

**MYTHS OF ORIGIN AND THEIR CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE
TIGANIA COMMUNITY OF MERU COUNTY**

BY

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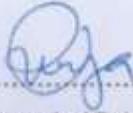
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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF
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DECLARATION

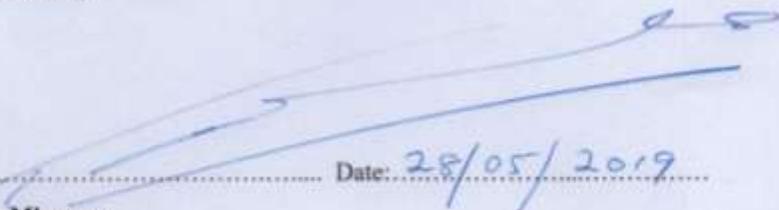
This research project is my original work and has not been presented for an award or a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my family –My loving husband Wilfred, my sons Nimo and Oliver and daughter Beryl.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to God for giving me health and strength to be able to undertake this work. I would like to extend my gratitude to my family members, especially my husband for encouraging me to soldier on, and to my mother who taught me how to speak my mother tongue, without which I would not have carried out this research.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Myth** It is a tale which describes the foundations of social behaviour.
- It is mostly held to be a symbolic description of phenomena of nature and provides cultural solutions and answers to questions that human beings ask in real life.
- Para-linguistic** A manner of communication which brings out a specific meaning and message that is not adequately captured in words. Paralinguistic elements are mainly culture specific.
- Rendition** The act of narrating a composition as expressed in an artistic performance.
- Perceived Relatives** These are people or a community in Tigania believed to be related not by blood or marriage but as a result of a cultural occurrence. Such people are inculcated in the community as part of that community.
- Acculturation** This is a cultural process in the Meru community of initiating a person into a community which he or she was not originally born into. It was a ceremony that involved mixing of blood between the ‘foreigner’ and a representative of the clan he was to belong.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

MT	Myth
LI	Kimeru Language
L2	English Language
NKJV	New King James Version

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to examine mythology in six selected myths of origin from the Tigania community of Meru County. Myths of origin in this study refer to all kinds of prose narratives including ordinary animal tales and stories of people. These tales are sacred and religious in nature while mythical characters are believed to be characters or beings that once lived when gods used to live on earth. Mythical characters are regarded as half men and half gods who would also be heroic in nature or founders of the tribes from which they hailed. The study aimed at examining the major tenets of myths, evaluating how characterization and stylistic aspects effectively communicate the notion of myths, and analyzing the relevance of myths of origin in Tigania community. The study is guided by functionalism theory, feminism theory and stylistic approach. The researcher employed a descriptive cross-sectional study approach, and data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. It was later analyzed and synthesized for presentation as a project. The findings of this study include the following: Characterisation and style have been effective in the communication of myths. Character formation and building have been enhanced by myths. Myths have also been found to be a rich repertoire of knowledge at the same time enhancing the community's religion and culture. Myths of origin have further enhanced cohesion, integration and social stability in the community. This study recommends another study on the future of myths of origin and a comparative study to shed light on how these myths of origin differ from other myths. It is also recommended that a study be carried out to explore how oral literature in general could be useful in confronting issues affecting communities in the 21st century.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

One common feature that ties together all cultures of African societies is that they all have myths which attempt to explain the origin of people and other phenomena around them. Myths deal with other aspects of African life. The former is called aetiological myths. Most African myths usually rotate around sacred beings and divine heroes. They are closely connected to the religious beliefs and practices of a people, revealing the existence of spirits and supernatural powers. These powers were believed to be instrumental in making things happen in the very beginning of time. Mythic figures reflect social reality because they have a structure of social life.

The myths of a community represent its consensus on social behaviour and aspirations. The African world was among others, a story-telling world. Indeed, the social significance of myths and the stabilizing nature of myths on the society in which they are set is an issue worth of consideration. They act as charters of social institutions rather than as faithful historical records of the past. Indeed, the past and the present coexist happily in African mythology.

Wole Soyinka in *Myth, Literature and African World* (1976:82) notes that myths and the study of myths provide man with the only hope of release from the enslavement of time because time would be regained in the knowledge that there

are diversities in human cultures that have not suffered the ravages of time, hence, giving a convenient mobility between the past, the present and the future. This study sought to identify the major tenets of myths of origin and how characterization and stylistic aspects have effectively communicated the notion of myths. The study also analyzed the relevance of myths of origin among the Tigania community.

A creative writer depicts ways in which characters move and socialize in relation to an existing myth. Levi-Strauss (1978:17) in his study, *The Structural Study of Myths*, defines a myth as a “story in which a culture endeavors to grapple with and to resolve some of the contradictions inherent in its view of reality”. One way in which this is done is by the use of characterization. In this case a character in a work of art is perceived to enjoy mobility between mortal and immortal life, a medium of transfer from the natural to the supernatural world. This character integrates the contending elements of nature and culture. Mythologies talk about the origins of the earth or the universe, life, death, the coming into existence of tribes, and ensuing migration.

Fights with the neighbouring communities, the heroes of the tribal fights, the interference of the gods in these wars, issuing of laws and customary practices are all subjects of mythologies. (Lo-Liyong (1972). Malinowsky (1954) points out that rituals, ceremonies, customs and social organizations contain direct

references to myth and they are regarded as the results of mythical events. All members of a culture share an inborn knowledge of basic myths within the society. The word myth is sometimes loosely used to cover all kinds of prose narrative, including ordinary animal tales and stories of people, but these tales had to be sacred or religious, while mythical characters are characters that lived “when gods inhabited the earth”. This view is shared by Michael Wainaina in his MA thesis, *Aspects of Orature in Selected Gikuyu Pop songs* (2002:79) in which he defines myths as “narrative tradition, texts arising from narrative accounts of events which happened in the distant past related to the time of creation, legends, fables and ogre tales.” According to Ruth Finnegan (1970), *Oral Literature in Africa*, mythic figures are themselves half-men and half gods and they may also be culture heroes and founders of the tribe.

David Bidney in *Myth and Literature* (1996:13) explains that myth is functional in the sense that it validates rites and institutions, as well as being used as an instrument ‘...of policy and social control’ (1996:17). His exploration of myths concludes that the positivity of myth in society and even to a student of literature, borders on the fact that "myth, like the great art of dramatic literature, ...have profound value ...because the plot or themes suggest to us universal patterns of motivation and conduct:" (Bidney13). Myths are, at varying levels of consciousness and degree of articulateness, a way of describing the foundations of social behaviour.

This function of myth, therefore, can best be understood within what Righter (1973:16) calls the cultural context because as he states, this function “...proceeds from the particular occasion or others like it. Bidney (1996) asserts that myths have a function which “...is essentially practical and social, namely to promote a feeling of unity or harmony with the whole of nature or life:” (7).

Soyinka (1976) asserts that one way of appreciating African literature and interpreting it satisfactorily is by paying attention to African myth. Myths, he further clarifies, are what makes the African world unique, but still enables it to possess “...in common with other cultures, the virtues of complementarity” (76). He sums up that myths are the cornerstone of African literature because they arise from man’s attempt to externalize and communicate his inner intuitions. Indeed, this assertion is replicated in our study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

It is a common belief that myths of origin are merely fictitious and bear no relevance to the social reality. Indeed, works of literature, both oral and written, are referred to as works of art whose supremacy and significance lies in the success of orature. However, this may be a fallacy because the literature of any society is the depository of the knowledge, skills, abilities and habits of thinking and doing things that the society has found useful to its survival and wellbeing.

Fictional works—novels, plays, poems and fairy tales from different civilization have the unrivalled capacity to provide insights into life. It is these insights that are the goal of literature. The myths of the Tigania people are complex and little understood today since they make reference to a dark past unknown by the majority in the contemporary community. Therefore, this study engages the mythological past in order to provide some illumination on the meaning and implications of these myths.

1.3 Study Objectives

The main aim of this study is to analyse myths of origin from the Tigania community of Meru County.

The specific objectives are to:

- i) Discuss the major tenets of myths of origin from the Tigania community.
- ii) Examine how characterization and stylistic aspects effectively communicated myths of origin from the Tigania community.
- iii) Investigate the relevance of myths of origin in the Tigania Community.

1.4 Research Questions

- i) What tenets were depicted in the myths of origin from the Tigania community?
- ii) How has characterization and style effectively communicate the notion of myths in the Tigania community?

iii) What is the relevance of myths of origin to the Tigania community?

1.5 Study Assumptions

- i) Major tenets of myths are manifested in myths of origin from the Tigania community.
- ii) Characterization and stylistic aspects have effectively communicated the understanding of myths of origin from the Tigania community.
- iii) Myths of origin are relevant to the Tigania community.

1.6 Significance and Justification of the study

The oral tradition of any community is passed on from one generation to another through word of mouth. The story-telling tradition has greatly been affected by the current social-economic and religious demands. Adults have moved away from their rural homes to towns to fend for their families, and some of those adults left in the villages consider traditional story-telling sessions as a satanic, archaic and irrelevant venture in this digital era. Devoted Christians do not understand why anybody would be interested in “heathen practices.” To them, children should be engaged in better stories. Therefore, formal education and Christianity have greatly influenced traditional stories, especially myths of origin.

This study was also necessitated by the fact that many people in the Tigania community have for ages grappled with questions such as:

Why do people die? Why are some women married as second wives and not first, yet they are beautiful? Why do we have some animals in the forest and others at home yet they are all animals? Where did the naming patterns come from? These and many more are questions that cannot be adequately answered except by use of myths of origin. Therefore, this study is significant because it will enrich our knowledge concerning the oral literature of the Tigania people, and specifically, myths of origin. It will contribute to the understanding of how literature as a discipline responds to society's cultural, social, political economic and historical matters. In addition, this research is a reservoir that will maintain the oral traditions of the Tigania people for posterity beyond the lives of the present day story tellers.

1.7 Scope and Delimitation

The study was limited to the analysis of the selected myths of origin from the Tigania community as original texts. The Tigania people, who are one of the eight ethnic groups that constitute the Meru community of Mt. Kenya East, inhabit the Northern part of Meru district. The majority of the Meru population is found in Imenti and Tigania divisions of Meru County. The Meru people are a diverse group of Kimeru speakers, whose sense of unity grew largely out of their common origin and cultural homogeneity. However, in the eight Meru communities, there are linguistic distinctions within the dialects and peculiarities in cultural practices for each group. The choice of Tigania community was necessitated by the fact

that the researcher is more familiar with the dialect of this ethnic group of the Kimeru speaking community. There was need to eliminate the tedious task of engaging a translator which would also be time consuming. There would also be loss of some stylistic aspects when the work is translated.

1.8 Literature Review

This is a review of related literature of both published and unpublished work from the secondary sources of data in the areas of specific interest to the researcher. This included works on myth definition, myth rendition and critical works on the topic under study.

1.9 Philosophical underpinnings of Myths

Funk and Wagnalls (1972) *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legends* defines myth as a story presented as having actually occurred in a previous age, explaining the cosmological and supernatural traditions of a people, their gods, heroes, cultural traits, religious beliefs etc.

Soyinka further asserts that a myth is an oral narrative which explains the essences and sequences, therefore preserving the memory of these elements for posterity; and as such, myths are second to rituals in terms of their evolution, a notion agreed upon by Okpewho Isidore who says that it is out of ritual purposes that myths were created (Isidore 1983:45).

This definition does not treat myths of origin as separate entities but presupposes that myths cannot exist without first having a ritual. However, this study does not treat myths as appendages of rituals but as an independent subject.

Dundes (1984) echoes Okpewho (1983) by asserting that myth can encompass everything from a simple minded, fictitious, even mendacious impression to an absolutely true and sacred account, the reality of which far outweighs any that ordinary everyday life can offer (Dundes 1984:14). However, Okpewho expands his argument further by stating that myth includes all tales.

The crux of this study is to analyze myths of origin, and the point of departure from the above argument is that this research does not treat myth as any tale, but a tale that explains the origin of things that are phenomenal.

Finnegan, while pursuing the dilemma of myth classification asserts that those myths which are referred to as 'untrue' fantastic tales are about incredible things but are untrue. These are tales about events which not only could not be in fact, adoring even to the teller, never did take place, and take the form of fantastic stories often ending up with a dilemma. Finnegan's argument, though useful in this study, does not add strength to the assertions put forward in this study that myths of origin are instrumental in answering questions that the community's contemporaries have grappled with for long.

These myths have been able to not only answer these questions but also aided in modifying social behaviour among members of the community.

Bukenya et al (1997) identify the major characteristics of myths by positing that myths are understood to be factual sacred stories of the origins of things that happened at the beginning of time. However, the contents of myths in various communities are believed to be a true and a present reality by the community members and that they tend to shape the future telling of tales. They arise from man's attempt to externalize and communicate his inner intuitions. Myths were stories accounting for natural phenomena or simply fables about the supernatural or beings that man could not easily understand. They were imaginary and not real and were basically told to teach young people how things came to be.

Ocitti (1975) says:

The elders used myths firstly as a device
to explain anything they did not understand.
Indeed, in a situation clouded by ignorance,
doubt and uncertainty; there were many things
to explain to the young.... (63).

On the other hand, according to Kirk (1970) myths are sacred tales that do not exclude the idea of their being traditional tales, but it goes much further in accepting one kind of traditional tale (Kirk 58). Myth is also by definition invented tales that describe the foundation of social behaviour, and its functional

aspect or value abides within a social structure mostly in connection with ritual. Olilo Machayo (2002) in *Myths and Rituals in in the Works of Francis Imbuga*, says that "... myths may be viewed to be those which articulate the foundations of society's behaviour and in so doing provide cultural solutions to problems faced in a community." He further postulates that myths are symbolic and they function to validate and perpetuate a people's ways of life. The content of such stories are hard facts about life and are meant to control and regulate the moral and social behaviour of people.

Myths control the social behaviour of people because these stories involve the preternatural forces such as gods, moon, solar system, mountains, and rivers. According to Were, (2014) myth is a traditional story concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or solid phenomenon typically involving supernatural beings or events (34).

Gould's (1981) observations are that myths play a fundamental role in the interpretation of what occurs in our lives. They are symbolic – do not only validate and perpetuate what happens in a people's daily lives but "... mythical imagination and intuition imply a belief in the reality of its object" (11). The role of myth, he adds, is evidently embedded in literature because "...fictions aspire to the status of myth" (19). This symbolism that is inherent in myths of origin call for a deeper revelation in order to authenticate myths in terms of meaning.

In his book *Research in African Literatures* (2001) Abiola Irele observes:

A creative artist is a vehicle of a power which acts through him. Artistic creation requires the presence of a symbolic world, a world of 'poetic existence'. This symbolic world of poetic existence is provided by mythology which is the necessary condition and primary matter of all art. (100).

