



Portrayal of Women in Selected Songs of Kenyan Male Artistes

-Kanyi Thiong'o¹

Abstract

This article analyses how Kenyan male artistes portray and appear to view women as evidenced in their songs about women. An application of social realism, Judith Butler's theory of performativity, Derrida's approach of alterity, and Lakoff's theory of metaphor informs the analysis. Songs mark almost all spheres of life in Kenya. It is therefore, necessary to examine how the male artistes in the Kenyan society construct women in their songs. This can provide a window through which a better examination and understanding of the self and the other can be achieved by examining the gender discourse that prevails in the unconscious expressions of the artiste. This is because songs can be viewed as honest confessions of what usually remains concealed in the self, about the other. It is hereby observed that male artistes are always engaged in an internal dialogue that attempts to define women from masculine precincts. These masculine dialogues manifest themselves in songs where the subsumed addressee is a plurality of the self (the male artiste) and the other (the women subject). The song is therefore, an interchange of a gendering process that voices its inner tensions, arguments, fears, hopes, dilemmas and ambitions through the song.

Key Words: Men, Women, Songs, Viewership, Metaphor

Introduction

This article analyses how different Kenyan male artistes view and define women in their songs and is based on the premise that women form one of the major themes in the songs of most Kenyan male artistes. The paper samples some songs of popular artistes, who practise the benga, kapuka, genge, jipuka, and ohangla music genres covering the period from the nineteen seventies to date. The focus is on the most popular songs composed on themes about women from most ethnic communities in Kenya. The article analyses women viewership as metaphors. This approach borrows from Lakoff's theory of metaphor. Lakoff observes that "*the contemporary theory of metaphor is primarily conceptual, conventional, and part of the ordinary system of thought and language (2)*". This is examined at the following levels:

- thematic concerns - what male artistes consciously say about women;
- style - forms of aesthetics used to qualify women viewership;
- slips of the tongue - what they think about women and express unknowingly;
- song as a social dialogue between sexes;
- song as a negotiation of power;
- love songs as a site for reconstruction of gender and re-examination of selves;

¹Doctoral Student, Department of Literature University of Nairobi

- emerging categories of women that appear to be evolving from male perceptions of women in society;
- The essence of the emerging categories; discourses that characterize masculine stories about women, examination of what informs these perceptions as persons, and the role of the woman in relation to how she is represented in male artists' songs.

The article analyses concealed assumptions and pre-suppositions that influence how male discourses construct women. The paper applies social realism and Judith Butler's propositions that,

[...] performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration. (xv)

In addition, the paper employs Derrida's argument on the discourses informing the process of constituting the other from the context of self. As Derrida observes, the other is always within the self (102). Thus the construction of women and the concept they have of themselves differs from how men perceive and conceive them.

This analysis is important because it reveals motifs that are constant in male dialogues about women. Women images in this context reveal an internal dialogue the male artists appear to have with themselves. The songs in this context define confessions of these inner dialogues. These songs therefore, can be said to reveal male gender discourses about women. This is manifested in iconic, symbolic and indexical metaphors. The songs in this context can be read as social, psychological, artistic and ideological expressions that function to thematise how various categories of men in the Kenyan society view women. The artists arguably, appropriate the popular music site to define a discourse that not only succeeds in portraying women the way it does, but also predefines male gendered perspectives of constituting women. The male discourse which manifests in the song operates within certain assumptions that are pre-supposed during song writing to give prominence to perspectives of women viewership whose assertions however, remain unstated. This constant preoccupation with the woman begs the question, why the woman? Why such manner of woman portrayal? And why portray women in this manner? There's a difference between how men portray women and how men view women. This can be examined in the context of what (Derrida: 1978) refers to as,

[...] the unpenetrated certainty that Being is a Grammar; and that the world is in all its parts a cryptogram to be constituted or reconstituted through poetic inscription or deciphering (94).

