrorized so many at the same time. As he promoted many scholars, he killed and destroyed many at the same time. The leader is further contrasted as being friendly yet unpredictable; attracting loyalty while at the same time

butchering masses of people. The juxtaposition brings to light the deceptive and deadly nature of the leader. The contrast also shows that such a leader did not deserve to be trusted at all. He also killed those he loved, trusted and mentored. This deceptive nature of the leader contrasted in the poem is a characteristic of bad leaders who mask their deadliness in the mask of goodness. Uganda has unfortunately been characterised by leaders with deceptive characters.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

Through deployment of figures of speech; Barlow, Wangusa and Kiguli effectively portray Uganda's state of governance characterised by gory and outlandish experiences. Some historical records, documentaries and reports ignore to record nasty and traumatic experiences of Uganda emanating from bad governance. These experiences are indeed indescribable. Poetry, however, has the ability to record Uganda's state of bad governance and its devastating impacts through the creative use of style. As seen in the discussion above, figures of speech help the poets to highlight political instability, corruption, poverty, discrimination, grotesque torture, humiliation and other human rights abuse in Uganda. They also enable the poets to attack and criticize the government, other institutions and leaders for their weaknesses and failures to ensure good governance. Figures of speech therefore, not only provide aesthetic value to the reader but they are also the means through which the reader comes to grips with the different evils that characterise Uganda's governance.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LINGUISTIC FEATURES

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter highlights and analyzes the poets' use of linguistic features to portray the subject of governance. The analysis of linguistic features is based on the New Critics belief that poetry uses emotive language and expressions which evokes subjective feelings and attitudes (Dipio, 186). This implies that literary language especially poetry requires a serious study in order to come to a deeper and holistic understanding of a literary text. Perceiving the subject of governance from the poems under study, therefore, requires studying and understanding the linguistic features of the poems. As Paul Simpson in his book, Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students has rightly observed that it is important to analyze the linguistic features of the text because;

this method of inquiry [stylistics] has an important reflexive capacity in so far as it can shed light on the very language system it derives from; it tells us about the 'rules' of language because it often explores texts where these rules are bent, distended or stretched to breaking point (3).

Analysis of linguistic features therefore helps to explain the nature of language used in a literary text. Writers may disregard or break the formal rules of language to communicate their intended messages more effectively. To infer meaning and come to grips with the subject of governance, therefore, this chapter undertakes the analysis of six linguistic elements which include neologism, different dialects, and identical lexical sets, use of different languages, diction and register. These poems are used for the analysis: Wangusa's "Africanology", "Portrait", "Procession I", "Statement: Seven Reasons Why", and "The Walking Stick". Kiguli's "I am Tired of Speaking in Metaphors", "The African Saga", "Flat Topics" and "Somewhere in the Field" are analyzed as well as Barlow's "The Walking Stick".

### 3.2. Neologism

Neologism is a process through which writers and speakers in general come up with new words after bending or extending the formal conventions of word formation as a creative way of expressing meanings, feelings and opinions. To Geoffrey N. Leech in his book, A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry, neologism means the application of an existing rule of word formation with greater generality than is customary where the usual restrictions on its operations are waived in a given instance (42). In other words, in order to get new unique words, the formal principles of word formation such as affixation which involves addition of either a prefix or suffix to an already existing word and compounding which involves joining together of two or more words to make a single word are ignored and at times creatively extended in order to give new contextual implications other than the words' denotative meanings. This section investigates the use of neologism to emphasize the subject of governance in Wangusa's poem "Africanology"

In the poem, "Africanology", Wangusa heavily applies neologism to explicitly portray bad governance in Uganda and Africa in general. The title of the poem, "Africanology", is Wangusa's own novelty resulting from creative suffixing of one bound morpheme "logy" onto the already existing root morpheme "Africa". The coined term, "Africanology", points in a precise and concise way to African evils which satirically according to the poet should constitute institutions and full courses of study in African universities:

The Amphitheatre of Anti-Governmentology in Algeria  
The bureau of Bankruptciology in Burkina Faso  
The centre of Senselessology in Sierra Leone  
The college of Corruptionology in Kenya  
The Ethnic – house of Extremisimology in Ethiopia  
The institute of Insolventology in Eritrea  
The Library of Liquidationology in Libya  
The Mission – mansion of Misinformationology in Malawi

he Naira – nest of Nepotismology in Nigeria  
The Polytechnic of Povertology in Pemba  
The School of Sectarianology in Somaliland  
The Senior Seminary of Swindology in Senegal  
The Synagogue of Scarcitology in Southern Sudan  
The Temporal Temple of Terrorismology in Togo  
The University of Ubiquitoniquitology in Uganda  
The Zonal Zoo of Zerologicology in Zimbabwe (9-24).

In the above extract, new words are formed as a result of adding suffix “logy” onto each word. As noted earlier, logy means a study. Institutions for the study in a way of promoting bankruptcy, senseless, corruption, liquidation, misinformation, swindling, scarcity, terrorism, sectarianism, among other characteristics of bad governance are to be set up in different countries of Africa in order to promote the vices. In Uganda, Wangusa suggests the establishment of “the University of Ubiquitoniquitology”. The word ubiquitoniquitology is formed as a result of suffixing of two bound morphemes; “quito” and “logy” onto a root morpheme “ubiquitous”. Ubiquitous means something seeming to be everywhere at the same time. The poet suggests that a higher institution to teach and sustain the principles of how countries can meddle in other countries’ affairs should be established in Uganda. Although Wangusa’s poem “Africanology” was published in 2006, it forecasted Uganda’s current events and practices which include among others, Uganda’s interference in other countries’ affairs. Currently, the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF) is in Somalia and South Sudan. Samuel Lominsuk; the South Sudan ambassador to Uganda applauds the deployment of UPDF in Juba. Lominsuk according to Frederic Musisi in his article entitled “South Sudan Defends UPDF Intervention in Conflict” defends UPDF’s intervention on the basis of a military agreement Uganda shares with South Sudan and DRC to hunt for Joseph Kony and to defend Uganda’s borders. Lominsuk also asserts that “Uganda’s intervention is also justified under the Inter Government Authority of Development (IGAD)” (4). The intention of helping to establish peace

in another country is incontestable. For example, conflicts in South Sudan besides heightening refugee problems in Uganda, it can spark off insecurity in Uganda. However, interference in the internal affairs of other Sovereign States contravenes the principles of good governance. According to Julius Nyerere in the forward to Museveni's book What is Africa's Problem? "The politics and the political turmoil of any country are the exclusive business of the people of that nation" (7). This implies that any independent state is charged with a responsibility of settling its political chaos. Uganda's intervention, therefore, in South Sudan, Somalia and other countries, usurps the independence of these particular counties. Besides, the deployment of UPDF for example in Somalia and South Sudan fundamentally undermined and desecrated Uganda's Legislature because it was done without the approval of the parliament of Uganda which is constitutionally mandated to discuss and permit Uganda's armed forces to be deployed beyond her borders. Neologism, therefore, has been used creatively and satirically by the poet to point out and criticize the evils of bad governance bedeviling not only Uganda but also other African countries. The creative use of neologism as a linguistic aspect effectively allows the poet to make the reader see the familiar evil from a fresh and entertaining perspective.

### **3.3. Use of Different Dialects.**

A dialect is a unique form of a language spoken by a person or group of people in an area with marked difference in pronunciation of words and sentence construction. To Paul Simpson in his book, Language through Literature, "a dialect is a linguistic variety that is defined according to the user of language: it tells you things about their social and regional background" (10). By this Simpson implies that a dialect is a variant of language that specifies a speaker's background and it is understood after listening and evaluating the words of the speaker. The poets exploit the variants of the English language to vividly underscore the subject of bad governance in Uganda.

In Wangusa's poem, "Portrait", he shows a difference in vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation and sentence construction between the poetic omniscient speaker and the quoted words of the protagonist of the poem. While the narrator's words are clear, formal and correctly spelt, the quoted words of the leader, sound and appear strange, incorrect and lack subject, verb and tense agreement, for example, he says;

"You street beggar!" flared the worrier.  
"You pink boy! You are not know  
That ayam no *Mistah* but MY Excellency?  
I play trumpet very good yes  
But also I play accordion very very good!"  
"You workers of money granary,"  
He told the staff of the Central Bank,  
"Last year I have made country  
Very happy with plenty, *Maliyote*  
By my send for good Rondo's parasites.  
You there government of treasure  
You say no money in granary  
But these here sacks of notes also coins  
They are money or rubbish? Tell me.  
And how you go say to newspaper  
That Mistah Foran Eggschange be in holiday,  
This I must tell you completely,  
Call him for duty quick on radio!"(40-59).

From the extract above, Wangusa shows the leader's mispronunciation of some words like "I am", "mister" and "foreign exchange" through dialectical misspelling as "ayam", "mistah" and "Foran Eggschange". This dialect of the English language depicts the leader's background of inadequate formal education. The broken English and misinterpretation of English words by the leader attests and alludes to the political myopia in Uganda during Amin' regime. Furthermore, the protagonist of the "Portrait" uses descriptive words instead of specific correct words. For example, he calls a white man, "You pink boy" and the staff of the central bank, "You workers of money granary". The imagistic circumlocutions imply that the leader cannot identify colours and name specific nouns. It also depicts that the speaker is uncultured due to inadequate formal

education. Besides, it sounds ridiculous and mocks the position of the leader. Unfortunately, illiterate leaders are part of Uganda's political landscape. Museveni observes that; “. . . here[in Uganda] we had a situation where suddenly people who were simply ignorant and hopelessly out of their depth were propelled into positions of great power”(190). He further enumerates that having illiterate leaders is a very big problem to Africa with devastating impacts such as lack of knowledge and ethics on the part of the leaders, failure to differentiate right from wrong and what is acceptable and unacceptable(190). While I agree with Museveni's observation above, I do not entirely blame bad governance of Uganda solely on illiterate leaders; Uganda's literate leaders have also failed to ensure good governance. For example, Dr. Obote as his title suggests was very literate but, political instability, abuse of human rights and human carnage characterised his regime. Through, different dialects, under lexicalization and circumlocutions, Wangusa paints a picture of one of Uganda's former presidents; Idi Amin, who among other leaders, -including the literate ones – was responsible for bad governance in Uganda.

### **3.4. Lexical Sets**

A lexical set refers to words or phrases that mean the same thing or that are used in the same context. In other words, a lexical set means concentration of words or expression in a given piece of work intended to clarify the meaning or theme of the work. Simpson defines a lexical set as, “a bundle of semantically compatible items which are closely linked to a specific topic or register”. A lexical set in Simpson's view includes synonyms and near synonyms and clusters of key words which correlate generally with a particular field of discourse (85). A particular lexical set is also referred to as an isotopy. In Wangusa's poem, “Portrait”, there is concentration of massacre isotopy in the fourteenth stanza; the semes include “rival factions”, “destruction”, “liquidation squads” and “bloodier squad”, and “struck down”. “Liquidation squad” means a

group of merciless people who execute or assassinate people in big numbers; “destruction” means to demolish people, property or the economy, “bloodier squad” means a crew of people who heartlessly massacre people. To strike down means to kill abruptly and or to hurt someone heartlessly. All these terms share the same component of meaning which is associated with the recurrence of bad governance manifested in political instabilities, economic and social backwardness, destruction of human life and property, which Wangusa emphasizes through the use of lexical set. The clustering of words with the same meaning (destruction) is intended to heighten the brutal nature of some of Uganda’s political leaders.

In Kiguli’s “I am Tired of Talking in Metaphors” there are isotopes of violence and emancipation which serve to highlight and stress bad governance in relation to gender discrimination and prejudices committed against women in Uganda. The violence isotopy are; “blinded”, “crippled” and “pieces of flesh in a sack”. These isotopes show the violence done to women by men who abuse their inalienable rights. In the poem, the persona’s mother is maimed in the eye by her husband because she exercised her democratic rights and followed her conscience to vote for a candidate of her own choice rather than that of her husband. This savage reprisal by the husband shows that women in Uganda are denied their political freedom by men. In the second stanza, another woman is murdered in cold blood by her husband who stuffs her chopped up body in a sack and inhumanely sends them to her relatives. The violence lexical set shows disrespect of human rights, injustice, inequality and lack of political freedom which are symptomatic of bad governance. Phrases in the emancipation lexical set include; “I refuse”, “I am here”, “I am not a machine”, “I demand for my human dignity”. This set contains words that show assertion and demand for women’s rights which are being trampled on as a result of bad governance that entrenches patriarchy at the expense of women’s rights. The words “I am tired”

in the title of the poem falls in the same lexical set of emancipation as words like I refuse, I am tired, I am here I am not a machine and I demand for my human dignity because it re-asserts the female persona's need for freedom against mistreatment and subjugation of male governors in Uganda. Therefore, the poets' stylistic choices are not arbitrary but have significant effect of portraying and emphasizing bad governance in Uganda in relation to women's rights and freedoms.

### **3.5 Use of Different Languages.**

In this study, use of different languages involves mixing of languages in a poem which is entirely in English. Wangusa uses different languages in his poem "Procession I". In the poem, people kill a tyrannical leader who killed many people, denied citizens freedoms of speech, expression and movement (47-50). In their ecstasy, they paint a mock head of the dead leader on a wooden board and inscribe on it a message in different languages;

Monster now I dead  
Ojozi nfudde  
Etiang adaun  
Wanangali nafiire  
Goblin very dead (89-93).

