

FOLK LITERATURE

AND

TOPICAL ISSUES

an investigation of Valley Tonga narratives  
dealing with marriage

by

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degree of Master of Arts in African Literature.

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(i)

DECLARATION

I certify that this dissertation is my own original work and that it has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or another University.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Siakavuba', written over a horizontal line.

(BWANA JOHN SIAKAVUBA).

APPROVAL

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## ABSTRACT

This study attempts to look at oral narratives of the Valley Tonga of Zambia that project these people's practices in marriage. In the absence of previous study of Valley Tonga Literature, let alone serious examination of Tonga narratives in general, the need to strike a balance between formalistic and functional theories in the study of folkliterature is fundamental. Complementary as the aesthetic and didactic roles of the folktale are, there is need for critical examination of the relationship between them.

Among other things, principles of aesthetics, among these people, against the background of real life issues determine the form which realized narrative performances take. Issues of less public discussion are given appropriate fictionalization such that narration is in the final analysis more manifestly entertaining. Hence, a narrator who lays more emphasis on content can mar the art while the contrary enhances its function. In this way any given tale acquires the potential to capture the necessary tri-periodical significance; reflecting the past and present, and projecting the future. This is how the folktale can be useful to society.

Since natural performance of the folktale is more pastime than a pedantic activity, the sociological data upon which every story is founded is given homophoric reference. This technique curbs audience boredom while engaging them into the performance intellectually. Thus it enhances both the aesthetic and functional roles of the tale. It also provides an audience seeking details of the sociological material with a cue for consulting relevant forms of the people's other oral traditions.

Therefore in order to exchange valuable views on the forms and functions of oral literature, scholars ought to demonstrate ultimate commitment to, and appreciation of, the literature's social context. Indeed, relations between the tale, the narrator, and the audience (as in the present case) contribute greatly to the formalistic and functional impact of performance.

Of the ten narratives given summary discussion here eight are ramified according to the type of marriage they portray, viz, arranged, elopement, forced, and abduction. The remaining two focus on some problems relating to polygamy and pregnancy respectively. The institution of marriage itself is highly regarded world wide, perhaps because of its implications on national ethos. In many cultures, it is the stronghold for all conservatism. How it has been converted into a tool for entertainment in these Valley Tonga narratives is but the cornerstone of this study.

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B.J. SIAKAVUBA, SEPTEMBER, 1989.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION : a socio-economic background.

The Valley Tonga whose literature is the focus of this study belong to a larger Tonga society. Strictly speaking, the Tonga people of Zambia are found in the Southern Province. They occupy the territory which spreads from the two Kafue River bridges down to Livingstone. On the North-South axis their land stretches from somewhere across the Kafue River down through Namwala to the Zambezi River. Through this region run the Great North Road and Zambia's major railway. These are the major routes that link the Province to the rest of the country. Within the region there are several feeder roads that make the urban centres along the railway accessible to the Provincial country, and vice versa. The most significant among these are the Siavonga, Chikankata, Namwala (both from Monze and Choma), Chipepo, Maamba, Kabanga and the Mukuni roads.

The Tonga are a matrilineal society whose historical background has yet to be ascertained. In their indigenous periods they claim to have had several small chieftaincies which colonial rule amalgamated into the fewer and larger ones that exist today. The original ones were established and based on the clan descent system which still determines claims of kinship in the extended family, and is at the centre of the customary laws of succession.

The Tonga political system has always been highly decentralized, lacking in elitist structure. Perhaps, as T.A. Mathews (1974) points out, this is because:

In the Tonga society, egalitarian and achievement oriented norms prevail which do not encourage claims to status based on the deeds of long dead ancestors.<sup>1</sup>

This situation could account for a number of things, such as the apparent absence of communal epics among the Valley Tonga. Although there are a lot of personal praise songs and poems, each composed, performed and individually owned by every male adult, whose death is often the ultimate end for the poem, it would require specialized research to document the presence of epics par excellence among these people.

However, their major social and political units can be described in terms of ancestral spirit, and rain shrines, whose underlying principles have already been capably discussed by previous scholarship.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Tonga are basically one and the same people, they can be divided into four main categories. There are the Ila of Namwala District; the Plateau Tonga of the highlands along which the railway runs from the Kafue to Kalomo; the Toka Leya of Livingstone District and part of Kalomo; and the Valley Tonga who occupy the Zambezi Valley. Apart from the Ila and the Toka Leya, the other two always refer to themselves as the Tonga. However, there is hardly any reliable criterion distinguishing these Tonga groups. Perhaps dialectical variation according to geographical location is the most feasible differentiating aspect, since they all share a common cultural foundation. Even this is quite superficial and often an optional case for the purpose of general identity. This is mainly due to the fact that whereas one can describe various dialects of Chitonga spoken, and distinguish the finer detail of customs of the four groups, it would not be as easy to determine the specific points where any two dialects or traditions border.

Dialectical variation tends to be mostly phonetic. Notwithstanding various intra-dialectical differences within any given Tonga group, major characteristic differences between the four groups arise from some specific consonant sounds. The Ila and Plateau Tonga use soft and hard glottals /h/ and /hh/, respectively, while the Valley Tonga and the Toka share labial and alveolar articulation in /f/, /s/, and /v/, /z/. However, the Toka have an additional peculiarity in the hard /kk/ sound. These differences, however, do not cause any communication difficulty.

Apart from dialectical distinctions, there are other social aspects which similarly have no distinct boundaries that can be used to mark out the different Tonga societies. Given that a people's economy determines their social formations, it is normal to expect cultural variations, however slight they may be, within the same people as may be dictated by geographical conditions.

Essentially, the Tonga are an agricultural people. Their practices in this area have been modelled along the dictates of their environmental conditions. It will be found that the Ila practice mixed agriculture like the rest but their soil which is less suited to crop agriculture has drawn them more to livestock rearing. Thus, their culture, to a larger extent, emanates from cattle keeping. On the other hand, Plateau Tonga appear to attribute equal significance to both crop and livestock agriculture. The other two groups engage in both types with relatively less intensity probably due to the rocky structure of their soils as well as tsetse-fly infestation of their homelands.

Despite these naturally determined aspects, the Tonga have some uniform traditional customs such as matrilineal kinship, belief in rain and ancestral spirits, knocking out of upper front teeth, practices in marriage, burial rites, and many others.

There are, however, two outstanding differences that distinguish the Valley Tonga from the other three. The differences relate to puberty rites and buntibe. Regarding puberty, none of the Tonga people encamp male youths, while, apart from the Valley Tonga, they all seclude adolescent girls and host initiation ceremonies at the end of the seclusion. It is possible that inadequate agricultural output and low levels of cash economic trade have discouraged the Valley people from conducting nkolola (the female initiation ceremonies). This is because individual families cater for the occasion. In the absence of initiation ceremonies, therefore, upbringing of girls among the Valley Tonga is an ongoing process undertaken by parents and their immediate families.

Buntibe, also called Ngoma (Drums), is a funeral dance performance during funerals of adults. However, it is only performed during mapwaila (second stage) of a female adult's funeral, while it occurs during both stages of burial and mapwaila of a male adult's funeral. It should also be noted that this dance is organized on team basis. Each team comprises men, women and children from a village or cisi (group of villages). Men beat drums and blow nyeele while women and children sing and dance. Quite often several teams perform at one funeral such that the occasion becomes highly competitive and colourful. It is perhaps due to this that outsiders may develop impressions that:

a big funeral is a time for excitement and gaiety to all but the immediate mourners, and even they take an interest in the performance of the Drums.<sup>3</sup>

Such impressions are, however, unfortunate because death is not as desired an opportunity for merrymaking as they purport. On the contrary, the Valley Tonga dread and grieve death just like any other society. This is most outstanding during the burial stage of any funeral. However, they consider it as an inevitable and important stage in human development. Hence the ceremonial send-off into the world of ancestral spirits of the deceased during mapwaila.

This should, however, not contradict the earlier argument that the Valley Tonga do not hold mass ceremonies probably because they cannot afford to feed the guests. It should be pointed out that funerals are not any individual family's sole responsibility among these people as nkolola tend to be where found. The whole community contributes food and other services necessary during funerals. In fact beer is brewed by each household in the village and visiting buntibe teams bring their own ration as another contribution to the bereaved village.

It can therefore be seen that similarities or differences in the various Tonga traditions and general outlook to life are related to the similarities or differences in the major economic patterns which in turn are determined by environmental factors. Indeed, as C. Ake (1981) states:

By creating and recreating his economic and material conditions, man also creates his culture, history and civilisation. Most importantly he also creates his consciousness, for even consciousness is<sup>4</sup> essentially an effect of the environment.

In the final analysis, a people's manifest life has its basis in environmental conditions which determine economic formations. Thus, the Valley Tonga whom we have already characterized as being basically the same as other Chitonga speaking Zambians in the Southern Province, have, like any other people, their own peculiarities.

We have already noted that this group of people is found in the Zambezi Valley. In our context the Valley is that part of the River-bed between the Devil's Gorge, about 17°58' S, 26°55'E and the Zambezi-Kafue confluence 15°56'S, 28°56'E. The Valley's North-South boundaries are marked out by the Zambezi escarpments in the North and the Zambezi River in the South. The Valley, therefore, includes the low and high lands found within the specified grid.

The Valley is a reasonably vast lowland area which has already been conveniently demarcated into three regions by earlier scholars, viz, the Upper River, Middle River, and the Lower River regions.<sup>5</sup> However, although previous works differentiate between the river regions and lowlands of the Zambezi's tributaries (both primary and secondary) we do not intend to make the same distinction. This is mainly because although the latter areas are often far away from the river basin it would not be proper to treat them separately since each one of the three regions goes with such inhabited uplands. However, they are in the hilly parts of the Valley and they culminate into the Zambezi escarpments.

The given divisions are not only geographical conveniences. They are also serviceable to literary study of the Valley Tonga. They coincide with dialectical variation within the Valley. One who undertakes to study any of the various forms and uses of language in this region is bound to observe the change in dialect as he moves either down or up-stream the Zambezi. The Upper River Chitonga is distinguished from that spoken in the other two regions because it lacks the hard /cc/ which is characteristic of the Middle and Lower River Chitonga. So whereas the translations and discussion on language and other customs relate to the Valley Tonga, they are based on the findings among the Upper River people. Precisely, these are the Tonga of Chief Mwemba's area.

Furthermore, the interested researcher would also realize dialectical fusion as he spans into the uplands towards the plateau from any of the three Valley regions. In the Middle and Lower River regions the higher up one goes the more one notices the gradual disappearance of the hard palatal and adoption of the glottal sounds. This is also the trend with the uplands of the Upper River region where the language has to contend with the glottal and hard alveolar sounds that characterize the Chitonga of Kalomo and Livingstone Districts, respectively. With such tendencies it would be futile to attempt drawing boundaries between which category of the Tonga speaks which dialect. The same applies to other aspects of life: customs and other traditional practices. Perhaps this is what leads E. Colson(1960) into observing that:

no clearcut linguistic, cultural or political  
boundary separates the Valley from the Plateau  
Tonga

Perhaps to reconcile this rather problematic situation, one would have to conduct research from the depths of his selected region where cultural patterns might at least be representative of the regional life. However, this might further deny certain parts of the area intellectual exploration unless particular focus was given. As things are, limited funding and time are already perpetuating narrow regional investigation.

At this point, let us look at the major economic patterns of the Valley Tonga. This might give us better insight into and appreciation of their cultural heritage.

It has been mentioned above that the Valley Tonga undertake both crop and livestock farming on a lower scale than their Plateau counterparts. As suggested, this only applies when a comparative view is taken. As a particular people they treat agricultural activities more seriously than they do other economic ventures. But because of the physio-graphic structure of the Valley - mostly rock and rubble - the inhabitants

tributaries. The main crops are maize, sorgham and bulrush millet. These have been grown in the Valley for periods as long as the people can recall.

Due to floods of the Rivers during wet seasons, fields are usually located distances from villages so that during these seasons, people leave their homes to stay at the fields in order to keep away wild animals that may destroy crops. This is especially true of the river basin villages which, due to seasonal floods are clustered on the nearby higher grounds. The common practice among people along tributaries is spending the days at the fields and the nights in the village.

There are two types of fields which nearly every family cultivate in the Valley. There are river-bed fields (kkuti) and high ground fields (ntema). Maize, and the drought resistant crops - sorghum and bulrush millet - are grown in the respective fields. And:

Because much of the arable land consisted of alluviums which could be cultivated for long periods, fixed agriculture was the rule.<sup>7</sup>

This practice has not changed. In fact in places where people did not have to move at the time of flooding the Kariba, fields have been cultivated by different generations and yields have, by local standards, remained satisfactory.

Methods of cultivating have not changed much in the recent times. The three crops are still prominent. Other indigenous crops are: groundnuts, beans, and vegetables like pumpkins, only to mention a few. Cash crops like cotton and sunflower have become common among the peasant farmers. Seldom can one find people who use chemical fertilizers though high breed seeds are gradually replacing local ones. In addition to being too expensive for the subsistence farmers, fertilizers are believed to have the potential to spoil soil fertility. Hence the need for them is not urgently realized. However, ox-drawn implements have continued to replace hoes.

Recently, international agencies have established several irrigation projects along the shores of Lake Kariba. Many local people have taken advantage of the schemes, some of which unfortunately, have perpetuated land alienation. These projects concentrate on methods of commercial cash crop and vegetable growing.

Another aspect of agriculture found in the Valley is livestock keeping. The common animals reared are goats, sheep and cattle in addition to chickens and ducks. The history of cattle keeping in the area is quite short due to tsetse fly which haunted the Valley. According to Colson, cattle were introduced only "after the rinderpest epidemic in 1896."<sup>8</sup> Nowadays, however, it is common to find more herds of cattle than goats and sheep. Apart from isolated cases of commercial ranching on some parts of the Kariba shores, livestock farming is on subsistence scales.

Other economic ventures in the Valley include fishing, fruit and "vegetable" gathering, hunting, and crafts. Previously, fishing was associated with people who lived along the main river and near the deltas of its primary tributaries. To them it was a perennial activity. Upland dwellers caught fish in the rainy seasons when floods caused upstream migration of fish. With the advent of Lake Kariba, fishing has greatly intensified. The ever flooded river basin has provided larger fishable areas, greater numbers of fish and fish species, as well as continuous fish migration along the tributaries. Subsequently indigenous fishing methods, adequately discussed by T. Schudder (1960) have grown proportionally.<sup>9</sup> Actually many people from other parts of Zambia and the entire world have converged on the shores of the lake for commercial fishing. Consequently many locals have also entered into the trade.

Gathering and hunting have for ages remained perennial part time activities among the Valley Tonga. The Valley has a wide variety of

edible wild fruit, root plants, and others whose leaves are used as vegetable supplements. Unlike gathering, however, hunting has lately become less preferable. This is probably due to population growth and density due to the Kariba project resettlement scheme. Game species and numbers have dwindled. Nevertheless, people may still be found hunting down the little game that might still be available using guns or any of the devices described by Schudder (1962) and Reynolds (1968).<sup>10</sup>

Craftmanship is one of the rich longstanding original and aesthetic traditions in the Valley. Among the common crafts are blacksmithing, basket weaving, pottery, and carving. Smithing turns out most of the locally used hand tools and weapons, while carving produces stools, tool handles, plates, and many other wooden items. Expert weavers have also been making plates called nsangwa - just like carved ones - as well as women's skirts.