The latter is an introspection of discourses of judgment with which the artists constitute a grammar of constructing women. What men say about women may not necessarily shape social sensibilities of how women are viewed in the society, but the recurrence of such motifs and themes in male songs can, with time, constitute a norm of how women will not only be viewed but will be constructed in future social discourses. This is because songs as social discourses permeate our lives and proclaim their space in most spheres in the lives of Kenyans. Furthermore, the number of male artists, studio technicians, managers of most music marketing agents, and music promoters in the Kenya music industry outnumbers that of women.

Thematic Concerns: What Do Men Mostly Say about Women?

One of the most famous artistes of the seventies, Daudi Kabaka, in the song *Msichana wa Elimu* asks, “*oh Lady of such great beauty, what makes you not to get married? You are educated; you’ve gone abroad and come back. What is it that makes you not to get married?*”

There is a positive portrayal of the woman in this case since she is portrayed as one who is mentally capable. Therefore, she can read and acquire cognitive skills like men in the society. Daudi Kabaka, appears to have responded to the social reality of the days when most fathers did not educate the girl child. He is therefore, appreciating the fact that a woman too can go to school and acquire education like men. Worth noting is that immediately after Kenya gained her independence fathers - who were the heads of most homes - channelled all their resources towards educating the boy child. The family expected the boy to acquire education so that he could get a good job and help the family climb out of poverty.

The artiste raises the social consciousness of the public that the girl child too can go to school and acquire education. However, like with all other male artistes, we sense a negative labelling of the educated woman tarnishing this image. He asks in what appears to be a rhetorical question, “*You have acquired education, you have gone abroad and have come back. What is it that is stopping you from getting married?* This question seems to insinuate that despite the fact that the lady has acquired education, she lacks judgment and she is not getting married because she is either too content as a result of education or her status as an educated woman has made her reject male suitors or even more likely, that those who could have approached her for a hand in marriage have shied away as a result of her newly acquired status.

It appears that even though women have acquired education; the male members of the society should continue influencing or even dominating the choices women make in life. The rhetorical question is therefore, a suggestion that she should get married. In the eyes of the persona, the woman is weak in decision making regardless of the fact that she is educated, so the persona in the song believes he is assisting the woman in her decision making when he tells her that she should get married. This image of male desire to decide for women what they should do reveals that the persona appears to have a silencing attitude towards the lady as one whose ways of thought have loopholes, so he as a male, should act as an advisor in her decision making.

Another famous artiste of the 70’s and 80’s, Joseph Kamaru portrays the woman as an educated member of society the same way Daudi Kabaka does. Kamaru however, portrays the educated lady as one who used her education to liberate herself from male domination. Unfortunately, in his song *Mwega Niuriku? (Which is the Best Lady?)* The artiste labels the woman as one who uses her liberated world to engage in immorality. This is a rhetorical statement because the artiste complains that he gave her everything yet she has left him. The woman in this case is portrayed as a person who is not only materialistic but also one who is hard to satisfy. The same theme recurs in most songs that were composed in the 90’s and in 2000. For instance, in the song “*Kinyau Nyau*” meaning women who are materialistic, by Deux Vultures the artiste complains that these girls want a phone, money, and the property the man has before they will accept him.

The materialistic girl thus emerges as one of the portrayals that recur in most male songs about women. In addition to materialism, the late artistes of the 90's hence appear to carry over the same theme of the liberated woman as one who loves fun. Jim@at in the song *under 18* portrays the lady as one who drinks more beer than the male persona had expected. The police arrest them on their way home and ask for their identification cards. The persona produces his but the lady is underage. The artiste asks, how could I have known she's under 18 yet she's the one who called me, talked to me nicely and she was taking beer more than I could have expected of any woman?