The message is in four languages; English, Luganda, Ateso and Lumassaaba. Notably, all these languages are spoken in Uganda. The use of the four languages place the poem in the Ugandan social context. Wangusa, therefore, incorporates different languages spoken in Ugandan to reminisce on Ugandan's shared experience. The phrases though in different languages, have the same meaning, which is, "I the monstrous leader, I am dead". The repetition of the same meaning in different languages besides emphasizing the fact that the leader has died, points to a Ugandan colloquialism; informal mixture of languages spoken in Uganda to underscore a realistic satisfaction that a deadly leader is dead. Wangusa's use of different languages also has a

humorous effect expressed when the painted head of the dead leader is made to publicly declare the leader's death. The leader, therefore, acknowledges that he deserves to die because he was wicked. Besides, the use of different languages emphasizes bad governance in Uganda characterised by violate and forceful overthrow of leaders from power. Through the use of different languages, the poet satirizes Ugandan leaders who stay in power against the will of the people, so that, their downfall or death causes happiness instead of grief among the citizens.

### **3.6. Diction**

This refers to the speaker's or author's choice of words. According to Murfin and Ray, diction "refers to the general type or character of language used in a speech or in a work of literature" (87). This implies that a particular speaker or writer can decide to use specific words or language in order to communicate the intended message effectively. The poets; Barlow, Wangusa and Kiguli use appropriate diction to portray the subject of governance. The poets' use of diction is analyzed basing on Barlow's "Summit Fever II: Brother to Brother", Wangusa's "Statement: Statement Seven Reasons Why" and Kiguli's "The African Saga".

Barlow in the poem, "Summit Fever II: Brother to Brother", appropriately uses diction to portray the subject of bad governance. The speaker in the poem who happens to be a leader who has refused to leave power asserts that, "well, I am really stuck/ on this accursed summit" (5-6). The word "summit" is used appropriately to refer to the highest position of leadership such as the rank of a president; the head of state. The adjective "accursed" which means something doomed is used to effectively describe the summit as a cursed position. It makes leaders lose their human nature and as a result they violate people's rights to life, freedom of speech, political participation, to mention but a few. Besides the summit is an ill-fated position because it can lead to the downfall of the leader. The word "stuck" on the other hand is appropriately used to

show the leader's unwillingness to leave the top position of leadership. The word stuck is used to emphasize the leader's excessive obsession for power which makes his father and brother to describe him as "power-drunk" (17). The word choice, therefore, effectively emphasize the leader's megalomaniac attitude which is a feature of bad governance.

Diction is also effectively used in Barlow's poem "Summit Fever II: Brother to Brother" to show absence of rule of law which is a badge of bad governance. This is seen when the speaker calls himself "a self-appointed" (52) and the position of leadership as a "self-imposed crushing burden" (44). The choice of the two phrases point directly to the way bad leaders get into power; through apportioning themselves positions of power without the will of the people and through the use of force to assert their leadership. The two phrases further indicate absence of general elections and free and fair politics. As a result many people do not participate in politics; self-appointed leaders suffocate potential leaders and deny ordinary people the right to vote their leaders. Barlow further uses diction to portray violent transfer of power from one leader to another. This is seen when the speaker says "Father thinks I am unaware/ Of the jealousies and intrigues/To knock me off the summit" (14-16). Due to the fact that the leader forced himself onto power, he is aware and fears that other people are plotting to overthrow him. The choice of the word "knock" suggests systematic use of excessive force to pull the dubious leader down. The word "knock" also suggests the ultimate death of the leader since no care is taken to ensure the leader's peaceful downfall. The choices of the phrases, therefore, effectively show absence of democracy which is an emblem of bad governance.

Additionally, the conceited and deceptive nature of bad governors is also portrayed through Barlow's effective choice of words in the poem "Summit Fever II: Brother to Brother". This is revealed when the leader in the poem calls himself, "Guardian angel" (53), "shepherd" (65), and

“arbiter” (92). By referring to himself as the guardian angel and shepherd, the leader means that he is a protector and care taker of all the people. By arbiter, the leader refers to himself as a peacemaker. These words appropriately justify the leader’s obsession for power in the sense that the words reveal the leader’s vain belief that he is politically indispensable just as a shepherd to a flock which cannot survive without him. Diction is further used to show the abusive nature of bad leaders. This is seen when the leader calls the ordinary people as; “uncomprehending, stupid/ Ungrateful and chaotic herds of sheep” (50-51), “stupid flock” and “ignorant fools”. All these are derogative and emotive words which show the leader’s condescending attitude manifested in his disrespect and scorn of the ordinary people. The leader also abuses his political competitors as; “power hungry upstart”, “braggart of an upstart” and “snarling wolves”. The leader creates an impression that he is the only one with ability and experience to lead and his challengers are ambitious, grumblers and Casanovas and as such, they cannot be perfect replacement for him. Therefore, the choice of derogative words effectively show undemocratic rule characterised by political deception and conceit. Barlow further chooses words that effectively show dictatorship. This is seen when the leader in the poem claims; “That a leader must lead! and sometimes/ Overlook the wishes of his people”(82-83). “I am compelled” and “I will weather the storm”. These phrases show the leaders determination and willingness to stay in power at all cost irrespective of people’s wishes. These words appropriately show dictatorship, political obduracy and adamancy which are characteristics of a bad leader not only in the world of the poem but also some Ugandan leaders. For instance, Milton Obote the second president of independent Uganda overthrew the independence constitution and wrote his own- famously known as the Pigeon hall constitution- and inserted a copy in each Member of Parliament’s pigeon hall. Besides abrogating the constitution, Obote abolished cultural leaders like the Kabaka of Buganda

and he stifled other political parties. The sole aim of doing all the above was to ensure absolute power unto himself. Idi Amin, on the other hand, ruled by decree and without mincing words he declared himself the life president of Uganda. Godfrey Binaisa is popularly quoted to have said, “Entebbe ewoma” figuratively meaning that the leadership position is sweet because it is used for self-aggrandizement. Leaders with such mentality can hardly leave power unless when forced to do so. Museveni, the current president of Uganda, also caused the amendment to remove presidential term limits in order to entrench himself in power and become a life president of Uganda.

Wangusa in his poem, “Statement: Seven Reasons Why”, also effectively use diction to portray the subject of governance. The poem gives seven reasons as to why the people represented by the collective pronoun “we” ousted their leader. In the first stanza, the poet uses the word “topple” to underscore the aggressive and forceful removal from power of a bad leader appropriately referred to as “monster”. The word “topple” brings out the phenomenon of Africa’s bloody military coup d’état which involve excessive use of force to overthrow bad leaders. The word “monster” is emotive and deliberately used to highlight the savagery and repulsive nature of the leader that he has to be detached from power through coercive means. In the second stanza, the poet describes the leader with phrases which portray his inhuman nature. The leader is a “man eater” and “four legged cannibal”. The phrases emphasizes that the leader is callous; he relishes in shedding blood of his own kind. In turn, the phrases highlight the subject of bad governance characterised by wanton loss of human life spearheaded by the leader. In the third stanza, the word “crocodile” is appropriately used to emphasize the leader’s two-facedness; where, he sympathizes with the plight of the ordinary people fittingly referred to as “toiling tillers of the land” yet in actual sense he is the major cause of their suffering. In the fourth stanza, the word

“lecherous dog” is effectively used to show the leader’s lack of moral scruples to the extent that he cannot control his sexual desires. The poet uses the words “lecherous” and “dog” instead of the word womanizer to emphasize the sexual moral decadence of the leader. The leader “maintained an extravagant mansion/ Each infested and brimming/ With infectious concubines on stand-by” (20-22). The choice of the word “concubine” not women or wives bring out the excessive immorality of the leader to the extent of having sexual intercourse with women who are not his lawful wives. The adjective extravagant has been deliberately chosen to qualify the noun mansion which is also chosen to purposely bring out the mindless squandering of scarce resources in Uganda and Africa in general on leader’s private pleasure and leisure. In his other poem, “National Elections 2001”, Wangusa uses diction to reflect the wanton loss of human life during elections in Uganda. This is seen in the poet’s choice of the following words, “slaughterer”, “blood” and “blood- red politics”. The word slaughterer point to the inhumanity of political aspirants to the extent of killing fellow human being in their bid for power. The phrase blood-red politics is deliberately used to effectively show that in Uganda everything connected to governing especially elections of leaders involve a lot of bloodshed. Other words suitably used to point to bloodshed are “the hammer” and “the anvil”. The speaker states;

Opposition Besigye the hammer  
Proposition’s Museveni the anvil”  
And betwixt the two –  
The prostrate population (13-16).

The hammer and anvil are both heavy to tools used to hit metals. The choice of the words hammer and anvil to refer to Besigye and Museveni respectively is intended to highlight the poor relationship between the two Uganda’s political opponents characterized by insults and intimidation. Unfortunately, the powerless, innocent and desperate people who are caught between the two people are crushed, some are demoralized, and others are physically hurt while

others die. As Okwir notes that during the 2001 campaign period, one senior army killed and injured several ordinary people who were waiting for Besigye along Kampala- Jinja highway(84).

Kiguli in her poem “The African Saga” uses words appropriately to highlight the subject of governance. The poem describes the nature of Africa’s politics especially the election process. The word “saga” which denotatively means a tale or a long story is suitably used to emphasize that African politics is like a story full of conflicts, fictitious characters and events. “Farce” means a laughter causing comedy. Farce also means a ridiculous situation. Politics is ridiculous in the sense that it is not genuine because it does not express the true wishes of the people, people win by deceit, rigging elections, making empty promises and relying on the gullibility and emotions of the people. As a result, the election process is farcical as the word “farce” appropriately suggest. Unfortunately, Ugandan’s and Africa’s political events such as elections manifest all these political farce. Farce also means an absurd event. True, political events are really absurd. They involve a lot of bloodletting inform of massacres and assassinations. They involve political violence both physical and psychological usually committed by coercive state machinery like the army and the police. Political events also involve a lot of political deceit, intrigues and manipulation. All of which portray the perennial absurdity of Africa’s political events suggested in the choice of the word “farce” and the wording of the tittle. Additionally, the phrase “African stage” is an appropriate choice in relation to political fictionality in Africa. Fictionality in the sense that political events and participants are fictional events and characters respectively. The choices of the words, therefore, portray the unreality of politics in Africa.

In another poem, “Flat Topics”, Kiguli uses diction to effectively portray abject poverty of the ordinary people. Poverty is reflected in the choice of the following words and phrases, “smoky

hut”, “mountain of rags”, “weak hand”, “fatted flies”, “unseeing eyes”, “plagued people”, “wasted hand”, “tired soil” and “frowning reality”. The phrase smoky hut, qualify the poor accommodation facilities where by the mother and her child in the poem have only a hut which acts as a kitchen, living room and a bedroom at the same time. A mountain reflects lack of proper beddings; the mother and her child gather together rags to make a bed. On the other hand, the choice of the phrase fatted flies point to poor sanitation that facilitate the breeding of healthy big flies which in turn lead to easy spread of diseases. For example the child’s sick eyes which are described as unseeing. Additionally, the choice of the adjectives wasted and weak describe the hands as diseased and useless and therefore, cannot do anything substantial. In the context of the poem, the hands cannot chase flies and clear the land for productive use. Finally, the choice of the phrase a frowning reality relates to a way of life that is stressful and annoying characterized by lack of basic needs like food, proper accommodation, basic health and proper sanitation as seen in the poem.

### **3.7 Register**

The poets also employ register to effectively portray the subject of governance. Register is a type of language used in a particular context for a particular purpose. To Paul Simpson in his book, Language through Literature, “a register is a fixed pattern of vocabulary and grammar which is regularly co-occurs with and is conventionally associated with a specific context” (10). This implies that register is language generally identified to be part and parcel of a given environment. In the analysis of the poets’ use of register to portray governance Kiguli’s poems “The African Saga” and “Somewhere in the Field” and Wangusa’s “The Walking Stick” are used.

Kiguli’s poem “Somewhere in the Field” is about a persona who is reminiscing about the effects of war which include, death of people, separation of families, loss of property, deserting of

homes, bodily impairment, physical and psychological torture. In the poem, there is use of warfare register which is seen when the persona asserts:

Grandfather's bones are scattered  
Somewhere in the field  
The wind buried him  
War has violated us  
Death is no longer sacred  
And life has no place of mourning

Cousin Katende was brought back  
From the bloodline in a coffin  
We learnt about it two years late  
That he died and was buried.  
His wife and child do not know us  
We do not know them (1-12).

The vocabulary of the two stanzas above is clearly organized into distinguishable lexical sets pertaining to war. For example, the words “bones scattered”, “in the field”, “war”, “death” and “bloodline”, suggest a warfare register. In a war, countless people die and their bodies are left unattended to because there is no time. As a consequence, the bodies rot from wherever they fell and the bones are left scattered in the battlefield. The word “bloodline” in the context of the poem relates to a battleground covered with blood. The warfare register is used to emphasize the violent scenes and emotions that characterise war. Innocent and helpless people like the persona's grandfather, as well as fighters like Katende die in a dishonoured way. The register also highlights the emotional torture, feelings of loss, loneliness and regret that the survivors of war are left to ponder over. Through register, Kiguli highlights the consequences of political instability which is an aspect of bad governance.