Like many other indigenous industrial arts, the four crafts have no particular periods of occurrence in a calendar year. They take place whenever need arises. These trades are undertaken according to sex: metal and wood work are masculine jobs while the other two are feminine. Today, however, it is possible to find male weavers and potters, although skirt and plate weaving has in the past been a man's job. All these crafts are now moving towards small scale industries. A comprehensive documentation of the Valley Tonga material culture is given in the afore cited study by Reynolds.

In addition to the foregoing major economic activities, apparently militated by ecological factors, there is one rather recent aspect of the Valley Tonga eco-system: Labour migration. In this section of the current chapter we shall attempt to briefly discuss the form and effects of labour migration on life in the Valley, as well as the people's reactions to it.

Labour migration is a subject that has received a fair amount of scholarship. In Southern Africa it involved movement of able bodied men from three territories; Zambia, Mozambique, and Malawi. The men went either to South Africa or Zimbabwe where they provided cheap labour to the mines and other industries found there. Migrant workers were contracted for periods of twelve months or more. In all the three primary territories there existed formal recruitment arrangements through organizations like the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (Wenela). There are many views on this system but the majority of critics acknowledge its leading cause as being taxation. It has been argued for example that:

Amongst the laws enacted specifically to push blacks into the service of white employers were those relating to taxation.<sup>11</sup>

However, Wenela, in Zambia, only operated in the Western and North-Western Provinces. But since labour migration was a colonial strategy and affected all blacks in any given colony, and since not all regions had formal recruitment points, many Zambians, among whom are the Valley Tonga, volunteered to join the wage labour force. Since they migrated on their own, they might not have been employed on the same conditions as the Wenela recruits in terms of duration of the contracts. It is possible that their claims that some workers stayed abroad for long periods and even permanently are true. It would therefore not be proper to believe that it was "in response to the pressures upon land" that labour migration became a significant aspect of the Valley Tonga economic system.<sup>12</sup> There is more evidence in addition to academic studies that point to its popularity long before the late 1950s when land alienation was created in the Valley.

In the earlier years of the current century, movement of contract workers was mostly southward as already noted. Following the establishment of settler farms on the Tonga Plateau and development of, especially,

copper mines on the Copperbelt in the later years, migrant workers started moving northwards. However, the northward drift was, to a larger extent, limited to the farms on the nearby plateau.

This drift has had diverse and far reaching effects. Most relevant to this study are those relating to trade and the family unit. Among the Valley Tonga, and indeed many other African societies, trade was by barter, before the introduction of currencies. Perhaps this was due to limited needs resulting from lack of contact with other cultures. The need for money was created by the settler Europeans whose government imposed tax on the local people. Thus, in search of this alien phenomenon - tax money - many went into foreign service in European industries.

It should be mentioned here that migrant workers often earned more money than they immediately required for tax, yet they lacked traditional material wealth. On the other hand some men, not able bodied enough to enter wage labour, owned material property but lacked tax money. Thus, the need for local property and tax money by migrant workers and villagers respectively instituted a precedent contradiction in an entirely barter economic system. The most logical course events could and did take was to submit to a new system of trade in which money is prominent.

Naturally, many areas of trade were affected. For example, hand tools, livestock and anything else that was previously paid for in kind could now be bought with money. Marriage, too, was affected in terms of bride wealth. This term began to include money among other items a father-in-law demanded from his daughter's husband.

It was, however, not only returned workers who bought goods from village dwellers. The latter also found the workers to be useful sources of Western or European goods like clothes, plates, pots, and the like. In fact goods from industrial centres were more preferable to the villagers who acquired them by exchanging with their traditional

many ex-workers accumulated property of both European and traditional value. This, coupled with their experience of the outside world, made contract workers the envy of other young men and indeed more favourite among women. In the final analysis we see that what originally was forced upon the people eventually became everyone's aspiration.

But because many able bodied men intended to and eventually joined the wage labour force, labour migration posed a very serious problem: a perpetual drain of productive manpower. Consequences of this state of affairs should be well known. However, Hobart D. Noughton's (1952) words might relive the picture more precisely:

This very exodus is itself a potent cause for the perpetuation of poverty at home, for the absence of so many in the prime of life inhibits economic progress and certainly accounts in no small measure for the low agricultural productivity.<sup>13</sup>

Families were therefore deprived of their energetic sons, and quite often, young women were left without suitors indefinitely. Given that the Valley Tonga "formally favoured infant betrothals",<sup>14</sup> it might be realized that migrant workers went away during periods they should have married. Thus, many marriages were put off indefinitely and hence a drop in birth rates. Then, society was threatened with gradual extinction.

However, the Valley Tonga have an effective way of making up for a marriage in the event of the known husband's absence. Death has been the only legitimate cause for husband absence. When a husband dies, the widow is inherited by and bound in marriage to the deceased's selected brother or uncle. In the Tonga context, brother strictly refers to one's mother's son, while uncle is mother's brother. Mother in turn means one's actual mother and/or any of her sisters. This is the matrilineal context on which the customary laws of succession are based. It is probably due to such laws that polygamy became institutionalized.

In the active days of labour migration, this custom of succession was extended to include young women whose husbands overstayed during foreign service. Explicitly, this suggests that young women would never experience non-polygamous marriages while labour migration existed. This was mainly because all single young men were out on contract so that only aged brothers and uncles were present to marry their kinsmen's fiancées. And when the workers returned, they found their childhood fiancées married either to a brother or an uncle. Once so, marriage is irreversible except in the case of bewidowment. Now the repatriated migrant was faced with an obviously stubborn dilemma on return to his village: he found his fiancée married; and marriageable young women available were already engaged to other men.

This is our interpretation of how labour migration paved the way for a revolutionary outlook to life, particularly marriage among the Valley Tonga. The dilemma had to be solved. This entailed working out new methods of marriage. The need for change in this area was for the benefit of both the young men and women. Without change, those returned workers who found their women already inherited would have waited for their turn to inherit a brother's or nephew's fiancée while girls could have continued being inherited by polygamous and already spent elder brothers or uncles.

Three profound changes regarding marriage emerged in response to the dilemma created by labour migration. We shall call these: elopement or individual choice; forced marriage; and, abduction. For lack of a more systematic method of examining how the collected narratives portray these changes, and how they were received, the tales have been classified into four categories according to the type of marriage they depict, viz, arranged, elopement, forced, and abduction.

Perhaps we should mention here that among the Valley Tonga, narratives have no titles. Some performing occasions identify tales by core-cliches (songs, leading characters, et cetra), or any other means considered suitable enough to enable them recall the particular story in question. In this study we designate the code NT (Narrative Translation) to the serial numbers in order to differentiate between the ten narratives.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### SOCIAL FUNCTION OF THE ART

1.

There are two major approaches today that characterize the study of folkliterature. These are the examination of the various forms, and that of social functions. Both approaches have sound findings which justify the need to pay equal attention to both form and content of the literature. They both tend to agree that social functions are only the discernible content which in turn is artistically presented. Thus social functions can be analysed in terms of the art. The oral narrative, perhaps the most elaborate and durable form of folkliterature, requires this kind of examination in order for us to genuinely appreciate its place in the development of society.

The role of oral literature in any given context has been defined in terms of the different functions it serves as well as the particular solutions it offers the scholar whose special problems may compel him to study it. Although the range is wide, it is possible to reduce the number of social functions oral narratives perform to two.<sup>15</sup> In most cases, if not all, the folktale both reflects cultural phenomena and entertains. Any other function ascribed to any narrative essentially belongs to either of the two. However, how these functions are handled is the concern of literary scholarship. In this chapter, therefore, we shall look at what significant cultural material is presented in the recorded narratives and how this material is presented.

It is perhaps necessary to mention beforehand that witnessed performances of the oral tale are not products of individual creativity in the same way a novel is often considered. Among the Valley Tonga, oral narratives, like other forms of oral literature, are "an inherited legacy and tradition," as S.P.C. Moyo (1978) points out.<sup>16</sup> The story teller merely contributes to the existence and perpetuation of the tradition

by doing what any other member of the society is capable of doing. There are no professional story tellers. However, each performance reveals individual interpretation of the role of art by each narrator. It is due to this that different versions of a narrative exist. Thus in evaluating the two social functions mentioned above, the role of the performer and his audience will be equally examined. However, the present work is so far the only serious study on Valley Tonga narratives.

In presenting cultural phenomena, oral tales more often than not depict particular topics prevalent in the culture of the performing society. The topics are explored in such a way that by the end of any performance it is clear what the conflict between existing reality and the ideal one is. How this is achieved renders the performance serviceable to entertainment. This probably explains why many theories relating to the functional study of folklore tend to emphasize the didactic role of narratives. But as Chatelin (quoted by Bascom, 1965) says:

The didactic tendency of these (Mbundu) stories is in no way technical but essentially social. They do not teach how to make a thing, but how to act, how to live.<sup>17</sup>

Hence, the narrative, and indeed literature as a whole, is very subtle in carrying out the socializing function. This is primarily because the manifest purpose of storytelling, as seen in the occasions of performance, is to entertain. However, by illuminating flaws in practices of a chosen aspect of life, folklore, particularly narratives, is a proponent of change. As R.M. Dorson (1972a) points out:

Folklore is an echo of the past, but at the same time it is also the vigorous voice of the present.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed when it is possible to discern the conflict that a tale explores it becomes clear that any given narrative presents a form of protest by the whole society or a segment of that society against prevailing practices regarding the select sphere of life. Quite often,

folklore proposes new outlooks to life without explicitly stating, let alone prescribing them. Nevertheless, close examination of performances reveals that there exists a certain degree of agreement between the tale on the one hand, and the narrator and his audience on the other, on what the nature of change proposed is.

In most cases, however, change reflected in folklore often tends to be highly conservative. In fact it is essentially the manner in which deviation from traditional values is treated that makes oral literature conservative in nature. By rewarding or punishing a hero for either being good or bad, folk literature exhibits value judgement based on the old order which is reminiscent of the ideal situation. But as we hope to show in this chapter, there are many instances when the old way is presented in such a way as to commend new social perspectives. Seen from this point of view, therefore, the narrative form and oral literature as a whole serves a noble role in noble cultures. It should be seen as a reflection of the past and the present, and indeed a projection of the future. This perspective gives a strong framework for examining narratives of, as in the present case, the Valley Tonga, centring on crucial topics such as marriage.

But before we assemble the collected narratives and examine how they deal with marriage, let us briefly look at what marriage entails, world-wide and among the Valley Tonga. As a universal institution, marriage serves similar functions everywhere; it legalizes sex to which is appended reproduction, hence continuity of human races. But because its governing principles and beliefs vary from race to race, and society to society and so forth, marriage has continued to draw a lot of attention.

There are three stages with which marriage is characterized in this study. These are betrothal, the wedding, and co-habitation (courtship, union, and unity, respectively). In all these exist manifest tendencies which constitute analysable practices, as well as the latent tendencies which reflect traditional principles that shape an individual's expectations in marriage. It is in the last that variation is most outstanding.

The commonest opinion about marriage today, which is also often associated with most Western cultures, is one that can perhaps be expressed more aptly in L. Sondashi's (1977) words. According to him:

People marry in order to cohabit together  
and provide human needs for each other!<sup>9</sup>

This view sees marriage to be a matter to be resolved by the parties engaging in it. In fact this is an ideal marriage many would wish existed. The determining factor in this type of marriage appears to be the concept of love which, as we might all agree, is the most difficult to document. Cohabitation and provision of human needs for each other are indeed services which only the partners in marriage can offer each other. But they have been sought differently by different people.

Some people have married out of prestige while others recognize a social obligation in marriage. In both types of people are found a category that regards themselves wholly responsible for everything and another that recognizes a certain degree of external influence. Given that love is an elusive phenomenon, the former group enter into marriage with scanty knowledge of their spouses. Their knowledge of each other seldom goes beyond exhibited behaviour. In many cases lack of adequate knowledge of each other has led to serious marital problems, some of which relate to the extended family.

The other category does not see the extended family as a menace to their marriages, but rather look to it as the vital element in their affairs. Most African societies regard marriage in this way. In the indigenous setting, marriage is:

a compact between two bodies of persons,  
the kin of the woman and his kinsmen.... 20

Consequently, one's parents play a major role at all levels of marriage; they choose their child's spouse, pay bridal expenses, and counsel the marriage throughout. Despite the privacy that goes with marriage, both husband and wife are encouraged to discuss marital problems with relevant members of the two extended families.

From the two perspectives one would recognize the apparent conflict between them. But there need be no conflict at all since it is clear that both are products of the same intentions except that one is more elaborate than the other. Certainly the traditional African view embodies the Western one. However, perhaps due to possible economic advantages of the latter view, it is becoming more and more popular locally. The Valley Tonga have looked at marriage from the African perspective but time and hard conditions have necessitated change of view. However, change is part of social development.

Despite the acute transformation in marriage trends, no strong challenge of or resistance to the change was applied. Instead, the Valley Tonga accepted the new methods and worked out ways of normalizing marriages. Besides, it was the first stage - betrothal - that suffered the worst impact. Weddings among these people have comprised two phases separated in both time and space. The first phase is the admission of the bride to her in-laws' home, while the second is her first return to her own parents' home. These are first formal meetings between the bride and her in-laws, and the groom with his in-laws, respectively. Bride wealth, communicated through a spokesman, is paid during the latter stage which

marks the beginning of the third stage of a marriage - the unity.

Since the impending change affected betrothal only the rest of the marriage followed the accepted course. This is probably because the origin of most of the change affecting marriage was well understood as effects of colonial taxation and contact with foreign cultures. The society's response was in many cases directed at members of the society who might have covertly submitted to alien ways. This is how folkliterature assumes the challenging task of protecting society from total collapse.

Among the Valley Tonga a literary genre other than the narrative could make the study of literary expression of topical issues like marriage very difficult. We should all be aware that songs and proverbs are the other forms that focus on public or private social conduct. But these are too brief to allow for extensive investigation. Furthermore, songs are highly prolific and do not live for very long. New ones emerge with a frequency corresponding with events. Proverbs mainly help clarify or justify complex situations of a judicial nature and are mostly used by elders. On the other hand the folktale never becomes redundant and often embodies other genres.

## II.

In the ten narratives we are going to examine, four main types of marriage emerge: arranged marriage; elopement; forced marriage; and abduction. Although analysis will follow this sequence it has been found necessary to discuss two of the tales separately because of their concern with particular problems common to the third stage of many a Valley Tonga marriage and perhaps elsewhere. The narratives are thus grouped in the following order: NT1, 2, 4 and 10; NT7 and 9; NT3; NT6; and NT5 and 8, respectively. The last two deal with polygamy and pregnancy, respectively.

Let us now look at those narratives dealing with traditionally arranged marriages. These tales can be split into two sub groups. There are the tales on arranged marriage either in the pre- or post-labour migration eras - NT2 and 10; and arranged marriage in the period of active labour migration - NT 1 and 4. However, let us bear in mind that as already noted above, arranged marriage was more suited to the pre-labour migration period because, then, both the boy and the girl destined to marry stayed within the villages and were prepared for the responsibilities ahead.

In NT2 we encounter one of the fundamental conditions determining betrothals and subsequent marriages. This narrative deals with a young man whose mother dies when he is still very young. With the death of his mother, the hero undergoes gross misery marked by neglect and labouring for the entire village until the supernatural forces come to complement his efforts to liberate himself. He acquires the ability to command rain. It is possible that without parents to arrange his marriage, and his ability to prove his worth to society, our hero's marriage could not have been achieved. By herding all the village's cattle and bringing rain to the draught stricken area, the hero proves to all that he is hard working and responsible enough to run a stable home.