The above works helped to understand the concept of myth. However, this study differs from the works cited above because unlike the present study, they mainly dealt with definitional issues which are not the primary concerns of this study.

1.10 Etiological Myth Rendition

The characteristic feature of folklore is that it has been handed down from one person or generation to another. Aetiological myths are stories with a religious touch about them. They tell us about the origin of life and death, natural phenomenon, behaviours of first ancestors of man, the solar system, and origin of people, sacred beings, divine heroes and activities of gods. Aetiological myths gave people their roots. Perhaps oral narratives are the most important microcosm in the genres of oral literature and the story of aetiological myths is very important because, in them, man's destiny is discussed.

According to Finnegan (1970), Myths of origin delineated religious beliefs and practices of a people and advanced that life is controlled by supernatural forces whose powers were instrumental in making things happen.

Time and occasion were very instrumental in determining when stories would be told. Basically, stories were told:

- (i) In the evening for entertainment
- (ii) After people had come from work
- (iii) Discussion around the fire (when cooking)
- (iv) At a marriage party or at a funeral

There has to be an interaction between the narrator/performer and his listeners who also contribute. Important therefore is the prowess in delivery. This is because rendition is a conscious craft-bearing aesthetic and artistic expression which is stimulated by a physical and socio-economic environment. It is a collective preference of generations as well as a talented individual innovation which is composed and transmitted orally in the imaginative expression of a people and projects their hopes and aspiration. Abiola Irele (2001) in his book *Research in African Literatures* had this to say about storytelling:

Story telling is a practice common to all cultures. Historically, story telling has acted as a sort of connective tissue across which different themes, subjects, values and discourse genres have circulated among different peoples throughout the centuries, as testified by our common patrimony of legends, tales, stories, myths, parables, sayings and proverbs (2001, 104).

Claude Levi-Strauss (1978) asserts that myths are still applicable in contemporary societies. He further explains that myth is in fact that which has to be told in order for an action or event to be understood, and concludes that what gives the myth an

operational value is that the specific pattern described is timeless; it explains the present and the past as well as the future.

This view is further echoed by Irele (2001) thus:

Texts of oral literature have the potential to get free of their immediate context and live a life of their own. They continue to be telling, significant, capable of hospitality and listening even when their original context has been strongly modified or no longer exists and they are re-evoked and developed in contexts completely different from the original. (2001, 106).

Caribbean playwright Derek Walcott, in *The Pressures of the Text* (1955), acknowledges the kinship between myth and ritual arguing that myth and ritual can serve as relevant and significant trope for exploration because myth and ritual serve to energize “...the imagination and perception” (25) Indeed, most forms of African drama are surrounded by myths because there is a link between rites and myths. Myths play a leading role in the ritual drama and as Hans Mol says:

Myths socialize through emotional anchorage advantage of integrative reconciliations but they can do so only through presentation of binary opposition with instrumental symbolism. It is in the repetitive presentation that the reconciling function of myth reside. (1977:21).

Machayo Olilo (2002) specifically looks at how myths and rituals function in the literary works of Francis Imbuga. He further explores how the author employs

myths and rituals to deliberate on the cultural woes on the African continent and finally how myths and rituals enable Imbuga to deliberate some social and political changes witnessed on the continent of Africa. Machayo shows how myths and rituals energize the works of Francis Imbuga.

Sailors (1948) has dealt with mythology and religion in Greek society which might be different from the African view of mythology and therefore there is need to investigate the myths of origin in an African traditional society to fill the void.

Myths are tied to a specific time, a place, and a people; and for the Greeks, they are never isolated, one myth evokes further myths... it is almost true that every Greek myth is ultimately connected in a chain of association with every other Greek myth (Bremmer 1987:6). According to Levi-Strauss (1978:43), a myth is as diachronic as a historical account of the past and it is synchronic and temporarily reversible as an instrument of interpretation of the present or the future. Levi-Strauss further postulates that the constituents of a myth are relational and must be put together to yield meaning, (4). Wainaina (2000) has dealt extensively with the mythological and definitional shortcoming in his thesis, *Worlds of Kikuyu Mythology*. Wainaina posits that any tale in the Gikuyu community is a myth. (2000:67).

Wainaina also postulates that a myth is like a language whose various constituent elements (phonemes) combine to make meaning. Wainaina, (2000) Levi-Strauss (1978), and Bremmer (1987), seem to merge in their view of the fact that myths are relational. Wainaina, whose study probes animal characters, states that the world of Gikuyu mythology is related to Gikuyu society and culture. Wainaina's perspective of the mythology among the Gikuyu mainly uses animal characters. This is however different from the Tigania community's view of myths as brought out in the myths of origin which have both human and animal characters.

The postulations of Bremmer (1987), Wainaina (2000) and Sailors (1948) inform that myths beget myths; that is, no single myth can exist on its own or yield significance but myths complement each other. This study does not concern itself with myth relationship or how the significance of any myth is dependent on another myth.

Freud argues that myths are distorted vestiges of the wish-fulfillment of whole nations-the age-long-dreams of young humanity. *Introduction to a Science of Mythology* (1998), Jung argues that myths of primitive man, like dreams and neuroses generally, are the products of a reduced intensity of consciousness and absence of concentration and attention. According to Jung, myths are made of primordial symbols or archetypes which are not whole tales but the nuclear concepts around which tales are built.

The above views, though relevant to the study, do not bring out an argument or insight into myths of origin which this study intends to pursue. There has been a myth-ritual controversy and several critical works have been done on myth and ritual with heavy assertions that the two are quite interdependent and that only when they are placed side by side can each of them yield significance. Soyinka attempts to resolve this ritual-myth controversy.

Myth and ritual do not always correspond to each other but they complete each other in domains already presenting a complimentary character. Soyinka (1976) posits:

Myth was created out of ritual
The later term must be understood in a
wide sense, because in primitive society
everything is sacred, nothing profane.
Every action, eating, drinking, tilling,
fighting has its proper procedure, which
being prescribed, is holy (Soyinka, 1976:32).

Bukenya (1997) and Taban Lo Liyong (1972) merge in their view of myth and legend. They agree that the mystical past had equally mythical figures that lived when the gods used to live on earth. These are half-men and half gods who are intermediaries with gods.

Soyinka (1976:47) and Luthi (1987:97) analyze the mythical worlds as: ideal essence world and the material world, the animal world, spirit world and the primal inner world.

The fairy tale is isolated, and thus enters effortlessly into fruitful contact with distant worlds, with worlds above and below, with nature and with individual figures of the world (Soyinka 28). Our study is in agreement with the above because the characters in the study exhibit the ideal world, material world, the animal world and the spirit world. Indeed, the credibility of the myths of origin from the Tigania community has been as a result of the interaction between the above realms. It eliminated the monotony of similarity in character and roles.

The controversy surrounding myth, ritual and legend could not be resolved in this study because we did not carry out a comparative study on the same. The information in the three aspects does not shed light on myths of origin which was the gist of this study. Indeed, the functionalists and psychoanalysts' insights equate myths to rituals because they "provide social solidarity, enhance the integration of the society by providing a formalized statement and its ultimate value-attitudes, afford a means for the transmission of much of the culture with little loss of content through protecting cultural continuity thus stabilizing the society." (35) Myths avail an opportunity for humanity to realize their position within the community and to play their part in line with the collective needs. Fights with the neighbouring enemies, the heroes of the tribal fights, the interference of the gods in these wars, issuing of laws and customary practices are all subjects of mythologies (Taban 1972:56).

According to Sailors (1948:21), a large portion of mythology explains religion, just as much of religion is mythology put into practice. Myths must have a religious background in that its principal actor or actors are deities. Funk and Wagnalls (1972) differentiates a myth from a legend: "a myth remains properly a myth only as long as the divinity of its actor or actors is recognized. When the trickster becomes human, rather than divine, when a hero is a man rather than a god, myth becomes a legend." (1972:778). This argument further sets apart the content of myths as individual tales that have a life independent of other tales and having the potential to yield meaning on their own.

The religious aspects of myths get further elucidation from Were (2014) in his PhD thesis, *Traditional Ritual Ceremony as Edurama: A Case Study of Imbalu Among the Bukusu of Western Kenya*, who says that myths embody chains of divine or miraculous origin and sanctions, thereby sacrificing human forms and beliefs. Were's arguments are in tandem with Irele (2001) since the latter defines myths as 'imaginative constructions and intimations or expressions of the divine.

According to Irele (2001), individuals are embedded in culture; humans do not select a culture, they are created by it. In this context, knowledge is embodied in social skills. Therefore, the religion and culture which the subject community subscribes to in this study is of importance to this particular research.

1.11 Theoretical Framework

To be able to achieve the objectives of the study and to give an in-depth analysis of the topic under study, Functionalism theory, Feminism and Stylistic approach were deemed appropriate. These theories were not applied separately or independently but rather they were intersected in the effort to give a comprehensive analysis of the texts under study. The two theories cohere in aiding the understanding of the significance of myths and how myths enhance the satisfaction of the needs of a society.

Functionalism is a theoretical approach of the ethnological tradition whose main proponents include Bronislaw Malinowski, Radcliffe Brown and Emile Durkheim. The major tenets of functionalism theory are cohesion, integration solidary and equilibrium. These elements explain how society is divided into its differentiation functional parts with each part dependent on the other and the amassed parts adding up to the structural whole of the society. Functional theory is sometimes called structural functionalism because it often focuses on the ways social structures e.g. social institutions meet social needs. Functionalism theory attempts to explain social institutions as collective means to meet individual and social needs of the community. It tries to explain how societies maintain the stability and internal cohesion necessary to ensure their continued existence over time.

Durkheim sought to explain social stability through the concept of solidarity, stability and internal cohesion necessary for continued existence over time although a change in one institution will precipitate a change in other institutions.

Malinowsky maintains that every social act or cultural fact is intended to satisfy a primary biological need and that the relevance of items of oral literature were regarded as relevant only in so far as they could be fitted into this social framework. He was interested in local narratives only when they could be seen to have a clear 'social function'. Functionalism is, therefore, a theory which examines the peculiar network of needs in any society and the way in which this network ensures the contentment and survival of the social system according to Lo Liyong (1972). Under this tradition, myths are a means through which social, cultural and spiritual needs are satisfied in a society. In this regard, whatever a society does has a practical use for its people and a special place within the fabric of the social systems. In the light of the above 'myths provide a model through which people can verbalise the relationships and constitution of their society' (1972:56). Functionalism theory was particularly important in this study because it helped the researcher to explain the importance of the particular myths in this study and myths in general.

Feminism theory tries to understand gender inequality and social roles for both men and women together with together with the battles that women fight in their

everyday life. Themes that feminism deals in include; gender discrimination, objectification, especially sexual objectification, oppression patriarchy and stereotypes. The feminists – Susan Burdo, Jone Johnson Lewis, Olyme De Gouge Rachel Speght and Judith Sargent Murray, all agree that men have historically been associated with the intellect and the mind while women have been associated with the body. In line with these the theory tries to look at men's and women's social role in the society.

The proponents advance that inequality between gender and how it has been practiced differ between cultures and change significantly through history. The persistence of gender inequality has consequently led to the formulation of the concept of patriarchy. Although there are slight variations between different feminist approaches there are salient characteristics that are common. Gender is a central focus or the subject matter of the perspective and that gender relations are viewed as a problem, a recipe for social inequalities, strains and contradictions. They also agree that gender relations are not immutable but are sociologically historical in nature, subject to change and progress.

The six myths of origin from the Tigania community all exhibit a bias towards the female gender in one way or another. Feminism was particularly important in this research because the theory is about emancipatory commitment to change. The conditions of life that are oppressive to women need to be transformed.

Stylistic approach is based on the study of style as used in literary expressions and its effect on the audience. Thus, it attempts to establish principles capable of explaining the particular linguistic items and choices made by an individual author in his or her work of art in an attempt to bring about certain meanings in the society as well as foreground certain issues that affect society. Wellek and Warren (194:42) in *Theory of Literature* argue that although stylistics bears a close relationship to linguistics, it is possible to simply identify it with poetics or general theory of literature since it includes additional areas, which are not under a linguistic or stylistic approach. Such areas include plot, themes, characterization and even motif.

Chapman (1973) in *Linguistics and Literature* postulates that stylistics views art as an author's way of appreciating his own environment. In that process, the author could employ language in such a way that he either applauds or criticizes what happens in the society. The six myths of origin selected for this study owe their antecedents and inspirations to the social experiences in the society from where they are drawn.

This study is an attempt to trace aspects that define myths of origin and the role of characterization and stylistic devices in communicating mythology. The study strives to capture the relevance of myths of origin in the Tigania community. It is important to note that the mythmaker manifests in all his work.

This he does by shaping situations and creating characters according to his personal whims and attitudes.

1.12 Methodology

1.13 Research design

A descriptive cross sectional study design was used in this study. This involved analysis and interpretation of data to capture important principles of knowledge and solutions to significant problems that the study hoped to solve. Both primary and secondary data was utilized, where there was an in-depth study and analysis of the selected myths of origin. Other works that reveal what has already been done by other scholars on the topic were referred to. The study involved field data collection, sampling, analysis, and interpretation. Relevant books, journals, theses and dissertation papers, newspaper articles, and any other published material on the topic was studied.

1.14 Population and Sampling

There are so many myths from the Tigania community. The research had identified eighteen myths but later narrowed down to ten. On further probing, this research eliminated four out of the ten. The six that were left for the study were sampled due to their focus on aetiology and their richness in cultural elements which are a major ingredient of this study. Furthermore, these myths are common in this community and are representative of the Tigania myths.

The study also excluded other myths of origin from the same community because they were common, and did not fully address the concerns of this study. These were; The origin of the *Tigania Oathing Ceremony (Kunyua muuma)*, The origin of *Tigania Cultural Acculturation (Nciarithio)*, The origin of *Ritual Cleansing (Nthenge na Ndoromerio ya Kithiiri)*, The origin of *Compensation made for Murder (Kurea Nyamuuru)*.

1.15 Data Collection

This study used both the primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources were the six selected myths of origin, and they were subjected to an in-depth study and analysis.

Secondary sources included relevant books, journals, theses and dissertation papers, newspapers articles, relevant published and unpublished material and internet sources that offered pertinent insights on the topic under study.

(a) Pilot Study

There was a mapping of the specific areas where data was collected. The researcher also familiarized herself with issues such as the days and time that were appropriate for the visit. It also involved obtaining a permit from the relevant authority. A research assistant was identified and engaged to assist in carrying out the research. He was expected to be familiar with the geographical location of the area and the ethical considerations of the target area.