Kiguli also effectively uses register in her other poem, “The African Saga” to portray the subject of governance. In this poem Kiguli uses theatrical register which is distinguished through the vocabularies used mainly in the first two stanzas of the poem;

Often a farce is acted  
Elaborately presented  
On the African stage.  
The ballot boxes set in place  
The curtain draws back  
To thunderous throbbing of drums.  
The ragged but indomitable chorus  
Stands itself lame  
To cast the vote,  
As the drums are due  
To ululate the victory. . .

The antagonist struts out  
Like a cock at dawn  
His plumage masking lethal fire  
His headdress flaming red  
He shoots venomous arrows  
Into the expectant audience. . . (1-17).

The words that qualify a theatrical register include, “farce”, “acted”, “stage”, “curtain”, “chorus” and “antagonist”. Farce is a laughter causing play that can be watched by an audience sited in a theatre. Murfin and Ray identify the following features of a farce comedy; ridiculous situations, mix-ups, slapstick and horseplay, and crude and bawdy dialogue (120). Farce, consequently, has silly events, simple jokes and imaginable situations which all cause laughter. Acted means something unreal presented to the audience while a curtain is a piece of cloth drawn down and raised to mark the end of a scene and a start of another scene respectively in the play. A chorus is a group of people who sing, dance and comment on the play. On the other hand, an antagonist is a wicked and cruel character in the play. In the second stanza, the description of the antagonist befits the appearance of an evil character in a play. For example, he moves with a lot of force

and arrogance, his eyes reflect fire, blood and poison. This description reflects how bad political contenders threaten the ordinary people. The dramatic register shows how a serious issue of election of leaders is turned into a comical event on account that the elections are distorted through vote rigging. Besides, the electorate instead of being vigilant, they dance and sing meaningless chants for the sake of entertainment just as in a comedy. As a consequence, power hungry political challengers who are villainous manipulate the electorate and the votes. Register, therefore, effectively portrays absence of free and fair elections and rule of law in Africa.

Wangusa in the poem, “The Walking Stick”, also uses register to effectively highlight bad governance resulting from excessive involvement of the security agents in political affairs. The persona in the poem equates the organs of the government to a man, whereby;

The executive is the head  
The legislature is the chest  
The judicature is the limbs (6-8).

On the contrary, the armed forces are not part of the organs of the government but are just tools; “walking stick” (13), used by the government to ensure good governance. However, with the coming of General Idi Amin to power in 1971, the armed forces become the leader. To bring out the above subject matter, Wangusa employs a political register which includes the following set of terminologies; “government”, “executive”, “legislature”, “judicature”, “military”, “armed forces” and “army”. The executive is an organ of government mainly charged with the responsibility of enforcing laws. The legislature is primarily concerned with law-making while the judicature is chiefly responsible for administration of justice. On the other hand the armed forces are used by the government to ensure peace and order and to protect people and their property. However, when president Amin came to power, the armed forces took over the responsibilities of the three organs of the government. The security agents made political,

economic and social decisions. Through effective use of political register, Wangusa gives a true account of the uncontrollable status of the army during Amin's regime. As Adam Seftel in the book, The Blood Stained Pearl of Africa observes that during Amin's regime, "soldiers were given more power to terrorize civilians and enrich themselves" (105). The soldiers made selfish decisions which intensified the state of bad governance.

### **3.8. Conclusion**

The poets stretch and bend the language in order to vividly portray Uganda's governance. The poets come up with new creative terms that can easily reflect the evils of bad governance. The poets' use of different dialects and languages helps to directly attack particular Ugandan leaders responsible for bad governance and to place the poetry in the Ugandan context. The poets' use of linguistic features, therefore, plays a very important role in effective and vivid expression of the subject of governance.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### STRUCTURAL AND GRAPHOLOGICAL FEATURES

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter analyzes the portrayal of governance through structural and graphological features. The chapter analyzes features of the poem that can be physically seen by the reader before reading the poem. According to Simpson, graphology is: “the visual medium of language. It describes the general resources of language’s written systems, including punctuation, spelling, typography, and alphabet and paragraph [stanza and line] structure . . .” (25). In other words, writers use or omit graphological features to communicate their thematic meanings, attitude and mood as well as provoking and influencing the reader’s emotional response to their subject matter. Structural and visual features are some of the emotive features used by the poets to convey their intended messages. Poets use graphological features in order to ensure that they effectively communicate to the readers in a way they would communicate to listeners of poetry. As Isidore Okpewho has rightly observed in an introduction to The Heritage of African Poetry, that:

With the movement of poetry from the open square to the pages of a book, the poet has lost the capacity for arresting our attention physically and has therefore opted for tricks of print that will appeal to our [readers] imagination (30).

Okpewho avers that visual features capture readers’ attention and propel them to think deeply. Interpretation of the structure and other visual features of a poem is a prerequisite to readers’ deeper and holistic understanding of a poem. This chapter looks at the artistic significance of graphological deviation, external graphology and parallelism in portraying the subject of governance.

## 4.2. Graphological Deviation

Graphological deviation is when poets disregard, bend or extend the visual rules of writing for the purpose of effective communication of thematic concerns. When studying poetry, therefore, attention should be paid to unexpected spellings, punctuation, external and internal structural digression from the norm, among others. This is due to the fact that, these extra linguistic features largely contribute to meaning. In analyzing the poets' use of graphological deviation, Wangusa's poems: "National Skull Exhibition", "Africa's New Brood", "Edict I: New Nomenclature" and Barlow's "The Leader that Hung" are used.

Wangusa's poem, "National Skulls Exhibition" is about the satirisation of the wanton carnage spearheaded by leaders as they strive to acquire and maintain political power in Uganda. The poem lists several well-known battlefields in Uganda that are to take part in the national skull exhibition. These include; Mukura-Soroti axis, Luwero- Mpigi- Mukono triangle, Arua-Adjumani- Koboko – Moyo quadrangle, Kasese – Kilembe – Kichwamba- Kabarole-Bundibujjo pentagon and Kitgum- Gulu- Atiak - Karuma –Apac – Lira hexagon. The winner of the show is to represent Uganda at a continental show referred to as "All – Africa Festival of Corpses and Bones" (29). The graphological structure of the poem contributes to the portrayal of the poem's subject of mass murder that has characterised Uganda. The poem has three stanzas; the first is the longest with thirteen lines, the second has ten lines and the third six lines. The graphological disorganization of the poem seen in the existence of stanzas of different length relate to the poem's subject of political disorder. The first stanza is longer than others because it introduces and describes the skulls exhibition event. It also states the physical and time setting of the show; "at the People's main Museum of Death . . . at Namanve Ghost Forest" (3-4) and "on the next anniversary . . . party's ascension to power" (10-11). The second stanza gives a detailed

list of all battlefields in Uganda which are to take part in the show. The third stanza conclusively warrants the best exhibitor to take part in a continental skulls show.

Wangusa heavily employs graphological deviation in the poem, “National Skull Exhibition” to emphasize the disorders that result from bad governance. This is mainly seen in the second stanza:

Mukura- Soroti AXIS  
    Representing Traitors Roasting Battalion (TRB)  
Luwero –Mpigi –Mukono TRIANGLE  
    Representing Bushcraft Resistance Army (BRA)  
Arua – Adjumani – Koboko – Moyo QUADRANGLE  
    Representing National Annihilators Front (NAF)  
Kasese – Kilembe – Kichwamba – Kabarole – Bundibujjo PENTAGON  
    Representing Total Extermination Militia (TEM)  
Kitgum –Gulu – Atiak – Karuma – Apac – Lira HEXAGON  
    Representing Lord’s Nose – cutting Legion (LNL) (14-23).

In the quotation above, the lines are indented that is to say they are not running from the same level. The indented lines serve to show and emphasize the political, economic and social disorders in Uganda’s governance. For example, the chaotic and bloody events which included; wars, outlandish human slaughter and misery which are effectively portrayed graphologically. Besides, the words axis, triangle, quadrangle, pentagon and hexagon are emphatically written in upper case. The capitalization is intended to capture our attention to areas in Uganda where politicians staged their armed wars as they were struggling to retain and attain power undemocratically. These places are outstandingly monumental areas which act as evidence of bad governance since they even embody mass graves of the victims of political turmoil.

Wangusa uses graphological capitalization to ridicule political leaders who came up with ridiculous names of places based on geometric shapes. These names do not entirely relate to the geographical layout of such places but relate to the breadth of the regions that underwent the

wave of man slaughter. For example, Mukura and Soroti - which Wangusa emphatically calls an axis, witnessed deliberate mass murder of people. For instance, on 11<sup>th</sup>, July 1989, people from Mukura and other surrounding areas who were suspected of being rebels or rebel collaborators against the National Resistance Movement regime, were herded into a crowded train wagon by sadistic military leaders. According to the report conducted in 2011 by the Justice and Reconciliation Project entitled, The Mukura Massacre of 1989, the 106<sup>th</sup> battalion of the National Resistance Army allegedly packed 116 people in a train wagon; sixty nine people suffocated to death and only forty seven people survived (5). The report provides an approximate number of people who were subjected to severe human rights abuse due to unsubstantiated allegations by official government soldiers. Satirically, Mukura and Soroti formed an axis of death just as Mukono, Luwero and Mpigi formed a triangle of death. It is so unfortunate that simple mathematical shapes are used in reference to places that underwent serious traumatic experience. This is intended to take away the emotional and psychological torture associated with the experience.

In “Africa’s New Brood”, Wangusa still exploits graphological deviation to underscore the subject of bad governance in Uganda and Africa in general. Notable is the initial capitalization and quotation of the words, “New Breed” and “New Brood”. New, denotatively means something entirely different in all aspects from the former. Breed means a particular type with different traits within a given species of animals. Brood, on the other hand, means a family of young animals born and hatched at the same time. According to the context in which the three words are used, breed and brood refer to the African leaders who assumed political power in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, namely, Museveni, Zenawi, Kagame and Kabila, to mention but a few. Wangusa uses the quotation marks because he does not agree with the sense in which the

words have been used. To him, the words; “new breed” and “new brood” are used ironically and satirically because they convey the direct opposite due to the behaviour of the so-called new breed or new brood of African leaders. Wangusa believes that these leaders are mere replica and incarnations of Africa’s past abominable leaders whom Museveni derogatively calls “garbage” (Museveni 24). Wangusa, therefore, uses initial capitalization of the words, “New Breed” and “New Brood” in order to make them stand out of the rest such that the reader’s attention can be easily captured and thereafter ponder over the words’ contextual ironical meaning. The irony of the word new is emphasized graphologically by initial capitalization. According to the conduct of the leaders in the poem, there is nothing new about their behaviour in relation to the former leaders whom they negated. For example, Museveni in his swearing in address on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 1986 promised Ugandans a fundamental change in the social, economic and political spheres of Uganda. This fundamental change entailed respect of human rights, keeping law and order, ensuring democratic governance, among others. However, Museveni’s own soldiers have committed heinous human rights abuses including massive killing of people in Mukura where innocent people suffocated to death from a train wagon instead of prosecuting them if they were suspected of committing crimes. The initial capitalization of the word “breed” also underlines irony, whereby, leaders who are supposed to be a distinctively better breed emerging from the old spice of bad African leaders, are a mere new brood (a replica of the old Africa’s post-independence dictatorial leaders).

Wangusa further highlights bad governance through graphological deviation in the poem “Edict I: New Nomenclature”. This is seen in the initial capitalization of the words in the last line. These are: “Me, Masaya, Conqueror of the Monster!”(23). The capitalization attracts the reader’s attention to these words. The initial capitalization of the word “conqueror” emphasizes the

extreme of bad governance seen in the violence during change of political regimes and power. The new leader does not democratically assume the mantle of political power, but grabs power by use of force after vanquishing the previous leader. The new leader calls himself a conqueror not president elect signifying the fact that he has simply imposed himself on the people. The previous leader has been emphatically referred to as a monster through the initial capitalization. The use of the initial capital letter shows the savage nature of the former ousted leader. The initial capitalization of pronoun “Me” shows the selfish and political narcissism engendered by the megalomania characteristic of Ugandan leaders. The new leader in the poem wants to stamp his personality on all aspects of life, which recalls former presidents Milton Obote and Idi Amin who had their faces printed on the Ugandan currency in addition to naming certain places after themselves. In addition, the use of “Me” instead of the collective “We” brings out the fact that the leader has selfishly taken all the credit from his colleagues who equally or did more in the struggle against the former monstrous leader. That is why Wangusa initially capitalizes the word “Me” not only to attract our attention to the vanity and selfishness of Ugandan bad leadership but also to invite us to join him in ridiculing such bad governance which makes leaders attribute all success to themselves. The use of “me” or “I”, notably, is not uncommon in political rhetoric of Ugandan leaders especially when gloating over “their” social, economic and political achievements. The initial capitalization of the word “Masaya” is aimed at satirizing and emphasizing the political egotism as a badge of bad leadership among Ugandan leaders. Such epithets as “Ssabalwany’i”, “Nyamulunga ”, “Conqueror of the British Empire ”, have been egoistically used in real life situations by Ugandan presidents: Museveni, Obote and Amin respectively to blow out of proportion their political prowess just as the persona in the poem does.