In this song Jim@at portrays the woman figure as one who drinks beer even more than the male persona. The question is, does the woman drink this much or is it the artiste who gives a negative account of her by valorising the song discourse. This as opposed to the surface impression of the woman as a fun oriented character functions to give the woman protest features. She is thus portrayed as one who goes against the social norms of what anyone would have expected of any woman in society. The fact that she is portrayed drinking too much while she is still under 18, portrays her as one who is protesting the social order of things. When the police release the gentleman, he sees this under 18 girl with whom he had been drinking and threatens to beat her up. In response the young girl simply tells him, *instead of beating me, let's go to our home you make love to me.*

The theme of the fun loving girl is repeated in Franco Wa Subu's song *Ni Mwana Uriku?* (*What kind of a Child is this?*) In this song the male persona is arrested and arraigned in court for falling in love with a minor. He however, defends himself by asking the judge, *who is this child who knows how to tell the bar waiter "lete"* (bring) who is this child who knows how to respond to a kiss? She knows how to give someone a date and to underline the calendar. These are images of liberal feminism which the male artiste appears to construct of the woman of the 2000 generation.

Big Pin in the song *Ni wewe (You are the One)* portrays the lady as a very sexy person. He thus wants her close to him. In this song the theme of love and romance portrays the woman as a very romantic member of the society. The persona desires her and wants to possess her for her beauty. He says, *Come closer, you are the one who makes my heart beat in seconds until everyone says Oh my God because of the way you talk and the way you walk.* This is a portrayal of the female character as one whose essence manifests in the shape of her body and a simple image of woman's character as a sentimental subject who cannot be thought of beyond the emotional effect she has on the male members of the society. Rather silently, the artiste appears to portray the woman as a sexual object though he is shy to acknowledge this openly.

However, Nonini, another male artiste does not shy away in painting the same image of the woman as an object of quenching male sexual desires. Sauti Sol in their song *Ni shike*", that is, *Hold Me* express the same theme openly. Here the woman is portrayed as a sexual object for meeting male sexual desires. The same image appears to characterize how almost all urban artistes of the 2000 appear to define the woman.

Kamande wa Kioi in his song *Andu aya*, that is, *These People* which refers to women argues that God is great because he created meat, beer and women for men. Bucanere in the song *Fever* says that the lady gives him a fever anytime she passes. Flex in the song argues that he cannot sleep because of her, because of her beauty... all these are sexist

images which appear to characterize the image of women male artistes appear to harbour in their minds and which they articulate in their songs.

Jaguar in the song “*Kipepeo*” meaning *Butterfly* argues that she is all he wants. He will treat her nicely so that she can accept to give birth to his child. This portrayal of woman appears to reconcile male desire for sex and the rightful place of sex in marriage. However, he appears to portray the woman as one who is gullible and will give in to his love not because she has thought about it but because the male persona has treated her nicely. This is a negative portrayal since it presents the lady as a person who is emotional and gullible.

Prezzo and Wyre in the song *Malaika mama (Angel Mom)* veer from the sexist attitude of women viewership. They shower praise on the lady who in this case is a mother and not necessarily a sex partner. The artistes recognize the role of women in society as mothers, where every child, male or female, becomes what they become because of the role their mother played in their lives. This is a social feminist portrayal of the women in society where it is argued that women too have their roles in society. Unlike the sexist artistes, this song presents an upward transcendence in its portrayal of women in society.

What male artistes say about women reveals introspectively what the artistes think of themselves consciously or unconsciously. In John De' Mathew's song *Kiura Kinene (A Big Frog)* the woman is portrayed as a thief who cons, exploits and plunders. This is an instance of shifting blame from portrayal of men's gullibility in order to focus on women as cunning characters. De' Mathew in this case appears to pronounce how cunning women are but does not recognize the foolishness informing the man's state of judgment. Instead, he wants the man to appear as the innocent character and as the villain who the woman treats unfairly. This, in my view, is an unconscious recognition that the woman is more intelligent than the male persona who has fallen victim to the lady's wits.