(b) Fieldwork

The field study and collection of material was done in Muthaara and Lanyiruu locations of Tigania East Constituency of Meru County. Data was gathered by audio-visual recording, brief field notes, and pictures in order to capture non-verbal elements which would otherwise be lost. There was a discussion with key informants who took us through the various myths of origin. There were open-ended questions for the discussion to give room for further probing in order to get satisfactory responses. The collected data was transcribed from L1 (Kimeru) to L2 (English), translated from L1 to L2 and finally processed. The transcribed and translated versions of the myths may be slightly different from the original version because the English language may not adequately bring out all the linguistic, paralinguistic and cultural elements in the myths.

These responses were recorded using note-taking and tape-recording as a method.

Rob Walker (1985), discusses the advantages of note-taking by noting that:

Only what is finished and valued is recorded, and that note-taking provides room to challenge the given testimony (further probe the responses) and the method is economical in terms of time and cost (110-116).

1.16 Data Analysis

This was a field based research. The primary data was collected, examined and collated in line with the objectives of the study. Data analysis was based on the concept of mythology in relation to the six selected myths of origin from the

Tigania Community of Meru County. There was a free translation, playing the tapes and consulting the brief notes as well as consulting the video to capture the mood and temporal presence. This was done to capture and comprehend the meaning of statements, and to put them in English in such a way that the translation would convey all the meanings, both denotative and connotative. Words that have no equivalent in English were explained in the glossary of terms.

Through content analysis, a comprehensive synthesis and interpretation of data gathered from the reading of both primary and secondary sources was undertaken to bring out a coherent final report. For ease of analysis and interpretation, the study was divided into five chapters, each addressing particular concerns as outlined in the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: TENETS OF MYTHS OF ORIGIN FROM THE TIGANIA COMMUNITY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter lays emphasis on the major tenets of myths of origins from the Tigania community. Myths of origin display certain salient features that set them apart from other genres of oral literature. Sigmud Freud and Karl Jung believe that myths and legends *symbolically* enact deep truths about human nature. Throughout history, myths have accompanied religious doctrines and rituals, helping sanction or recall. The reasons for religious observances can also help sanction customs and institutions.

Writers and speakers often turn to myths when they try to tell stories of deep significance because mythic structures touch a powerful and primal part of the human imagination. They help to concisely allude to stories familiar to their audiences by drawing on powerful association with just few words.

Emile Durkheim's developments in functionalism were later modified and referred to as functionalism by Haralambos and Holborn as:

The various parts of society...seen to be intergrated and taken together as a complete system. To understand any part of society, the part must be seen in relation to society as a whole (2007:856).

In this way, a functionalist examines part of society in terms of its contribution to the maintenance of the whole system. This means that the relationships between

members of society are organized in terms of rules and social norms which stipulate how people are expected to behave. This will entail an example of how myths of origin from the Tigania community are structured and what effect they have on other parts of this community's social, political and economic structure. Many stories fall into familiar mythic patterns and they display certain salient features that set them apart from other genres of oral literature. They include the following:

2.1.2 Myths are Cultural

Knowing the oral arts of a society is a major step in understanding our own cultural values. Experience in other parts of the world with a living tradition of oral literature indicates that people well grounded in their culture are likely to do well and to find a full satisfactory life-style than those who do not. Oral literature in all its forms and content is found in the village and cannot be studied in isolation of real life. The greatness of oral literature lies in its ability to embody, in forms of oral literature, a wide range of creative materials such as speech as well as religious and social concepts.

Soyinka (1976) avers that in a sense the history of a people's culture is the history of its attitudes to myths because myths themselves carry fragmentary overtones of the past. This, combined with the poetic side of the dramatic vision as well as with the direct application of mythical situations to contemporary problems,

produces a very remarkable effect; a kind of new mythology. Myths confirm and maintain the memory of, and provide authority for, tribal customs and institutions. (18).

Myths essentially have societal importance and the social function of storing and transmitting the values of a given society since they occur only in social content, as part of a cultural milieu. Myths are culturally inspired with certain social milieus. This sociological function of myth relays the social issues assailing humanity while pacifying man's curiosity about origins. Kinuthia et.al (1996) states that the "the main difference between man and other apes is his mental capacity for intelligence. Indeed, curiosity in relation to one's origin is one of the main characteristics which distinguish man from the rest of creation" (16). Therefore, studying oral literature is not enough without the realization that we are searching for the essence of man's culture.

Wellek and Warren (1942) in *Theory and Literature* posits that "...large questions raised by literary studies are at least ultimately or by implication social questions of tradition and convention, norms and genres, symbols and myths." (1942:85). In *Red-Thigh Woman (Ngirani) MT 2*, young men are very careful when selecting a life partner. They would seek the advice of the people, secretly, about the background of the girl they hoped to marry.

In *Red-Thigh Woman (Ngirani)* MT 2, the elders concluded:

“All daughters from this illegitimate union shall never secure marriage by young men but would always be married as second wives or by old men who had divorced or lost their first wives”.

This advice from older members of the society was necessary in order to avoid getting married to *Ngirani* (Red Thigh Woman) which syndrome among the Tigania people is such an emotive topic even to date. This trend was maintained since the custodians of the morals in the society wanted to discourage some anti social behaviour in the community such as sleeping with a close relative, for instance a daughter, son, sister or brother. To date, this ideal is upheld not only because it is an ancient story but because it was a form of retributive justice to the wrong doer and his posterity. Douglas (2000) maintains that “prophetic myths for our time, are an attempt to make our collective experiences intelligible”. This he says is through a narrative that is representative of truths or values that are sanctioned by the general belief of a people (2000:121).

Myths of origin are as old as culture itself. It is clear that the kind of accounts that any particular society created are a reflection of that society’s way of life. Tigania people from a very early time were hunters and relied on wild animals for food, which they supplemented with agricultural activities. It was therefore natural for a man to desire to domesticate wild animals to save him the agony and danger of going out to hunt every time he needed food.

This is according to the MT 5, *How Animals Were Domesticated*.

“One day, the dog, while at the edge of the forest next to man’s homestead, observed how man would make a trap and kill many animals for food”.

In addition, the mythmaker had reason to explain the origin of rain from which the peoples’ livelihood depended on. This is aptly captured in *Rain and Thunderstorms*, MT 6. Once a religion or a mythology is established and endorsed in society, a new cultural element is introduced and certain end results introduced to ensure that people adhere to those new elements; that is why culture is dynamic and keeps swelling and with each new challenge comes new ways of infusing it into the community. If the father had not impregnated his own biological daughter in *MT 2, Red-Thigh Women (Ngirani)*, the Tigania culture would not have such a scenario.

This scenario is aptly illustrated in *MT 2 Red Thigh Woman (Ngirani)* thus:

“All daughters from from this illegitimate union shall never secure marriage by young men but would always be married as second wives or by old men who had divorced or lost their first wives. such a girl would be referred to as ‘Ngirani’ or K iero Gitune”

However, the introduction of this myth was all in an effort to solve a problem in the society, which would otherwise consume the social set up of the entire community. In the Tigania community family life and relations was very important because this was and is the institution at the core of survival and

perpetuation of life. Indeed, five of the myths of origin under discussion touch on family, their aspirations, challenges and solutions. In the same myth we have:

“Should a young man fall in love with a red-thigh woman, she
Would escort him at night and on parting she was expected to
Throw a ‘Kinyinga’ in front of the man on his way home. This
Symbolic act was a saving ceremony to save the life of the young
Man”

The functionalist perspective to this particular myth is that there was a solution that was arrived at by the elders. It was meant to cater for the social and cultural needs of the society. It provided marriage even for the ‘red-thigh woman’ and the young men who would insist on marrying such a woman would be saved by the saving ceremony prescribed.

Oral traditions have influenced the creative writing from Africa and have been integrated into the different genres of literature. Okpewho (1983), Lindfors (1973) and Odaga (1982) observe that contemporary writers have continued to employ myths in their writing in various ways. Odaga further notes that, “the traditions and experiences are rich” (xxiv), while Wainaina (1998) notes that, “orature is a vast reservoir of the artistic material” (5). Thus, oral traditions have been referred to as rich resources of material for the contemporary writer.

Myths have a cultural origin which is part of its history revealing the trends of an era and are revelatory to the degree of possessing intimate involvement with space

and time. Thus myths hold a profound significance for philosophy, offering insight on embodiment. *MT 5, Family and Clan Naming Patterns* among the Tigania community captures the entire history of the Tigania people right from *Mbwaa* (Coast) to their present day habitation. They use family and clan names that they acquired during the *Mbwaa* experience thus:

“As they grew up, the two siblings began to be in constant conflict with each other. As a result of this the father supported the first born, Meneng’a While the mother was allied to the second born, Mutabui. This brought About ‘Cioithe’ and ‘Ciong’gina’ meaning ‘of the father’ and ‘of the Mother’ respectively”

Atwood (2003) says that “Myths have established a communal code that is radically different from the ideology governing the old world” (13). This is to mean that though these myths belong to the ancient times, the principles thereof are applicable today.

The cultural names such as Mutabui and Muriiru, Ciethe and Ciong’ina, Njeru, Njiru and Ntune from which the Tigania community traces their ancestral naming is a pattern that is alive even today among the Tigania people. This shows that myths cannot exist independent of the history of the particular community represented. Myths justify a culture’s activities and social systems and account for customs and rituals. In *Family and Clan Naming Patterns MT 5*, when children are born, they are named according to this story.

Similarly, in the Tigania community, family and clan names trace their ancestry from the story of migration, and no clan can dissociate itself from this arrangement.

Although some clans are despised because of the negativity connected with the time they escaped, the rationale behind this is necessary for the purpose of inculcating warriorship among the youth. They help validate certain sociological systems such as rites of passage, institutions, sets of rights and wrongs, proprieties and improprieties, codifying behavior and enforcing morality.

Myths of origin are socially formative, unifying and solidifying and sustaining capacities. They set up some precedent as cultural ideals and a guarantee for the continuance of that ideal. They address problems of cultural conflict among African communities by validating values and customs that may be a cause for optimism about humanity's future, even in the shadow of threatening developments. Considering *Perceived Relatives (Gichiario)*, MT 4, we learn that a community whose cohesion and survival is on the brink of collapse can find remedy in the lessons acquired through etiological tales.

In the same myth, the punishment of the young men in the *Gaaruu*, (traditional Tigania house for young men and old men) had far reaching consequences in the survival of its unity. This spells optimism and hope to the preceding generations.

Mythology, though a very ancient discourse, instructs the community in the modern age, although human beings are tied to their past in certain ways. By retelling the myths of origin and the lessons learnt, succeeding generations can face the future with renewed vigor in the hope that past mistakes can be corrected.

The scenario of *Red Thigh Women (Ngirani) MT 2*, clearly shows that certain things may take very long to outgrow culture. Among the Ibo of Nigeria, the red-thigh woman, popularly known as Osu has been well discussed by Elechi Amadi in the novel *The Concubine* (1966). Here, Ihuoma the main character, is an extraordinarily beautiful young woman who attracts several suitors, causing untold suffering and death to all of them. She could not secure a good marriage and had to remain a concubine. According to the Tigania culture, it was unacceptable to have sexual relationships with close relatives because incest was considered a taboo. The story has the same dimension as science and Christianity. In the traditional Tigania culture, the punishment for having sex with a very close relative, for instance a daughter or mother, was severe and it exposed the culprits to social stigma if not death.

The punishment seems too severe, and the community may have to contemplate a shift from it, although these days such occurrences just go unreported. Myths are believed to be true accounts by the society from where they are drawn. They are represented in a logical model that is capable of overcoming contradictions.

The Red-Thigh Women (Ngirani) phenomenon aptly demonstrates the argument that the African man is by nature polygamous. This argument provides a legal ground for the Tigania man to get another wife without seeming to hurt the society.

The Tigania people believed in myths especially because of the artistic application of the power of words and on the omnipresence and versatility of myths in their cultural mindset, and on the inevitable pull of narrative in our desire to understand ourselves and our world. However, Wamahiu (1993:6) suggests:

Culture-defined roles and relationships should best be seen as a human contract. In other words, these roles and relationships are not immutable and unchangeable. Where there is a felt and justified need, then there is no reason why these roles and relationships cannot be revised. One does not have to continue oppressive practices if they have outlived their use. (1993:6).

This assertion by Wamahiu is very instrumental in instituting a change for the better. Some of the cultural practices contained in myths of origin need to be discarded if their relevance to the present day demands are futile.

Language as a cultural constituent is the collective meaning and bank of peoples' experiences in history. Culture and language are almost indispensable because it is through language that the genesis, growth, articulation and transmission of

culture is realized. This language is developed within the traditional setting of a people where experiences, attitudes, and beliefs are tailored in a way that is peculiar to the cultural audience. Carol Osborne in *Mythmaking in Margaret Atwood's Oryx and Crake* (2003) contends that “myths offer an additional commentary on the power of words, on the omnipresence of myth in our cultural mindset and on the inevitable pull of narrative in our desire to understand ourselves and our world” (Atwood, 2).

In the six myths of origin, it was and still is difficult to find English words which could adequately fit the *Tigania* words due to the rich cultural thrust. Most of the native words can only be elaborated superfluously and could not be directly translated since there are no English equivalents. Myths of origin, being stories that explain origins, use words which are older than the English vocabulary because western education had not yet brought the meaning, or the objects denoting those words were not available.

Examples of such words are, *Gaar* (house of old men and young men), *Nkanatha* (cowshed), *Kinyinga* (burning piece of wood), *Ngirani* (Red-thigh woman), *Gichiaro* (Perceived relative) etc. All these words are Kimeru words and have been used in the six myths of origin from the Tigania community. This study used language and cultural references that can be understood by the Kimeru speakers consistently.

In myth rendition the manipulation of linguistic and cultural elements is vital in order to enrich the understanding of the audience, and it calls for ingenuity and a rich repertoire of lore. This is because words have cultural overtones that only the native speaker may fully draw from the ‘kernels of knowledge’ that may be contained in such a work of art.

The relation of narrative style to mythic quality is a difficult business and a delicate balance. The audience-visual machine that the researcher used was able to capture the contextual nuances and paralinguistic elements that add flavor to the narrative work. The nuances of both sight and sound at the fervid scene were not lost. It was therefore possible to perceive the tricks that the voice of the narrator could play, all to the success of the quality of the myth narration.

The non-verbal cues in MT 4 *Perceived Relatives (Gichiaro)* aptly brings out this:

“The husband did not inquire much about the matter because it was evident especially with the child who was roughly wrapped up in the hands of one of the young men. The woman, unwilling to give details in the open called the husband inside the house and in low tone narrated what had happened...”