In Barlow's "The Leader that Hung", besides the obvious use of capital letters at the start of every line, there is a deviant use of upper case letters whenever certain words like suspicion, fear, hatred, and honesty appear;

One day Suspicion opened its sharp and ugly teeth  
And gave Trust a deep and vicious bite.  
Trust fought back with gentle pleading words  
Beseeching the leader to throw out Suspicion.  
But Suspicion, now grown into Fear, bit harder.  
Trust spread his wings and flew out bleeding.  
To fill his place vicious Hatred marched in  
(...)

Love slowly bled to death  
Forgiveness was starved  
And Honesty slowly stifled.  
Fear, Suspicion and Hatred grew and grew (9-31).

In the above quotation, social vices such as fear, suspicion and hatred, which are inherent among the bad Ugandan governors, are all initially capitalized. The capitalization graphologically sets them apart from the surrounding words. The graphological uniqueness of the words serves to emphasize the bad leadership qualities of not only the fictional leader in the world of the poem but also of real Ugandan leaders. Just as the leader in the poem destroys his subjects due to irrational fear, suspicion and hatred, Ugandan leaders in different regimes have committed assassinations and political witch hunting, economic malice and other machinations. In fact the prevailing bad governance in Uganda is largely due to the above three evils which Barlow graphologically emphasizes by initial capitalization. Barlow also sets apart and emphasizes some virtues of good governance such as honesty, trust and love through graphological deviations. Love, trust and honesty are initially capitalized to mark them out as traits to be universally emulated by all leaders. Unfortunately, such good virtues have been quashed by fearful, hateful and suspicious Ugandan leaders.

### 4.3. External Graphology

External graphology refers to a word or words, dates, expressions like sayings or quotations and names of places or people that are placed before or after the poem. These features, although, outside or external to the poem, contribute to the poems' meaning and their interpretation enhance full understanding of the poem. In analysis the effectiveness of external graphology in depicting Uganda's governance, Barlow's poems, "The Leader that Hung" and "Uganda" and Wangusa's "National Skull Exhibition" are used.

In "The Leader that Hung", Barlow indicates the year, 1969, just after the last line. The inclusion of the year 1969 at the end of the poem should not be taken for granted. The year helps the poet to emphasize that everything in the poem is his real experience and observation. The year, therefore, lends credence to the poem. In the political history of Uganda the year 1969 is marked by an attempt to kill the then president of Uganda, Milton Obote due to bad governance. In relation to the poem, the people assassinate their leader because of bad governance manifested in his fearfulness, suspicions and hatred of his political opponent. The use of external graphology in terms of mentioning the year the leader in the poem was hanged (1969), effectively point to the bad governance which prevailed in Uganda in 1969 which almost necessitated the assassination of Milton Obote, the then president of Uganda.

In his other poem, "Uganda", Barlow mentions the poem's setting in terms of time and physical place which is "1978 Ethiopia" respectively. The externally foregrounded items relate directly to the poet, the poem and Uganda's state of governance in 1978. The poem was written by Barlow while in exile in Ethiopia. This implies that Barlow was among the many people who fled Uganda due to political instability. The poem is the lament of a persona who while away from Uganda outcries the poor leadership in his country characterized by bloodshed, poverty, misery,

famine and despondency. The persona asserts: “Painful are the thoughts of Uganda/ Where now Nuba rules in blood / (. . .)/ Dark are the hearts of her people / That cheer the princes of Nuba” (1-6). Due to the indication of the year 1978, there is no doubt Nuba symbolizes Idi Amin who in 1978 was at the climax of his reign in Uganda. In 1978, Uganda was characterized by bloodshed, torture of human beings, suffering, economic hardships, fear and massive fleeing of people from the country; Barlow is one such exile.

Wangusa also employs external graphology in the poem, “National Skull Exhibition” to highlight the subject of governance. The poem as earlier analysed highlights the excessive death of people in different parts of Uganda as a result of warlords’ struggle for political power. Wangusa deliberately writes the following statement immediately after the title; (“The result is that today the best skull show is not in Luwero but in the north . . . and the western districts . . .” The Monitor, 26 January 2000). The above statement means that it is not only in Luwero where there has been excessive bloodletting but also in the north and western parts of Uganda. The statement has three graphological features; ellipsis, quotation and parentheses marks. The ellipsis shows that the reader is intentionally tasked to identify particular areas in the north and the western districts that have been immersed in excessive bloodshed of human beings because these areas are obvious. The parentheses marks are used to indicate that the statement is additional explanatory information related to the poem. On the other hand, the quotation marks used show that the statement is an extract from the Monitor of 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2000. Wangusa quotes the monitor in order to adduce evidence and to emphasize the subject matter of the poem that there has been excessive death of people in different parts of Uganda. The statement though not part of the poem’s lines or stanzas, it provides clues on what to expect in the poem. These include; the

subject of excessive man slaughter, affected areas in Uganda and the satire of the poem. Besides, the statement makes the poem realistic when related to the Ugandan context.

#### **4.4. Parallelism**

The poets also highlight the subject of governance through the use of parallelism. Parallelism is a form of foregrounding that consists of sudden occurrences or concentration of indistinguishable features that relate to the structure and meaning of the text. Parallelism, therefore, can be syntactic and semantic when words are repeated in identical grammatical structure and when words of the same meaning or that belong to the same field are repeated in the text respectively. According to Christina Gregorious in her book, *English Literary Stylistics*, parallelism is “the unexpected repetition of norms, whether these are norms that are linguistic, generic or norms of a particular historical period and or author” (36). In other words, parallelism is a type of foregrounding that encompasses recurrence of standard features of the language which may be formally acceptable within a given period of time or officially known about a given author. Features of parallelism whether used consciously or unconsciously in a literary text by the author have an explicit or implied contribution to the overall message in a text which readers ought to find out. In furtherance of this view, Gregorious stresses that, “If words are structurally paralleled, through the same or similar sound, meaning or positioning in a syntactic structure, readers seek either some sort of equivalence or oppositeness in the meaning relations that these words have” (37). In a similar way, Leech argues that, “If a parallelism occurs in a poem, some deeper motive or justification for it should be sought” (67). Gregorious and Leech suggest interpretation of both syntactic and semantic parallelism that exists in a poem. This section, therefore, analyses the deployment of parallelism to underscore the theme of governance in Wangusa’s poems, “The State is my Shepherd” and “Edict I: New Nomenclature”.

In the poem, “The State is my Shepherd”, Wangusa employs a lot of syntactic parallelism expressed by making the state the grammatical subject and the persona the grammatical object:

The state is my shepherd, I shall not want;  
it makes me to lie down in a subsidized house.  
It leads me into realms of political tranquility;  
it restores my faith in a business future.  
It leads me into paths of loans and pensions, for  
its international reputation’s sake.

(. . .)  
Its guns and pangas comfort me.

It preserves for me a bank account, in the  
presence of devaluation;  
it fills my pockets with allowances;  
my salary overflows (1-15).

From the quotation above, pronouns “it” and “its” referring to the state are the grammatical subject while pronouns “I”, “me” and “my” referring to the speaker are the grammatical object. Just as the object depends on the subject of the sentence, Wangusa makes the state the main part of the sentence and the speaker the minor part of the sentence to highlight the dependence of the speaker on the state. The parallelism also signifies the superiority of the state over the speaker; the state owns and controls the resources and the speaker is at the receiving end. For the speaker to live a comfortable life, the state must ensure social, economic and political stability, which is not the case in Uganda. Through syntactic parallelism, Wangusa underscores the poor relationship between the state and the ordinary person. Besides, Wangusa satirizes the state for failing to use its forefront position to effectively deliver services to the ordinary people. Furthermore, Wangusa highlight aspects of bad governance through semantic parallelism. This is seen in the concentration of the speaker’s ideal expectations from the state which include; “subsidized house”, “political tranquility”, “business future”, “comfort”, “bank account”, “pockets with allowances”, “overflowing salaries”, to mention but a few. Due to bad governance

in Uganda, many ordinary people represented by the speaker are disgruntled by the existence of political instability, poor business environment, unemployment, low wages and salaries, to mention but a few. The whole poem, therefore, is semantically deviant because the state of Uganda is not a good shepherd to its people.

In another poem, “Edict I: New Nomenclature”, Wangusa also heavily employs parallelism to portray the subject of governance. The poem profoundly uses unexpected syntactic and semantic regularity throughout the poem. In the first stanza parallelism shows the excessive dominance of the leader. This is illustrated below;

Let all documents where his name was printed  
All books where his regime was recorded  
All glasses where his deeds were engraved  
All woods where his honours were carved  
All stones where his titles were chiseled  
All medals where his face was embossed (1-6).

As seen above, all lines save the first line consistently start with determinant, “all” followed by nouns then an adverb “where”, then a pronoun “his” which is followed by another set of nouns, then an auxiliary verb “was” or were and finally verbs. In all lines, there is repetition in the same grammatical order of words, such as; “documents”, “books”, “glasses”, “woods”, “stones” and “medals” which are used to preserve things permanently. There is also recurrence of particular things concerning the leader’s personality such as name, regime, deeds, honours, titles and face. All these, are set to be preserved for posterity. Syntactic parallelism shows that a leader entrenched himself on everything possible as a way of establishing himself as an autocratic leader. This highlights the vanity and absolutism of a bad leader. The stanza also employs semantic parallelism to emphasize the pride and autocracy of the leader. All words in each set of nouns relate in meaning. The leader made sure that his name, government, feats and

appearance is permanently recorded. The repetition of the word “his” in the same grammatical structure emphasizes the leader’s selfish desire to egoistically stamp his personality permanently.

In the second stanza, parallelism is used to point directly to the new leader’s out right orders for the destruction of everything that reminds people of the old leader’s personality. The new leader asserts;

Destroy all songs where his clan was praised  
Dig up all monuments by him erected.  
Batter down all his castles and barracks  
Set on fire all his chain of pagan shrines  
Blow up all portraits of his hateful figures (8-12).

All lines begin with phrasal verbs followed by a determinant “all” and then nouns. The phrasal verbs which includes, “dig up”, “batter down”, “set on” and “blow up”, contain forceful commands for immediate and unquestionable actions. The new leader emphatically orders for the destruction of everything; “songs”, monuments, castles and barracks, shrines and portraits of the previous leader. This shows that the new leader is as selfish and arrogant as the old leader. As the old leader, the new leader also wants to stamp his personality on all aspects of life. This is emphasized in the third stanza when the leader asserts;

Replace his image with mine in all offices  
Alter the dates on all foundation –stones  
To read post –revolution, and as laid by me (9-10).

The lines begin with verbs which are imperatively constructed to give expressive commands that call for immediate action. The verbs “replace” and “alter” are semantically parallel in meaning as they both suggest an immediate change. In the context of the poem, the words relate to the modification of everything from the old leader to the new leader. The words imply that the new leader not only have the traits of the old leader but also wants to own his achievements. Syntactic

and semantic parallelism in Wangusa’s poem, “Edict I: New Nomenclature” effectively portray political narcissism and absolutism which are both badges of bad governance.

#### 4.5. Meter

Meter involves the analysis of the stress patterns of lines in a poem. Some words carry strong and others carry weak stresses depending on the nature of the words and the syllables they contain. Barlow’s poem, “Bear the fools and the stupid kindly” is used in the analysis of the use of meter to portray governance. In the illustration below, strong stresses are bolded while weak stresses are not bolded.

**Sheep**, all **sheep**!  
**That** is the problem.  
**Herds** and **herds** of **sheep**  
**Blind** stupid  
**Thoughtless** **followers**  
**The whole lot** of **us**!  
**Fools** that can be **led**  
To **jump off** **sheer precipices**  
**Completely incapable** of  
**Realising** the **consequences**.  
**Blockheads** that are **led**  
To **scream slogans** for years  
The **meaning** of **which**  
They never thought **about**  
**Even** for a **second**.  
**Just stupid** **thoughtless** **fools**  
**Following unquestioningly**.  
**That** is the **biggest problem**; or is it?  
Imagine, for just one moment,  
That each of us  
Was a **cantankerous**  
**Original thinker**,  
**Bold enough** to **practice**  
Our individual, **often stupid**  
And selfish idiosyncracies  
What chaos, **WHAT CHAOS!**

So bear the fools and the stupid:  
The unthinking blind followers, kindly.  
Maybe they too contribute to some sanity

In our already troubled humanity! (1-30).

From the illustration above, the words; sheep, herds, blind stupid, fools and blockheads are stressed to emphasize the foolhardiness, indolence and ignorance of the ordinary people. The heavy stress of the words; followers, led, and following unquestioningly, not only accentuate the foolishness of the ordinary people but also the condescending attitude of the leaders. Leaders disrespect the ordinary people by keeping them uninformed about issues of governance. As such, the ordinary people become submissive followers of their leaders. Stressed words also emphasize the persona's attitude of anger and bitterness about ordinary people's subservient and impassive attitude towards bad governance. Through the use of heavily accentuated words, the persona attacks common people's compliance towards promoting bad governance. The words; "or is it", in the last line of the first stanza are not stressed. These unstressed words show the persona's uncertainty in his belief that the compliance of the ordinary people promotes bad governance. The first two lines of the second stanza are not stressed to bring out the persona thoughtful and reasonable attitude about the fact that if ordinary people were intelligent, there would be a lot of anarchy and confusion than the one existing when the majorities are fools. The aggravated disorder that would exist if the ordinary people were equally intelligent as their leaders is effectively portrayed through stress of the phrase "what chaos" which is repeated and foregrounded through capitalization. Through stress and unstressed words and phrases in the second stanza, the persona expresses his realization that both stupid and intelligent people can contribute to disorder.