The discourses in this song thus appear to define the woman within the perspective of liberal feminism. The woman is thus depicted as being liberated and in control of her own decisions and choices. However, we cannot fail to observe that as much as De' Mathew, as well as Jim@at in the song *Under 18*, attempt to draw this image of a liberated woman the liberated, woman is defined using images that reflect moral rottenness.

Thus it becomes clear that male artistes have a tendency of drawing women images negatively, even where they want to appear as if they are recognizing the place of women in the current society. In his song *Mtoto Mzuri*, Nonini however, attempts to redeem these negative image songs by singing about a good woman. Nonini says a good woman *should not be a prostitute. A good woman should be clean...*and that is the kind of the woman he can marry. However, he in addition reveals his obsession with the body since he says a good woman should be *sizeable, one with a nice sizeable back*. One then wonders if the male artiste can ever perceive the woman beyond her corporeal self or whether he can ever see women or ever think about women objectively as it seems as if their mere discourse on women is based on selfish desires in which the woman must quench their desire for sex.

As it appears, in their songs Kenyan male artistes define the women as being liberal feminists, material feminists and social feminists. The male artistes silence the woman so that she appears as one who only has ears to listen to the male character but not to say anything. This obviously is a case of male hegemony because men address women while the women remain silent and submissive to the male voices. This is a condescending attitude towards women, however much the male artistes camouflage it in love lyrics.

The Woman Metaphor in the Songs

Male artistes in their songs employ different forms of metaphors to qualify how they view women. Jaguar employs a good number of conventional metaphors. In this case he portrays love as a journey.

Big Pin, Daudi Kabaka, and John De Mathew employ novel metaphors to define the image of woman within aspects of feminine strength. In this context, the portrayal of the woman transcends beyond the mere description of the words an artiste uses, to necessitate a deeper need to examine why he constructs the women in these very images. I want to observe that the very images function defines new perceptions of women as opposed to the traditional perception of woman as a subject who is limited to the kitchen. The novel metaphors in this case function to draw cognizance to new dimensions within which the women of today should be perceived. These images therefore, presage a course that signifies the woman essence by ascribing to images of love lyrics as a sign of appreciation of women.

The sexist artistes, on the other hand, appropriate abstract emotions to draw expressive images of the effect the current woman appears to have on the male members of the society. The construction of woman as a subject to be desired, however low it may score on the moral scale, appears to discount and to question the traditional male chauvinism and misogyny as states of defining women in contexts of male superiority.

John De' Mathew appeals to sound metaphors to signify love and romance. This can be said to reflect a new awakening in male discourses where the song serves as a metaphor of mapping gender within new categories of constructing women in the light of their strength. This features in the song "*Njata ya Kwa*" (*My Star*) and in the song "*Kwaheri, Joyce*" (*Goodbye, Joyce*)

In this period of gay rights I want to argue that the male artiste defines heteronormativity as a site for defining the gender relation. This serves to tell us much about our society; that although the artistes appear fixated on love and romance that is centred on the perception of the woman in the context of her body our society, to a large extent, values women and their respective roles in the lives of men, may they be emotional, psychological, or even physical.

Song as a Social Dialogue between the Sexes

What are the implied responses that the women are expected to elicit as a response to the male artistes' voice or is there a female voice in the artistes' mind that the male artiste appears to respond to? All along, the woman is a silent subject in spite of how the male artistes portray her in their songs. The fact that men sing to and about women reveals an intention on the part of men to create a dialogue with women through the songs. The fact that the dialogue men invite appears to operate within love, sex and

relationship reveals that there is a body of discourse in real life which men identify with that relates to how women portray themselves to men. The male artistes appear to be responding to the way women present themselves to them. It is this body portrayal of women by themselves towards men that define the lyrics of the male artiste's songs. In this frame of mind, the love song, and the male discourse about women in male songs can be said to define a response to a discourse that exists between the sexes. In this dialogue, the male artistes appear to have revealed how they perceive the woman and therefore what their expectations are from the members of the opposite sex.