In this story we have the hero and his guardian - the old woman - on one hand, and the rest of the village on the other; representing good and bad values, respectively. It can as well be claimed that NT2 is archetypal and that the hero's hardships are a form of initiation tests he undergoes before being recognized in society. It can also be said that the rain is a symbolic introduction of the final resolution.

NT10 on the other hand presents a contest in which the man who demonstrates the ability to tolerate his mother-in-law's (and indeed any other family member's) old age wins. In this tale the bride's mother

ingenuously performs a wide range of absurdities such as farting, careless blowing of the nose, and so forth, in order to penetrate deep into her potential son-in-law's inner self. Two major characters emerge. These are Lindi, the village boy who resists all efforts to make him laugh, and Philemon, the elegant town dweller who cannot suppress his laughter. They win and lose respectively. We should perhaps mention here also that both Lindi and Philemon are living persons in Simankawa's home village. This is an interesting feature illucidated later.

It can be seen from these tales that the portrayed betrothals span a number of years in NT 2, and are instant in NT 10. This factor suggests to us that the marriages are pre- and post-labour migration ones, respectively, essentially because in the former the hero is not physically removed from the village and the period of proving his worth begins right from his childhood; while in the latter tale, we encounter the hero at his marrying age. So, while the hero in NT 2 passes through all stages of development in an ideally immobile society the one in NT 10 appears and is tested abruptly. Consequently, we are led to claiming that the mother-in-law in NT 10 belongs to the liberal post migration period ones who do not emphasize the potential son-in-law's background so much as long as he satisfies the more important conditions. In the final analysis, it can be said that the morals pertinent to marriage the two tales project respectively are hard work, responsibility and respect, especially, for old age.

NT1 and 4 do give useful information to people interested in arranged marriages during labour migration. They particularly focus on inconveniences of husbands' absence. In both narratives, brides are accordingly transferred to their in-laws' homes in marriage to husbands whose persons they have no contact with. They both are required to observe the daily routine of married life as though their husbands are present. They carry out all domestic chores including preparing food for their husbands.

But probably because the bride in NT 1 is covertly told that her husband is at Saba - a village on the southern banks of the Zambezi, also commonly used in reference to industries in Zimbabwe by the Valley Tonga - she discovers that he is in the form of a snake hidden in the crib and presses for her first return to her parents (kupilusya). The discovery frustrates her so badly that she mourns "/My own mother foresook me/, /The plate is shattered/."

In NT 4 the bride is not aware of the truth though she is highly suspicious of everything that goes on. She decides to leave her mother-in-law. But because she has not stayed long enough at her mother-in-law's place to warrant for kupilusya she absconds into the bush. There she climbs up a tree down which only the pleas of her youngest brother make her come. Then she goes back to her family.

In these narratives, both husbands are presented as monsters with strange eating habits, perhaps to depict the unnaturalness of the situations. Although we cannot be certain from NT 4 that the young husband is on contract, we can safely claim that his physical absence and his eating habits suggest that he, like that one in NT 1, is a caricature of the migrant worker. Both husbands do not appear in public and when they do, like in NT 1, there is panic in the village. This could be a criticism of migrant workers who on return seemed to have lost the desire for integration into the local community, as further suggested by the husband's retirement from the feast in NT 1.

These narratives also show how parents nursed sons whose destinies they knew very well lay in foreign service. The tales seem to propose that outside the traditional society, the individual ceases to be human. This is clear from the physical description one of them is given:

After having that child, the child had the upper body of domba. The rest of the body was human.<sup>22</sup>

It is believed that a domba is a half human and half snake creature that sorcerers and witches use. Since there is no evidence that the two mothers are witches, their sons are entirely human except that they have a future destined for labour migration. We can therefore explain the physical forms of these young men in terms of society's protest against the migration system in respect to marriage. It is portrayed as witchcraft which produces malomba.

It is also believed in the Valley that if a witch's domba is killed, the owner also dies at the same time. We can therefore argue that by killing the monster in NT 1, the community is expressing their wish to end the system of wage labour in the same way. This protest takes another form in NT 4. Here, relatives take turns in appealing to the bride to climb down as though to depict the need for concerted effort to resist the system.

These stories can also be seen as protests against idealistic society which insists on arranged marriages in the changing times. The marriages are a clear mockery of the tradition and reminiscent of ntuuntu - a children's institution in which girls and boys act in marriage, and at times with imaginary spouses. Furthermore, although a wife is never withdrawn from marriage among the Valley Tonga, both marriages in these tales break up. This contradiction indicates that the narratives are advancing change in practices because prevailing circumstances can no longer support arranged marriages. It further points to the argument that the tradition needs urgent amendment so as to accommodate the new methods of marrying. Thus, the tales present powerful appeals to society to accept the new methods.

Narratives 7 and 9 depict one of the new methods: elopement or personal choice of spouse. But both also reflect some of the problems arising from such marriages. In these stories, young men bring into

their parents' homes wives whose backgrounds are not well known. In NT7 the bride is physically normal, but when she is assigned to collect vegetables from the field, she turns herself into a duiker and invites wild ones into the field where they eat up all the beans. This goes on for some time until a passer-by discovers her peculiarity. The passer-by notifies the bride's parents-in-law who later find her red-handed. On being discovered she bounds into the bush together with the wild duikers and never returns.

In NT 9 the bride is allergic to all feminine chores except stringing beads. This is instantly challenged by her sisters-in-law who, while their parents are at the fields, force her to pound maize. When she does so the first time, she sinks into the ground up to the waist. They quickly stop her and she comes out. The second time, they let her sink completely and a pumpkin plant grows from the spot where she sank. This plant grows swiftly and within a short time the whole courtyard is covered. On seeing this the girls call their parents who send for their counterparts. These come and sing in turns but it is not until the youngest brother sings that the plant shrinks and the bride is eventually retrieved. Then she goes back to her parents' home.

Both narratives are quite interesting and bring out quite forcefully the basic argument justifying arranged marriages. It is possible that the young man in NT 7 could not have married the same woman had he known about her duiker characteristics. It is also very unlikely that the husband in NT 9 took his wife seriously because such redemption infringes on the basic norms. Adequate knowledge of brides clearly lacks in both tales. Apparently such knowledge can best be gained through parents who, as seen in the preceding section, constitute the negotiating parties in arranged marriage.

Given that both brides disappoint their in-laws, let us look at the implications of their queer habits. It can be seen that both contradict some motherly virtues; namely, generosity to the people she lives with, and productivity, respectively. It is clear in NT 7 that instead of sharing what is available with her in-laws, the bride consumes it, with her own family - the duikers. On the other hand, the bride in NT 9 is not capable of producing let alone processing food for her family. It might be worthwhile to mention here that a wife among the Valley Tonga plays the leading role in providing and preparing food for the family. It is therefore unlikely that one such as that wife in this story can raise a healthy family. The two narratives clearly propound the merits of traditionally arranged marriage and justify emphasis on service to the extended family since in both cases husbands are not very significant. It is parents, and sisters-in-law respectively who challenge and regulate the bride's behaviour.

NT9, however, also brings out a feature we noticed in NT 4, viz, a young child's success in normalizing the situation where adults fail. By refusing to respond to the adults' pleas, the brides in these two tales, to us, appear to reject the adults's idealism and hypocrisy because although the latter are fully aware of the unnaturalness of the two situations they go ahead to inaugurate marriages. Perhaps if they had been as ignorant of this fact as the children (actually babies) are, the brides could have reacted differently. As things are, the brides identify themselves with the innocent because they, themselves, were equally ignorant of the abnormalities.

NT 3 portrays another type of marriage: forced marriage. The tale opens with a contextual setting in which there is a man who has a large field in which nothing else apart from a lone fruit tree that has a single fruit grows. This man assigns his daughter to guard the fruit against

anything that might eat it. The girl does this dutifully until a die-hard and determined young man appears on the scene. She resists this man's first attempts at the fruit but eventually he forces his way and eats the fruit promising to eat only part of it. However, upon realizing how tasty it is the man eats up the whole fruit. When her father comes to learn of it he is extremely angry and beats his daughter so severely that she is said to "die". Her mother picks her up and leaves her on the banks of a river from where she regains consciousness. But instead of going back home, the girl seeks that young man who ate the fruit and thence enters into marriage. The marriage is formalized during kupilusya.

It is explicit from this tale that the sequence of events surrounding the fruit leads to the assumption that defloration is involved. In the olden days defloration was harshly handled as the tale reveals and often resulted in marriage. Today, however, forced marriages occur mostly when there is pre-marital pregnancy.

It is interesting to note that there are only four characters all of whom appear to be equally significant. There is the young man who, in our context, is probably a recently returned labour migrant. There is the girl who is instructed to protect her virginity until may be her fiance returns from Saba where he might still be. There is also the disciplinarian father whose idealistic hopes begin to take shape only with his wife's concern. Perhaps because she understands her husband's disappointment and knows her own role well, the old woman sets her daughter on a course that restores peace in the family. We can see that the young man and his parents-in-law are attracted to the same forces: the girl and her marriage. The parents want to preserve their pride through their daughter's decent marriage, while the young man who can no longer marry through decent channels takes advantage of rather too rigid norms regarding sex.

It therefore becomes apparent that there is a common interest which, to the delight of all the four, is achieved, viz, the girl's successful

marriage. This is seen in the harmony and joy all of them manifest at the end of the narrative. However, their ultimate goal is only achieved after marked frustrations on each one of the four characters' parts. The narrative therefore gives a fair exposition of experiences that led to and justify changed outlooks to marriage.

NT 6 shows a young man who goes into the bush and carves a piece of wood into the form of a woman. He puts a life-giving feather into the figure which turns into a beautiful young woman. He takes her home as his wife. Then he goes into wage labour, leaving his wife with his mother. While he is away, another man marries his wife. When the first husband returns he follows his wife up, finds her, and plucks the life-giving feather which takes her back into the original wooden form.

The first marriage in this tale appears to be a normal traditionally arranged one. In this regard the carving process may be seen as bride service.<sup>23</sup> The second marriage is procured through abduction. The woman does not concede in the marriage but is forcibly taken away. In accordance with Valley Tonga customs, when the latter marriage happens, there is a legal case to which the abductor is answerable and such a wife should not escape from the new marriage if the case is to stand. The woman is quite aware of this and stays with the new husband.

By the time the former husband returns, the new marriage has been on for some time and the best (traditional laws can permit him) to do is recover all expenses he incurred in marrying. But this is practically impossible since bride service cannot be returned unlike material bride wealth. However, in the tale, it is presented through plucking of the feather and the bride's reversal to the wood form, which to us indicates difficult consequences of such marriages. The tale therefore proposes total avoidance of abducting and marrying other people's wives. However, it is the second marriage in this story that makes NT 6 a suitable representative of those narratives from the Valley dealing with marriage.

When marriages occur in the way we see them in NT 6, the women involved find themselves in very complex situations out of which the best way is to go into exile. Their reputations are utterly damaged so that they are no longer considered worthy citizens in their home villages. In this narrative, the woman cannot go back to being the living tree she initially was, neither can she remain with either husband, all because her personality has been tainted.

In addition to the eight narratives discussed in this section, that show the various methods of marrying and their implications among the Valley Tonga, there are NT 5 and NT 8 which centre on polygamy, and pregnancy, respectively. Perhaps we should mention that polygamy is an old and established system common to many cultures world over. Among the Valley Tonga, it enhanced the custom of inheriting widows. However, there are various reasons that make people engage in it.

In NT 5, the husband is not satisfied with his first wife and so, marries another one. However, in addition to solving the man's immediate worry, polygamy creates a new one.

This story depicts a man who spends nights with the new wife to the annoyance of the senior wife. Consequently, the senior wife plots to undermine the new marriage. She does this by sneaking to the new wife's house every night and farting into it through an opening in the wall. As intended, quarrels ensue every time the smell reaches the couple. On seeing the success of her scheme, the senior wife shares the secret with one of the neighbours. Incidentally, the junior wife also consults the same neighbour over her problem. Then things are revealed and the husband is made aware. To confirm the truth he ties a scorpion to the vent. Thus when she comes to repeat her exercise, the senior wife is stung. Despite the sharp pain, she quietly runs to her house where she begins to scream for the husband to come. Well, he goes there and cross-examines her. She confesses.

To justify his actions, the husband says:

Why do you think I married another woman?  
That is when I saw that my wife, yourself,  
was not good.<sup>24</sup>

This explanation is quite straightforward and suggests that polygamy is a more effective remedy and substitute for divorce when cohabitation fails. However, it also creates rivalry between wives and could even be a danger to the husband for, in many cases, competition for him may involve the use of dangerous love potions.

Apart from justifying and showing the consequences of polygamy, this narrative also portrays the role of a responsible husband in solving domestic differences in polygamy or any other setting. Precisely, such a husband is expected to be rational and follow matters up rather than being emotional. The husband here meets this requirement. It is possible that had he been emotional towards his first wife, she could have been divorced. As things are, it is very likely that she will work out a better strategy to entice her husband or even maintain harmony in the polygamous setting. Indeed the purpose of the punishment here is to correct and not to break bonds all together. Alternatively, the husband could have easily divorced his junior wife had he not had the maturity he demonstrates.

NT 8 on the other hand looks at some complications that go with pregnancy. In this tale we see a pregnant wife with a rather abnormal craving for fig fruits. She sends her son to get the fruit which is guarded by a dangerous bird. Each time the bird finds him up the tree, the boy plays his flute and descends while it is dancing to the music. One day, however, he allows himself to be devoured by the monster. On realizing the boy's delay, his mother informs her husband who threatens to kill her if the boy has been eaten by the bird. He follows him and finds his son has been swallowed up. He returns home to carry out his threat.

Certainly this narrative shows a contrary brand of maturity to that in NT 5 on the part of the husband. This one does not appear to understand

that cravings are normal conditions in pregnancy. Although one cannot predict what an individual will crave for in her next pregnancy or what form or degree it will take, craving is an anticipated antenatal condition. That is probably why many societies urge their members to be tolerant with pregnant women, because these women experience a great deal of suffering.

It can be argued that the woman in the current story endures a lot of pain in order to satisfy her craving. She is fully aware of the dangers involved, yet she risks her son's life by sending him to collect the fruit. Perhaps this is in protest against her husband's apathy. Although he, too, is aware of the danger the boy is in, he makes no effort to provide for his wife's craving. The conflict here can perhaps be more efficiently expressed in Helene Deutsch's (1945) words. According to her:

an excessively strong or abnormal reaction to the physiological signals that are normal in pregnancy takes place only if additional motives leading to a quantitative increase of the normal response are present.<sup>25</sup>

It appears that the boy is also aware of his father's shortcomings and understands his mother's protest. This could be the best explanation for his own death. Since he has discovered an effective method of avoiding the bird, it would otherwise be difficult to account for why he gives himself away. It is clear from this narrative that the husband is one that cares little for his family. That is why he allows all of them to perish. As such the story can be seen as a useful appeal to husbands to accept their role as a crucial one in marriage.