The structure of the poem "Bear the fools and the stupid kindly", also contribute to the portrayal of governance. The poem has three stanzas. The first stanza has eighteen lines, the second eight lines and the third has four lines. The first stanza is longer than the others because the persona is

venting out his too much anger about the thoughtlessness and submissive nature of the ordinary people. This explains why almost all the words in the first stanza are emotive and heavily stressed. The second stanza expresses the persona's realization that if ordinary people are politically, socially and economically conscious as their leaders it can exacerbate the state of confusion. The third stanza is shorter because the speaker is completely resigned about people's foolishness and the fact that it ironically contributes to relative peace in states that are badly run by bad governors.

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

Depicting Uganda's governance in works of art and poetry in particular is a very difficult task because it involves attacking and critiquing past and present regimes, prominent institutions and individuals. Besides, discoursing on Uganda's governance involves invoking powerful emotions of fear, disappointment, anger, deprivation and humiliation. These emotions are a result of Uganda's traumatic experiences such as political instability, cancerous corruption, abject poverty, exploitation and oppression, to mention but a few. The three poets have effectively portrayed Uganda's experiences pertaining governance through the creative use of graphological and structural features. The poets' use of graphological features such as upper case letters against a background of lower case letters provides extra levels of analysis, interpretation and meaning. Graphological deviation helps to concisely and precisely point to the social, economic and political disorders in Uganda. Deviant upper case letters mark out and emphasize areas in Uganda that have experienced the devastating effects of war. These include; Mukono, Luwero, Mukura, Soroti, Lira, Gulu, among others. Deviant punctuation marks help to highlight the fact that old and new leaders have the same traits of being despotic, corrupt, indifferent, and deceitful, among others as discussed above.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1. Introduction

The study critically analyzed the portrayal of governance in Ugandan poetry focusing on the selected poems of Henry Barlow, Timothy Wangusa and Susan Kiguli. Emphasis was put on the poets' use of figures of speech, linguistic, visual and structural features. Seven figures of speech were studied, these are: irony, personification, rhetorical questions, allusion, imagery, symbolism and juxtaposition. Linguistic features examined included: neologism, use of different language and dialect, lexical sets, diction and register. Visual and structural features studied included: graphological deviation, external graphology and parallelism.

#### 5.2 Main findings and conclusion

The study found out that Henry Barlow, Timothy Wangusa and Susan Kiguli underscore the theme of governance in their poetry among other themes. The three poets portray characteristics of bad governance such as; disrespect of social, economic and political rights, political persecution, absence of free and fair elections in Uganda, leaders' excessive love for power, absence of peaceful transfer of power, political instability, excessive bloodshed of especially the ordinary, unwarranted neglect of duty and responsibility by government and public servants, wide spread corruption, poverty and unequal distribution of social amenities, lack of accountability and transparency. The study observed that form and content work together to make meaning in the selected poems of Barlow, Wangusa and Kiguli. The study shows that the poets' stylistic choices; figures of speech, linguistic and structural features effectively portray aspects of Uganda's governance.

The poets' use of irony is helpful in showing the failure of the Ugandan state to fulfill its responsibility to its citizens. Irony shows the failure of the government to provide basic needs like accommodation, political stability, and employment opportunities, among others. Irony also enhances the view that Ugandan leaders misuse their offices and public money to fulfill their personal interests. For example, in Barlow's "Building the Nation", the Permanent Secretary is deceitful and hypocritical when he claims that he attended to "matters of state" and "highly delicate diplomatic duties", yet, in the actual sense the Permanent Secretary and other leaders cheat their people and nation when they spend time and public money on eating and drinking in the guise of nation building. Irony also helps to ridicule some Ugandan leaders for instigating political instability in Uganda. This is seen in Kiguli's poem, "I Laugh at Amin", where the persona states that he is laughing with all the people Amin killed. In actual sense the persona is mourning for the dead and attacking Amin for the wanton death of so many Ugandans. Irony also shows leader's irresponsibility, negligence, discriminative and unjust nature towards the citizens which Peter in Kiguli's "Crazy Peter Prattles", calls tipsy explosions.

The poets' use of personification helps to depict the major characteristics of bad leaders. The personification of hatred, fear and suspicion in Barlow's "The Leader that Hung" shows that these are dangerous traits for the leader to possess. The personification of vultures cursing leaders responsible for the massive death of people in Kiguli's poem "Viewers may Find these Pictures Disturbing" satirize political leaders.

The poets' use of rhetorical questions enhances the portrayal of the forgetfulness, indifference and corrupt nature of leaders. It is shown through rhetorical questions that Ugandan leaders come to power with good intentions; to work for their people effectively and to use the country's resources appropriately. However, once in power, the leaders forget the good intentions and they

start to fulfill their selfish agendas. For example, leaders forgot about being transparent and instead start amassing wealth at the expense of the suffering citizens. The rhetorical questions in Kiguli's "Crazy Peter Prattles" show negligence of duty and discrimination between the rich politicians and the citizens. The questions are asked to point at bad governance which prompts public servants like doctors, nurses and judges to favour politicians and to disfavour the ordinary people.

Allusion also helps the poets to directly point to the subject of bad governance and the leaders responsible for it. It was found out that Kiguli's poem "I Laugh at Amin", directly alludes to Amin; one of Uganda's previous leader who is responsible for the death of many people. Allusion also shows the inconsistent, unpredictable and incoherent nature of bad leaders this is seen in Wangusa's poem, "Portrait". The biblical allusion in Kiguli's "Fishers of Men" shows political instability and wanton massacres of people in Uganda during Amin's regime. The use of allusion in particular historical allusion, therefore, helps to place the selected poems in the Ugandan context.

The poets' use of imagery helps to show the brutality of leaders and to depict a vivid picture of the devastating effects of war. This was established in Kiguli's "Viewers may Find these Pictures Disturbing". The poem shows images of dead human bodies littered on the ground, grass growing through body parts like eye sockets and covering the bones. These images highlight disrespect of human life that characterizes wars. Imagery also gives a thorough description of bad leaders' traits. For example, in Wangusa's "Statement: Seven Reasons Why", leaders are described using animal images like, "man eater", "a four legged cannibal", "crocodile", "a lecherous dog", "crafty serpent" among others. Some Ugandan leaders are actually referred to using animal pictures in order to point to their inhuman behaviour when dealing with citizens.

For examples, leaders kill their opponents and innocent people the way a snake eliminates its enemies. Imagery also shows the conceited nature of leaders which make them think that they are the only knowledgeable people to rule over the stupid ordinary people. For instance, the leader in Barlow's "Summit Fever II", regard citizens as "sheep", who cannot challenge his leadership. The conceited nature of leaders leads to bad governance because it makes leaders ignore people's wishes and illegitimately extend their terms of leadership.

The poets' creative use of linguistic features also effectively highlights the subject of governance. For instance, neologism is used creatively and satirically to show and criticize the evils of bad governance in Uganda and other African countries. In the poem "Africanology". Wangusa creatively adds suffix "ology" onto each named evil to come up with the name for the institution to teach the evil. For example, the institution to teach corruption is termed "Corruptionology", nepotism is "Nepotismology" and ubiquitous is "Ubiquitoniquitology". These new unique terms not only create humour but also arrest the reader's attention to think critically about their meaning and implication. Neologism helped to show that bad governance is deeply ingrained in Africa to the extent that institutions are set up to teach it. Through neologism, African leaders are seriously attacked and criticized for continuously promoting bad governance.

Also, the poets' use of different dialects helps to depict the uncouth, illiterate and abusive nature of some of Uganda's leaders. As depicted in chapter three, the protagonist of Wangusa's poem, "The Portrait" cannot pronounce some words; he unintentionally misapprehends some words and uses circumlocutions. The analysis of the leader's dialect shows that some Ugandan leaders are uneducated and therefore unfit for leadership. These leaders, therefore, have committed various atrocities against Ugandans due to their paranoia, insecurity and lack of confidence.

Through the analysis of the poets' use of lexical sets, the study establishes that some women in Uganda are still discriminated against, denied their political rights and subjected to domestic violence. This is seen through the use of lexical sets in Kiguli's poem, "I am Tired of Talking in Metaphor". For instance, the need for women's rights and freedom is expressed by concentration words like, "I refuse", "I am tired", "I am not a machine", among others. The poets also incorporate different Ugandan languages in order to discuss Uganda's shared experience of political instability and bad governance in general. Different languages also help to create a realistic poetry meant to be read and understood by most Ugandans.

The study concluded that the poets use visual features such as deviant capital letters, punctuation and structural digression to record and express the subject of governance. For example, Wangusa uses indented lines in the second stanza of his poem, "National Skull Exhibition" to highlight the political disorders in Uganda. He also uses deviant capital letters to attract the readers' attention to places such as Luwero, Mukura, Gulu, among others where warlords fought from to attain and retain political power undemocratically. The poets also use external features like noting the years in which their poems are written to highlight the subject of governance. For example, Barlow's poems, "The Leader that Hung" and "Uganda" were written in 1969 and 1978 respectively since these years are externally seen on the poems. Syntactic and semantic parallelism and their contribution to the meaning of the poem in relation to the subject of governance are also analyzed. Syntactic parallelism shows the superiority of the state and the inferiority of the ordinary citizens while semantic parallelism helps to show the failure of the state to fulfill its duties like ensuring political and economic stability.

By and large, paying critical attention to the poets' use of figures of speech, linguistic and structural features underscored the theme of governance from the poems. Stylistic choices play a

vital role in making meaning and enhancing the artistic beauty of the poems. The creative and imaginative use of style gives the poets ultimate power to attack and criticize particular individuals and public institutions responsible for bad governance in Uganda. It also enables the poets to highlight the social ills that official government documents, newspapers and other writers ignore or fear to write about.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

This study examined the poets' portrayal of governance and the findings revealed that the poets through use of features of style and language highlight characteristics of bad governance, such as: political instability, corruption, disrespect of human rights, dictatorship, and poverty, lack of accountability and transparency, excessive involvement of security agents in political affairs and political deception. All these features of bad governance cause serious emotional distress which is not fully discussed in this study. There is room for further investigation on how Ugandan literature and in particular poetry addresses the trauma inflicted on Ugandans by especially leaders struggling to attain and maintain political power.

This study has not examined the poets' use of sound and phonological features such as: rhyme, alliteration, consonance, assonance, onomatopoeia and pun. It is my view that these features are evident in the poems of the three poets. There is need for further research into these features in order to come up with a study of how phonological devices portray the subject of governance.

Government institutions such as parliament and ministry of education should study Ugandan poetry and other genres of literature. Leaders should read it in order to improve their leadership skills and to avoid mistakes of the fictional leaders in the world of the studied poems. The

ministry of education should emphasize literature in all institutions of learning in Uganda to enable learners get awareness of the social, economic and political issues in the country.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix I: Henry Barlow's Poems

#### **A, Bear the fools and the stupid kindly**

Sheep, all sheep!  
That is the problem.  
Herds and herds of sheep  
Blind stupid  
Thoughtless followers  
The whole lot of us!  
Fools that can be led  
To jump off sheer precipices  
Completely incapable of  
Realising the consequences.  
Blockheads that are led  
To scream slogans for years  
The meaning of which  
They never thought about  
Even for a second.  
Just stupid thoughtless fools  
Following unquestioningly.  
That is the biggest problem; or is it?  
Imagine, for just one moment,  
That each of us  
Was a cantankerous  
Original thinker,  
Bold enough to practice  
Our individual, often stupid  
And selfish idiosyncracies  
What chaos, WHAT CHAOS!

So bear the fools and the stupid:  
The unthinking blind followers, kindly.  
Maybe they too contribute to some sanity  
In our already troubled humanity!

29<sup>th</sup> June 1992

## **B, Building the nation**

Today I did my share  
In building the nation.  
I drove the Permanent Secretary  
To an important<sup>5</sup> urgent function;  
In fact to a luncheon at the Vic.

The menu reflected its importance:  
Cold Bell beer with small talk,  
Then fried chicken with niceties,  
Wine to fill the hollowness of the laughs,  
Ice-cream to cover the stereotype jokes,  
Coffee to keep the PS awake on return journey.

I drove the Permanent Secretary back.  
He yawned many times in the back of the car  
Then to keep awake, he suddenly asked,  
Did you have any lunch friend?  
I replied looking straight ahead  
And secretly smiling at his belated concern  
That I had not, but was slimming!

Upon which he said with a seriousness  
That amused more than annoyed me,  
Mwananchi, I too had none!  
I attended to matters of state.  
Highly delicate diplomatic duties you know,  
And friend, it goes against my grain,  
Causes me stomach ulcers and wind.  
Ah, he continued, yawning again,  
The pains we suffer in building the nation!