Myths expand the cultural vocabulary as the audience learns to be more proficient communicators especially because the telling language is culturally foregrounded.

A very important aspect of mythology is the sense of community that results from the ritual telling of these stories, for it sets a precedent for how stories may function, with embellishment of images, symbols and mythic allusions. *MT 5, Origin of Family and Clan Naming* has a lot of local vocabulary that English has

not been able to fully explain while others are culturally coded. In this particular myth, the audio-visual equipments were necessary in order to capture them all. This, especially eliminated the pain of trying to keep pace with the narrator's speed of delivery. This together with note-taking did away with the awkwardness of having the narrator to go back on his details so as to get the clan and family names correctly.

Within an African ritual context, spoken words are considered to be in fact more effective than the actions. Kamare and Mpesha in *Journal of Asian and African Studies*; No.41 1991 145-6) explain thus "one reason why each word must be weighted before it is uttered is because of the finality of the spoken word." It is also one way in which society silences its members because of the conviction. For these stories to be alive as they are today, having survived the ravages of retelling by different narrators, it means that much of the cultural references are alive and so important as to be retained.

The myths of origin from the Tigania community are awash with symbolism. Characters, objects and language has been used symbolically for various reasons. Names for example have been used symbolically both for family and clan identification. MT 5 *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, we have the following symbolic names; Cioithe, Ciong'ina, Gaita, Mwithe, Nguu Ntune, Njeru, Njiru, Ntune, Koome Njue etc. All these names have cultural meanings.

This oral sharing of the mythmakers' love for words, kernels of wisdom from their vast knowledge of cultural texts and their visions have the capacity to help their audience to understand themselves. This noble assignment of communicating societal expectations to the young was obligated to female parents and these expectations were shaped by the society in which the story teller is a part of. The narration, storytelling and a valorization of the multiplicity of language and words constitute much hope for the persistence of creativity. It is important to note that the female parents were the story tellers because it was their cultural duty to ensure that children wait for food to cook and so they had to engage the children's young mind in stories as they prepared the evening meal.

Atwood (2003) notes "that myths of origin have set the stage ... to reverence language since words created expand a community's vocabularies, making them better communicators" (2003:32). What seems to be the most important aspect of mythology, however is the sense of community that results from the ritual retelling of stories.

2.1.3 Solution Oriented

Most of the needs that were met by the selected myths of origin may not necessarily be recurrent in the society today but at that point in time they were meant to satisfy certain needs in the Tigania community.

MT 1, *The Origin of Death* was necessary because among the Tigania people, one of the qualities of a deity was immortality. Indeed, the god that was worshipped in this community would never die because he was not human. When Thaaai (God) saw that man was not dying but living forever, he decided that it was not in order for man to live eternally like him. MT 1 *The Origin of Death* it is noted;

“Long time ago, people never used to die. They used to live forever God (Thaaai) thought to himself. This is not good since if man does not die he will be like me who is immortal. So he decided that mankind ought to die but resurrect”.

As noted earlier, issues that were beyond human comprehension were referred to the realm of the spirits and offerings and sacrifices would be made so that the religious leaders could approach the gods for clarity. The place of Thaaai in the six myths of origin is clearly set out and is irreplaceable. When the Meru people grew tired of mistreatment in *Mbwaa*, in *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5, they consulted Thaaai on how they could be set free and through a series of consultations, prayers and offerings, they were set free.

‘a Mukuri (savior) would be born’

These were not mere words but a promise from Thaaai and indeed the ‘Mukuri’ saved them from slavery in *Mbwaa*. Though seers, mediums and other special people in the community were highly venerated, they were only close to Thaaai but could not carry out his assignments.

That is why in his infinite knowledge and wisdom, he decided to send the Mole to man to inform him that henceforth he (man) would be dying but after dying he would resurrect. To Thaaai that was needful.

MT 2, the story of *Red-thigh Woman (Ngirani)* was useful because there was a problem of incest within the family set up. The decision arrived at after the mediation was to discourage this ill-mannered behavior and to maintain the sanctity of the family institution. The Tigania community holds the institution of marriage in high esteem. Before one gets married, investigations are carried out to find out the integrity of the family where he or she is getting married. Vices such as witchcraft, sorcery, thieving and other abnormalities were discouraged. Together with these, families that had a history of *Ngirani* were also avoided.

This myths asserts;

“Even today, ‘Ngirani’ are believed to exist in thi community. They are described as extra ordinarily beautiful and are normally married as second wives by old men. Young men who intend to marry are always warned, “Beware of the beauty of the red-thigh woman”

MT 3, *How Animals Were Domesticated*, came about because of the need for material wealth. Muriiru needed to own animals for food and prestige as a man within the Tigania community where wealth was a measure of social status. In tandem with answering the question of how animals were domesticated, the need for recognition especially for men in a male dominated society was strong.

Muriiru, in an attempt to own animals that were already in the forest, had to seek the assistance of a well-known medicine man in order to lure them to his homestead. The need for material wealth was also important because the main livelihood for the Tigania community was farming and animal husbandry. The provision of food and other basic necessities for the family was a man's duty. There was also need to instruct the young people on the duties and responsibilities of different people in the community. For instance, MT 5, *How Animals Were Domesticated*, we are informed that a man's duty was to herd animals, hunt for game and provide for the family while women were housekeepers, which included cooking, fetching water farming and babysitting. All this was in consistent with the Tigania traditions and that is why Muriiru wondered,

‘How can I tame the animals in the forest to be mine?’

Muriiru wanted to conform to the traditions of the Tigania community by owning animals. Kinship relations were the strings that held the community together, and their unity was their strength. MT 4, *Perceived Relatives (Gichiario)* ensured that there was this much needed unity in the different clans that make up the entire Meru community because they perceive each other as ‘brother’ and none can do anything bad to the other without courting the wrath of Thaa. When Kaumi, the pregnant woman went to seek for a manual job in order to feed her children during famine, she went to a neighboring clan because she knew she would be treated well.

However, when her helpers were killed and the revenge by Thaaai carried out, it was in an endeavor to restore these kinship ties. In relation to the new born baby, the father announced: “This is your brother. None should ever do anything evil to the other.” This is in MT 4, *Perceived Relatives* (Gichiaro).

The Meru people were enslaved and mistreated in Mbwaa by Nguu Ntune. They suffered for a long time and so they sought ways and means of buying their freedom. In MT 5, *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, freedom for the Meru community was a priority as well as settling the disquiet about how children and clans should be named for purposes of social and cultural identity. The Meru people knew that while in bondage, they could not develop themselves in any way. That possibly explains why they tried all they could to loosen themselves from their slave drivers, the Nguu Ntune. This need for struggle for freed is a lesson retold to date among the Tigania people while articulating the need for unity and selflessness in the service of humanity. The history of the migration of the Tigania people is still retold in the annals of history besides other lessons that we learn from this myth. The explanations contained in *Rain and Thunderstorms*, MT 6 settled the issue of territorial dominion. When the two brothers could not co-exist peacefully they parted ways and each established his area of operation independent of the other, and there was harmony.

This is explained in MT 6.

“Moon is normally seen at night with Stars because the two brothers friendly, while Sun is normally seen alone during the day because this elder brother is not friendly to his siblings”.

However, the same myth brings to the fore the need to be patient and tolerant to one another in order to maintain co-existence between siblings.

2.1.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the various tenets of myths that are inherent in the six myths of origin from the Tigania community in Meru County. The six myths of origin from the Tigania Community of Meru County are cultural and are solution oriented in nature. We have delved into the six myths of origin and this research shows that they are cultural. In this sense we mean that the whole notion of myths is deeply rooted in the culture of the Tigania community from where they have been drawn. Secondly, the myths of origin from this community embody all that which the community cherishes and admires and what they hate and detest. For example, they detest disobedience, hatred, disharmony and mistreatment, and they however cherish courage, responsibility, freedom, and unity. In the same vein we have realized that the six myths of origin address certain needs in the community.

**CHAPTER THREE: EFFECTIVENESS OF CHARACTER AND STYLE
IN COMMUNICATING MYTHS OF ORIGIN IN THE TIGANIA
COMMUNITY**

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with character and stylistic aspects and their effectiveness in communication of myths. Characterization in a work of art comprises the persons through whom the writer speaks to his audience. It forms a major part of a work of art. Forster (1927) hints on the importance of characterization when he says that it is through characterization that the writer is able to appeal to the intelligence and imagination of the reader.

J, Hawthorne (1985:40), observes that "...characters can be used to tell a story, to exemplify a belief, to contribute to a symbolic pattern in a work of art. And readers normally look for characters they can identify with. They want heroes or heroines who have problems to solve and this is a confirmation of human potential and possibility of success even in a difficult situation. This could model them to conform to the qualities exhibited by their heroes or heroines.

Characters play a very vital role in literature as they control the plot of the story, bring out themes and arouse and sustain interest since a story is normally told through the characters. Literature places characterization at the center of storytelling.

This chapter looks into the nature of characters propagated in the selected myths of origin and how characterization is related to representation of the core concerns of the myths under study. A close scrutiny of the myths of origin from the Tigania community shows that the society is purely patriarchal. Patriarchy refers to a (system of) societal structures that are male centered and controlled and is organized and conducted in such a way as to subordinate women to men in all cultural domains – familial, religious, political, economic social, legal and artistic. Hegemonic masculinity is about “maintenance of practices that institutionalize men’s dominance over women” (Chiari 28). Were asserts that patriarchy tends to go hand in hand with male domination of women in most spheres of life (62). He continues to posit that patriarchy socializes men to consider themselves superior to women and advocates for the dominance of men by women (Were 62-63). Indeed, while African women have made considerable gains in political, economic and social development of the continent, they are still widely marginalized within the corridors of power, with stereotypes and male chauvinism manifesting in employment and that feminists read a lot of gender inequality as a problem. Susan Burdo, one of the feminist advance that though gender inequality is socially historical in nature, the conditions of life that are oppressive to women need to be reviewed.

One’s gender is an ideological construct which society applies to draw differentiations between the qualities it considers appropriate for a man or for a

woman. Based on this standpoint, society spells out roles which are termed as duties for men or duties for women, because as Were further argues, despite patriarchy conferring upon men numerous privileges and advantages, these are tied to other responsibilities and expectations of men which in essence is a product of and imposed upon men by society. For instance, in many African communities, kitchen work is for women while hunting and looking after livestock is categorized as jobs for men and boys. The examination of character portrayal through the gender perspective therefore examines them from a cultural standpoint.

However, the functional integration and maintenance of society is thus a central theoretical interest at the root of functionalism. When applied to myths of origin items of cultural identity were regarded as relevant.

3.1.1 Duties and Responsibilities

Here we consider how society draws on myths, beliefs, attitudes and the historical factors to define societal norms and moral obligations. It is important to note that through these considerations, society endeavors to explain, justify and enhance the existing social status, including its stand on roles for both men and women. We look at the extent to which characterization in myths of origin confirms or deviates from the society's prescription of men and women's roles.

However, the duties and responsibilities for both boys and girls were culturally defined by the society.

As Njau puts it in *Society and Socialization* (1994), man in a traditional patriarchal society is considered the head of family and a defender of the community. This notion that a man is the defender and protector of his community (masculinity) is often inculcated in young boys at an early age through role-playing, initiation rites and other socialization practices. His role therefore includes hunting, protecting the family, giving advice to adult boys and settling disputes in the community, while the woman is expected to stay at home and cook, fetch water and firewood and generally take care of children. Both boys and girls were socialized to behave and act as such.

Society, through myths of origin seems to lay emphasis on the presumed weakness, inferiority and negativity of women, while showcasing men's superiority, strength and intelligence. At this juncture it is worth noting that the female parents were the ones charged with the responsibility of telling the children and youth stories as a bait for them to wait for food while male parents would be in their special huts *Gaaru* inducting them on the higher order issues of the community such as land ownership, marriage issues and taboos. This in itself, though it is a form of division of labor, implies that the less serious issues of the community were done by women as men did things that seemed to matter more.

In *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5 Gaita who is portrayed as courageous, patriotic and so blameless that he is fit for sacrifice is a young male character. His portrayal together with the other three men who had lined up for sacrifice and the ultimate freedom of the Meru people from the yoke of slavery credits the male gender against the female gender. Gaita said, 'if Nguu Ntune will release us because of sacrificing a human being, then I am the one to be sacrificed so that our people can go'.

The histrionic exertions that the narrator employed enlivened the work and gave credibility to the details of the story. Together with the physical movement as devices necessary for the transport of the myth by the narrator executed many of the dramatic moments in the characters. This, the researcher was able to personally observe and the pictures taken was crucial for the understanding of the myths of origin from the Tigania community. In the narration of MT 5 *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, the emotions of the narrator were physically observable. He exhibited a fluidity of movement that aided in achieving freedom of his spirit from this material world to the realm. Emotions of sorrow, sadness and nostalgia were particularly brought by the uncommon phenomenon of human sacrifice that wrought freedom. In the Tigania community times of calamity such as drought, locust invasion or epidemic were averted by sacrifices of sheep and not human beings as happened in this myth.

However, there were characters in this myth whose contribution to the success of this myth cannot be overemphasized.

In *MT 5 Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, Gaita said:

“If Nguu Ntune will release us because of sacrificing a human being, Then I am the one to be sacrificed so that our people can go”.

Koome Njue is another male character who is very significant in the same myth of *Origin of Family and Clan Naming Patterns, MT 5*. He is described as a wise and intelligent man who helped in the mediation role between the people and Mugaa O Ngaai on how the Meru people could break loose from the slavery of the Nguu Ntune. The origin and migration traced from the ancestry of the founding ancestors following patrilineality and the genealogies provided are those of men. This is important to perpetuate separate identities in society and to legitimize certain rights to some resources by people thus categorized. This particular myth has played a significant role in distinguishing men from women. Of particular interest here is that Koome Njue and Mugaa O Ngai, though human, are men who had been elevated to the status of deities. In fact, the chain of command was from Thaaï and ancestors to Mugaa O Ngaai to Koome Njue, then to the people.

The above are in line with the ideas of Durkheim who was concerned with the question of how societies maintain internal stability and survival over time through solidarity.

This demarcation of duties and responsibilities between men and women was for the purposes of social unity and solidarity and myths of origin in the Tigania community aptly captured the role of every member of the society.

All the characters in *Rain and Thunderstorms*, MT 6, are boys. These are Sun, Moon and Stars. While we blame them for the sibling rivalry that erupted and culminated in a fight, we still commend them for making it possible for mankind to get rain from which all life - plants and animals thrive. The same rivalry is credited to the emergence of day and night. The mythmaker manipulates the story such that the mistakes made by the male gender are not necessarily mistakes but are construed to bring a positive effect in the society. The same fight is shown as being the cause of day and night, and the eventual distinction between light and darkness:

“That is why we see the Moon at night together with the Stars but we see the sun alone during the day because he is not friendly with other siblings” (MT 6, *Rain and Thunderstorms*).