From what we have seen in the foregoing, it can be argued that none of the tales is on a one to one relationship with, although they all focus on, real issues affecting society. Apart from the obvious sociological material upon which the stories are built, intellectual arguments are certainly artistically advanced in the tales. These arguments are mainly given in the form of non-human characters, and symbols such as

rain, the inji fruit, the life-giving feather and many others. In addition to expressing social needs, these characters and symbols at times present smooth transition in plot towards the desired solutions. Thus it can as well be said among the Valley Tonga that:

tales are not conglomerations of episodes and characters accidentally related, but that there are coherent... relations between the episodes and characters of a tale.<sup>26</sup>

The collected narratives further demonstrate that textual coherence is inherited and transmitted from generation to generation by individual narrators who, as we have already seen, are not professional. There, however, tends to exist very strong relationships between the narrator, his audience and the tale, upon which realized structures lie. The major relationship has already been cogently argued out by J.A. Moody (1986) when he says:

Since the story is mediated by the teller, he must have an attitude towards it as well as towards his audience, and his audience in turn has an attitude towards the story.<sup>27</sup>

It is therefore this attitude factor that moulds each performance into the structure it follows. Thus, whereas textual plot and theme are products of predecessor generations at any given point in time, each performance stands out as a unique experience in which prevailing moods of both the narrator and his audience are ultimate determinants.

### III

In attempting generic structural patterns of the collected narratives we are compelled to refer to Denise Paulme's (1972) "proposition-sequence" structural types.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps this is due to lack of previous scholarship on Valley Tonga narratives, let alone specifically on narratives dealing with topical issues. However, the collected narratives exhibit interesting patterns which future research can investigate.

It is clear from the texts that NT2 follows the ascendancy pattern in which the hero begins with lack of recognition and hence lack of a wife. He goes through a period of striving and testing before he is recognized and marries. Characterization here is simple and archetypal. Equally simple in plot and characterization are NT1, 4, 7, and 9. However, perhaps due to the range and nature of events covered, these narratives tend to follow the descendancy structural pattern. This structure shows a hero's downward progression from normal situations to deprived ones. In all the four cases we have heroines - the respective brides.

The tales open with what could be termed as successful marriages, but go through interdictions whose violation is inevitable and leads to permanent dissolution of the marriages. It should be noted that in tales NT1 and 4 (which look like versions of the same story) interdictions are externally caused and are in the form of fundamental expectations in any marriage: husband-wife contact. In the other two, social restrictions and adherence to accepted norms, respectively, introduce the deteriorating relations in marriage and the subsequent dissolutions. NT 8 could also belong to this pattern since the anti-hero's own negligence results in the complete extermination of his family.

Competition for the same object is what determines structures of NT 5 and 10. In these tales, the main characters vie for the same husband and wife respectively. Clearly, winners in both contests can be said to possess better qualities than their rivals according to the specifications in each narrative. The double hero structural pattern is what Paulme calls the "mirror-image" tale type.<sup>29</sup> This, too, is the basic formation for NT 6.

However, unlike the simultaneous competition in NT 5 and 10, that in NT 6 is successive. Both heroes begin with lack of a wife but at different times. The first one labours for and acquires one whom, perhaps due to labour migration, he deserts for quite a long period. Then the

second appears and, probably because he is in a situation beyond traditional formalities of betrothal, he abducts and marries the same woman. The return of the first husband disrupts the new marriage. The succeeding events, coupled with traditional practices, lead to restoration of the lack for both heroes. As such the tale is complex in its own way because although the beginning takes Paulme's "complex tale type", contact of the opposing heroes leaves none of them in a normal situation.

NT 3, on the other hand, is of a strikingly peculiar structure. Apart from the young man in this narrative, the other three begin with stable parents-daughter relationships which they lose as a result of the young man's initial lack and the subsequent quest. But instead of perpetual parallel development between the three there is subordination in which the father punishes his daughter. The punishment achieves its intended results but with the mother's help, who helps her daughter to embark on the search that leads to her stable marriage and the subsequent restoration of normal relationships between all the four characters. In this story, therefore, we have the young man whose positive progression is definite, on the one hand, and the other three who move in the normal-lack-normal sequence, on the other.

It can be seen from these patterns that structural analysis of Valley Tonga narratives, if undertaken, can reveal complex sets that may not easily be found in existing studies. Using Paulme's quite universal patterns, we might realize that not all the collected tales match hers in structure; neither do all her tale types apply to the present tales. This, in our opinion, suggests that analysis of structural patterns is far from being concluded, until, perhaps, oral narratives from all societies have been studied.

At this point let us look at one aspect of narrative structure which has all along been only mentioned in passing. This is the presence of songs in Valley Tonga narrative plots. Songs appear to be a very important feature, albeit there is no distinction between narratives with and those without songs.

Out of the ten stories presented in the current study only one, NT 5, does not bear a song. In fact some of the tales contain more than one song. These as we might agree, have retained their positions in kwaana. They have also remained in the same form and with the same content for periods as long as Chief Mwemba's people can recall. Of course there are versions of each song but even these are well known to almost everyone such that when one version is used, the narrator is exercising his freedom to choose from the available repertoire. This gets further testimony in the fact that except in very peculiar cases, narrative songs are untransferable. Each one and its various versions go with a particular narrative.

All this suggests that where found, songs are integral parts of narrative structure and content, which play clearly defined and understood functions, some of which are: to maintain audience participation; to heighten audience anticipation; and to appeal to the audience so that they may vividly see a character's predicament, as most cases tend to be. Indeed, they, in many ways, help to advance the story as Scheub would put it in his theory of the "expansible image".<sup>30</sup>

It may be agreed that songs, in the final analysis, lead to the achievement of the generic function to entertain. We also strongly believe that an audience that is actively engaged in performance has better chances of ultimate appreciation of the various morals inherent in the narratives.

We can therefore see from the role songs play in the narratives that there is generic provision in stories to satisfy the two functions - to educate and to entertain. But since, as already seen, not all tales go with songs, and narrative structure and content of each tale are inherited legacies, it becomes important to investigate how individual performances utilize this provision. However, it should be noted that the two functions complement each other such that a narrator who lacks fair concern for both fails to appreciate his own role in society. Nevertheless, since entertainment is the more manifest function it would be interesting to investigate how this is achieved in narratives that are essentially based on topical issues. Thus in the succeeding section of this chapter, we draw our attention to how individual style weaves traditional concepts and norms into art.

#### IV.

The dictionary definition of style in our context is that

quality that marks out something done or made  
as superior, fashionable or distinctive.<sup>31</sup>

In Literature, style has often referred to the manner of writing or speaking which characterizes a particular work or literary tradition. As such style is the element that distinguishes one text from another that may be dealing with the same or related themes.

But since the collected narratives demonstrate adherence to the dictum that

Literature must be related to established  
forms of saying things; even syntax and  
diction ..<sup>32</sup>

linguistic analysis per se is for future research to undertake. Our present concern is with those distinguishing features which facilitate functional success or failure of the recorded performances. However, where peculiar linguistic rendition works towards this goal, it will only be inevitable to comment on it.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the collected narratives is the use of formulas. It is quite clear from the texts that opening and closing formulas including chorus responses characteristic of kwaana in other Tonga traditions do not receive similar attention among the Valley people. Apart from Joyce Siachitebwe who uses an opening associated with riddle performance, nkaako (there it is), none of the rest suggests its use in narration. Although it is possible to encounter performances using the opening, it does not appear to be accepted. Its presence is supposed to receive some acknowledgement, kakaza (let it come), but during the current performance nothing came forth as though to stress its irrelevance. Similarly the conventionalized response galangati is entirely absent.

On the other hand there exists a terminative formula which appears to serve no other function than to indicate a tale's logical end. Out of the ten narratives, eight tend to agree that kamana kaano (the tale is finished) or a similar phrase is enough to carry out this function. The other two, "There, there.... It rains where it was given a bride", and:

This is why you find duikers bother us a lot  
in our fields. The girls you marry, too ...

in NT 2 and 7, respectively, are individual choices which cohere with the respective openings.

However, there are three opening formulas in all that differ from the usual "There was... " in our collection. These are: NT2, "Let us see... Just why do people say ..."; NT 5, "I have a narrative about ..."; and NT 7, "Now I want to tell you a story ...". All these suggest that the narrators have many tales to tell and therefore present the initial introduction of the particular ones for the occasions. Apparently, the first and last ones are the ones that go with tale terminating formulas which are different from the common one. Certainly, these are interesting formulas which can be investigated further.

This situation indicates that both the narrator and his audience enter storytelling events with preconceived and understood expectations and responsibilities. Formulaic openings here imply that the audience require synchronizing in order for them to be attentive. Thus the opening and the subsequent chorus are dropped essentially because both narrator and audience claim the two disrupt attentiveness.<sup>33</sup> It should be noted that the prose narrative is transformed into the poetic form by the chorus response which, as we might all agree, occurs randomly whenever the narrator pauses either to catch his breathe or for the dramatic effect. Furthermore, audience concentration on suitable openings for the response distracts them from the substance of a tale. Whereas prescribed opening formula and the response are not important, the terminative signal is necessary in order for the audience to begin digesting the thrill and prepare themselves for the next narrative.

It has been noted above that in order to provide for audience attention and participation, prose narratives are flexible towards contemporary phenomena while maintaining the basic structure and content. By the very nature of transmission, narratives are perhaps the only genre in which reproduction verbatim is neither insisted upon nor possible. Although basic themes and plots are retained, each performance contains alterations and reconstructions (or deconstructions). These constitute the narrator's mimetic and diegetic inputs which sustain narrative discourse.

These two concepts should, however, be approached with caution as Moody rightly warns. According to him:

The attempt to formulate the problem of narrative method in these terms ... seems in the final analysis a questionable one because it makes into opposing entities what are, in practice, the same thing.<sup>34</sup>

However, we shall consider direct speech, which is common in all tales, as the dramatic imitations and simulations; and this we shall call the

mimetic. The narrative voice, the commentative element, we shall term, the diegetic. Both contribute greatly to maintaining audience participation and toward final achievement of the two functions of the folktale.

To start with, let us look at the rhetorical questions which are often succeeded with calculated pauses. It appears that pauses are useful devices that monitor audience attentiveness and awareness of the portrayed phenomena. During Zuka Sianguni's performance (NT1), for example, she says, "Well, what do you expect?" This question, like many others of its type, draws the audience deeper into narrative analysis.<sup>35</sup> These should, however, not be confused with another type which we might call "prompters".

These questions, the prompters, enhance plot and facilitate its coherence. They are questions like: "Then what happens ...?"; "Is it not time to go and collect remains of the meal?"; "Aa ... now what?"; and such others.<sup>36</sup> The major difference between rhetorical questions and prompters is plainly that between analysis and prompting. The former can be found on both the mimetic and diegetic levels while the latter is clearly a case of diegesis.

In securing audience participation through intellectual and literal examination of a given narrative a narrator also uses more effective similes and metaphors. Most of the collected performances manifest the tendency by narrators to bring into tales metaphorical phenomena that are familiar to both themselves and their audiences. For example, we have two cases of living persons in narrative dramatis personae: NT2 and NT 10. In the former, Namwido appears justified to portray the picture of an aged person more effectively in her own image. She also makes the audience part of the narrative as she, herself, is. This, she achieves by throwing to the audience, descriptions of certain

experiences through remarks such as: "Now there also lived a woman of our type"; "You know better what it means to look after so many cattle"; and "We are comfortable ourselves".

This narrative also shows how a narrator establishes and maintains a particular relationship with the audience. Namwido opens with a patronizing welcome and assurance from which she technically glides into the thematic aspect of her tale. She maintains this relationship through comments like, "Oh ... my young ones, it was terrible", and reference to familiar places and periods - "Gale" and "Kabbwida", and, "It was being happy like we were last season". She also has an interesting way of distinguishing between those parts of the tale which belong to the past; "See/You see ... it was like this", and those parts belonging to the present.

It can be seen from these remarks that the narrator wants her audience to feel part of the narrative, and remain audience to the same performance, at the same time. It could be said that she successfully transplants the tale from the past both in time and space. She has a remarkable style and ability which has possibly received little attention in many studies.

In NT 10, the narrator is certainly relieved by the presence of two suitably contrasting personalities in the village, who can stand in place of lengthy descriptions of rustic and urbanized people's characteristics. As such she transfers Lindi and Philemon from the real world to the fictional. In both NT 2 and 10, we find that the technique serves an obvious advantage of excluding detailed descriptions and achieves high levels of audience enjoyment and comprehension.

The technique also applies to reference to other cultural material such as old customs. However, it will perhaps suffice to comment on the

manner in which the customs are introduced in the tales. Quite often, the opening phrases are in the affirmative. For example; "Thus in line with ...", and "You already know ...", in NT 4 and 5, respectively. Like the inclusions of living persons in tales, these expressions help elide chunks of common-place material while maintaining audience alertness, and draw focus onto effects of the material in the narrative situation, and thereby sharpen audience analysis of the given stories.

In most tales, especially NT 5, the impact of sociological material plays the important role of clarifying narrative events. Background information here explains Siansima's claim that bwinga is shy and rather scared of her husband. This is an issue about which society is quite particular. That is why the bride is so submissive, and the senior wife cannot refer to her husband by name. It could also explain why most of our narrators, except those above the age of fifty, use maiden names, yet all of them are married.<sup>37</sup>

Even when there is no direct appeal to background knowledge on the audience's part, narrators often engage them actively through other alternatives, particularly humour and intense dramatization. Looking at NT 5, we could say that the narrator depends on tickling her audience in order to maintain their involvement in the performance. As such she fully utilizes the crude method the senior wife uses to destabilize her co-wife's marriage. She explores the farting events and their effects with a clear intention of keeping her audience amused throughout.

In order to achieve this, Siansima exploits her linguistic repertoire through synonyms and ideophones. By using words such as "sticking", "planting" and "fixing" (anus) on the hole, the amplified buttocks-wall contact "ju", then the release and drawling emission as it diffuses with the room air "faa", "foo", and so forth, the narrator gives the whole process so much life that it adds to the audience's

ultimate enjoyment. These are accompanied by appropriate dramatic enactments.

On the other hand Malambo (NT 8) uses alternative means despite the seriousness of her central theme - pregnancy. Precisely, she relies on the song which, though short, is prolonged through repetition. Her song can be divided into two segments: the boy's and the bird's lines, and the chorus. The boy's line is actually the sound of his flute while the first of the bird's lines requests the boy to play the flute again. The second is ideophonic of its dancing.

During this performance, the narrator has a commendable way of voice regulation such that the contrast between the boy's and bird's lines in the song is as sharp as that between the (narrator and audience's) wish for the trick to work (and it works), and aggression coupled with begging. The emphasis creates the desired impression that the monster is less dangerous than it really is. So when the narrator imitates bird's dancing, the audience sings more enthusiastically as though to keep it busy while the boy escapes.

In addition to this the narrator also regulates emphasis between those parts featuring the boy and his mother, and the husband. The former's utterances are made to reflect the helplessness of their situation while the man, when he eventually appears, is made to speak with exaggerated authority and certainty. Through this variation, and since the husband appears only towards the end of the story, the audience is helped to develop a negative attitude towards him. So, whereas NT 5 appears to rely entirely on humour, NT 8 is built on alternating between humour and seriousness, perhaps due to lack of song, and the inhibiting nature of subject, respectively.

However, although the genre provides for elision and appropriate exploration of humour, there are incidencies when these tend to be

inappropriately applied. It has been noted above that the impact of sociological information is more important than its detailed description. Hence when a narrator attempts giving details of a cultural event, it suggests weakness on his part.

Two cases of elaborate description and explanation may be reviewed here. These are Sianguni's description of kupiila (offering to ancestral spirits) in NT 1, and Siansima's explanation of the use of holes in the walls and the relationship between njela and the woman's pain in NT 4. In the first case the process the narrator is describing is a very common one such that she should have simply referred details to her audience's own knowledge using any one of the ways discussed above. However, her effort could perhaps be better explained in terms of the realism of what she says. Plainly, one cannot fail to spot the obvious distortion of reality here. Although kupiila is as significant here as in real life - exorcising society from unnatural evil - blood has never been known to be mixed with the usual beer or plain water used in the rite.