So the PS had ulcers too!  
My ulcers I think are equally painful  
Only they are caused by hunger,  
Not sumptuous lunches!

So two nation builders  
Arrived home this evening  
With terrible stomach pains  
The result of building the nation  
-different ways.

### **C, The leader that hung**

When love and trust from the people he led  
Flowed to him and warmed his heart, and  
When he, in return, loved and trusted his people  
He blossomed and was magnificent.  
But one day that Cancer of Suspicion  
Within his heart was roused from its light sleep.  
In the fertile soil of a leader's position  
It was fed and it grew at an alarming rate.

One day Suspicion opened its sharp and ugly teeth  
And gave Trust a deep and vicious bite.  
Trust fought back with gentle pleading words  
Beseeching the leader to throw out Suspicion.  
But Suspicion, now grown into Fear, bit harder.  
Trust spread his wings and flew out bleeding.  
To fill his place vicious Hatred marched in  
And joined his father in fatal attack.  
Masters of their craft, they set to work.  
They filled the leader's heart with crippling fear  
Which flowed unhindered to the tips of his toes.  
They turned his eardrum so it could hear  
Lies where truth was spoken  
And malice where none was meant.  
They tinted his eyes so he could see  
Cunning and intrigue in every soul;  
His tongue they coated with sleek lies.  
His thoughts were conditioned by an invincible  
Craving ambition for absolute power for ever.

Love slowly bled to death  
Forgiveness was starved  
And Honesty slowly stifled.  
But Fear, Suspicion and Hatred grew and grew.  
They consumed his mind and sucked his blood.  
Nothing was left of his former self.  
The people he once proudly led, sadly  
Shook their heads and in determined whispers said,  
Our leader is gone; this is not him.  
We must hang this dangerous monster  
But Fear, Suspicion and Hatred grew and grew.  
They consumed his mind and sucked his blood.  
Nothing was left of his former self.  
The people he once proudly led, sadly  
Shook their heads and in determined whispers said,  
Our leader is gone; this is not him.

We must hang this dangerous monster  
Of Suspicious, Fear and unreasoning Hatred  
Before it consumes us and our children  
And so they hunger their leader.

1969

## **D, The Bullock**

His role; servile service!  
The uncomplaining whipping-boy.  
His reward; meager grass  
And decorated harnesses!  
Castrated in mind and body  
He continues the Farmer's  
Faithful servile servant  
Forever led by his pierced nose!

## **E, Summit Fever I: Father to son**

My Son!

You were born among the rolling plains  
Where the ever- playful wind  
Plays hide and seek in the supple grass  
Caressing and tickling it into joyous laughter;  
Where herds of cattle leisurely wander  
Collecting the sweetness of the grass  
Into the benevolence of their udders;  
Where lambs and calves  
Frolic in the dewy grass.

You were born under the wide blue skies  
Where hilarious clouds race each other  
Across the vastness of the horizon,  
Where in the evening, when the stars  
Have burnt and perforated glowing holes  
In the thick black cloak of night,  
Homestead fires glow dotted across the land  
-imitation of the stars in the silent sky!

From the plains you have watched  
The indolent waking of the sun  
How lazily it throws its numerous arms  
Onto the sleeping hills around  
And then tickles awake  
The drowsy cloud of the skies.

You were often astounded by the luxurious yawn  
Of the exhausted sun in the evening  
When it rubbed its drowsy red eye  
And donned its crimson evening dress

Across the greying western horizon.  
Many a morning you've woken up  
By the glorious orchestra of bird songs  
Hailing the Sun-God at dawn.

You have praised the beauty  
Of the elegant white egret

Picking ticks off the browsing cows  
And the majestic courtship- dance  
Of the graceful Crested Crane.

Have you forgotten the forlorn cry  
Of the silvery- green Ibis searching  
For her lost Children?

You also have known  
The rigours of the plains  
The trembling anger of the mid-day sun  
Which causes all complaints, in defeat,  
To bow their heads and plead for mercy,  
And the animals to chew their cud  
Under the hush trees and silent bushes.

You have often trudged weary miles  
On paths of searing-hot brown dust  
For a small pot of precious muddy water.

The wide shallow floods of the rainy season,  
The sticky quagmires,  
The hordes of irritating flies  
The bloodthirsty mosquitoes  
All this and much more my son!  
But . . . But . . . this is life!

This is life as it was meant to be  
The lowly plains are bursting with life!  
The joys and sorrows  
The beauty and ugliness  
The ruthlessness and tenderness  
The laughter and tears  
These are the real essence of life!  
The plains are bursting with life.  
In comparison, the summit,  
Your abode,  
Is stone dead.

I have come to rescue you;  
I have come to take you home!  
To take you back to the plains and to life.  
Away from your cold and bleak summit!

I know my son  
The summit is an honoured and lofty place  
The highest and the ultimate.  
But it is also a weird and sinister place  
It certainly is no place  
For a prolonged and happy stay;

For its glories and joys  
Are precarious and short – lived.

The stay at the summit  
Should be as long as an arrow's flight  
From the twanging bow to receiving earth!

Come down, do not overstay;  
For a mistress that tenaciously clings  
Onto her capricious lover  
Quickly blots out the tender rays of love  
And loses what she best wanted to retain!

The summit was meant  
For a short and glorious stay  
When it is fully bathed  
In the pure sunshine of love  
Of the humble dwellers of the plains.

When the weather changes  
The summit is a deadly place.  
The vicious gales of jealousy  
And the sinister clouds of intrigue  
Will most surely wreck any Lord of the Summit

The glare of publicity flush-lights  
Destroy the once –sensitive eardrums.

The stiff-naked protocol  
Insulates one from the human touch  
And all of these develop into Summit Fever  
Which finally ends up in mountain madness!

Summit Fever is a cruel disease  
A killer disease that does not kill  
But gradually alienates you from your own;  
Ostracizes and makes a leaper of you.

People talk and convers with you  
But only with their lips not their hearts  
They will laugh with you, whilst laughing at you.

Summit fever is a killer that does not kill  
A cat that plays with the dazed lizard  
Postponing the inevitable tortured end.

I have seen the symptoms of the fever  
In you my son!!  
It must be the fever  
If you cannot see,  
As you do not now,  
How your henchmen organize  
The rabbles to raise their hands  
And scream at the mention of your name.

It does not surprise me  
If you cannot hear,  
As you cannot now,  
The empty –tin – hollowness  
Of their meaningless Oye! Oye!

It must be the fever  
If, in your growing conceit  
You mistake all this for loyalty  
And wide spread love for you.

As for your trusted colleagues!!  
Can sycophants ever be colleagues!?  
What genuine advice can they give you  
If whenever they open their mouths  
They switch on recorded tapes of your speeches  
To which they add monotonously,  
Their one song of songs:

“Great is the Lord of Summit  
His wisdom knows no limits  
He is forever in the right  
His rules is forever and ever  
Amen.”

Come back to the lowly plains my son,  
Let me take you back to sanity and life  
Do not hesitate. Come now  
Before it is too late!

## **F, Summit fever II: Brother to Brother**

Father went back disappointed!  
I had tried to explain;  
But what do you tell a man  
Who thinks you are going mad?  
Well, I am really stuck  
On this accursed summit  
I only hope I shall not end up  
On some remote foreign plain with  
A broken heart and broken spirit!

Father thinks I am blind;  
That I cannot clearly see  
The waning loyalty and love  
Of the people on the plains.  
Father thinks I am unaware  
Of the jealousies and intrigues  
To knock me off the summit.  
Father thinks I am power- drunk.  
He thinks I am really going mad  
And I know he is not alone  
Other independent minds think so!  
Maybe you too, brother!

Well, you are all wrong.  
I am perfectly within my senses  
I am conscious of all things around me  
And I know much more than  
You or father can ever know.

Brother!  
Sometimes I boil with anger and cry  
In the privacy of the friendly night  
At the injustices of it all.  
I have served this country  
And selfishly given the best in me.  
Is it my fault that some of them  
Have been more alert and energetic  
And others indolent in gathering;  
That some have snatched from the weak  
And others are downright fools!

Brother,  
Father entreats me to go back to the plains  
He does not know I have considered doing just that  
Many long nights and weary days.

Truly brother often I have almost decided  
To shed this self-imposed crushing burden  
For which I earn only callous ingratitude,  
Unreasoning hatred and jealousy.  
I have often concluded there is no reason  
Why I should strenuously burn up  
My fast dwindling reserves of energy  
Helping uncomprehending, stupid,  
Ungrateful and chaotic herds of sheep.  
Why should I be the self- appointed  
Guardian of the stupid flock?

Why not let the ignorant fools choose  
Some power hungry upstart to lead them?  
Why not let these snarling wolves in sheep skins  
And my beloved people to pieces?  
Why not just let go?

But then, I always recognize with shock  
That the stupidity of sheep,  
Is an innocent type of stupidity;  
That I should accept them as they are  
For they were meant to be led or pushed;  
And it is the shepherd's responsibility  
Whether they go the right or wrong way.  
I recall my avowed promises to them,  
To lead them to more succulent pastures.

I begin to question myself  
Am I a shameless deceiver who swore  
Empty promises to my constituents?  
Am I a cowardly deserter  
Who turns tail and surrenders  
At the first encounter of uninformed  
Biased and unreasoning resistance?  
I debate time and again with myself;  
Has democracy a philosophy  
Of firm and confident leadership?  
Or is it a blind, slave- like execution  
Of the wishes of the unenlightened masses?

I have concluded and with reason  
That a leader must lead! and sometimes  
Overlook the wishes of the people  
Where the terrain being traversed  
Is unfamiliar to the flock he leads,

Thus I am imprisoned at the summit  
By my convictions and sense of duty  
By my avowed but unfulfilled promises.  
You may ask, as father tried to,  
After I had explained all this,  
Whether I am not the most conceited man alive.  
What evidence, what right have I  
To consider myself the only arbiter  
Of what is good or bad for the nation?  
I am compelled to stay at the summit  
To complete the wonderful projects  
I have initiated with such effort  
Which some braggart of an upstart  
Will surely claim if I claim down.  
No I cannot abdicate now.  
I am not a coward. I will weather the storm.

Brother you now know why I cannot leave  
The summit abruptly now.  
I am a prisoner at the summit  
With strong fetters at every turn

When I had confided all this  
To my brother, he was silent for a long time,  
His eyes were downcast avoiding mine.  
When he at last looked at me,  
He said in a very sad voice,  
May be father was right after all!  
I then knew that he too was against me.  
He rose without a word and left the room.  
I have not seen my brother since!

### **G, Summit Fever III: Epilogue**

I now live in a humble bungalow  
In the sweltering heat of a foreign plain  
Nursing my bruised heart and broken spirit  
I sadly recall my father's last visit  
And the long talk I had with my brother.  
Bitter tears roll down my cheeks  
For the slaughter and bloodshed  
Those power-drunk former colleagues,  
Army officers and their lackeys  
Have caused, and continue to inflict  
On the people I've loved and served  
And for whom I sacrificed everything

Two questions for which I have no answer,  
Continue to haunt me unceasingly:  
Can one ever fully understand  
All there is in a situation  
In which one is not totally involved?  
Can one retain the love and loyalty  
Of the people he leads, for all time  
Without sacrificing truth and principles?

## **H, I Refuse to Take Your Brotherly Hand**

Your nails are black with dirt, Brother  
And your palms are clammy with sweat  
I refuse to take the hands you extend in help  
I shall not join with you brother  
For unclean hands make me uneasy  
For filthy fingernails rob me of my pride.

You argue, gesticulating with your once  
Impeccably clean and beautiful hands  
That before long it shall not matter  
For 'everybody' is delving and digging  
And all shall have hands dripping with dirt.

That nobody shall know what clean hands look like  
And there shall be comfort in the dirty crowd  
And enough to eat, for there are good yields  
When the striking manure is well dug in  
With strong and bold hands in time.

Are you going blind brother?  
I ask how many have the sludge  
Or the strong and bold hands like yours  
With which to dig and delve?  
Brother the hands of many are too weak with hunger  
And for many the sludge is out of reach  
And yet for others the stink is too nauseating!  
But all have eyes and hunger fills them with anger  
As they watch your fingernails fill with dirt!  
I have seen hungry envious eyes  
Watching silently through your chain-link fence  
I have seen eyes in deep sunken sockets  
Burning with anger intently watching you  
I have seen parched mouths water with saliva  
And heard the rumbling of hollow empty stomachs  
As they watched you feed the dog with meat  
From the heavy yields of the city sludge.

Have you entirely forgotten Brother  
The fragrance and comfort of clean hands?  
The confidence, the peace you have when you know  
You'll leave no ugly sludge upon the sheet?  
Don't you remember the repulsion you had  
When you shook hands with fat dirty men  
With their dirty clammy palms?

Let me alone Brother and from the top of the cliff  
Don't offer me your dirty hand in help.  
Let me trudge the long way up  
For the short cuts are soiled and slippery  
Your palms are clammy with the sweat of fear  
And your fingernails are clogged with dirt.

## I, Uganda

*(With apologies and deep appreciation to  
Walter de la Mare for creating 'Arabia')*

Painful are the thoughts of Uganda  
Where now Nuba rules in blood  
Amidst silent and pained anguish  
Under her glorious skies.  
Dark are the hearts of her people  
That cheer the prince of Nuba  
Riding armoured troop-carriers,  
Rattling, in midnight gloom.