It was in line with this that the myth maker assigned duties to man such as hunting, and to the woman duties such as being at home to cook what the man brought home. In the story of *How Animals Were Domesticated*, MT 3, man went hunting with the dog while the woman did the simple jobs that required little effort and intelligence. In fact, as the story goes, the man was thoughtful enough to have devised the strategy of luring animals to him and taming them as his

property. The man visited another equally intelligent man, the herbalist, and together they succeeded to lure animals into the homestead only for the woman to chase them to the forest. “The animals trooped into man’s homestead in pairs, male and female of different species”. But, immediately, the buffalo retreated together with the other animals that had not entered the homestead after hearing the comment from the woman concerning the horns. They ran and disappeared into the forest and became wild animals’.

This juxtaposition of the husband and wife is in line with societal attitudes and belief in the naivety of women and the ability of men. Were (2008) asserts that the domination and controlling aspect of patriarchy is that men are expected to have ‘everything under control’ (65). When man managed to lure the wild animals into his homestead, in the story of *How Animals Were Domesticated, MT 3*, the mythmaker effortlessly shows that the woman is not supposed to comment on the nature of animals to be domesticated. This is totally against the common belief that a husband and wife must be in agreement so as to be able to build a good home. Just a brief comment is exaggerated in terms of effect - that the woman is blamed for the loss of livestock that would have been the domestic animals and by extension, a man’s property.

The animals became a man’s property because of his skill, and he was so strong that he could hunt wild game while the wife stayed at home. This is seen in the

story of *How Animals Were Domesticated*. MT 3. The man acted in a dictatorial manner because he did not want the woman to speak on anything when the animals arrive. He asked her severally whether she understood the requirements or she needed further clarification. This was harassment and intimidation to the wife, her intellectual capacity being demeaned. The mythmaker succeeded in showing the audience that indeed the wife never understood because she acted contrary to what was expected, and the loss of some animal species is blamed on her. The man is heard asking the wife, 'have you heard or I repeat? the man asked the wife severally'

It is important to interpret that the woman decided to comment on the buffalo's horns in the interest of the safety of her husband and the entire family because the horns were dangerous. In the story, the woman owns only a cat to help keep children company. Her other legal property is grains which unless the cat helps to protect, the rats will destroy completely. The man's property was more valuable than that of a woman. This is in line with the story of *How Animals Were Domesticated*, MT 3. The woman told the cat, "...on condition that you will kill all the rats that are destroying my grains". That is all she owned as a woman. Since social institutions are functionally integrated to form a stable system, a change in one institution is likely to precipitate a change in other institutions.

The family institution is a very important institution in the Tigania community and Africa in general. What we experience in this particular myth is necessary to avoid producing dysfunctional families that may soon cease to exist.

In an Article appearing in the Standard Newspaper of 3rd March 2016, titled “Stop this Discrimination against Women,” Debora Houlka cautions the entire African Continent:

“Male dominated leadership teams set the tone for talent management norms where masculine stereotypes can influence promotion and development opportunities. While African women have made considerable gains in the political, economic and social development of the continent, they are still widely marginalized within the corridors of power. Stereotypes and male chauvinism have continued to manifest in employment” (The Standard pg 22).

The *Red-thigh Woman (Ngirani)*, MT 2, shows how the father ended up marrying his daughter in an attempt to erode society’s morals. Ndiindi is disdainful about this because it is a form of dehumanizing and silencing of individuals in society. What happens to Ndiindi is a total transgression of Tigania traditions. Like most African communities, the people do not approve of conception outside official marriage. Such an act is disapproved of because the society does not also encourage promiscuous liaison. What the father did was tantamount to legalizing immorality.

An interview with the key informants (boys, girls and women) revealed that myths of origin from the Tigania community were very oppressive to the female gender and need an overhaul to remove the negativity with which women and girls are regarded. The same is a perspective which feminists also hold. In MT 6 *Rain and Thunderstorms*, there are no female characters except the wife. The wife is included because she was necessary.

“A long time ago, there lived a husband and wife. They were blessed with three boys. This family did not have a girl child”

The myth tries to explain how the sibling rivalry in this family was a blessing in disguise because it brought territorial supremacy as each son got his own sphere of influence. This has a bearing on the Tigania community where girls were not included, not even mentioned in family property inheritance.

According to the Tigania traditional rules, sexual escapades among relatives were forbidden and traditions stipulated that the child born of this scenario cannot live. Traditional rules of the land demand that such a child is unholy and must therefore die. However, although Ndiidi's child did not die, she was socially 'dead' because her status did not allow her and her female progeny to enjoy a fulfilled life.

3.1.2 Stereotypes, Vocatives and conventions

Stereotypes are expressed through characterization in myths. Allport (1954:186) says "... a stereotype acts both as a justificatory (sic) device for categorical acceptance or rejection of a group and that these stereotypes form a picture in the mind of both the instigator of the stereotype and its recipient."

These have also been used extensively to advance and promote patriarchy in the Tigania community. A stereotype is an idea about a particular type of a person that has become fixed because it has been widely held for a long time. Stereotypes may be positive or negative. In a patriarchal set up, stereotypes are aimed at inculcating specific beliefs and attitudes in the minds of women and the audience so as to pattern their behavior in a "particular way." (Chabari 62).

When a society perpetuates a particular stereotype about males or females, the society is training women and girls in general to feel and act in an inferior way towards their male counterparts, and males to feel and act with superiority. This in turn is aimed at building self-esteem and boosting male psyche while making females feel inadequate, naive and intellectually challenged. This construction of male superiority and female inferiority finds its way in myth through characterization. More often than not, the female character comes out as one deserving pity, and susceptible to making the wrong decisions and suffering psychological guilt as a result of sidestepping what the general society expects of

them. This presumed weakness is a myth meant to wage psychological war on women, a war of subjugation aimed at compelling women and girls to be subservient, and training future women to feel guilty of insubordination if they challenge the men folk. Women are portrayed as pitiful, weak, vulnerable and recipients of mercy from their male counterparts.

When the planned escape was being organized in *Origin of Family and Clan Naming Patterns* MT 5, women were to escape in the first cohort together with children so that in the event that the Nguu Ntune pursued after them, they would not catch up with them. An important reminder is that in the traditional African society and Meru in particular, the term warrior had no female equivalent and women who did heroic exploits were the subject of negativity, and they would be castigated in the community. This vulnerability of the female is perhaps what is often used to justify the societal view that women and girls always need the physical protection of the men or boys.

Much as it is in good faith to be mindful of one another specially to foster team spirit, it is painting a weak picture of the women, as perpetually reliant upon men just like children. Imbuga writes, “Characters should not be contrived to cause convenience. I prefer that the girl remains true to the prevailing reality.” In other words, the writer would rather reflect the girl child in real life, but Alembi says, “I write to communicate to the audience.

What the girl character becomes during my writing is an unconscious process.” Whether the portrayal of the male and female characters in the myths of origin under study is conscious or unconscious, it is a cultural construct.

The pregnant woman *Perceived Relatives (Gichiario)*, MT 4, was in such danger that she had to be helped in delivering by young men who were passing by. Indeed, she had to plead with them to help her lest she died together with the unborn baby: She says, “If you don’t help, I and the unborn child will die.”

Her life and that of the child were in the hands of the three young men. In the same story, when the punishment was meted out against the evil doer, it is reported that a voice emerged from the cloud of fire that the orphan and one who had just had a wife should come out of the Gaaru. The one who had just married was to be spared specifically so that he can take care of the wife since traditionally, a widow was the object of scorn, pity, exploitation and generally vulnerable. This is to further stress on the utilitarian aspect of myths. These aspects are to educate, uphold and to mirror what society values.

There are a number of reasons advanced to explain why women have not excelled in written literature as opposed to their male counterparts. Among them are socio-cultural roles. It is within such a backdrop that Virginia Wolf (1929) notes how women are supposed to stay ‘in the background’ (emphasis mine) or else face

condemnation or laughter if they seek to do more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex. (89). Inasmuch as it is the women who used to story tell, mythmaking itself was done by men and women were only to communicate the myths, a duty prescribed by men and which women were quite willing to oblige.

According to Oakley D (1972), sex refers to the state, the quality of being male or female and to the biological features that accompany male or female sex. This implies a natural division between the most basic physiological differences of males and females, their differences being genetically determined; largely universal, and genetically constant. This view considers sex a category distinguishing males from females in terms of biological characteristics. Masinjila (1994:11) gives us an insight into how men and women are viewed in a patriarchal society.

Men are regarded, within the patriarchal traditional society as possessing reason, logic, intellect, egos, souls and strong wills. Women on the other hand are, emotional, given to capricious anger, chaotic and generally suffer from unbridled sexuality. (Masinjila 11).

In a patriarchal society like Kenya, male physique is exclusively big, strong and unconquerable, while the female is invariably frail and vulnerable. The main male characters in *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5, are portrayed as courageous and unconquerable. These are Gaita, Nthanju, Muthetu and Kiuna who are actually ready to be sacrificed to buy the release of their people.

J.H Goldstein in *Aggression and Crimes of Violence (1984)* describes aggression as “behavior whose intent is the physical or psychological injury to another person” (viii). However, he continues to say that it not limited to “only hitting someone but also embarrassing another person” (viii). In *Rain and Thunderstorms*, MT 6, there is not a single girl or woman character. The siblings are only brothers, sun, moon and the stars and their rivalry is presented as violent and titanic such that when the war broke out between them, none could overpower the other.

Scholars Rowan (60) and Hoch (18) state that aggression is one of the qualities of being masculine and according the cultural set up this misunderstanding between the siblings is presented so positively as giving rise to rain, night and day. These three entities are very important aspects of determining seasons. This is in accordance to the story of *Rain and Thunderstorms*, MT 6. In the traditional Tigania community, activities were determined by seasons such as harvesting, planting, weeding etc. An important reminder is that in the traditional African society, the term warrior had no female equivalent and women who did heroic exploits were subject of negativity and would be castigated by the community. Their exploits were not celebrated as much as those of men. This assumed vulnerability of the female is perhaps what is often used to justify the societal view that women or girls always need the physical protection of the men or boys.

Benjamin Odhoni (1994:56) observes that among the Luo women and girls are “...regarded as frail and weak parties who need constant masculine care and protection.” Women’s character and roles in society are thus greatly dictated by these associations, as they strive to live up to the societal expectations. The female subservience in this patriarchal society silences Ndiindi who seems to do nothing to disentangle herself from the intricate web of shame and stigma that her father has got her into according to the *Red-thigh Woman (Ngirani)*, MT 2. Indeed, this scenario is still alive in the Tigania community where a woman is supposed to be seen and not heard and that ‘her voice is in her husband’. This is meant to maintain the status quo that men are the family heads.

Gender plays a decisive role in the construction of the family, lineages, clans, tribes and ethnic groups. Women do not culturally pass their identity to offspring, don’t originate clans and their names are rarely used for conventions. In the myths of origin under study, almost all the male characters are named by their cultural or tribal names such as Muriiru, Mutabui, Koome Njue, Gaita, Kiuna, Nthanju, Muthetu, Maruba, Kang’ira, Mbulu. The use of etymological terms such as ‘elders’, or the Kiswahili ‘mzee,’ ‘spear’ which is a purely male weapon, ‘Nthaka” whose English equivalent is young men and Gaaru (a house for young men), further denote bias against females. It is important at this point to note that the term ‘elders’ refers to people (men) whom the society has given the mandate to be the custodians of community wisdom especially because of their age and

knowledge about the community. Therefore, any reference to a man as an elder accord him that respect yet not all men have this wisdom.

This is also evidence in the extensive use of vocatives such as husband and wife, father and mother, boys and girls, men and women, cioithe and ciong'ina, wife of, and medicine man. There is also the portrayal of men as having special almost deity-like abilities to solve mankind's problems and not women. Roles such as seers, mediums, rainmakers, diviners, elders and herbalists have all been assigned to male characters in the myths of origin from the Tigania community. Further analysis of the myths reveals that the male gender comes first in situations where both genders are referred to: In MT 2, *Red-Thigh Woman*, (Ngirani) we read, "a father sired." The mother is mentioned much later when she had gone to the farm and when Ndiindi slept with the father. In MT 5, *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, we are told that the Meru had one parentage: "The father was called Mukunga and the mother was called Ngaa." MT 3, *How Animals Were Domesticated*, begins with, "there was a nearby homestead belonging to a couple, Muriiru, the husband and Nkimaa the wife" and in MT 6, *Rain and Thunderstorms* the myth starts with, "Long, long time ago, there lived a husband and wife."

In the story of the *Perceived Relatives (Gichiaro)*, MT 4, when the punishment was meted out against the doers, it is reported that a voice emerged from the cloud

of fire that the orphan and the one who had just married should come out to be spared from the fire. These two categories had to enjoy the cultural immunity. This should be understood in the light of the notion that in the Tigania community and most other patriarchal societies, men are the heads of the family, custodians of societal values and law givers and that if the newly married man died in the inferno, the widow would be of no consequence in the community because she would be totally dependent on a husband.

It is noted that in *Family and Clan Naming Patterns, MT 5*, the first born child was usually named after the family members of the husband. If it was a baby boy, he was named after the father of the husband and if it was a girl, she was named after the mother of the husband. Those who come later are named after the parents and relatives of the mother's side. In the same story, it is the creation of the mythmaker that the mother should love the second born and not the first as is expected while the father loved the first born. This further takes us to patriarchal privileges. This is contrary to the natural inclination where mothers love all their children equally. Mothers, sisters, aunts and grandmothers must always come second. Women's position and status by subversion is a historical truth but a mirror that is biased against the female gender. In the Meru community, marriage and motherhood was almost a religious duty that was carried out with awe and reverence.

Women were mothers, wives and concubines in patriarchal society acting within a framework designed and executed by men. Ndiindi, in the story *Red-Thigh Woman (Ngirani)*, MT 2, had to be married, her single motherhood status notwithstanding, if only to fulfill this vow-like obligation. Indeed, her out-of-wedlock-child status was frowned upon but the status quo had to be maintained, by ensuring that she got married.

According to *Red-Thigh Woman (Ngirani)*, MT 2, men are daring enough to take their daughters to bed against all common decency and decorum. When the father impregnated his biological daughter, the object of pathos should have been the victim. However, the man's inflated ego is further massaged by being given the daughter as a second wife and nobody raised a voice against this because the judges who meet to deliberate the issue are fellow men intent on maneuvering through a way of getting young beautiful girls as second wives when their old women, seemed to them sexually unattractive. It is apparent that these myths discriminate against women and girls in favor of men in this society because as the female offspring of this union eternally suffer the consequences of the act, the male offspring are free to marry as they wish.