Similarly distortion of reality regarding the function of holes in walls compels Siansima to attempt an explanation in NT 5 when she says:

You already know how people of long ago used to build their houses. They left several holes in the walls where they propped some household items.

Now, since she has already referred to the audience's knowledge, we cannot find justification for the succeeding explanation. Surely, she gives it mainly because she does not want the audience to remain with the truth behind the holes, though she could have sought other reasons, such as ventilation since it can as well be accepted because the Valley is notorious for its high temperatures.<sup>38</sup>

These two digressions definitely defeat the purpose of engaging the audience into text comprehension and analysis. The njela-pain issue on the other hand, is given the necessary cause-effect relationship due to the fact that it exists only in the belief system since no one is known to have risked testing it.

Another form of defeating audience analysis is found in Mukwiti Malyenkuku's performance of NT 7. The weakness here is created by the narrator's bias towards the didactic function of kwaana. It is clear from this performance that the narrator's aim is showing disadvantages of individual selection of a spouse. As a result she makes a number of unnecessary statements. For instance, right at the beginning she says, "He did not know that the girl could turn herself. She was a duiker." The revelation is not only untimely but irrelevant also, because a less didactic narrator could have found a better way of making it. Besides it completely kills the necessary suspense which heightens audience attentiveness, pleasure and textual analysis.

In concluding the tale, too, Mukwiti sounds a clear caution which reinforces her didactic concern when she says, "The girls you marry, too ... you must be careful." Equally, this deprives the audience of the opportunity to exercise their own ability to judge a story.

Quite often, too, she tends to shift attention from major issues to stress the bride's unacceptable qualities, as in:

The girl, because she was a duiker, went to the fields, and there, turned herself into a duiker.

Such a presentation leads one into thinking that the bride could not have gone to the field if she had not possessed duiker elements. It renders her later reference to the audience's knowledge, "She left. Is she not bwinga?", rather ineffective because from the quotation above it is her being a duiker and not bwinga that inspired her to go.

The narrator's preoccupation with educating can further be seen not only through the thematic content of her tale, but also in the way she conducts us through the tale. Consider the manner in which the song is initially introduced:

After turning herself, here is the song she sang to call her fellow duikers so that they come to help her eat bean leaves. We shall sing this song.<sup>39</sup>

This approach is at variance with what we have seen in other performances. We are not told what purpose a narrative song serves, neither are we told to sing it. We, the audience, automatically realize the need for and the effect of the song, and sing along with the persona. As things are, our role is reduced to that of passive pupils.

We would finally like to look at one more generic opportunity that allows direct audience participation: core-cliches. We shall only discuss songs and proverbs, and the forms they take.

Unlike rhetorical questions and prompters, songs motivate both physical (vocal) and intellectual involvement of the audience in a performance. As we have earlier on claimed, these retain their form. We can substantiate this by examining a few lexical items from the songs in NT 1 and 4. The items are archaic terms, and other expressions associated with slang. In the first narrative there are words like buvundu (bran), and nsangwa (plate) - also found in NT 4. These are outdated terms for busenga and mbede, respectively. Both the old terms have syllabic stress, and normative resemblance with the contemporary ones which can be used in the songs without violation of metre. In our opinion the archaic terms are used in adherence to the restrictions of kwaana. On the other hand slangish expressions like 'ntola kwesu (take me back home), in NT 1, cannot be suitably replaced by the full form nditola kwesu without undue violation of lyrical flow.

However, mfulu (drinking gourds) which sounds like slang has no plural equivalent for lufulu - the singular. Ideophones, too, (quite prominent in songs) have no substitutes and add vividness to the images being presented.

There are two instances in our study when proverbs are used. In the first narrative (NT1) there seems to be no notable difference between the literary and the ordinary rendition of the proverb munwe uumwi tuupwai njina (one finger does not crush lice) - employed when emphasizing communalism. Here, like in ordinary use, the proverb is used with the same signal: bakati (it is said).

On the other hand, this signal is converted into a question in NT 2 so as to suitably introduce the narrative. It is quite unlikely here that the narrator's intention is to clarify the proverb. Besides, we can never be certain that the tale is the origin of the saying. Instead, we see it as the initial stimulus to the audience. However, in these two cases, the respective proverbs function in the same way as rhetorical questions, though the latter case may also be a prompter, because it stimulates insight into plot development.

We can, therefore, claim that narrative structure and content are in such harmony with kwaana that narrators and the audience understand the variables at play - functions and provisions of their tradition. When a narrator deviates from reality injudiciously, because of his concern with the didactic function, or mere distortion, his conscience compels him to give data intended to normalize relations between the tale, the audience, and himself. When concern is primarily with entertainment, the didactic function is subtly and hence automatically carried out. The result is successful narration in which the audience is also active and the story reflects the past and the present, while projecting the

future at the same time. Thus, the social function of the art can best be defined in terms of the social context of each narrative performance.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### CONCLUSIONS

In this study we have attempted to investigate folktales based on and reflecting Valley Tonga practices in marriage. Specific focus has been on thematic and stylistic variables at the narrator's disposal in the kwaana tradition. In the process of so doing, a number of issues pertaining to generic conditions and functions, which also determine success or failure of performance, arise.

The most important aspect of our study, in my opinion, is the looming notion that the fiction of oral narratives is really an aesthetic model, carefully designed from sampled everyday experiences. It is essentially because of this notion that we find it less important to discuss the obvious cultural material that adds decor to the folktale. As such our concern at the moment is with nuptial and other intellectual arguments, how they are presented, and their impact in the stories, through close examination of different variables that manifest in narrative performances. However, lack of previous scholarship on Valley Tonga Narratives, and narratives from other societies, dealing specifically with marriage, also renders this work particularly unique.

It can be seen from the discussion in the preceding chapter that folk narratives entertain, reflect reality, and project the desired and ideal reality through critical examination of society. It is the critique aspect of literature as a whole that enables us to identify its other functions. Through it, we are able to recognize mistakes and enjoy events leading to the resolutions in any piece of fiction, and learn from it whatever moral there is to learn. No argument, for example, has so far been advanced to explain why the Valley Tonga who are said to be highly conservative have a wide range of methods by which marriages may be secured.<sup>40</sup> It would appear that conservatism would be more prominent in marriage because it is the entire foundation and springboard

for all the other cultural aspects of any given society. Perhaps this issue has little scholarly implication.

However, our examination of the few narratives in this study reveals the various factors that pacify the conservative element. Among the four main types of marriage that exist among the Valley people: arranged marriage; elopement; forced marriage; and abduction, the last three are fairly recent developments which the collected narratives justify. They are attributed to, and shown as consequences of contact with foreign cultures brought about by the colonial policy of taxation.

It is basically through taxation that the indigenous life began to disintegrate. Firstly it sent able bodied men in search of tax money through labour migration. Secondly, as a result of labour migration, society was drained of productive manpower both economically and socially. And because migrants brought goods and money which the untravelled villagers required, the system of internal trade changed much to the advantage of the migrants, who, consequently became wealthy and the envy of everyone.

And because traditional marriages required the physical presence of suitors throughout, labour migration caused husband absence such that marriages remained pending for long periods. In many cases, and in line with customary laws, the women got married to their fiances' relatives. Consequently, workers returned home only to find their fiances already married, and all the available young women engaged.

Traditional marriages were, therefore, no longer practicable. Returned workers wanted to marry while betrothed women, waiting for their men's return, risked being married to the latter's relatives and hence enter into polygamous marriage. In response to this situation, the three recent types of marriage emerged. According to NT3, 7, and 9,

forced marriage and elopement were preceded by prior negotiation between the man and the woman. This is probably because both were single and in urgent need of a spouse at the time of contact.

On the other hand no agreement was reached in the case of abduction as NT 6 shows. However, this type did not only affect married women whose men were on contract. It also affected betrothed young women who declined returned workers' informal offers of marriage. In order to avoid any of the new methods, some parents arranged for their children's weddings despite the groom's absence as NT 1 and 4 show.

In all, we have two ideal marriages: NT 2 where the hero proves his worth to society as in the pre-labour migration period; and NT 10 where the hero need not necessarily impress upon the bride's extended family as long as her parents' particular conditions are met. This is the case in the post migration and present periods.

From the eight tales, NT2, 3, and 10 show what we may consider to be successful marriages while NT 1, 4, 6, 7 and 9 depict unsuccessful ones. Whereas success in NT 2 and 10 is based on satisfaction of prescribed conditions, that in NT 3 results from recognized contradictions in existing conditions. Failures in the other five tales obtain in unnaturalness of circumstances: inauguration of marriage despite husband absence (NT 1 and 4); unacceptable behaviour in view of the materialistic outlook to life (NT 7 and 9); and marriage of another man's wife in NT 6. However, since the new ways violated formalities in the first two stages of marriage alone, where such marriages had the potential for success they were formalized through kupilusya - the transition from the second to the third stage - as NT 3 shows.

It is therefore arguable that apart from showing series of events, the narratives suggest what is wrong and what ought to be done. More interesting in this regard are the tales depicting unsuccessful marriages.

NT 1 and 4 propose submission to new ways whose perfection NT 7 and 9 suggest. NT 6 simply condemns this type of marriage (especially) when the woman concerned is already married. Thus, in this study, two narratives look at arranged marriage in the ideal past and present (NT2 and 10 respectively), another two criticize arranged marriage in the present (NT 1 and 4), while NT 3 encourages change whose imperfectness the remaining three (NT6, 7, and 9) criticize.

In the remaining narratives, justification and preferability of polygamy to divorce is presented in NT 5, and husbands are implored to bear with pregnant wives in NT 8. The former tale also shows consequences of polygamy and demonstrates the manner in which the husband is supposed to settle them. NT 8, is based on irony in which the tale appears to praise the husband when he, actually, is the loser.

It can therefore be said that these and other cultural values in the stories are artistically presented. Some of the aesthetic options the narrators have exploited to express conflicts in the narratives are: non-human characters and characteristics (NT1, 4 and 7); most effective catastrophes and supernatural forces (NT 2); serious tests (NT 5, 8 and 10); and symbolic figures (NT 3, 6 and 9). These were coupled with humour, dramatization and active engagement of the audience both physically and intellectually in the performances. All these features of narration work towards the ultimate attainment of entertainment, which we see to be the most profound function from which any others stem. Hence, a narrator, among the Valley Tonga, who stresses the socializing function of kwaana, as performance of NT 7 does, tends to undermine his audience's role as well as that of the tradition. Otherwise we have also found distortion to arise from a narrator's intention to distract his audience from the realism of the cultural material he employs in the narrative.

The foregoing results precisely from the fact that the basic narrative plots and themes are products of society. But although narrators here are not professional, they contribute to the tradition and the realized performances in no small amounts. It is, however, not yet certain whether the particular cultural images used in each tale are the same in all its versions or the narrators' own creativeness, but the way in which they are employed certainly reflects the latter's careful selection and utilization of the available artistic repertoire.

At this point one may wonder where the essence of the redundant Tonga narrative style which Jones and Carter (1967), and other historians talk about lies.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps it only appears when a narrator performs to an audience he knows has little or no knowledge of the tale's cultural background, for indeed, even a historical narrative told to a local audience appears to be adequately edited. Certainly, the various forms of repetition characteristic of oral narratives, are, each, for specific aesthetic and social purposes such as picture intensification, dramatic effect, and many other literary functions within their contexts. In this study we find that illucidative information is normally given through reference to the audience's own knowledge of local customs. There appears to be no way a narrator can exploit this homophoric technique before an audience that lacks knowledge of the culture of the performing society.

However, examination of narrative structure given shows that "every narrative has three major structural units", although tale types range from simple to beyond Paulme's complex types.<sup>42</sup> The units can perhaps be more succinctly defined in terms of the lack, quest, and resolution, from which, we could say, all literary plots develop. But the nature and impact of the lack in a folktale determine the form of

the subsequent quest and resolution and hence, the final structural pattern the story takes.

Quite often, the first stage of the oral tale is fairly concise while the other two may be elaborate depending on individual narrators' creativeness and the tale's flexibility to such creativeness. It is in these last two units that we find a lot of mimetic and diegetic features. As such, and perhaps due to the said unprofessionalism of our narrators, there is no single opening formula; neither is there a single terminative model. However, there is complete unity between the three units. Perhaps this is all because both the narrator and audience, in the Valley, enter story telling events with socially defined and understood expectations and contributions.

It is therefore apparent that in order for oral narratives to be useful to any scholar (for they really are), there is need for him to appreciate and respect their social context and the relationship between folktales, the tradition, and other forms of folklore. Without this condition, the folktale might remain less significant than it really is, or may be taken for mere rhetoric, because the aesthetic and functional commitment that exist at the centre of the tale might be overlooked.

However, it is, perhaps, for the student of literature to continue investigating the aesthetic elements and interpret them in terms of the functional load of narration in which entertainment superceeds and furnishes the socializing role. Then the determinant relationship between the narrator, his audience, and the tale itself can be realized. That is, of course, if the value of the different forms of oral literature to related fields of scholarship is to be correctly interpreted. We hope this work correlates with this important

role of scholarship in folkliterature. It might be realized from the current discussion that the arguments on form and function of oral narratives presented could have universal applicability to literature as a whole and hence invite extensive investigation.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Timothy, A. Mathews (1974), "Oral Traditions in the Gwembe Valley: a preliminary assessment and some problems" History Seminar Paper No. 3. (Lusaka: UNZA), p.4.
2. See E. Colson (1960), The Social Organization of the Gwembe Tonga, (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 164-66; also T.S. Schudder (1962), The Ecology of the Gwembe Tonga, (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 112-18, for example.
3. E. Colson (ibid), p. 185.
4. Claude Ake (1981), A Political Economy of Africa, (Essex: Longman), p.9.
5. E. Colson, (ibid), p.15.
6. Ibid., p.14
7. Ibid., p.199.
8. Ibid., p.21.
9. T.S. Schudder (1960), "Fishermen of the Zambezi," Human Problems in British Central Africa, 27, (Manchester: The Rhodes Livingstone Institute), pp. 41-9.
10. Schudder (1962), pp. 189-201; and B.G. Reynolds (1968), The Material Culture of the Peoples of the Gwembe Valley, (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 56-66.
11. Francis Wilson (1972), Labour in the South African Gold Mines 1911-1969, (London: Cambridge University Press), p.2.
12. Colson (1960), p.22.
13. Hobart D. Houghton (1952), in Hobart and Walton, The Economy of a Native Reserve, (Pietermaritzberg: Schutter and Schutter), pp. 112-13.
14. Colson (1960). p. 23.
15. See William Bascom (1965), "Folklore and Literature," R.A. Lystad, ed. The African World: a Survey of Social Research, (London: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc.) pp. 469-90.
16. S.P.C. Moyo (1978), "A Linguo-Aesthetic Study of Ngoni Poetry," Ph.D. Thesis, Wisconsin University, p.1.
17. Bascom (1965), p.470.
18. R.M. Dorson ed. (1972), Folklore and Folklife, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p.17.