The male artiste valorises the song as a site to negotiate with women. Women, on the other hand, appear to use their bodies as a negotiating tool, where they communicate to men via body language. Big Pin says *when I see how you walk, when I hear how you talk...* this means that the male artiste engages in an interpretive discourse within which he reads the woman's intentions and motives. The fact that the woman does not respond to the male talk in the song however, calls us to question her silence and her possible responses if she was to reveal her mind to the man about what she thinks of what men say about her. These silences, in addition, call us to question her silence as a form of response. Where men may appear good in talking, women can be said to control male dialogue because men appear to sing from experiences they have had with women. How they see them and the image of silent women adopted in this case, portrays them as wise and intelligent members of the society since they spare their language which can be summarized as a practice of rhetoric and a pausing of mental puzzles through which they are able to read men's minds.

Song as a Negotiation of Power

As a result of their manner of dressing, mode of talk and their entire manner of grooming, the women appear not only to do these as forms of self-adorning but the same can be read as semiotic symbols laden with semantic significations. In so doing, the male artistes interpret women behaviour, as projected in their body mannerisms. In this context the women inspire what the male artiste sings. She can therefore, be said to control the male character, behaviour and thought by her presentation of self. Jim@at, for instance, in the song *When Dame* observes that, *when you have plaited your hair like that, oh you look so attractive that I feel I can marry you*. This is a masculine expression that arises from the way women present themselves to men and the consequent effect the woman's presentation of self appears to have on men.

Unlike the hegemonic masculinity where male chauvinism dominated how the male saw women as objects to be beaten, shouted at or just mere objects; the male discourse in today's songs appears to negotiate power with women where the men no longer regard women as subordinates and the male as superior to women. This is because most of the discourses in male songs acknowledge the necessity to recognize, appreciate and respect women. Jaguar in the song "*Kipepeo*" says *I will not be harsh to you so that you keep crying...* this is a shift in male consciousness, an acceptance that women are not any lesser human beings. This is opposed to the image of women we find for instance in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* where Okwonkwo beats his wives. We do not find such portrayal of women in Kenya's male artistes' songs. Instead, we encounter conditions where men are accepting defeat once they succumb to women's intelligence and wits. This is evidenced in John De' Mathew's song "*Simama Mama*" where he argues

that he gave her everything but at the end she took him for granted. This implies that the woman was in a position to negotiate for her share of the property and that the fact that she had been married to him did not serve to make her ignorant of her rights and freedom. The artiste argues that *...you squandered my wealth and left. ...I hear you have befriended one of my friends and when I am around, you give him a kiss in my presence so that I can feel bad.*

Bucanere in the song *Fever* says *I will do everything to get you because I'll do anything you'll ask of me.* This is a sign of masculine submission to feminine power. It is noticed therefore, that power balance in the song appears to reveal that the current crop of male members of the society recognize the role of women as decision makers. This is a song of the 2000 generation. This can be contrasted with Daudi Kabaka's portrayal of the women in the 70's as one who is incapable of making a decision to get married, which is why the artiste was indirectly suggesting to her to get married now that she is done with her education.

Women in addition, appear to wield power over men once they provoke men's emotions. The level of reasoning goes down immediately one becomes emotional. This is evidenced in Bucanere's song "*Fever*", where he reveals his emotional weakness once he falls victim to the woman's beauty and attractiveness. In this context the woman is presented as one who uses the male perception and interpretation of feminine beauty to control them. Consequently, male artistes valorise the song discourse to celebrate women's physical beauty but at the same time mourn the power this has over them. This in retrospect serves to reveal the power of self-control which the self surrenders to the other. The manifestation of this surrender to women power is again revealed in UP ddz's song "*Sonai*". The artiste says, "*Where are you Sonai? Please show up because love is making me suffer. I have realized that without you I am suffering*". The woman controls male behaviour in this context. The persona subordinates to the woman. This is a portrayal of women as people who use their beauty to control men. The women in this case are portrayed as witty characters who use their body features to have control over men. Physical appearance and ironies of perception override the cognitive process of defining interpretation of self and others.