The council of elders agreed: "...that all daughters from this illegitimate union shall never secure marriage by young men but would always be married as second wives or by old men who have lost or divorced their first wives."

(MT 2, *Red-Thigh Woman*) In other words, the mother's negative status only applies to the girl child. Incidentally, the girls whose fate was to be married as second wives (*Ngirani*) are extraordinarily beautiful. It becomes ugly to be beautiful in this male dominated society.

It is well noted that the council of elders' verdict is undisputable and was made up of men only and in a case involving a man and a woman, chances of bias abound. Women are not members of clan councils and do not participate in decision making. Marie (1993:47), Gordon (1996), and Kanogo (2005), advance that power relations in marital, kinship and ethnic cohesiveness in patrilineal and patrilocal communities favors the male gender. The sin of one wayward father consigned his daughter and the female progeny to a life of stigma and psychological torture. The mythmaker gives patriarchy another boost by creating a common abode, *Gaaru* a special place where young men of the same age stay together for a specified period of time being initiated in adulthood by older men. In fact, when the young men perished in the inferno inside the *Gaaru*, the mourning is described as 'generous,' the death of a circumcised man being such an immense loss to the entire society not just to the parents.

This is seen in *Perceived Relatives (Gichiario)*, MT 4. In the *Gaaru* boys are inducted and trained one on the practices, beliefs and attitudes that further push women into negative cocoons.

All this time, women and girls are indoors, which is metaphorical of subjugation and subservience to their outgoing male counterparts. It is worth noting that myths are charters for proper conduct because they preserve the ways in which the society has always behaved since time immemorial. These myths of origin are as old as the history of the community and are integrated in the history of the same community.

The unquestionable obedience of the wife to the husband when handling the meat brought home may be construed negatively according to MT 3, *How Animals Were Domesticated*. The ability to outwit the Nguu Ntune was also through the effort of men according *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5. However, this functioned to educate and socialize children while drawing a moral to warn people not to break the norms of the society such as unity. Njoroge (1978) asserts that literature can be manipulated either to boost or destroy the image or dignity of a people. This is evident in all the myths of origin that this work is dealing with.

3.1.3 Language and Style

In this section, we discuss language and style and how they have been employed effectively in the communication of mythology. Raymond Chapman (1973:13) notes that literature uses language as an artistic medium, not simply for communication or even expression.

It is not spontaneous...it is considered and developed in a way that is impossible in everyday conversation, even for the more deliberate registers adopted for certain styles. Chapman observes therefore that literary language is conscious in formation. Symbolism, allusions, repetition, etc. that are found in oral literature are deliberate in conveying meaning.

Charles Chadwick (1971) postulates that in literary work, symbolism refers to the use of a word, a phrase or a description, or even a character to represent deeper meaning than the words themselves. He further says that symbolism is “the art of expressing ideas and emotions not by describing them directly, nor by defining them through overt comparisons with concrete images, but by suggesting what these ideas and emotions are by recreating them in the mind of the reader through the use of unexplainable symbols.” (32) Robert further enhances the understanding of a symbol when he explains that a symbol is an object that signifies something else by association or by semblance. It can be a material object or a written sign used to epitomize something invisible.

John Mugubi defines a symbol as “a perceptible object used in reflecting or representing an abstract idea or less perceptible object.” (2005) Literature uses symbols as a stylistic device to effectively communicate. An oral artist will prefer to use symbolism to avoid direct reference which can be a basis for accusations by those whom the message is intended.

An oral artist will use symbolism to praise virtues in a society or castigate vices indirectly. Culture, it is argued, is coded wisdom. This coding through symbols gives the audience the challenge of deciphering the message being put across and symbols are the nucleus of all cultures.

Symbolization illustrates a community's values in a variety of ways and provides visible, audible and tangible evidence of the beliefs and values which cannot be readily perceived. The totality of perspectives based on the social and cultural values of the group is the essence of African aesthetics.

We use symbolism to refer to the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from the literal sense. Symbols are used to create meaning and emotions in a story and to represent abstract ideas. It is not just the presence or availability of myths that is important but also their symbolic function as literary tropes that provide real meaning. Indeed, myths just like other tales thrive on symbols. In this particular study we restrict ourselves to how symbolism manifests itself.

In the selected myths of origin symbolism manifests itself as:

1. (A) Character symbolism

Character symbolism occurs when characters are used to represent some ideas of ideals. The following characters have been used symbolically in the six myths under study:

(i) Ndiindi

Ndiindi in *Red-Thigh Woman (Ngirani)* MT 2, is a female character who has been used symbolically to represent a victim(s) of oppression and male chauvinism. She is the face of despondency, disillusionment and social injustice among the Tigania community. She is a young beautiful girl who falls in the hands of her immoral father and conceives out of wedlock. She cannot secure the customary marriage which was culturally valued, but becomes a second wife of her father and a co-wife to her biological mother. Ndiindi is completely helpless because the decision is arrived at by the elders. These elders were the custodians of the judicial system in the community and so their ruling cannot be questioned. Hers is an ill-fated life and posterity.

The *Red-Thigh Woman (Ngirani)* scenario demonstrates that the Tigania community is a patriarchal society that elevates men and mistreats women and girls in general just because they are females. The notion of red-thigh woman (*Ngirani*) seems to offer no hope of freedom from the inhuman and unjust society. The fact that Ndiindi was never heard in the judicial process shows how the arbitration of social issues was plagued with inconsistencies and malpractices.

Of particular interest here is that the elders did not rule before the girl gave birth. They waited until an extra-ordinarily beautiful girl was born. That is when they said that the girl should be married by the father and that all the daughters

descending from this union will always be married by old men as second wives. We can deduce that this was selfishly motivated because the council of elders in the Meru community were all old men, keen on securing young beautiful girls for wives.

(ii) Nguu Ntune

Nguu Ntune was the slave driver of the Meru people in Mbwaa and is first used as a symbol of oppressive dictatorial rule in MT 5, *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*: "...Meru were working as slaves of a red-skinned people called Nguu Ntune....and were mistreating them."

The symbolism that underlies this is similar to the biblical story of Pharaoh and the Israelites. Tired of oppression and dictatorship, they enlisted the help of their god Thaa (God) through their mediators. Through the divine council of Mugaa O Ngai, Gaita and Koome Njue freedom for the Meru people was realized. This brought hope and inspiration for a new dawn.

Nguu Ntune who were believed to be Arabs or 'Red Skinned' are known to be very enterprising although they mistreat their labor force. For instance, they made several unreasonable demands from the Meru people whenever they sought to be released. This was in the hope that it would be impossible for the Meru to meet those demands giving them a leeway to continue mistreating them.

Nguu Ntune finally lost his source of cheap labor through the leadership Koome Njue and the unity of the entire community which ultimately redeemed the people of Meru from suffering and oppression. This triumph offers hope for mankind that it is possible to succeed even in hard situations.

(iii) Gaita and Koome Njue

The two people feature very prominently in *Family and Clan Naming Patterns, MT 5*. The two are symbolically used to stand for servant leadership and advocacy.

These can be regarded as traditional rulers and traditionally, a lot of religious ideals surrounded the person and office of traditional rulers-their positions being linked by myth and legend with Thaaai (God).

The final triumph and freedom of the Meru people was through a process of genuine leadership whose hallmark was the selflessness and persistence of the duo. These are seen as earthly representatives of Thaaai (God). Character symbolism is very evident in these myths and the mythmaker has used their names symbolically. For instance, Koome Njue is a Kimeru name for 'wise' and he is portrayed as so since he helped the Meru people to escape from slavery in Mbwaa. He consults all the time and finally outwits the Nguu Ntune and finally achieves the freedom of his people.

Koome Njue has demonstrated that wisdom and peaceful mediation can rescue a community that is on the brink of collapse. Gaita is the name of the other spiritual leader mentioned in MT 5, *Clan and Family Naming Patterns*. Gaita is a Tigania word which means 'selfless.' Although human sacrifice was a ritual and a practice that was uncommon within the Meru community, Gaita gave himself to die for others, a public demonstration of courage and patriotism. The many ordeals that Gaita and Koome Njue went through in their quest for freedom emphatically brought the question of leadership in the face of imminent defeat, even in the present society. Koome Njue was initially named Mwithe (hidden) but people later renamed him Koome Njue. It can be argued that the maternal instinct had hinted to the parents of the agonies their son would go through and so hiding him was meant to save him from this situation. However, he was not hidden but worked closely with the Meru people and wrought their freedom. We are told that, Nguu Ntune came to see the spear that his slaves were making, but he got a rude shock for surely they had gone!

(v) Elders

In the Tigania community in the olden days and even today, the council of elders was the only group that was legally mandated to arbitrate on matters of the community such as land issues, extreme moral inappropriateness, and general misconduct. Their verdict was final and nobody would question it. The council was therefore a symbol of political judicial system.

It was also made of people whom the community looked upon in terms of moral forthrightness beyond compromise. According to MT 2, *Red-Thigh Woman (Ngirani)* The decision of the council of elders was never discussed further.

The present day famed Njuri Ncheke is held in high esteem in the Tigania community. They arbitrate on all manner of local issues in the community and settle disputes. Indeed, just as it was in the olden days, their ruling is final and the community has to adhere to this.

However, the elders we see in *Red-Thigh Woman (Ngirani)* MT 2, fall short of the above threshold. When the girl was impregnated by the father, it was expected that that being a social crime, it should have been dealt with accordingly. Instead, the wayward behaviour of the father seems to be rewarded. The girl bore the brunt of the elders' misrule. She ended up as a wife to an old man who was her father and became the co-wife of her mother. Justice was not done either to the offender or to the offended party. This further eroded the moral uprightness of the community because it weakened the judicial system.

(iv) Muriiru

In MT 3, *How Animals Were Domesticated*, Muriiru is a symbolic character that the mythmaker has used to represent the male gender and the head of the family institution.

This should be understood against the backdrop of the Meru community where the male gender is portrayed as wise, intelligent, strong and unconquerable. Muriiru is depicted as having the unparalleled skill to lure wild animals and to domesticate them and, having the physical strength to hunt wild game and being able to provide food for his family. Indeed, Muriiru used to hunt wild game to supplement the daily diet. Hunting was a dangerous activity that demanded skill, strength, wit and courage, which is why it was a preserve of men. The dog is said to have thought, “If I become a friend of man he will protect me from stronger animals like elephants because he has the ability to kill them.”

The laborious work of constructing a *Nkanatha* (traditional Tigania wooden structure for animals) and provision for the needs of the family in the Tigania community was done by men and that was why Muriiru built a *Nkanatha* large enough to accommodate as many animals as he desired. This is because a large herd was a measure of wealth in the community. The wife was expected to silently follow her husband’s instructions. This is seen when she carries the meat into the house quietly as the husband gave her, an episode that even the cat took note of.

(b) Animal/Object Symbolism

Animal or object symbolism happens when animals or objects are used to represent something other than what they actually are. The symbols in this study

have function to unravel what the society cherishes or detests according to the dictates of social usefulness. Radcliff was interested in local narratives which had a ‘social function’ in the society. The following objects and animals have been used symbolically:

(i) Mole

The mole is a common bush rodent in the Tigania community that is known for hiding from the sun and is normally destructive to the roots and tubers of the crops which it feeds on. Mole as a character in the myth of *The Origin of Death*, MT 1, is not only used as a symbol but a metaphor of a degenerate community, and general waywardness among the general populace. The mole is also known to evade even the most well crafted traps that farmers set up by moving underground and shifting locations. The mole is a commonly used term in political rhetoric referring to a person who works within an organization but secretly passes on information to another rival organization. It is the equivalent of a traitor or a saboteur. In *Origin of Death*, MT 1, Mole said to Thaa, “I met a sweet potato and started eating, then I met another one that was bigger and sweeter and decided to eat it also. Then I decided to terminate the mission.”

The responsibility that was vested upon Mole was a unique responsibility because the destiny of mankind rested solely upon the actions and behavior of Mole, and in response to his obedience to an authority higher than him.

When he is sent to deliver the message of death and resurrection, he does not refuse the onus but sets on the journey willingly. However, Mole not only delayed with the message but he actually never delivered it and that is why Thaaai cursed him for disobedience. Why such a noble responsibility should be vested on a rodent of no consequence is a matter of speculation.

However, it can be deduced that what is important is the message and not the messenger. In this particular case, the messenger required to have been one of a higher moral standing. Human beings are normally tempted by what they value most. The failure by the mole to deliver the message of hope to mankind is seen as the triumph of evil forces against good, and so a wakeup- call for humanity to work hard and defeat the evil forces that always plague humanity.

(ii) Sweet potato

The sweet potato is a drought resistant food tuber which is grown in the dry areas of Meru. It is not a staple food and it is this food crop that lured Mole causing him not to deliver the very important message to humanity according to MT 1, *The Origin of Death*. The sweet potato can be used symbolically as the sin or evil of the forbidden fruit typical of the biblical analogy.

Sweet potatoes, as the word suggests, are sweet to eat but their commercial value in the Meru community is almost insignificant. Small errors as is seen can be very

destructive in the long run. The ‘tuber-value’ things are the baits that cause people in a society to stumble and fall.

(iii) Fire

In many societies of the world, fire has the symbolic value of removing or taking away impurities and in most cases, it is personified. When the gods decided to punish the young men who had killed Maruba and Kang’ira in *Perceived Relatives (Gichiaro)*, MT 4, he sent a cloud of fire. This fire has been used as a metaphor of vengeance and symbolically to represent divine retributive justice. It is also a refiner’s fire meant to rid the society of the scum.

It is clear that the gentlemen, who had helped the pregnant mother with delivery and the eventual relationship that was forged, deserved a better treatment. Instead, they were followed and killed. While it is important to treat all humanity with a measure of fairness, one is expected to do better to those that are related to one by blood. The death of Nthaka (young men) tends to enhance the mythmakers’ view that perpetrators of evil and human suffering deserve punishment as well as to indicate that forces of evil are bound to be defeated.

Fire is still mentioned in MT 3, *How Animals Were Domesticated* where Muriiru was instructed by the medicine man, Mbalanchu to burn the herbs severally. These were the herbs that ultimately lured the animals into Muriiru’s homestead.

The burning was meant to remove any impurities or any unwanted material that could have stifled the potency of the herbs.

(iv) Sun

The sun is symbolically seen as a sign of good tidings, optimism, a new dawn and beauty in most cases. The fact that the rising of the sun announces a new day is enough to help us understand the superiority of the same in the heavenly bodies. When the Sun was cleansed by the brother in *Rain and Thunderstorms*, MT 6, he became better though he did not reciprocate to his brother, Moon. The use of the Sun in this case is however metaphorical of people who take advantage of others to better their lives, a show of failed moral forthrightness which brings despondency in a community.