19. L.S. Sondashi (1977), Marriage Is Not for Weaklings, (New York: Exposition Press), p.61.
20. A.R.Radcliffe-Brown, and D. Forde, eds. (1950) African Systems of Kinship and Marriage, (London: Oxford University Press), p. 44.
21. See Appendix, Text NT 1.
22. See Appendix, Text NT 4.
23. Although Colson (1960), p.23, mentions Bride Service, C.S. Lancaster (1974) "Bride Service, Residence, and Authority among the Goba (N. Shona) of the Zambezi Valley", Africa 4,1, pp. 46-64, gives a thorough discussion of the system.
24. See Appendix, Text NT 5.
25. Helene Deutsch (1945) The Psychology of Women: a psychoanalytic interpretation, (New York: Grune and Stratton), p. 130.
26. D. Ben-Amos, (1977), "Introduction: Folklore in African Society," Bernth Lindfors, ed, Forms of Folklore in Africa, (Austin: University of Texas Press), p. 19.
27. J.A. Moody (1986), "Story-Telling in Zambia", in S.P.C. Moyo, T.W.C. Sumaili, and J.A. Moody eds, Oral Traditions in Southern Africa, II, (Lusaka: UNZA) p. 286.
28. Denise Paulme, quoted in Ben-Amos (1977), pp. 20-1.
29. Ibid.,
30. Harold Scheub (1977), "The Technique of the Expansible Image in Xhosa Nsomi - Performances," B. Lindfors, ed, Forms of folklore in Africa, p. 40.
31. Oxford Advanced Dictionary of Current English, 3rd ed. (1974) S.V. "Style".
32. Guerin, et al (1979), A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row) p.271.
33. There exists in the Valley, a conflict between elders and school going children on the ideal narrative technique. Elders reject the opening and chorus formulae common in Plateau narrative traditions, while the children, instigated by teachers insist on the formulae.
34. Moody (1986), p. 272.

35. Clearly, the audience is compelled to interpret narrative context against the background of their own knowledge, and hence evaluate the text, as in NT 1.
36. This is a very common feature, but the examples cited are from Text NT 4.
37. Among the Valley Tonga, a wife may call her husband by name, only after they receive their first grand child.
38. The holes referred to in this tale, (NT 5), were mainly used for urinating through at night due to dangers posed by wild animals. Here, however, the narrator wishes to draw her audience's attention from this fact.
39. Our own emphasis.
40. Colson (1960), p.24.
41. A.M. Jones and H. Carter, (1967) "The Style of a Tonga Historical Narrative," Africa Language Studies, 8, pp. 112-3.
42. E.M. Munalula (1986) "Matangu-Lozi Oral Narratives," M.A. (African Literature), Dissertation, UNZA, p.21; also Paulme's Tale Types quoted by Ben-Amos (1977), pp. 20-1.

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APPENDIX

NARRATIVE TRANSLATIONS 1 - 10 (ENGLISH)

NT 1 : Narrator: ZUKA SIANGUNI; FEMALE; 60 YEARS; V/MWANAKUKALYA;

Date: 30TH OCTOBER, 1988.

In a certain village there was a marriage. When the bride was brought, she was told by her mother-in-law that her husband was still at the towns where he was working. This was how they lived, so she stayed. They stayed like this for a good number of days until the young wife got used to the new life. Then she even started carrying out all domestic chores.

Whenever her mother-in-law got maize for the day's meals from the granary the girl always did the pounding herself. On seeing this her mother-in-law instructed her to be pouring the bran into one particular crib. Indeed, she followed these instructions. Now as she used to pound like that she sang just like all women do, even to this day. She sang for her husband:

Let us pound for those at Saba  
Let us pound for those at the mines ...

She sang like that each time, over and over until her job was done.

At the beginning she did not realize that as she sang, there was a voice which took over whenever she paused. It sang the same tune:

Who are those at Saba?  
We are in the crib ourselves  
Where we are receiving bran  
The bran is being prepared  
Being prepared by wives...

This went on for quite some time. When she first became aware of this voice she never believed there was someone who helped her in singing. But she did in due course. Her mother said nothing although occasionally she was around and heard for herself. The young woman never queried.

When the old woman realized her daughter-in-law was certain about the voice, she issued fresh instructions, "My daughter, I think you should now stop putting any more bran in that crib. I am sure what we have now is enough. Instead, however, remember to deposit some amount of whatever food you prepare in the crib shelter."

"Yes, mother," but she wondered. "Ma ... ! first my husband is away, next 'put bran in that crib', the crib which never fills. Then there is the voice, and now, 'Put some food aside'. What could all this mean? Is there a domba around?" However it was unexpected of her to ask for explanations. She knew this and so, never asked.

In the days that followed she tried to ask her mother-in-law about her husband. The mother simply said her son was not yet back. The young woman grew weary: but who was that singing in the crib? And who was she always giving food to? The voice itself contradicted her praises directly. Is it not that the one who was said to be at the mines is in fact here in the crib?

Early one morning she determined to investigate. "Today, come what may, I will peep into that crib. Who is that one who always sings along whenever I am pounding? Unless she does not go to the fields!"

Indeed as soon as her mother-in-law, left, she rolled her mortar. Just when she filled it she went to the crib-shed... to the same crib with the voice. She lifted the stone, covering the crib, and opened silently. And when she peeped... mawee... ! Her mouth went dry! She found the crib half full with coils and coils of the monster. The head delicately resting on top of the heap. It was sleeping, wattles and comb completely relaxed in their dull purple.

The whole of this day she was not herself. She tried and tried to think but she got nowhere. Could this be her husband? Is he not the same one who questioned her praises. And when she asks her mother-in-law she gets the same story. Since this discovery she lost her vigour at work. It was a matter of forcing herself. Songs also changed. Lamentingly she now sang:

My own mother foresook me  
The plate is shattered  
She gave me to a long stomach  
Whenever I take my nsima  
All the plates are swallowed  
When I try water  
All drinking gourds go  
And when I take beer  
Beer pots vanish  
My own mother foresook me  
The plate is shattered....

This became the new song, a sorrowful one. Whenever the mother-in-law was out of sight she mourned her fate.

In the succeeding days she reconsidered her situation, "But why does she not tell me the truth? All along I have thought she has spooks, nothing else! Now that should be the son I am supposed to be married to. Ma ... !"

One day she resolved to confront her mother-in-law. Just when she arrived mother- and daughter-in-law talked.

"Mother, it is evident that I have spent a very long time here with you. All this time you have been telling me that my husband is still at Saba. Is it that he does not know that his wife has been delivered?"

"Well my daughter, I cannot tell. But certainly, I sent word." The old woman was doing her best to appear honest.

"If that is so, then why has he not sent anything - salt for instance - let alone return home to his wife and mother?" she was saying.

"Come to think of it, I agree with you completely. Why, all his friends are returning. But all of them keep saying he has not yet made the target."

Ma! how elusive she is. But she kept to it although, inside, she wanted to confess. As they talked like this, the young woman asked, "But my mother-in-law, there is a matter about which I am not clear, to this day."

"Now my daughter, what is it that bothers you? Please do tell me. As already said, 'one finger does not crush lice'. Come ... perhaps I can be of help in the matter."

"Most likely. What I am wondering at, mother, is this;

"From the time I came here I have been pounding maize everyday. As I pound like that, you know how, we young women are. We sing along. Now when I sing like that in praise of those who are away, there is something that replies to my song in the crib-shed. Just when I have finished you would also hear it saying:

Who are those at Saba?  
We are here in the crib ourselves  
etc. etc.

"That is what bothers me so much."

"But who can it be that sings?" Ma ... ! she tried to show surprise, yet of course, she knew. But the young woman, too, pressed on.

"That is what I am wondering at, too. However, I noticed that this voice came from the same crib where you said I put the bran. And since you instructed me to be leaving food in the crib-shed, I have never seen any guests."

"This, my daughter, should not surprise you. I suppose you know that any new wife whose husband is away should get used to this task. When I felt your husband was due, I thought I should introduce you to it so that you develop the necessary self confidence."

But as she spoke like that she could see her own lie. The daughter-in-law also continued, "Additionally, I expected the bran I put into the crib to accumulate, so, I thought of spreading it evenly in the crib. But when I peeped into ..."

What! Ma ... ma ... ma! You did that? That is no place to look into! You could be frightened to death. But ..., anyway, that is all right and passed."

They went on talking like that; daughter-in-law seeking clarification, and the mother concealing facts. But for how long? The young woman was tactful and soon the other gave in. She admitted that that was her son, the husband to the young woman.

Well, what do you expect ... ? There was no complaint from the daughter-in-law. She never said a thing about her husband again. One day, however, she reminded her mother-in-law of some of the customs. The mother also conceded that, indeed it was long since her daughter-in-law joined them, and as such was due to make her first return to her own parents' home.

Arrangements were made and when the day arrived, she put together her belongings in readiness to start off. Farewells were exchanged between the two. Mother went to inform her son it was time to leave. And when the beloved son emerged he headed straight for the woods. His exit from the crib was spectacular; long as he was, the hiss as he slithered from the crib-shed to the tall trees spread through the whole area.

Yo-yo-yo-yo ... as he went, until kkwapa-kkwapa...kkwapa-kkwapa,

up the trees. Then he was ready for the trip. Looking up there the wife observed her husband's shining body, comb and wattles redish as in the moment of activity, and a pair of vigilant eyes; sharp and commanding a good portion of the route. As soon as she set on the footpath to her parents' home she broke into song:

Take me back home  
Nzelele Nalungwe nzelele-nzelele  
Take me back home  
Nzelele Nalungwe nzelele-nzelele

Then the husband asks:

What will you give me?  
May be a chicken  
It could be an ox  
Anything you will mention  
Nzelele Nalungwe nzelele-nzelele  
Take me home  
Nzelele Nalungwe nzelele-nzelele

They walked and walked while singing like that. Birds screamed and screamed at the terror that had taken over their habitat. As for himself he swung from tree to tree leaving behind an impression of a strong wind.

They walked and walked until the village was in sight. The village heard the song and knew their daughter was brought back. There was excitement. People were sent to prepare the hut in which their in-law was to lodge.

And when the couple appeared ... there was panic in the village. Chickens, dogs, goats, cattle and young children scampered in all directions. When the mother came to observe her daughter's husband, she found a fully grown mulala.

Many of you might not know this snake. But it is one that grows very long. It only moves up in the trees from one to another, very rarely on the ground. It has wattles and comb just like a cock, and when relaxed this creature calls like a cock, too.

*This was her son-in-law. When he descended, he formed a huge pile with his head delicately rested on top. Eyes staring unblinkingly.*

They were received in the same way any other couple would have been. But the hosts privately consulted with their daughter. She narrated every event of her stay at her husband's place.

That very day the village embarked on the beer brewing process. During the days preceding the feast, chicken after chicken were slaughtered to feed their son-in-law. In due course the beer was ready and the feast was due. As usual, libation was poured, an ox slaughtered. Its blood was mixed with a little beer and offered in thanksgiving to the ancestral spirits. Only after this did the feast begin in the real sense.

Imagine all that beer, meat, singing and dancing. It went on throughout the night. The in-law was enjoying himself in the company of his in-laws. The absence of his wife did not bother him. He was used, for since their arrival in the village he never saw her. But the reception was nice. They drank and danced throughout the night.

The following day, when the sun was up like this, the son-in-law felt he could not continue. He retired to his hut. This was like a signal every one was awaiting. They brought to that hut bundles and bundles of grass. These, they put all round the hut. The door was barred and then one of them set the hut on fire. Then his wife was not around. She had been escorted to her grandmother's yesterday.

The fire was big. Smoke rose up but it was not until all the bundles of grass caught fire that the terrified voice pierced above the noise from the fire. He called out to his wife to save him. But the crowd could not listen. Instead they helped him sing:

Mwiza, Mwiza !  
Jooncho mulomo  
I, your husband  
I, who plays the big nyeele  
which, when it sounds  
All the hills respond  
Oongakee ...  
Mwiza please  
Jooncho mulomo....

He cried and pleaded, but no one came to rescue him. The framework of the hut could no longer hold. It collapsed inward with a large noise and swallowed the poor husband's plight.

It ends here.

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NT 2 : Narrator: NAMWIDO CECILIA SIANSAALI; FEMALE; about 85 YEARS;  
V/MWANAKUKALYA; Date: 18TH FEBRUARY, 1988.

You have done well to come this time. I was about to stretch myself.

Now, let us see ... . Just why do people say "It rains where it was given a wife,"? Listen to this small tale.

In a certain village there lived a young man. This child, when his mother died, had no one to look after him. Among the proper people, no-one said, "I will keep you." All of them neglected him like he was unknown in the area. Now there also lived a woman of our type. This old woman offered to stay with him.

"Come, my little brother. We shall keep each other company."

And so this child stayed with that old woman. When the people of the village saw this, they said, "He is cheating. Through and through, he will have to look after our cattle."

Then they stopped their own children from herding. Oh ... mother! This child took over. Many as they were, just like you see the herds in our village, he had to do it all by himself. You know better what it means to look after so many cattle. He did this for a long time.

In time the boy grew. But he was brought up in slavery. He knew no happiness. See ... it was like this. At the end of each day he got home with dry and cracked lips - hunger! Even then no-one cared. But if one animal came back limping, it meant trouble from the owner. There was nothing much this boy could do to help his guardian. However, he managed to deliver a little firewood every day.

A number of years passed with the boy suffering like this. All these years! Then his mother was fed up: "All this time they cannot stop, the person has even grown into a man!"

As he slept one day, the young man dreamt about his mother. Here she was, and was saying, "Listen my son. I have seen your suffering and it is too much. Now, in the days to come, all the rain will finish. What you have to do as from now is this, whenever you are in the forest with your animals, build up a ngazi. It must be a strong one. Also put up a kraal in which would fit the wealth you look after.

"I will see when the job has been done. By then the draught will also have become serious. So when you finish grazing your animals, climb up and call to me. Remember, do not forget your grandmother. Never!"

When the boy woke up he was trembling. He looked this side and that side ... "Mother! Is it true?" He cried and cried. Then it was daylight. Again he gathered his animals, and off to the woods, like on every other day. When the sun scorched he looked about the sky. All clouds were disappearing. The sky went dry, ntaa ...! Then he remembered his dream. He began the task. He cut, cut, and cut. He cut like that until he was satisfied. Then he started erecting his ngazi. He thatched it. Then the kraal was also done.

In the village, people were getting worried. Even Gale and Kabbwida were dry, too. But no-one thought about the herdsboy and his grandmother. Anyway the old woman never ran out of water. She had all she needed.

You see, it was like this; after grazing his cattle he could drive and lock them up in the kraal. Himself, he went into his ngazi. There he called to his mother:

It roars, son of the soil, it roars  
Of Royal birth  
When mother died, she said;  
When it thunders come out  
Come out and face up where your mother  
dwells  
In Nyambe's domain among the clouds  
It roars son of the soil it roars  
Of Royal birth . . . .

Aa . . . then you could see water as never before. It could rain and rain. All streams could flow again. When satisfied he calls out again;

What is created never lasts  
It should never last  
Now dry up!  
Mba . . . . !

In a twinkle of the eye all clouds vanish. The sky once more goes blue, and the sun comes back, just like it had not been raining a little while ago. Then he jumps down with his gourds. He goes to let the animals out so that they may drink to their fill. Himself, he washes up, fills his containers, and then, "Hoi - hoi - !" He drives the animals to the village.

"Here grandmother, drink. Don't tell anyone. Never!"

"But where have you found it, my little angel?"

"No, that is a secret. Let us just, cook, and bathe. We shall always have fresh water. Don't worry."

And so, it went on for a long time. A long one. The young man also went on doing like that. All these days people were suffering! They tried here and there. It was the same everywhere. Hee . . . ! we are comfortable ourselves. What else could they do? Then they saw cattle passing water. Whoever got the idea. Everyone was running after them, collecting as much of it as possible. Some shat, others kicked . . . ! Who cared! All they needed was water.