This motif is extended in Sauti Sol's song "*Sura Yako*" "*Your Appearance*" it is revealed that the woman has taken control over the man by serving him with a chapatti which she has sat on. He says he has no option but to marry her because she is good looking. Arguably the act of sitting on the chapatti makes the man subordinate to the woman's control. In the song "*Juju*", "*Witch-craft*" the persona says the woman has used love potion on him. Power control in a man woman relationship is thus presented as a site for struggle. The woman is thus portrayed as a person who in the current state of things no longer remains submissive to male power and domination but as one who can also be in control. The woman, as revealed in the songs thus no longer remains submissive but looks for ways and means through which she shares power in a relationship with her male partner. Corporeal body presentations in this context define sites through which men and women define the value of self and the other.

Images of women appear to neutralize male hegemony. Consequently, men succumb to power sharing as a result. The man in this context focuses on the corporeal body of the woman and the site of her beauty. Male invitation of women into a dialogue and a

negotiation of the male female relation and their respective patterns can be summarized as an awakening that informs new gender relations. The male female discourses of how to treat one another, how to see each other boil down to a re-manifestation of an awakening of the male artiste to new realities of the self and a renewed awareness of women as equally valuable and important members of the society.

In this case, I would read the male submission as a Socratic apology to members of the opposite sex. This portrayal of men as succumbing to a need to recognize, cherish and sing for women can be contradicted to the previous state of women in the African society. The men are therefore, reacting to the vestiges of a past history which but remains conscious in their memory where women were not regarded at all. This recognition defines new gender discourses and gender relations between the sexes.

Emerging Categories of Women that Appear to be constructed in Male Songs

There are different forms of masculinities which influence how women are portrayed in male songs. This can suggest the varying perspectives on women that different forms of masculinity bring to bear. These forms of masculinities do not respond to the same form and nature of "woman". The "woman" in question, in the prevailing discourse is one who is constructed in a male discourse and therefore, one who does not necessarily exist in the world of reality. We are therefore, dealing with a state of disturbance, a disturbance of creating an understanding of the other which is constituted by conditions of the self.

Male artistes in this regard reflect the changing trends and transitions defining the world of women today in the Kenyan society. Various categories of women emerge as evidenced in the songs. These include liberal feminist, social feminist, material feminist and black feminist. These can be interpreted as forms of women recognition however much these portrayals appear to limit the woman to her corporeal being. This invites doubts as to the limitation of women to their body shape, emotions which the male artistes orchestrate to limit women perspectives of themselves within similar notions.

This opens up the silent intentions that inform how poetic voices in songs function to define being, that of oneself and that of the other. The portrayal of sexes in popular songs is therefore, not as much fetish as it may appear but it calls for analysis of dialogues that define how gender voices constitute alterism. Song lyrics in this context cannot be discerned in the light of their construction of self and the other, but these portrayals can be understood upon explication of the contradictions within which they operate to precast gender opposites that are unstable within presumed stabilities.

Significance of the Emerging Women Categories in Male Songs

The emerging categories of women in these songs reflect what current societies appear to grapple with in their constitution of gender relations. Consequently hegemonic masculinities emerge as a contested category of male and their respective masculine categories. There emerges a sentimental and romantic masculine category that appears to orientate its constitution of women as opposed to our grand fathers who valued women as economic commodities because they could plant on and till the land, milk cows, and rear children at the same time.

Discourses on women as evidenced in the songs have led to greater consciousness of women in society, greater recognition of women and their appreciation although this may be seen on the surface as a mere allusion to the body, its appearance and its ability to meet male sexual fantasies. The very act of female talk in the songs signifies inner desire for human self-preservation regardless of the competing ideologies that pose threat to social stability that ensues as a result of the existing relationship between women and men in the society. The male artiste's over celebration of the woman body therefore, can be seen as a calling to the members of the opposite sex to a celebration of their own essence. This has impacted greatly in changing stereotypes the society had about women as lesser human beings.