In addition, the sibling rivalry between the brothers represents the present day wrangles in the contemporary society, for which a solution has to be sought. When Sun decided to be appearing during the day and Moon at night, it was an endeavor to solve this problem. This organization brought a clear demarcation of the spheres of influence and activity between the two members of the family.

(v) Spear and Sandals (Material Culture Objects)

The spear and the sandals are very important artefacts in the Meru community especially because they are phallic symbols. After circumcision, a Tigania initiate

would be given a spear and sandals by the male parent. This was to inform the young man that the mantle to protect the clan was upon him and he had no reason to fear anything. The sandals were also symbolic because they were a preparation for long distance treks in search of wealth so that the community does not die of starvation. It is important to note that these items were not given to uncircumcised boys (biji) because they were still considered to be children to be protected together with women.

The need for Nguu Ntune in *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5, that the Tigania people make sandals and spears may have been a mistake but in all its interpretation, Tigania men were indeed warriors because a warrior in the Tigania context is normally given a spear for protection and sandals to traverse the vast land in search of food to sustain the family and the clan at large. This is done ceremoniously after a boy has been circumcised.

(c) Land

Land is a symbol of family roots and their rootedness in a particular territory, not just a mere material possession. Land may not necessarily mean soil but a place of settlement. It confers to the owner both economic and social status. It is the place of ancestors who died and are buried there. This should be understood in the context of Tigania culture who in the traditional set up consulted the spirits of

their long dead ancestors by pouring drink offerings on the ground. In a patriarchal community, descent coincides with patrilocal settlement.

Mbwaa is a Meru name given to a place at the Coast, where the Meru people are believed to have originally come from. This place is first used as a symbol and secondly as negative metaphor of slavery in *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5. Mbwaa is used to symbolize the deed of oppression and servitude. The Nguu Ntune or the slave master is believed to have been an astute businessman who was only interested in enriching himself and his ilk at the expense of the Meru people while the place itself was a beehive of activity. This meant that the Meru people worked round the clock. Geographically, Mbwaa is hundreds of kilometers from the present day Meru land. It can be inferred that the Nguu Ntune was able to dominate the Meru people because he felt that Mbwaa was his home and that the Meru were foreigners.

Muriiru, in *How Animals Were Domesticated*, MT 3, had a large homestead and built a large (Nkanatha) for animals that was able to accommodate ‘as many animals as he desired’. This is because he considered that place his home. The animals that returned to the forest considered the forest their place of abode and in the forest there were no negative comments like those from Muriiru’s wife. Whenever Muriiru went hunting he, had to use a lot of skill and manipulation because the wild animals were in their territory and not his.

In *Rain and Thunderstorms*, MT 6, when the sibling rivalry became too much, the children decided to part so that each may establish dominion and control in their separate territories. We see the Sun in his territory and domain during the day and the moon at night and there was peace. The Mole was designated to live under the ground as a curse in *Origin of Death*, MT 1. Indeed, Mole even today lives under the ground and cannot come out unless under the cover of darkness and retreats immediately he hears someone approaching because he considers this as trespass.

(d) Language

Language is symbolic because it constitutes the substitution of words for objects and incorporates audible symbols that people use to communicate and organize their experiences. It is central to the formation of social identity. Names, status etc. are marked linguistically by gender. In gender specific language, scholars emphasize the role of language in the construction of identity and in tracing the history of a community. Group names and totems symbolize the identifiability of specific groups in relation to other groups. In the Tigania Community, names whether individual or group were representative of virtues and values that enhance social equilibrium.

The following group names are used to identify groups of people in the Tigania people.

(a) Njiru

Njiru is the group that departed from Mbwaa while it was still dark. Njiru means 'dark.' This is according to *Family and Clan Naming Patterns* MT 5. Black color can be construed to mean power. Today the clan of Njiru is highly valued as people who are daring and fearless because they walked at night without fearing even the wild animals. Men from this clan are sought after by would be fathers-in-law to marry their daughters because they offer protection to their wives and children.

(b) Njeru

This is the group that left Mbwaa when the sun was up in the sky. The English name for Njeru is 'white' or 'whiteness.' They are referred to as cowards because they slept until day break. MT 5, *Family and Clan Naming Pattern* explain that they would keep peeping outside to see whether it was still dark or not because they were afraid of darkness. The Njeru clan is despised because they are lazy cowards who slept while others were escaping, and they are castigated because warriorship is a highly priced virtue in the Tigania community.

(c) Gaita

Gaita is the young man who in *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5, offered himself as a ransom sacrifice so that the Meru people could be set free from slavery. The name itself means ‘selfless.’ The Tigania meaning of Gaita is to value others to the extent that you don’t value yourself and that you are willing to ‘lose’ yourself for their sakes. He had a lot of love for his people and although the demand from Nguu Ntune that a human sacrifice be made appeared far-fetched and sacrilegious, Gaita considered himself fit for the assignment and his death worth the freedom of his people. Today in the Tigania community, people who display a willingness to sacrifice for the good of the community are christened ‘Gaita’. This is according to MT 5, *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*.

(d) Ngirani

Ngirani is a group name in the Tigania community which is almost a taboo name and whose mention ushers an aura of fear. It refers to women whose lineage is from Ndiindi, the girl who got married to her father. Among the families from where a young man aspiring to have a wife should not go is to a Ngirani or red-thigh woman. The myth of origin of *Red-thigh Woman (Ngirani)*, MT 2, explains this scenario.

2. Allusions

Allusion is a literary device which refers to making references or quotations from known authorities, journals or books (Mugubi 2005). It also includes making reference for familiar objects, places or events or persons known to the audience as well as to the reader. Biblical allusion is one of the most commonly used devices that is employed in literary work and it refers to making references to or analogies from the bible text. The six myths of origin from the Tigania community does not directly refer to bible verses but uses analogies derived from the bible.

For example, in the myth of *Perceived Relative* (Gichiaro), MT 4, we see that there was divine punishment for the young men (Nthanka) who had killed Maruba and Kangi'ra. These two young men had helped the pregnant woman to give birth on her way home and they deserved to be treated well. However, the perpetrators of this heinous act were not spared the wrath of Thaa. He sent a cloud of fire that devoured all of them while they were in the (Gaaru). However, some people were spared whom Thaa considered 'worthy.' In the bible we see God destroying Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wickedness. He rained fire there and spared only Lot and his family because of their piety.

In *How Animals Were Domesticated*, MT 3, when Muriiru burnt the herbs to lure the animals into the homestead, they came in pairs, male and female, and entered

into the Nkanatha. Traditionally, Tigania people keep their animals in the (Nkanatha) and they consider it safe for the animals. Indeed, the animals that went back into the forest are always under threat from hunters and other dangers in the forest because they are unprotected. In the bible, we read that Noah built an ark and the animals went into the ark, animals of all species, male and female, and once in the ark they were safe from the raging waters outside.

The name Mbwaa is synonymous to suffering among the Meru community even to date and is also equated to the biblical Egypt where the Israelites were enslaved by the King of Egypt known as Pharaoh. The same conditions that the biblical Israelites were exposed to are seen in the Myth of *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5, including escaping at night. Just as the Israelites prayed earnestly to their God for intervention, the Meru people also prayed and consulted Thaaï to intervene on their behalf. Nguu Ntune is the equivalent of Pharaoh while Egypt is Mbwaa.

In MT 1, *Origin of Death*, the mole is given the responsibility of taking the message of death and resurrection to mankind. He is warned not to talk to anybody and not to delay. He is however tempted on his way by a sweet potato which delays him, and he eventually fails to accomplish the mission. Man continued to die and the mole was cursed.

The mole has the biblical allusion of the serpent that brought the ultimate fall and banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:6 NKJV) When these two ate the forbidden fruit, they were punished by God and the serpent was cursed.

Gaita in *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5, offered himself to be sacrificed (Kurorwa) so that his people could be set free from slavery in Mbwaa. This is similar to the biblical Jesus who was a ransom sacrifice for humanity to be delivered from the power of sin and death. (Sin is construed to be a form of slavery) while in *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5, we encounter a significant character called Koome Njue. Koome Njue was initially named Mwithe by the mother which is a Kimeeru name for 'hidden.' He was later renamed Koome Njue meaning 'wise.' This is the man who ensured the deliverance of the Meru people from Mbwaa to their present day homeland of Meru. Similar to this is the story of Moses in the Old Testament who was also hidden by the mother so that he could not be killed. He grew up to be the deliverer of the Israelites and their eventual habitation of the promised land of Canaan. (Exodus Chapters 2-3 NKJV).

3. Repetition

Mugubi (2005) defines repetition as the regular recurrence of an idea, a sound, a word, a phrase or even an entire paragraph or stanza for purposes of emphasis or

to create rhythm or suspense. There are several instances of repetition in the six myths of origin.

In the *How Animals Were Domesticated*, MT 3, when Muriiru went to the medicine man for advice about how to lure the animals into his homestead we see Mbalanchu, the medicine man repeating some words: He said, “burn these leaves, bur....n, bur.... n, bur...n.” This repetition has the effect of emphasizing that the leaves which were medicinal had to be burnt thoroughly if they were to bring the desired results. It has been known in the Meru community that failure to follow instructions from such a person can bring disastrous results to the victim. Actually, when he burnt them as instructed, the animals came into his homestead.

In the same myth we see another repetition where the woman is given a strict warning not to comment on anything during the process of domesticating the wild animals. Muriiru the husband asked his wife twice, “Have you heard, or I repeat” but although the woman answered in affirmation, she did not comply with the warning and her comments made the present day wild animals to retreat into the forest against the husband’s wish.

In the *Origin of Death*, MT 1, we encounter another repetition by Thaaï to the Mole. Thaaï said, “Go, do not talk to anybody and don’t delay.” He repeated, “Have you heard? Do not talk to anybody and do not delay.”

This repetition was important because Thaaï knew that the medicine would lose its potency if the sun rose before it was delivered to mankind. This repetition was not followed because Mole delayed and never delivered the message. This disobedience brought death to mankind.

Another repetition is found in *Red-Thigh Woman* (Ngirani), MT 2. When it was reported to the council of elders that Ndiindi was pregnant, they said in unison, “Ndiindi is pregnant! Ndiindi is pregnant!” This was a shock to them because in the Tigania community, in those days, it was totally unacceptable for a girl (Mukenye) to be pregnant and the punishment was very heavy. In fact, some would be tied to a tree in the forest for animals to devour them, while for others, crude and fatal methods of abortion were administered.

In *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5, Nguu Ntune has repeated three times what he demands the Meru people to do before being released:

“Go make a shoe (sandal) that has animal hair on both upper and lower side.”

“Go provide a bull that could shit chalk.”

“Go make a spear that was able to touch the sky.”

The idea being advanced here by this repetition was that it was almost impossible for the Meru people to be set free because even the demands were almost unattainable. However, they managed to trick Nguu Ntune and left.

3.1.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter we have established that characters are very important in a work of art because it is through them that the audience or the reader gets to know the mind of the oral artist or what message he is passing across. We have endeavored to analyze characters either depending on the roles conferred upon them by the society or on the basis of names and conventions of the society.

This chapter has also delved into style in the interpretation and understanding of myths of origin from the Tigania community. What is clear in the six myths of origin is that the male character is the most important player in the tales and that patriarchy is deeply entrenched in the Meru community. The male gender has been assigned roles that endear them to the audience especially in terms of heroism, intelligence and tact; they are winners rather than losers.

We have also noted that the female gender is secondary, playing second fiddle to man. The women have been marginalized, are few, and have been assigned the darker side of the roles, while being portrayed as weaklings, pitiful, intellectually challenged and deserving the pathos of the reader. They are the vulnerable characters in the six myths of origin from the Meru community from which the myths have been drawn from.

CHAPTER FOUR: RELEVANCE OF MYTHS OF ORIGIN IN THE TIGANIA COMMUNITY

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has extensively dealt with character and stylistic aspects and their effectiveness in the communication of myths. This chapter will endeavor to discuss the relevance of myths of origin in the Tigania community. From a stylistic perspective Sigmund Freud and Karl Jung believe that myths *symbolically* enact deep truths about human nature, while Atwood, Margaret in *Mythmaking in Oryx and Crake (2003)*, states:

Mythography, critically pursued, may function as curettage device scapeling away debris from our present perspective that should have been removed long ago. It may also provide us with some of the tools for making moral choices among the vast range of materials that are available to us. Myths provide us with a heightened dedication to forge the possible personal and cultural mythstories, stories that serve as symbolic constructions of reality leading to individual freedom and social growth' (Atwood 2003:271).

This may be more beneficial than retreating into an automatically repeated and uncritical view of historical events that presently may need to be drastically reshaped. In myths there lies a rich wealth of African ideas, belief values, literary expressions and the exercise of human imagination.

Literature, being a reflection of society must be able to offer hope in dark situations, make recommendation for future scholars and as a stepping stone to a better society. It is against this backdrop that we embark on a detailed analysis of the critical areas where myths are or are hoped to be relevant.

4.1.1 Character Formation and Building

Literature is an uttering of the outerings of the human imagination. It puts the shadowy forms of thoughts and feelings out into the light, where we can have a look at them and perhaps come to a better understanding of who we are and what we want and what our limits may be. Myths have an implication beyond their own terms, such that in a wide sense, they are allegorical and show a transitional phase. Durkheim interprets mythology as “a repertoire of allegorical instructions to shape the individual to his group. The classical purpose of myth in society and culture is best defined as bringing man into union with the whole of society, for man is only a fraction of the whole and his identity is defined in the body of society.

In the myth of *Origin of Death*, MT 1, Mole was sent to Thaaï with a very important message. The instructions were clear. However, he did the direct opposite, displaying disloyalty and selfishness, and acting in total disrespect to a deity. The relationship between Thaaï, man, and the mole was totally destroyed.

Thaai said:

“From today henceforth, you shall never see the sun, you shall always live underground and under the cover of darkness eating roots, and the moment you see the sun you shall surely die. And because of your disobedience, man shall continue to die without resurrection”.

This informs on the character of the mole, and the result of this was death, a calamity that people contend with even today. The mole in this situation may not necessarily mean the character of the rodent as we know. Animal characters are used in oral literature to point out undesirable qualities within a human community.