Oh . . . my young ones, it was terrible. Imagine how insipid urine is. But what else could they do? So they kept dates with the animals; but no one offered to follow them into the forests.

The elders themselves were getting puzzled, "But the cattle, where do they get all that water they pass? All grass is destroyed but why do they continue being fat. . . ?" They tried various lines of thought but there was no satisfactory answer to each. They came together to debate and plan.

As they talked like that, they realized that while their own children were growing thinner and thinner every day, and others even dying, the herdsboy himself was healthier than ever. The old woman, too, she never joined the village in that humiliating business. They resolved to confirm their suspicions.

So, one day the elders followed the young man into the bush. All the way staying out of his sight. But they walked and walked for a long time, following behind like that. Far away beyond the hills, they noticed that the vegetation was different. Grass was green and high like this. Trees, too! It was beautiful here. The animals fed. They also found some fruit but no water. As the sun began going down, they saw the boy bringing his animals together. He drove them further towards the hills.

And when they turned behind one ant-hill their eyes remained open - twa! Mouths open also. They saw something like a full home. Ngazi, kraal, green crops, and everything found in the rainy season. The boy knew nothing. He just threw up his gourds and closed up the cattle. Up! he went and began to call:

It roars, son of the soil it roars  
Of Royal birth  
When mother died she said  
When it thunders come out  
Come out and face up where your mother  
dwells  
In Nyambe's domain among the clouds  
It roars son of the soil, it roars  
Of Royal birth ....

He sang and sang for a long time but there was no rain. Not even clouds. He sang once more. Then, clouds appeared. In a short time it came. Those who were hiding all this time got soaked.

They said, "Let us go, you people. He might stop it before we capture him!"

Very cautiously they approached. Him, unsuspectingly continued singing. When he became aware of their presence they had already climbed up. They fell on him . . . . He had no chance to stop it. Now it rained like it was possessed.

"Please our lord we plead. Forgive us! Do not stop the rain, and lord please hear us!" They begged him. They held him still, until he assured them. It rained and rained. Also they walked and walked. Until, Odi, in the village. Was it joy! The whole village was outside just to feel a drop of rain once more. It was being happy like we were last season.

Reaching the village the men did not go to the old woman's place, no! Instead they sent youths to go and bring her. "Leave all her possessions. Just bring her here herself."

Now, when they brought her, they went to the headman's. Different types of food were served for the two. Then they were put in beautiful houses to sleep that night.

When it was daybreak, early in the morning . . . youths were ordered to build a house; a good one. The old woman's property was transferred into that house when it was done. All this time, it continued raining. When they were fully transferred the young man was crowned and presented with a very beautiful young woman to marry.

There . . . there . . . .

It rains where it was given a bride.

NT 3: Narrator: BAMUKA SILOOZI: FEMALE: 55 YEARS; V/SULWEGONDE;  
Date: 4TH JANUARY, 1989.

There was a certain man who had a very, very big field. Now in this field there was nothing growing. But at the centre of this big field, there was a sole bwiiyi. This tree itself had only one fruit. This nji was also very big. Then this man instructed his daughter to guard that nji against thieves.

One day there came to that field certain young men. When they came to the foot of this only tree, one of them looked up. He saw a big, juicy-looking nji. Immediately he asked that girl to pluck that fruit for him.

The girl replied, "My father would not be pleased to have that fruit disturbed. Be it by people or birds." So, she did not let him have it. But in the days that followed, that same young man returned. Alone this time.

"Hey, friend, why don't you let me have a nibble at it. Just a little bite. This fruit is too big. I will not finish it all." He persisted. In his determination, this young man climbed up the tree. There he was, and took a bite. He found the fruit to be extremely sweet. Vwavu. . ., he took another bite, a bigger one. Another one! Aa..., he went on taking mouthfuls until he ate it all up. When he had eaten it all up he left for his own village. Now he left the girl crying. She cried and cried.

Then the man arrived, the girl's father. When he arrived he saw that the fruit was no longer where it used to be. Not even anywhere at all. Only his crying daughter. On being asked, his daughter said people had stolen the fruit. He got so cross that he beat his daughter terribly. He beat that girl until she died. When her mother saw that she was dead, she picked her up and took her to the river side. There she placed her by the bank near the water. Then she returned.

At dawn the girl regained her consciousness. She started singing:

Njii...yi-yi  
I have died for one nji  
Simutanda climbed and ate inji  
I have died for one nji.

She got up, walked, walked. She sang on as she went like that. She walked on until she reached the home of that man who ate the fruit. When she arrived like that, ma... she got married. They stayed up to when it was time for returning bwiinga.

There they were. They walked and walked until they arrived at the woman's father's village. There, they were warmly received by her father.

When the day broke they assembled to discuss the matter. They discussed and bargained until the father pronounced the total bride-price. They paid everything that was mentioned. Then, they went back to their own village and went into proper marriage.

This is where it ends.

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NT 4: Narrator: MAVUNYU JOYCE SIACHITEBWE; FEMALE; 30 YEARS;  
V/SIAMATIMBA; Date: 5TH JANUARY, 1989.

Here it is;

There was a certain woman. This woman had a child. After having that child, the child had the upper body of domba. The rest of the body was human. That child was a male. So then this woman raised that child. She cared for him, and cared for him, until he grew up.

Now when the mother saw that her son had grown up to the age of marrying she started looking for a bride for him to marry. Thus, in line with the practices of betrothal the people of long ago observed, the parents looked for a suitable bride. They looked around the whole area until they found her. She also accepted when her father told her. Then what happens...? When this was over, they paid up their bride price. And then when they finished, they got the girl, taking her to her mother-in-law.

When they arrived there, the new bride did not see her husband. When the day broke, in the morning, the mother said, "Take this mukande. Go and put it under your bed."

What does she do...? Aa..., she took that kafuko and put it where she was told.

Maa... now there, that person came and drank wuu...wuu... all of it gone. And then the pot also gwalya! He swallowed it. The girl went to collect her container. She reached there but that kafuko was not there.

"Ma... Maybe mother was here before me." It was not a matter to talk about. What follows...? Aa... she just let it be. She kept quiet.

Now it was noon, "Cook nsima." She cooked nsima. Then, "Take it to your room, under the bed. Also take mukande again." She took these things and placed them as advised.

Is it not time to go and collect the remains of the meal? She went there only to find nothing. Nothing at all.

"Ah... but how does this person eat? The plates are nowhere to be seen. Uh... let it be." She said nothing about it. What could she say, anyway?

It was night and again, "Take this and that to your room, under the bed...." And again she did.

At night she just slept without seeing the husband.

"Uu..., what should I do? I do not see this person." She did not consult anyone. Who could she? She was still bwiinga. Well, she stayed on.

When she saw that many days had passed, and things remained the same, she resigned, "Ba... then I suppose I just have to leave this place." So, she went away into the forest. In the forest there, she saw a palm tree. She climbed up this same tree. She climbed, climbed, until she reached the very top. And there, she stayed. She remained there.

Her mother-in-law started looking for her. She searched and searched. Then she went to her counterpart.

"Ma..., my friend, how about our person here, did she not come?"

"No, my friend, she has not been here. Not ever since."

"Uu..., even at home, since she left yesterday she has not been seen."

"Where could she have gone?"

So, they started searching together. First they saw some relatives where she could have possibly gone. They searched and searched. She was nowhere; "Let us search the forest, too. She may have...."

They searched, and searched, until finally they saw her. When they came to peer up the leaves of the tall tree, they found there she was. Up the same tree. They said, "Uu..., this person we are looking for, is this not where she came?" They started singing.

The mother-in-law started:

Come down, my daughter  
Nsangwa lweelwe  
My daughter, come down

I do not wish to come down  
Because you gave me a strange husband  
One who swallows plates, too

Nsangwa lweelwe....

Aa..., now what? She fails. Then there came her mother. She, too, sang just like that. And just like that she, too, failed. And so her youngest brother also tried. He sang:

Come down my sister  
Nsangwa lweelwe  
My sister, come down

I do not wish to come down  
Because they gave me a strange husband  
One who swallows plates, too  
Nsangwa lweelwe....

But as she objected like that, she was slowly coming down. When the adults saw this, they stopped the child. "Leave me her mother-in-law to sing." But as soon as she started, the bride up there also resumed her upward climb. Then, when they saw this they resolved. "Leave the owner of the sister to do it. Do not interfere."

Aa..., the boy sang, sang, sang. Then, she was coming down, slowly. She touched the ground. They caught her. The mother-in-law says, "Come, we can go home, now, eh...."

"No, I am not coming with you to your home. How can I? You gave me a husband whom I do not see. I have not seen what kind of person he is. At least I have never seen his face. I am not coming."

The mother persuaded her, and she persisted. And as a result, that is the tale. It ends.

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NT 5: Narrator; BELITA SIANSIMA; FEMALE; 40 YEARS; V/SIATWINDA;  
Date: 31ST JANUARY, 1989.

I have a narrative about a man who was a polygamist. This man had two wives. Now these two wives, one was younger. She did not yet have any children. She was still new.

Now the senior wife was jealous of this junior wife. At night when the husband slept with his girl, that same one, the younger one, the elder could come. You already know how people of long ago used to build their houses. They left several small holes in the walls where they propped some house-hold items.

So, when night fell, and this man went to sleep with his young wife, the elder one got up. She went to the other wife's house. There, on the hole..., that one near the bed where they were sleeping..., when she went, she stuck her anus there. And then faa...! a fart! It filled the whole house. There, she goes to her own house.

Now there, "You woman, you have farted!"

"Umm..., no." You already know that when a wife is still new, a bwiinga, she is shy and a little scared of her husband.

"You are lying! What then is stinking?"

"I do not know."

They get out of bed, remove the blankets, and shake them so as to remove the stench. They go back to sleep. Tomorrow again, the sun is already setting. Again, they start going to sleep. Once more the elder wife gets up and goes out.

Just there, she planted her anus... ju...! foo...! The gas went right through the room.... "Uh... you woman, you have already farted!"

"It is not me, it is not me."

"Get out you liar! Why the smell? What kind of a woman did I marry?" Again they get out of bed and vwuku-vwuku..., they shake off the smell from the blankets.

"Let us sleep!" They sleep.

This went on for some time in just the same way.

Now, that woman, the elder one, like the foolishness of women, she could not keep the trick to herself. She went to her fellow woman, one whose house was near hers like this:

"That child..., they are always fighting, wrestling! You know, when they go to sleep, I sneak to their house. On that hole near their bed, I stick my anus, and then fwaa...! I discharge. It goes in, inside their room and stinks there!"

"Oho...?"

"Yes, and because of the smell, they are always quarrelling even up to daybreak. They don't know who is doing it." She was very excited as she revealed the secret.

As the fate of the younger wife would have it! Just when she got up one day, after the usual quarrel, she decided to share the problem in her house with her neighbour. She went to the same woman her co-wife had gone to the other day. After the greetings, she started;

"My husband is always scolding me, saying, 'You have farted... you have farted.' I am definite, even in my sleep, I have never done it when with my husband. Not that I never do so on other occasions."

"My sister, it is not you who farts. It is your co-wife. It is this same senior wife of yours who comes to do it through that hole nearest to your bed. Then the smell fills the whole room where you are sleeping."

"Ee...!"

"Yes! It was only yesterday she whispered that to me."

That same morning, that woman sought the women's husband. When she found him she called him aside, "You, do not be bothering and fighting your wife because of the smell in your bedroom. It is your elder wife who does it. It is here on this opening that she always comes to plant her anus and then faa...! The smell enters. When it fills your room, she leaves you to fight over it. That is what she wants."

"Is that so? How did you know?"

"It is not difficult."

Ha...! When he heard that, the same day, he did not waste any time. Immediately he went to look for a scorpion. When he got one, he went to tie it right there on the hole she uses. To himself he just said, "Today..., I don't know."

Aa..., just when everyone retired to sleep, that woman started again. Just when she fixed her anus against the opening... iimya!  
The scorpion!

"I am stung," she did not stay there. She ran to her own house as she said this. And there..., "Bama....! a scorpion has stung me! Mother! a scorpion has stung me! My children's father... I have been stung!"

"What...! Where did you find it?"

"Just here on the bed, ooh...!" The man came out and entered her house, "Just here...!"

"Revive the fire!" She blew on the fire. They looked for it together, shaking the blankets so it may drop. "Why, it does not drop?"

"No...! Scorpion, hee...! I think it is just hiding somewhere...!"

"You liar..., you found the scorpion on the bed! how true is that, woman?"

Now that time when he left the other house, he picked njela and placed it in the fire. Now as this stone heated with the fire and the pain tore through the whole waist, burning the anus like it was on fire, itself, "Oh..., my husband, I am dying! The scorpion...!"

"Where did you say you got it, tell me?"

"Just here on the bed...!"

"Liar! Follow me. Come and see where you got it." They lit a grass torch, "Look..., see where it was when it stung you. The scorpion is still here where you always come to fix your anus. We have always been wondering where the smell comes from yet it is you who farts through this hole. I am always fighting my young wife when it is you who does it. It is here that you found the scorpion. Now you will feel it!"

He went back into the house, blew up the fire into flames. The njela was now red-hot, pilibili.... Then the anus itself was also as red. "Please my husband, I am dying! Yes it is me..., it is here, please, right here...!"

"Ee...! But just what do you want? Why do you do this?"

"Ah..., eh..., I wanted..., I thought, then this other woman should be divorced, so that I remain alone again...."

"You remain alone! And when you remain alone, will you manage to look after me? Why do you think I brought in this other woman? That is when I saw that my wife, yourself, was not good enough. And you are too jealous, you woman! The scorpion will teach you a lesson today."

Now, when he did like that, the wife said it was all right. so he went and removed the njela which was in the fire.

"Oh..., it is better now. The anus is no longer so painful, my husband. I repent. I promise, I will never do it again."

"And if you ever repeat it, that will be the end of you in this home!"

And that is the tale. The narrative is finished.

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NT 6: Narrator: MARGIE SIAKAZIBA; FEMALE; 35 YEARS; V/SIABASWI;  
Date: 31ST JANUARY, 1989.

There was a certain man called Chinyama. That man, Chinyama, went to the hills. When he went to the hills like that, he carved muzumangoma. That zumangoma was carved into a plank. After making a plank out of that cizumangoma, he carried it home and pushed into it a feather. It turned into a girl.

After the plank turned into a girl, the man himself went away to the towns. After going away, he stayed there for some years. His mother could hardly remember how her son looked. The girl also began to look old. She, too, had stayed for a long time. Now, all the people in the village started thinking about marrying her. But the girl refused. When each one tried she replied:

I don't want, I don't want  
I don't want, you people, I don't want  
My husband has not yet returned  
I don't want to marry, I don't want....

From there, all of them went back. But after some time, one man came and he was resolved to marry her; "What kind of refusal do you present? Your husband went away a long time ago."

He dragged her. Aa..., he took her. After taking her like that, only one day passed. Then her husband returned. When he heard what happened, he spent the whole day playing his kankobela. He made one and played it all day long. He sang;

She was muzumangoma, Chinyama my wife  
Come let us carve  
Yes..., come let us carve

She was a tree growing out there  
Yes, come, let us carve

Now, there..., they listened. There..., he has come back! When he entered the courtyard, all the people gathered from all over; wondering what was taking place. Others said, "Umn..., that man who carved a girl has arrived today." They gathered.