Discourses that Characterize Male Stories about Women

The discourses that characterize male stories about women can therefore, reveal a renewed desire of inclusion of members of the opposite sex in male affairs. Although this has taken a romantic course I think it can work a long way into the inclusion of women in all social affairs. The fact that the Kenya constitution has set aside a one third representation of women in the Parliament is proof enough that women have not been adequately represented in all spheres of Kenyan society. The same under representation is reflected in the kind of things the Kenyan men appear to say about women. Women discourse needs to be dislocated outside sex and her body figure.

The male artistes thus need to reflect on women's cognitive abilities and bring this capability in their songs. This is evidenced only in Daudi Kabaka's songs. I therefore, want to observe that male artistes need to rethink their notions of women and re-invent the male discourse about women in a more encompassing image of the woman and the totality of her capabilities.

Examination of Factors Informing Male Artistes Perception of Women

Most male artistes in the Kenyan music industry do not have more than basic education. Their low levels of education limit their perception and overall judgment of women. At the expense of defining an objective image of women, these artistes hence end up fanning their idiosyncrasies about women. In the long run, this affects the objective portrayal of the true status of the Kenyan woman at present. A state of sheer ignorance on the artiste's part has therefore, made it impossible for them to rise beyond their mental fantasies which they present in the songs as images of women. This is opposed to the current realities of women in real life situations. As earlier observed, there is therefore, a clear difference between the women in male songs and women in real life. The woman in male songs is also portrayed as one who is obsessed with her body which is not the case with all the women in Kenya. The male discourse therefore, cannot be said to represent the true image of women as evidenced in reality.

The Role of Women and how this is Represented in Male Songs

Women portrayal in male songs defines only one aspect of women. I think it is therefore, a discourse that men in the song have maintained in this very manner in order to condition how women define their mental frames of themselves. Portrayal of women as sex objects in the songs cannot simply imply male desire for sex but begs the question of the self that remains postponed in the very portrayal of women. Invariably this would

affect aspects of self-appreciation and prioritization of the self on the part of the woman. In so doing, women focus more on their bodies since that appears to be what preoccupies the men. This manifests power control over the “*other*” which is the very desire that keeps shifting attention between the sexes. This picture is not true of the Kenyan women and the Kenyan society. This is because we have women in all spheres of life such as education, politics, and so on but they are not given cognizance the same way the women who love adorning themselves are given in male songs. This, on the part of the artistes, is a misplacement of priority in their perception and objective portrayal of women. I would wish that in future songs, the male artistes are able to be more objective in their portrayal of women as members of the society whose sensibility transcends their body shapes, costumes, cosmetics and such mere ephemerals.

In Lieu of Conclusion

Female portrayal discussed in this article does not necessarily represent how all men in the Kenyan society view women. The male artistes in this case represent certain classes of members of the society both in terms of their academic levels as well as their social belongings. These male artistes' views therefore, do not reflect the real image of the women in the Kenyan society today because most women whom I interviewed observed that they are dissatisfied with these portrayals.

Double meanings in the images of women in male artistes' songs can be said to suggest a male conflict that ails from within as one tries to make a concrete understanding of women. I therefore, conclude that the images of women as portrayed in male artistes' songs beg the question of the inner motif of their constitution. The varying images of women portrayal qualify as shifting perspectives of women constitution and therefore, this serves not only to paint an image of how men perceive women but also as a sign of instability within which men appear to define an understanding of women whom they rarely take enough time to understand (assuming this is possible).