Poignant earlier memories . . .  
They haunt me – the people, the country  
The cheering green of inviting hills  
The splendour of cloud – wrapped mountains  
The mischievous giggle of youthful streams  
And the quite serenity of blue lakes  
The roar of ever – thundering waters  
And the silence of vast shimmering plains at noon.

They haunt me –  
The beauties of my country haunt me  
The black depth of star – filled skies  
And the moon- silvered banana leaves  
The bird –song – filled mists of dawn  
And the smiling farewells of sunset colours  
The pent up anger of thunderstorms  
The dark awe of impenetrable forests  
And the billowing waves of grasslands.  
They haunt me – my people haunt me.

The abandon of their happy laughter,  
The twinkling friendliness in the eyes  
Of naked children smiling at strangers.  
The vain extravagance of the weddings  
And the strangling poverty of the villages  
The compassion and generosity at funerals  
And the callousness and cruelty of Kondos.

And oh! those drums – those bewitching drums!  
The drummers' flitting hands flirting shamelessly  
Tickling the responding tautness of the skin  
The suppleness of suggestive waists  
Flowing effortlessly from the unmatchable

Rhythm of agile feet in the dust!  
The Bwola, the Dingi-Dingi, the Nankasa  
It haunts me – her music haunts me!

Painful are the memories of Uganda  
Where mercenaries plunder  
They have slaughtered our guts through.  
But one day our guts shall sprout  
The broken bones shall mend  
And the festering wounds shall heal.  
Uganda once again shall be a smile!

1978 Ethiopia

Kondos: *armed thieves*

## Appendix II: Susan Kiguli's Poems

### A, I am Tired of Talking in Metaphors

I will talk plainly  
Because I am moved to abandon riddles.  
I will tell you how we held our heads  
In our hands  
Because the owl hooted throughout the night  
And the dogs howled as if mourning:  
We awaited bad news  
We received it  
Our mother blinded in one eye  
Crippled in the right leg  
Because she did not vote  
Her husband's candidate.

I will remind you  
Of the time the peeled plantains  
Stood upright in the cooking pot  
We slaughtered a cock  
Anticipating important visitor  
We got her:  
Our daughter – pieces of flesh in a sack-  
Our present from her husband.

No, I will not use images  
I will just talk to you:  
I do not fight to take your place  
Or constantly wave my fist in your face.

I refuse to argue about  
Your "manly pact"  
With my father-  
Buying me for a bag of potatoes and pepper.

All I want  
Is to stop denying Me  
My presence needs no metaphors,  
I am here  
Just as you are.  
I am not a machine  
For you to dismantle whenever you whim  
I demand for my human dignity.

## **B, Crazy Peter Prattles**

So what is the hullabaloo  
About the minister's hailing son  
That he makes boiling news?

How come it was not even whispered  
When Tina's hospital bed crawled with maggots  
And her eyes oozed pus  
Because the doctors lacked gloves?

What about Kassajja's only child  
Who died because the man with the key  
To the oxygen room was on leave?

I have seen the queues  
Of emaciated mothers clinging to  
Babies with translucent skins  
Faint in line  
And the lioness off the nurse  
Commanding tersely  
"Get up or leave the line".

Didn't I hear it rumoured that  
The man with the white mane  
And black robes  
Whose mouth stores the justice of the land  
Ushered a rape case out of court  
Because the seven year old  
Failed to testify?

Anyway I only remember these things  
When I drink  
They are indeed tipsy explosions.

## **C, Why Vultures Laugh**

We have dipped  
Half-fired pots  
In the well of independence  
Like vultures sinking  
Long beaks in the soft parts  
Of a rotting carcass.

At least the vultures harvest  
Chunks of stinking slippery flesh  
Which sail gently  
Down welcoming throats.

But we have stayed by the well  
Soaked in frustration  
Our arms heavy stumps our hearts shriveled nuts  
As the water defies our pots  
Little wonder then  
The vultures laugh at us.

## **D, Fishers of Men**

The nets are out in the depth  
Doing the job  
The silver grey moon floats  
On the surface of the waters.  
Fishermen pull their nets  
With big hearts waiting for fish!  
Outcome the meshes

Full of the moonlight harvest  
As the silver wonder  
Turns into bullet riddled chests  
And water logged eyes!

## **E, Viewers May Find these Pictures Disturbing**

Barbecued flesh  
Desolate coach  
The vultures have stayed away.  
Red flags  
Fly on the grey hearse.  
'Their blood be on their heads'  
The vultures say.

Grass grows through  
Open sockets  
Blades sprout  
To cover lone bones.

A little girl  
Walks on four  
Eating with monkeys  
She wears a crown  
Of roasting flesh  
And rotting remains.

The owls have the cock by the beak  
Silence reigns  
The owls fly to the scene  
Eyes wheeling in  
Supplication.

## **F, I Laugh at Amin**

I laugh with all the skulls  
Amin holds in his hand  
With all those perched on his shoulder  
And the ones in an infinite queue  
Behind his back.

I laugh with the victims of the  
1977 firing squad  
They were dead long before  
The guns fired  
I laugh at bullets wasted.

I chuckle with the heads of schools  
Across the nation  
It tickles to extract money  
From an army of tortured widows.

I laugh with the ghost of Kay Amin  
Remembering Amin astride her dismembered body  
Calling her a wicked woman  
Before their bereaved children.

O how I laugh!

## **G, The African Saga**

Often a farce is acted  
Elaborately presented  
On the African stage.  
The ballot boxes set in place  
The curtain draws back  
To thunderous throbbing drums.  
The ragged but indomitable chorus  
Stands itself lame  
To cast the vote,  
As the drums are due  
To ululate the victory. . .

The antagonist struts out  
Like a cock at dawn  
His plumage masking lethal fire  
His headdress flaming red  
He shoots venomous arrows  
Into the expectant audience . . .

All the laughter filled bellies  
Are roasted by fire,  
All the parted lips  
Are stuffed with live charcoal  
Red hot winking charcoal!

As terror contorted faces  
Swallow charcoal  
The votes are shipped to oceans,  
Usually one peasant gulping fire  
Chokes on it in hilarious laughter,  
Ha ha, some farce.

## **H, Somewhere in the Field**

Grandfather's bones are scattered  
Somewhere in the field  
The wind buried him.  
War has violated us  
Death is no longer scared  
And life has no place for mourning.

Cousin Katende was brought back  
From the bloodline in a coffin  
We learnt about it two years late  
That he died and was buried.  
His wife and child do not know us  
We do not know them.

War denies us  
Luxury of forgetting  
Forces us to examine empty meaning.

We have left our homes to squirrels.

Conflict has removed our teeth  
Bruised our gums  
Cut out our tongues  
Scarred our throats.

This war is hungry at us  
Kneading us  
Into a fluffy pastry  
We have no breath  
We are left only the fire within our souls.

## I, Flats Topics

A child prostrate  
Lies in the middle  
Of a smoky hut  
On a mountain of rags.  
A mother's weak hand  
Drives an army of flies  
From his unseeing eyes.

The prestigious press  
Full of shots  
Of starving Madonna  
Clinging to a dead child.  
The pop singer's voice woos  
His jewelled audience to toss coins  
In the begging basket.

A midst nodding sleek faces,  
A fat finger wags  
Accusing plagued people  
Of 'non performance'  
Of 'dependence syndrome'  
Meanwhile a wasted hand  
Scratches a tired soil.

Panoramic views of  
A frowning reality  
You see it, live it.  
Does it surprise then  
That it is no haven  
For prattling poets.

### Appendix III: Timothy Wangusa's poem

#### A, The State is my Shepherd

##### Psalm 23 Part II

The state is my shepherd, I shall not want;  
it makes me to lie down in a subsidized house.

It leads me into realms of political tranquility;  
it restores my faith in a business future.

It leads me into paths of loans and pensions, for  
its international reputation's sake.

Yea, even though I walk through the valley of the  
shadow of Kivulu,

Yet will I fear no Kondos, for  
the state is with me;

Its guns and pangs comfort me.

It preserves for me a bank account, in the  
presence of devaluation;

It fills my pockets with allowances;  
my salary overthrows.

Surely increments and promotions shall follow me  
all the days of my life;

And I shall dwell in senior quarters for ever.

## **B, Africa's New Brood**

(As of May 2000)

This lament is for you, Africa's former "New Brood"  
That have converted yourselves into Africa's "New Brood":

This lament is for you political triplets  
of the Great Lakes region;  
for you Kaguta, Kagame and Kabila.  
It is for you Kampala, Kigali and Kinshasa -  
cities of Africa's torrid and turbulent zone.

This lament is for you Abyssinian twins,  
Meles Zenawi and Isaias Afwerki.  
It is for you Addis Ababa and Asmara,  
In the land of millennial, historical paradox  
Of survival against all external attackers –  
And of panoramic geographical wonder.

This lament is for you warrior cousins,  
Foday Sankoh and Jonas Savimbi.  
It is for you enslaved Free Town  
and for you besieged Luanda,  
upon Africa's sunset coastline,  
that first suffered and braved  
alien imperial havoc.  
This lament is also for you, you trigger –happy  
kinsmen in word and deed,  
for you Charles Taylor and Hussein Aideed,  
with all your ever- clashing warrior clan – lords.  
It is for you Monrovia and Mogadishu,  
as physical distant  
as distastefully alike.

For you Kaguta, prodigy of Rwakitura  
I shed my first tears.

For when you first stood slender and tall like a reed  
upon Uganda's political ant-hills,  
Kampala clapped her two million hands  
in delirious ecstasy  
at the "fundamental change" guaranteed to all  
("Not routine change of guards"!)-  
as you castigated and cursed the ousted  
swine-like and ghost-like past abominators  
of our once golden and incomparable land.

Waving the magical Ten-Point Programme  
in the electric mid-morning air,  
you swore by your gun to capture and enshrine  
all that is sacred and dear to the people:  
emancipation from terror and horrendous regimes;  
assurance of progressive pockets and gratified bellies;  
toothless neighbours along all our borders  
and universally enviable all-Africa brotherhood.

Fourteen pages into the future –

Why Alice Lakwena of the Spirit Movement?  
Why Joseph Kony of Black Ten Commandment?  
Why the inconsolable captivity of Aboke schoolgirls?  
Why the unspeakable Atiak massacres  
The unthinkable Mukura human incineration  
The nightmarish Kichwamba holocaust  
And the infernal Kanungu conflagration?

Why the blood-deep corruption in exalted places  
And national referendum on prehistoric birthrights?  
Why the perennial penury among the toiling majority-

And why Radio Katwe's reported  
Export of war to Congo?

For you Paul Kagame of Kigali  
is my next round of tears.

For when you and your warrior compatriots  
stormed that south –western sovereign republic  
in expedient abuse of your land of refuge  
as you apparently pursued just reprisal,

How right it seemed to the outside world  
to shut one of its eyes  
to your lofty and dramatic adventure!

Yours the third spectacular African achievement  
of a rebel bush army to topple  
a reigning regime from political platform.

For you Laurent Kabila, shooting star out of a gloomy sky,  
is my third round of tears.

High was the drama and regional euphoria  
that you whipped up in the mountains of Uvira-Murengye  
phenomenal the massive support by Zairian Tutsi

in their minority resolve to survive.

Popularly armed thus  
did you irresistibly march against the chaotic troops  
of the ailing, fore-doomed Mobutu;  
And thus were you propelled to Kinshasa  
amid ululations and jubilation frenzy  
That greeted you as the long-awaited redeemer,  
the panacea for the country's political epidemic.

But now shame on you all-  
brood that was but lately  
Africa's new breed;  
Thorough shame on you Afewerki and Zenawi  
now reduced to mere insect men  
chirruping and battling  
over what must telescopically appear  
like one blade of grass  
and one square inch of dust!

You have commandeered and in bloody death  
damned thousands of your own kindred.

How unhappy are twin breasts  
that suckled the twin babies  
that you once were!

Utter shame on you Sankoh and Savimbi,  
you serpents, with your sly natures  
sulking and slithering behind your hissing names  
and the dark masks  
of your equally unkempt beards.

May the illicit diamonds and gold  
of your killing fields  
that swell your coffers  
never decorate your coffins or caskets!

And permanent shame on you –  
all you architects and perpetrators  
of Kisangani's devastation.

May your political mega-egos  
and Lilliputian- sized hearts  
never live to engineer or witness  
another Kisangani.

Wherefore cry aloud , you streets of Kisangani –

Cry aloud and refuse to be consoled:  
for barbaric and brainless and heartless  
is the destruction of your children  
by invaders that first posed  
as your timely redeemers.

Cry aloud you thickets, jungles and forests  
Of the diamond fields of eastern Congo.

Cry aloud and refuse to be consoled:  
For monstrous and unspeakable was the fate  
Of the fleeing thousands –

whose unverified  
uncounted remains  
lie unburied  
under your drooping foliage.

And may the sharp and pointed words  
of your underground groaning  
for rigid redress, O forests,

Terminally pierce the ears and hearts  
of all gun – profiteers  
who pass for political saviours.

Amen.