Now, from there, when everyone had gathered, they surrounded him. With his piano, he played. All the people watched him:

She was muzumangoma, Chinyama, my wife  
Come let us carve  
Yes..., come let us carve  
etc. etc.

He sang and sang. That woman also came outside. As she came out like that, when she wanted to sit outside there, he plucked that feather.

Then she became a plank once more, standing there, zeyaa....  
Everyone was bewildered. The story is finished.

---

NT 7: Narrator: ELIZABETH MUKWITI MALYENKUKU; FEMALE; 64 YEARS;

V/KANCHINDU; Date: 3RD FEBRUARY, 1989.

Now, I want to tell you a story of a certain woman who had a child, a son. Then, this son was looking for a wife. He found the girl. He did not know that that girl could change herself. She was a duiker. But she was a very beautiful girl.

When they brought her to her mother-in-law's, they stayed. One day, her mother-in-law told her, "Daughter, go to the fields and pluck some bean leaves for our meal."

That girl, because she was a duiker, went to the field, and there turned herself into a duiker. This was in her mother-in-law's field. After turning herself, here is the song she sang to call her fellow duikers so that they come and help themselves to the bean leaves. We shall sing this song:

Duiker, yoo...!

Jakaile, jakaile

Come we eat bean leaves

But whose beans are they Mwasas?

I say it is our uncle's beans

Jakaile, jakaile

On this side there are snares

That edge has pit-traps

Jakaile, jakaile

Phi..., oh... please come

Phi..., oh..., please Mwasas

Jakaile, jakaile....

Now, those duikers went into the garden belonging to her mother-in-law. They ate, ate, ate. Then she, herself went back home. She had not plucked any bean leaves for their meal! When she arrived at home, her mother-in-law said, "Daughter, didn't you find any bean leaves?"

"No, mother, I did not find any. I don't know what is eating the beans. If it is duikers, then they are full in the field. There is completely nothing."

"Ba..., then we are finished."

She let sufficient time pass. A week elapsed. Again, she sent her, "Go and get the leaves now. May be you will find they have sprouted again." She went. When she got there, again she started her habit. In the field, she turned herself. She started to sing to call her fellow duikers:

Duiker, yoo...!  
Jakaile, jakaile  
Come, we eat bean leaves  
etc. etc.

They came in, ate, ate, and ate. Again they separated and went their own ways. Now, nearby stood a woman who was passing by. This woman witnessed the whole process; how she transformed herself and invited these wild duikers. Just when she reached the village she went to that woman's mother-in-law.

"You, old woman, you might be wondering why your daughter-in-law does not bring any vegetables home. Why she doesn't is because when she gets to the field, she transforms herself and invites other duikers. This daughter-in-law of yours is a duiker. Follow her tomorrow. You should follow her when she leaves."

"Is that so...?"

"Yes."

Aa..., the new day broke. "Daughter, go to check on the beans once more, please. Just get whatever leaf you find, so that we cook."

"Yes, mother, I will go." She left. Is she not bwiinga? When she arrived there, she started the process again, bbindimuu..., she went on as usual:

Duiker, yoo...!  
Jakaile, jakaile  
etc. etc.

The mother-in-law thought, "No..., I don't want to scare her. I want to make sure, today."

She came out, tupu-tupu-tupu, with the other duikers, her friends.

Now, the mother-in-law went back to tell her husband. She said, "Ah..., my husband, this woman whom we married for our son, she is a duiker! All these days I send her, yet she is a duiker. I heard from my friends who told me."

"Eh..., tomorrow I am following her. I want to scare her."

The following day, "Daughter..."

"Yee..."

"Go to get the beans again." She goes happily. Now, this time, her father- and mother-in-law said, "Let us go and see." They arrived. Again, bbindimuu..., bbuku-bbuku, tuku-tuku...:

Duiker, yoo...!  
Jakaile, jakaile  
Come we eat bean leaves

But whose beans is that Mwasa?  
I say it is our...

The mother-in-law could not hold herself this time, "So, when you come here you are the duiker...!"

When the daughter-in-law saw this, she had no time to go back to her human form again. Izyu! She just bolted like that into the bush. She remained a duiker.

This is why you find duikers bother us a lot in our fields. The girls you marry, too..., you must be careful. You will find yourself marrying a duiker!

---

NT 8: Narrator: MARY ZAAMBA MALAMBO; FEMALE; 35 YEARS; V/MWANAKUKALYA;  
Date: 12TH FEBRUARY, 1989.

There was a certain woman who conceived. As she had that pregnancy, she developed a great appetite for figs. Now, when she developed this abnormal liking, she used to send her son. He was a bit grown up.

"My son, I am dying. Go and collect figs for poor mother."

That boy went to get the figs. He had what they call a flute. When he got to the tree, he climbed up. His flute, that type they blow when herding cattle, he shoved in his pocket. He climbed up pulling his tin along. He had an old tin in which he meant to put the fruit. He climbed, climbed, climbed.

But in that tree lived a very big bird, which could kill and even swallow you if you were not careful. Now, when he climbed, he started picking the fruit. He picked the fruit. Unfortunately the bird which was away, somewhere, returned. It sat at the foot of the tree blocking the boy's way. When the boy saw this he pulled out his flute from the pocket. He started to blow it:

Ntyee, ntyeku-ntyentye  
They are rotten, they are rotten  
Blow it again, child  
Blow it again, so that I may dance  
Baa...,baa...  
Gobwi-gobwi, gobwi-gobwi...  
They are rotten, they have ants inside....

Now, that boy, while the bird was jumping around in dance, he came down, came down. Umn..., he ran away, taking the figs to his mother. His mother ate, ate, ate. But this antenatal addiction my friends.... When you get it, it is trouble. She sat there ndundaa..., with her pregnancy. She ate, and ate until she finished them all. But tomorrow she will need some more again.

"Please, my son, there where you got the figs. Go back again my son, just to come and satisfy my appetite. There is nothing else I would so much like to eat."

"But mother, there is a dangerous bird there. This bird kills, even. You will see. One day it will kill me."

"No, my son. The bird should not scare you. Carry your club today and hit the bird with it if it comes near you." He went. Again it was still out hunting when he got there. He climbed up.

Again the bird was soon there. Again he pulled out his flute and started blowing it:

Twee..., tweku-twetwe  
They are rotten, they have ants inside  
etc. etc.

So while it is still running around dancing, he, himself sneaks down and escapes. It was dancing because of the good music. During this time he carefully climbed down carrying his basket full with figs. He ran away to deliver the fruit to his mother.

She ate, ate, ate.

Again, "My son, please..., eh...."

"Mother, if you see the sun setting without me one day, then take it that I am dead. The place is not good. There is a terrible bird which threatens to eat me whenever it finds me."

"Please, just go, my son. I beg you. Otherwise I will not sleep today if I do not eat figs. I will not rest."

When he reached there, poor boy, he climbed up. But on this day he had sacrificed himself, "But no, I am fed up of coming here every day."

The bird was away as usual. When it came back, it found him up there. He did not play his flute, he was just quiet. Then it sprang at him, vwupu...! and swallowed him.

At home she waited, and waited for her son. She waited, and waited for the boy, until the sun went down, "Umn..., this boy. Where he gets the figs, today.... Father of the boy! What about the boy..., how is it that my fig collector has not yet returned? Yaa..., I am dying today. No way! I cannot eat nsima, my husband. Maybe he went further than the usual place, today...."

"But where does he usually go? He was saying the other day that there was a dangerous bird. Maybe it has swallowed him. But now, if the child has been swallowed, woman..., I will not let you be!"

Now, that man followed. Just there where the boy used to get figs, he only found the flute lying. The bird had eaten him, but it was not there itself. It was away where it always went. Yet it had swallowed the boy. The father went back. When he got home, nke! He killed her.

"Die, together with the baby in the womb. I don't care!

This is where the tale ends.

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NT 9: Narrator: SIANCHENGWA ANNA KALANGU; FEMALE; 28 YEARS;  
V/SINAKOBA; Date: 11TH JANUARY, 1989

There was a man who had a very, very beautiful daughter. But this girl was a good-for-nothing. She did not take part in doing any domestic work. However, as she grew up, men were just swallowing saliva in admiration. Did it take long? One man came to pick her.

When she married this same man, each one tried to tell the other what kind of life they had led where they came from. The man's background had no peculiarities at all. Now, the woman's was strange.

She said, "As for me, I do not pound grain, work in fields, draw water, or do anything at all. I do not do any outdoor jobs. This is how I grew up."

When he heard this he went to brief his parents together with his brothers and sisters. They all agreed that their in-law should stay in the way she described. As such, all the feminine jobs in the home were being done by her sisters-in-law, as if there was no additional mouth. When the planting season arrived, off to the field, the elders used to go. Only the man's wife and her sisters-in-law remained at home during these days.

As the rainy season intensified, work at the fields got heavier also. At home, the girls were just counting on time. When they saw that a reasonable period had elapsed, they thought, "Comrades, let us test this sister-in-law of ours today. What could happen if we gave her the pestle?"

"Yes, indeed! So much time has passed."

One day, as soon as the elders set off for the fields, the girls also pulled out their mortars. There..., they filled them with grain. Then they called their sister-in-law out, "Come, friend, so that you may also help a little. Should you really be spending your time in-doors?"

On hearing this, she came outside, and told the girls that what would happen if they forced her to pound with them, would terrify them.

"Nothing...! How can we..., old as we are..., be terrified by what might happen?" Ma..., what could she do? There, they handed her the pestle. Reluctantly she took that pestle, and began to pound. As she pounded a song was on her lips:

At my mother's, I don't pound  
I only string beads  
I don't pound...

She sang like that as she pounded. While pounding and singing like this, she was sinking into the soil. When the others saw this, and she had sunk up to the waist, they took the pestle away from her. In time, there she was, coming out again from the soil where she had been sinking. When they saw this, the girls were very scared. For the coming number of days, they stopped sending her. But soon they started again.

"Nothing..., she is just tricking us, this sister-in-law of ours. Did she not come out on her own? Even today, when we make her pound, she will still come out of the ground."

"Yes, indeed! She must also be scared of sinking for ever. She cannot permit that."

Aa..., they spoke on like this until they resolved to give her the pestle again, to pound today, "If she so wishes, let her sink. It is up to her."

When they handed her the pestle, she sang as she pounded:

At my mother's I don't pound  
I only string beads  
I don't pound....

Again, as she pounded and sang, she began to sink. The girls themselves were busy with their own measures. She also went on down, down..., myo-myo..., myo-myo..." after she sank completely, the surface smoothed as though nothing had been there.

Soon, however, a pumpkin plant appeared where she had been. That pumpkin plant grew. In a twinkle of the eye, it spread around. Its stems spread that far..., all over the place until the area was dark with its green leaves. Now the girls were very scared. They tried to send the dove to go and call her mother. But when it got there, it just perched up a tree in the village clearing; "Guugu-gruugu-gu...." And back it went. Next, they sent another bird, mpiye. It also just went to sing, "mpiyee.....mpiyee....," and came back. The parents of the girl never got the message at all.

When those who were at the fields came back, they found the whole courtyard covered with the pumpkin plant. And when asked, the girls simply pointed to the plant. Their father said, "Call the dove, so that it goes to call her parents."

The dove was sent for. When it came, it was given the message.

"But what is the girl's name?" They told it. It flew to the in-laws'. It reached the place and settled onto a tree that was in the middle of the courtyard:

Guugu  
Chilelezuba is gone, Chilelezuba  
Guugu  
Chilelezuba is gone, Chilelezuba

Immediately, they understood it. The old woman said, "Bama..., bama..., my mother! They gave my daughter to pound. Let us go my children. Let us go and bring her back!"

She started off with her children. When they arrived there, they found the plant had started climbing up nearby trees. As soon as she was there, she started singing:

Let me gather the plant, my child  
Let me gather it....

She sang and sang, but the plant kept on spreading. When they saw it did not come back together, the father sang instead. Still it did not stop growing. Then the children came to sing also. Each one sang after the other but the pumpkin plant kept on growing. Finally the youngest started to sing, too.

Let me gather the pumpkin plant my sister  
Let me gather it...

As the boy sang on like that, the plant also started coming back together. He sang, sang, sang. The elders felt he was tired, so they tried to assist him. As soon as he stopped singing, they took over. And the plant, too, immediately, then, resumed its spreading once more. On seeing this, they stopped. The boy began again.

He sang, and sang. The plant also came back in retreat. It kept on shrinking slowly until the whole of it disappeared:

Let me gather the pumpkin plant my sister  
Let me gather the plant....

Aa..., the head emerged. The plant itself had completely vanished out of sight:

Let me gather the plant my sister  
Let me gather it....

The young wife kept on coming up. Until, finally fubbu! The whole of her was out. She even walked about.

From there, the mother took her daughter home.

This is where the tale ends.

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NT 10: Narrator: DELIA SIAMANGWINGWINDA SIMANKAWA; FEMALE; 45 YEARS;

V/SIMANKAWA; Date: 31ST JANUARY, 1989.

In Chief Mweemba's area there was a certain old woman who had a daughter. This girl was extremely beautiful. When this girl grew up there were many young men who came seeking to marry her. The girl was admirably beautiful. When she sat there to be watched, uh....

Now her mother used to bring her outside. She would make her sit in the open so that she could determine who loved and would manage to marry her daughter. When she sat like that, men like Philemon, came saying they would take her. But the mother also came and stopped at a distance, like there:

Whoever laughs at my clothing  
Malimba, he won't marry my daughter  
Malimba

Bbwi...bbwi-bbwi...

Malimba, he won't marry my daughter...

She dances around and lets out a loud fart in the process. All the paraded suitors laughed and thus, lost the girl. Yes, they laughed because the old woman did a disgusting thing. They left her.

Again, another group came, determined to take the girl. They came saying, "Let's go and bid. What kind of girl is she that everyone should be failing?"

She was already there! When the old woman saw the suitors, she brought her outside to be admired. She, herself started singing and hopping around as soon as she emerged:

Whoever laughs at my clothing  
Malimba, he won't marry my daughter  
Malimba

Bbwi...bbwi-bbwi...

Malimba, he won't marry my daughter

Bbee...

Malimba, he won't marry my daughter....

At that they tried to hold their laughter, but soon they laughed. Thus they, too, failed and left the girl when her mother blew her nose carelessly like that. The girl was taken back into the house.

Again, another set came. This time they were the younger people. In fact, they were boys of this age..., Kanemba, Adam, Zeeni.... Aa... they paraded. The girl was brought outside, also. As usual the old woman started:

Whoever laughs at my clothing  
Malimba, he won't marry my daughter  
Malimba

Bbwii...bbwi-bbwi...

Malimba, he won't marry my daughter  
Malimba

Bbee...

Malimba, he won't marry my daughter

Bbwee... bbwe-bbwelelee...

Malimba, he won't marry my daughter  
Malimba...

Umn..., they started giggling and left one by one. She danced on more vigorously than ever - brushing her dirty sambambi on the youngest boy. He resisted:

Whoever laughs at my clothing  
etc. etc....

Bbwee...bbwee-bbwedeleelee...

Malimba, he won't marry my daughter  
Malimba

Bbi...

Malimba,....

She sang and danced, swinging her rug all over. The boy mastered his laughter completely. He ignored her efforts to make him laugh, hence fail the test.

...he doesn't marry my child  
Malimba

Whoever laughs at my clothing  
Malimba...

She tried and tried to tickle him, but failed completely. Finally she was convinced. The boy, Lindi, took the girl.  
"Let us go!"

There, they went. The matter is resolved. Lindi has taken the girl. He has won. Today he is married!

The story ends!

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