The songs under analysis reveal that men do not take time to interrogate their perception of women, and the causal factors informing the effect women appear to have on men. The women, on the other hand, appear as a silent aggressor who has discovered the weaknesses of men. Women, as a result, take advantage of male weaknesses to exploit the male partners on the ground that they make their outward appearance so prominent and attractive to the men that the woman's attractive image shuts off men's conscience and sound judgment. In return, the women take advantage of this to brain pick the men and therefore to learn the inner side of man. However, the women remain silent and do not reveal their intentions or their minds to men. This is the portrayal of women as witty characters who use their wisdom of silence to uncover men at their expense.

The woman in this portrayal qualifies as a being that is in transition. In so doing she appears wiser than the male character and therefore, her image is portrayed as one that has changed overtime. She is therefore, not the dull, ignorant, foolish and gullible woman she was in the traditional stories. She is therefore, growing and changing with time. Her role in society cannot be ignored and neither can she be wished away.

Post Script: Unifying our Conscience

While most academic research such as this one focuses on what I would term as conscious discourses, I wish to draw the attention to the somewhat ignored discourses such as the “drunk man” talk and how women are constructed in it. This may border on humour but it is very important because most people reveal their inner truths when drunk, thus the old adage *a drunk person never lies*. We should aim at tapping greater variety of how men think of women by examining such ignored sources of information.

Works Cited

- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York and London: Routledge, 1999, Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*. Trans: Alan Bass. London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd 1978.
- Lakoff, George. “The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor.” *Metaphor and Thought*. (2nd edition) Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Discography

- Big Pin “Ni wewe”, *Jatalo*. Homeboyz Production, 2010.
- Bucanere “Fever” Single, Home Boyz Production, 2004.
- Daudi Kabaka “Msichana wa Elimu” *The Very Best of Daudi Kabaka*. Vol 2. Music Copyright society of Kenya 2015.
- Deux vultures “Kinyau Nyau”, Ogopa DJs, 2008.
- Flex “Manzi Kitu” Single. Calif Record, 2005.
- Franco wa subu “Ni mwana uriku Njanji?” *Mwendwa OCS*. Lady Wanja Studio 2011.
- Franco Wasubu “mwedwa OCS” *Mwendwa OCS*. Lady Wanja Studio 2011.
- Jaguar “Kipepeo” Main Switch Studios, 2013.
- Jim Wat – “When Dame” Single. Calif Records, 2011
- Jim wat “Under 18” Single. Calif Records, 2011
- John De Mathew “Kiuna Kinene” *Kiura Kinene*. 2008.
- John De Mathew “Kwaheri Joyce” *Peris Nduku* 1986.
- John De Mathew “Simama mama” *My Brother*. Studio Sawa, 2013
- John De’ Mathew “ My dear Nduku” *Peris Nduku* 1986.
- John De’ Mathew “Njato Yakwa” *Njata De’Mathew Sounds*, 2002.
- Kamande wa Kioi “Andu Aya” *Githukia Tombo* Studio Sawa, 2010.
- Joseph Kamaru “Mwega niuriku?” Kamaru Studio, 1975.
- Kioboyo “Niguthii Riu” *Niguthii Riu*. Studio Sawa, 2013.
- Nameless “I am coming home” Single Home Boyz Studio, 2011.
- Nameless “Juju” Single. Ogopa DJ, 2004.

- Nonini “Keroro” Single. Calif Records, 2005.
- Nonini “Moyoni” Single. Calif Records, 2004.
- Nonini “wee kamu” Single. Calif Records. 2004.
- Nonini...“Mtoto Mzuri” Single. Home Boyz, 2013.
- Pili Pili “Kamata Dame” Single. Calif Records 2003.
- Prezzo ft Wyre “Malaika Mama” 2006.
- Sauti Sol “Ni shike” *Sauti Sol*.2015.
- Sauti Sol “Sura yako *Sauti Sol*.2015.
- Sauti Sol “Sura Yako” *Sauti Sol*.2015.
- U.P ddz – “Sonai” Single. 2007
- Vinnie Banton – “Mwanamke” Single. 2006.