## C, National Skulls Exhibition

(“The result is that today the best skull show is not in Luwero but in the north . . . and in the western districts. . . ” The Monitor, 26 January 2000)

The Uganda National War Memorial Conservator  
Of relics, ruins and historic mass graves  
To be based at the People’s main Museum of Death  
To be erected soon at Namanve Ghost Forest  
Hereby announces to all compatriots,  
All artists, connoisseurs and artifact collectors  
That by a resolution of the Supreme Caucus,  
A countrywide competitive exhibition  
Of war-time skulls and skeletons  
Shall be mounted on the next anniversary  
Of our permanent party’s ascension to power;  
Wherefore the key battlefields named hereunder  
Shall participate in the said competition:

Mukura- Soroti AXIS

Representing Traitors Roasting Battalion (TRB)

Luwero –Mpigi –Mukono TRIANGLE

Representing Bushcraft Resistance Army (BRA)

Arua – Adjumani – Koboko – Moyo QUADRANGLE

Representing National Annihilators Front (NAF)

Kasese – Kilembe – Kichwamba – Kabarole – Bundibujjo PENTAGON

Representing Total Extermination Militia (TEM)

Kitgum –Gulu – Atiak – Karuma – Apac – Lira HEXAGON

Representing Lord’s Nose – cutting Legion (LNL)

The prize- winning skulls and skeletons  
Shall constitute a tourist centrepiece  
At Namanve Memorial Holiday Resort,  
While exhibitors with the largest skulls  
Shall qualify to represent the country  
At the All- Africa Festival of Corpses and Bones.

10 March 2000

## **D, Africanology**

Consequent upon the Extraordinary Colloquium  
Of All- Africa Think Tank of Academic Associations  
Concluded this historic day in the city of Abuja-

It is hereby recommended and forthwith resolved  
That strategic organs of the Think Tank be set up,  
Equitably spread across the African Continent  
And situated on all principal university campuses –

To research and promote the ethos of Africanology:

The Amphitheatre of Anti- Governmentology in Algeria  
The Bureau of Bankruptciology in Burkina Faso  
The Centre of Senselesslogy in Sierra Leone  
The College of Corruptionology in Kenya  
The Ethnic – house of Extremisimology in Ethiopia  
The Institute of Insolventology in Eritrea  
The Library of Liquidationology in Libya  
The Mission – mansion of Misinformationology in Malawi  
The Naira-nest of Nepotismology in Nigeria  
The Polytechnic of Poverology in Pemba  
The School of Sectarianology in Somaliland  
The Senior Seminary of Swindology in Senegal  
The Synagogue of Scarcitology in Southern Sudan  
The Temple of Terrorismology in Togo  
The University of Ubiquitoniquitology in Uganda  
The Zonal Zoo of Zerologicology in Zimbabwe.

The director of each designated research organ  
Shall be a pre- eminently published intellectual,  
Prize- winning analyst and proven ideologist  
Of Permanent Western World Predatoriology  
And perennial Third World Strangulationology.

20 February 2000

## **E, The Walking - stick**

(With love to all political theoreticians)

The year of Our Lord 1964 it was,  
And newborn Uganda only two years old.

Equating organs of Government  
To parts of the human frame,  
The professor eminently declared:

The executive is the head,  
The legislature is the chest,  
The judicature is the limbs.

“What of the military, Professor?”  
Shouted one of us, and we all nodded heads,  
“What part of the body are the Armed Forces?”

“Given that the Government is the man,” he quipped –  
“The army is his walking – stick.”

Come 25<sup>th</sup> January 1971,  
Major – General Idi Amin stormed the political stage –

And overnight  
The walking – stick became the man, and  
The man became the walking stick!

Note: As recounted to the National Resistance Council (Uganda’s Interim Parliament)  
in 1989. Recollected and versified 20<sup>th</sup> July 2001.

## **F, Statement: Seven Reasons Why**

Hereunder we set forth and telecast

To all continents and oceans  
Why it was our duty to topple that monster.

- One: He was a man-eater.  
At first wearing a human mask  
With two legs and one heart,  
By the end of his atrocious regime,  
He had betrayed his true self  
Of a heartless  
Four legged cannibal.
- Two: He was a crocodile.  
On numerous political ant-hills  
He raved and swore  
How full of tears his eyes were  
For the toiling tillers of the land-  
But he kept their mouths shut and hungry.
- Thee: He was a lecherous dog.  
In every strategic citadel  
He maintained an extravagant mansion  
Each infested and brimming  
With infectious concubines on stand-by.
- Four: He was a vain pig  
Surrounding himself with a pack  
Of yelping sorcerers and wizards,  
He shut his eyes to their cut-throat deeds  
While they fattened like hogs  
On blood they squeezed  
From the denceless poor.
- Five: He was a greedy hyena.  
Never to him did Afrolandia extended beyond  
The jungle village of his untutored boyhood,  
Into which he dreamt to crowd  
All roads and railway-lines  
All hospitals and granaries  
All factories and breweries.
- Six: He was a crafty serpent.  
He conjured up a depraved scheme  
Of banishing strong youngsters  
To remote scorching deserts

To grind granite scorching rocks to useless sand  
(Which he called Character Development)  
To render them spineless enemies  
Upon their crippled return.

Seven: He was a sadist goblin.  
Warriors who pointed a spear at his hounds  
He swooped upon and spirited away  
To subterranean dungeons  
Of genital- crushing  
And brain-spluttering tortures.

For these reasons and many more of equal gravity  
We reassure countrymen and enemies alike  
Why we struck faster than thunderbolt  
To terminate a nightmare dynasty-  
And have today assumed total political power  
And vested it all in one of ourselves  
As Commander Supreme of the Uniformed Forces  
And Chairman of the Redemption Forum.

## **G, Edict I: New Nomenclature**

Let all documents where his name was printed  
All books where his regime was recorded  
All glasses where his deeds were engraved  
All woods where his honours were carved  
All stones where his titles were chiseled  
All medals where his face was embossed

Let them all be torn up and smashed

Destroy all songs where his clan was praised  
Dig up all monuments by him erected.  
Batter down all his castles and barracks  
Set on fire all his chain of pagan shrines  
Blow up all portraits of his hateful figures

Replace his image with mine in all offices  
Alter the dates on all foundation –stones  
To read post –revolution, and as laid by me

All streets, roads, lanes named after him  
All plans, projects and institutions  
Let them be changed and named after me

And that gigantic medallion of his visage  
That dangles by the People's Palace  
Let it with cranes and tractors be hauled down  
Malted and beaten into an image of  
Me, Masaya, Conqueror of the Monster!

## H, Portrait

People far off would never conceive  
People near him would never perceive  
How he could be both magnetic and vitriolic  
The darling and scourge of damsels  
The patron and poison of scholars  
The envy and despair of diplomats.

He carried in his immense bulk  
Promise and doom in one  
Charming while most erratic  
Commanding devotion while he killed

Driving himself in an open jeep  
Through streets of Afroville  
Without convoy or body-guard  
He extracted adoration shouts  
Of "Our man! Our man!"  
From overwhelmed street-walkers-

And amazed the police on duty  
By snailing in the traffic queue  
At security road-blocks.

Damning the women's mini-skirts  
And banning their outlandish hair styles  
He was immediately immortalized  
In new improvised fashions  
Lovingly baptized "Masaya Nvako" –  
"Get off my back, Masaya dear."

On a chosen surprise day  
He turned up in the throng  
Clad in one of his colourful masks:  
Spotless warrior's green  
Muhammedan white kanzu and turban  
Or close to naked in a swimming trunk  
At a popular holiday resort  
To the ecstasy of photographers.

His third-hand command of Rondo's tongue  
Imbued his speech with added glamour.  
"Is it true, Mr. President,"  
Asked a foreign journalist,  
"That you often blow your own trumpet?"

“You street beggar!” flared the Warrior.  
“You pink boy!” You are not know  
That ayam no *Mistah* but MY Excellency?  
I play trumpet very good yes  
But also I play accordion very very good!”

“You workers of the money granary,”  
He told the staff of the Central Bank,  
“Last year I have made country  
Very happy with plenty *Maliyote*  
By my send for good Rondo’s parasites.  
You there government of treasure  
You say no money in granary  
But these here sacks of notes also coins  
They are money or rubbish? Tell me.  
And how you go say to newspaper  
That Mister Eggschange is not there  
To make things come in shops!  
If that Mistah Eggchange be in holiday,  
This I must tell you completely,  
Call him for duty quick on radio!”

In Rondo’s ambiguous country  
He saw and dined with the monarch,  
A higher guest than Pussy Cat.  
“Mrs. Queen,” he belched his thanks,  
“Ayam fed up with so good food!”  
When you visit at my country  
Also I shall revenge like this.  
But my visit was very short call,  
Next year I come long call.”

Like Bonaparte,  
He enchanted his warriors,  
At first ill-clad and ill-fed,  
With uplifting visions  
Of conquering virgin lands  
And transforming each warrior  
Into a Field Marshal  
And single proprietor  
Of an idyllic golden valley.  
Would they fall behind him?  
With him in heroic adventure  
Rise to peaks of fame?

Like Bismarck,

Political pilot of Prussia,  
He construed his enemy to seem the attacker  
And himself the wronged self- defender,  
At conferences always posed  
As front-line champion  
Of continental brotherhood –

As when at a Black Summit  
He made an amorphous speech  
Then stepped from the rostrum  
Straight to the dosing king of Afrozania  
Who had sworn never with Masaya to connect  
And disarmed him with a rousing hand –shake  
To the staggered applause of all.  
He excelled Richard,  
Hunchback king of Rondoland,  
In the demonic genius  
Of thriving on mutual counter –plots  
Between rival factions  
That sought his destruction:  
And none of his liquidation squads  
Was secure by day or night  
From being suddenly struck down  
By a yet bloodier squad.

Had he had more than two years  
Of formal school in his day  
Commented a political projector,  
He would be Afrolandia's wisest statesman.

He has all the makings,  
Whispered the Bishop of Afroville,  
Of the dangerous sinner  
Who could become a compelling saint.

## I, National Elections 2001

*(In praise of changeful “No Change”)*

Mr. Kavuma out, Mrs. Kavuma in  
Chemonge down, Chebrot up  
Kuka off, Kulany on  
Etiang silenced, Ekanya songfied

Wanjuzi uprooted  
Wesonga tap-rooted

Censured Jim and Sam back on stage

And former minister Vincent,  
Alleged slaughterer of voter Vincent –  
(Ah, what’s in a Christian name?  
What’s the blood worth of one’s namesake?) –

Poised to prove his hand innocent.

## II

*Opposition’s Besigye the hammer  
Proposition’s Museveni the anvil*

And betwixt the two –  
The prostrate population:

A mass of tormented metal  
In the national iron forge

Of Uganda’s blood-red politics.

10 October 2001

## **J, Procession**

What sudden blast is that –  
Of buffalo horns  
Breaking ecstatic news  
Upon ear – drums  
Of trembling dawn!

Attention you survivors  
And hearken to this you prisoners  
All you scorched hilltops  
And you bleeding valleys:

Hearken all you to this  
And know at once –

That in order to prevent  
A nightmare country  
From growing more wild

We the vigilant watchdogs  
Of Afrolandia's precious liberty  
Have on this first day of May  
In the thirteenth intolerable year  
Of our home – grown cancer  
Toppled the monster  
That cannibalized the people.

This resounding night  
(For which a battalion of thanks  
To the unbreakable spear  
And impenetrable shield  
Of Masaya our front-line warrior)

Was the monster surprised  
Routed and flung  
Down  
A jagged  
Precipice  
Into a bottomless  
Yawning pit

In victorious bloodbath!

And as suddenly I Mwenya the singer  
Crazily tumbling from house

With a giant's head of sponge  
And all around me  
Everybody with incredible face  
Staggering and singing  
Clapping and shouting  
With demented joy-

Can it be true O wife asked each man  
Can it be true O husband asked each woman  
Can it be true O child of my mother  
Can it be true O you old and wise one

Speak O mouth that was gagged  
Break loose O tongue that was tied  
And you fettered limbs –  
Be quickly unfettered

For who could have dreamt  
In what head sprouted  
The wild germ  
Of Ojuzi the man-eater  
And Masaya his spear-bearer  
Face to face on field of battle  
Insect man against mighty giant  
And there with mortal spear – thrust  
Insect man uprooting mighty giant  
In conclusive victory!

O servant born to be our Saviour –  
Rustless continue your flaming spear  
And endless our praise and fear!

Ah what ecstasy it was  
On the day of automatic music  
Of rusty tins and broken pipes  
And jubilation costumes  
Of colourful rags and weeds  
Round the necks of men  
And waists of women  
Or carried high on emergency flag –sticks  
As banners of redemption!

When happiness drove the city mad  
And you slapped your neighbour's shoulder  
In spirit of new – found brothers  
And wished the blind had eyes

The lame their legs  
The deaf their ears –

When barren women  
Strapped stones on their backs  
To go help them laugh and shake the head  
At the shattered statue  
Of him that used to be  
Spear-proof –

And along Central Street  
A funeral procession  
With a painted head on wooden board  
And the message in multi – lingual caption:  
MONSTER NOW I DEAD  
OJOZI NFUDDE  
ETIANG ADAUN  
WANANGALI NAFIIRE  
GOBLIN VERY DEAD.