The moral and archetypal lessons conveyed via the myth transmit a sustaining and timeless form that both teaches and serves to bind the society closer. Society in this sense functions unilaterally as one. The ritual of human sacrifice in *Family and Clan Naming Patterns, MT 5*, enhanced the spirituality and the belief in supernatural beings and powers. However, only the pure and blameless like Gaita had the unfortunate but rare opportunity to serve the sacrificial requirements of the gods and to free their people from slavery. Why the Meru people got their freedom was because Gaita was considered unblemished and meet for sacrifice according to the above myth. This helped to establish the social and natural order as a product of divine mastery.

People learnt that servitude and moral probity can be a saving grace for a community doomed for destruction. The Meru people were already slaves of the Nguu Ntune and it was not possible to predict when and how they would be set free.

In *Perceived Relatives (Gichiaro)*, (MT 4), the young men who had killed the ‘good Samaritan’ were all wiped out by an unnatural cause. “The entire Gaaru together with its occupants were reduced to ashes.” The mole was also cursed by Thaaai for his disobedience. He would forever live under the ground, never to see the sun. This is suggestive of the mistakes that would not go unpunished. Significantly, the story contends that by use of myths, the mythmaker does not merely expose social and personal vices in a society. He is also censuring them in a way or other.

The Tigania community created this myth specifically to ensure that people do not treat others inhumanly, to foster cohesion and co-existence and harmony between clans. In a wider sense, in the African set up, individualism was discouraged. Indeed, Mbiti (1994) reiterates that “I am because you are, and since you are, therefore I am,” (48) and it is the divinity of this philosophy that has kept the Tigania community mindful of others around them. This helps build character among the young people. In *Rain and Thunderstorms*, MT 6, the younger brothers, Stars feel at peace with Moon and not Sun.

Indeed, their order in the solar system is due to the unity forged after Sun left. This is pointing to us that unity is vital for order to prevail in a society.

In *Perceived Relatives*, MT 5, we encounter a shift from the norm. It is not expected for a young man to help a woman to deliver a baby because midwifery was a preserve of a few special women in the community. This was a special organization that was meant to satisfy the social needs of the community. However, when the men who had helped the woman to give birth reached the woman's home, they were lauded for their courage and kindness. This helps the youth to develop traits that foster a sense of belonging to a traditional society that is recognizable today.

During the interviews and discussions with the informant, it was observed that the myths of origin from the Tigania community had a lot to offer in terms of character building. When the wayward members of the society are castigated and punished for their evils acts and bravery, love and selflessness extoled, young people felt an urge to identify with the winning side.

MT 5 *Perceived Relatives (Gichiaro)* illustrates thus:

“They carried the infant and the luggage and together with the now very weak mother trudged on until they reached the woman's home which was several kilometres from where they were”.

These were the ‘saviours’ who were lauded for their their goodness. The myth also gives us a contrast of the evil young men who paid good with evil but who punished also for their actions.

“The entire ‘Gaaru’ together with its occupations were reduced to ashes...This was a revenge for the evil done against a relative. It was a taboo to shed a kinsman’s blood”.

It is a common perception that old people are cultural patriots but in both the story of *Perceived Relatives (Gichiario)* MT 4, and the *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5, young people did enlist their participation in the freedom of their people and became cultural crusaders. It is time the saying that youth are the leaders of tomorrow changed to be leaders of today because the young men in the two myths above did not procrastinate their service to the deserving people. Gaita says: “I am the one to be sacrificed.”

Myths are themselves relational because they interpret the relations between the natural and the supernatural, the good and the bad, the victim and the victor. Character can very well be analyzed in a relationship rather than in isolation. The following three myths help us to draw the parallels between the good and the bad in the story *Perceived Relatives (Gichiario)*, MT 4.

4.1.2 Education

Western education has tended to consign indigenous education to virtual extinction. Today a very small percentage of young scholars attach any significance to traditional education and culture. While this remains true, Sifuna (1990) defines education as the “whole process by which one generation transmits its culture to the succeeding generation or better still as a process by which people are prepared to live effectively and efficiently in their environment.” Myths teach by symbolic and creative license, are in vogue and cannot be old fashioned. (1990:42).

Otiende (1982) goes further to say that education is the preparation for life into whichever society we are born. Traditional education therefore refers to the ways of learning and teaching which are based on knowledge accumulated by Africans over long periods of time in response to their physical, ecological, political and socio-cultural challenges, according to Otiende (1982). African customary education preserves the cultural heritage of the family, clan and tribe. Traditional education is actually the passing down to a later generation, of beliefs, practices and customs, and myths actually do this. This education was to conserve beliefs, practices, religion, and customs at family, clan and ethnic levels.

An article carried in the Daily Nation of 25th May 2017 defines education as an institution through which society molds successive generations of citizens and

human capital. Through schooling, students are expected to develop holistically – find identity, meaning and purpose in life through connections to the community, the natural world and enduring values such as compassion and peace. They are expected to acquire certain abilities, skills attitudes and habits of thinking that enable them to effectively discharge functions as citizens and as productive members of society. (Daily Nation Thursday 25th May 2017). Sifuna (1990) confirms that there is an effective African traditional education which is tangible, definite and intelligible.

It is essentially an education for living with the main aim of preparing the youths for adult life, an education which is intertwined with social life and meant to socialize the youth through norms and beliefs of the wider society. The skills and knowledge gained in this education are useful both for individual and society as a whole. It lays emphasis on social responsibility, job orientation, political participation and spiritual-moral values.

Lo Liyong's sentiments while advocating for the study of oral literature in African institutions is of great import to this chapter. He notes:

“This is not a ‘return to caves’ war cry. It is rather the transmission of the old spirit; the old fire; the re-enshrining of our inner vitality, it is the request for the blessing saliva of our ancestors to help us face the future like men...” (xii).

Lo Liyong observes that the use of oral material such as myths of origin cannot be confined to the past. They can be used as channels through which issues can be addressed. By using oral traditions African writers have sought to show its importance and vitality artistically not only in the traditional African setting but to the contemporary society. The past serves as a springboard for evaluating and confronting the present. The past serves as a guiding tool for dealing with the present and its experiences. Tigania traditional education, which was basically passed on through narratives, songs, proverbs and riddles were to expose youth to nature and the various ethnic institutions that existed in Meru land.

Such institutions included marriage, property ownership, rules of succession and acquisition, ethnic identity and the kinship ties. As a Tigania youth entering adulthood, emphasis was laid on character building and in development of aptitudes and acquisition of moral qualities. There are in all African societies, regulations concerning those that one may not marry. These are one's own relatives or relatives of the parents or general consanguinity. There were also other categories of people who were regarded as "unmarriageable" because of undesirable family traits, and the red-thigh women were some of them. In the myth of *Red-Thigh Woman (Ngirani)*, MT 2, young men were clearly instructed on how well to choose marriage partners and Ngirani were avoided at every cost. Young men intending to get married were always warned: "...beware of the beauty of the red-thigh woman. (*Ngirani*)"

We are also hinted to about the property ownership in the Tigania community when we see the woman chasing the animals back to the forest and only managing to have the cat as a friend while other higher order animals like cows are owned by the husband. This is in the story of *How Animals Were Domesticated*, MT 3: “Soon the dog also became a domestic animal helping the man to hunt, protect his homestead and his other property, which included animals as was the agreement.”

When man desired animals, he sought a way of luring them out of the forest, while those that ran into the forest did so because the woman was disobedient to the authority of the husband. Those animals that came into his homestead became his property, for instance - cows and goats. A discussion with the informants informed that this arrangement is important because men know what is culturally theirs and women know what they should own and this ends wrangles. This is a myth that can be retold today in settling property disputes between couples

A quote from MT 3 *How Animals Were Domesticated* brings out this:

“To this the wife agreed but on condition that the cat would kill all the rats that were destroying her grains and keep children company while she would be away”. (Emphasis mine)

In *Perceived Relatives (Gichiaro)*, MT 4 the young men who helped the mother to give birth, were lauded for their boldness in helping although midwifery was a preserve of women. They are however, juxtaposed with the rogues who planned how to kill the ‘good Samaritans.’ They are regarded as wicked, scheming and miscreants.

The retributive justice that Thaaï meted against them was a further boost to the moral lesson that the young people ought to emulate. Character training was vital in young people because they were being prepared to take social responsibilities, participate in political affairs of their people and also in decision making. They were expected to fit in a society.

When we tell children myths about origins we instruct them in the essentials of the tribe and its traditions. We are also restating, often on a solemn and regular occasion our claim to particular things. Folktales embody ideas, concepts and meaning to their owners, and that in folklorist studies we agree with William Wilson's assertive plea:

‘Surely no other discipline is or concerned with cultural heritage from the past than folklore; no other discipline is more concerned with revealing the interrelationships of different cultural expressions than is folklore, and no other discipline is more concerned, or should be more concerned with discovering what it means to be human. It is this attempt to discover the basis of our common humanity, the imperatives of our existence that put folklore study at the center of humanistic study’ (Wilson 1988:157).

The future of an individual and the community depended on oral literature as a tool of instruction on the values and norms.

The foundational principles of a family are love and unity which is first seen between the brothers in *Rain and Thunderstorms*, MT 6.

“It was a close-knit family and these children used to everything Together – eating, playing and bathing”.

However, the contrast happened when the bath turned to be a painful affair and a fight ensued causing so much pain and tears from Moon. The implied meaning of the bath can be construed to mean the chastisement of an individual from evils such as corruption, hatred, tribalism and others that threaten social and cultural cohesion.

Just as it is painful to get individuals to be morality responsible in society, the Moon was quite unwilling to be made better through the cleansing, and he opted to remain ‘dark,’ as opposed to his brother, the Sun who was willing and waited for the cleansing. Society should be willing to embrace positive change irrespective of the disquiet involved in the process. Vices and other inappropriate acts in a community were satirized through myths. In *Origin of Death*, MT 1, the disobedience of Mole has been criticized. He is blamed for the cause of death of mankind who would die and never resurrect.

Myths explain to man the world beyond and so he comes to terms with the social world of his fellow men. Faith and religion explained through myths makes man feel at home with the world.

This may be explained by recourse or fantasy, but as long as it is explained, man feels less frightened and less of alien. In the myth of *Perceived Relatives (Gichiaro)*, MT 4, the people were awed by the punishment that the *Nthaka* were subjected to but since such an act was unprecedented and evil, the people did not take much time before they held consultations to propitiate the spirits. In this case the fear of the unknown was dispelled because they were able to purge evil through sacrifices.

Etiological myths help to improve our ability to detect and understand other peoples' emotions and feelings. The incidents illustrated enable us to see the motivation and the nexus between the action and its trait. As a result, the skills that we must help to manage complex relationships in teamwork. This is aptly illustrated in the story of *Red-Thigh Woman (Ngirani)*, MT 2, the social stigma attached to this state was so demeaning that young boys would always make fun of beautiful girls to the effect that they could be Ngirani. With this background information, it is easy to live with these accursed individuals in a community and interact in a healthy manner especially because they are still in our immediate environment. It is a fact that the red-thigh woman's status was predetermined by forces beyond their control and so their blind condemnation is assuaged. This must be considered against the backdrop that the Meru community is a close knit society sharing a common ancestry, history, religion and culture.

4.1.3 Religion and culture

Before the introduction of religion by the white man, Africans had their own religion in which they worshiped on mountains, rivers, under sacred trees, rocks etc. They used to give offerings to their gods as a way of worship. African religion was in the heart of the African culture and it played a significant role in the daily routine of life both for the individual and for the society in general. Clyde Kluckhohn, (1966:59) points out that etiological myths provide social solidarity and enhance the integration of the society by providing formalized statements whose value-attitude affords a means for the transmission of culture with little loss of content – thus protecting cultural continuity and stabilizing the society. Therefore, preserving and maintaining mythical material is important in order to perpetuate the traditional heritage of the community. Religion suspends disbelief and capitalizes on hope and faith. Events in the realm of religion were controlled by a superior being or preternatural forces, which enhanced behavior modification and created a governable society.

Meru people believed in one Supreme Being called Thaaï from whom their blessing originated and they had a well-structured hierarchical order of beings to ease communication. Rituals and rites were embedded in this religion because worship was communal and was meant to shape the community. The spiritual leaders were also political leaders who were recognized and venerated by the members of the society.

Today, Njuri Ncheke (council of elders) of Meru are both religious and political leaders and their office is venerated. Religion and culture permeated all spheres of the life of the society.

Among the Tigania people, myths placed the role of gods in the lives of the living. Their influence ensured that truth and justice were upheld as cornerstones of a functional community. These gods worked in conjunction with special people in the community. Religious specialists in the African community were people with special skills and talents that were necessary in serving the community. These skills would be either in the social or spiritual realms.

Gods and ancestors had a mysterious way of revealing their wishes and demands to humanity and they could only be consulted by this class of special people: medicine men, seers, diviners, rainmakers, mediums and elders. The intervention of gods and ancestors was sought during certain occasions and issues such as mysterious deaths, drought and famine, sicknesses, installation of leaders, when going for war or in case of barrenness. Religious and cultural ideals were taught and spread orally through myths, legends and other genres of oral literature.

Mugaa O Ngaai (Medium) is consulted by Koome Njue on behalf of the Meru people in *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5, to see the status of the freedom of the Meru people.

Mediums interacted with the spiritual world and were able to interpret and reveal messages from this world. Having suffered under the tyranny of Nguu Ntune it was necessary to seek the intervention of gods and ancestors and to know how they could get freedom from the Nguu Ntune. When they prayed and consulted Thaaï and the ancestors, there was a reprieve: “A Mukuri (savior) will be born.”

The many demands that were made by Nguu Ntune were able to be met because there were constant consultations between the spiritual leaders and Thaaï and so the eventual freedom of the Meru people owed its success to the advice and counsel of these mediums. This heightened our understanding of their divine responsibility.

It is important to note that mediums had a special place of abode and so religious leaders like Koome Njue had to walk long distances to where they lived. Since mediums were consulted by special people in the community it can be argued that Koome Njue was also a special person in this particular community. The council of elders among the Tigania community got their position by virtue of their age, wisdom and the knowledge they had acquired during their lifetime. They were mostly called upon to settle family and community disputes. When Ndiindi got pregnant by her father in the story of *Red-Thigh Woman (Ngirani)*, MT 2, elders were informed to chart the way forward for this was to set a precedent upon which such matters would be dealt with in future.

When they decided to wait for the unborn child instead of deliberating in haste, it was in keeping with their wisdom: “to wait until the child is born,” because it was a taboo among the Meru community to comment on an unborn child as this could endanger the unborn baby.

Children born out of wedlock were unwelcome, and no young man would be quite willing to marry a girl who had such a child, possibly that is why the elders concluded that Ndiindi be married by the father of the child and their verdict became final. This is in contravention of their role- to dispense justice to all without partiality. The ruling was seen as partisan especially because Ndiindi, the offended party was not accorded any hearing. Medicine men or herbalists were another special group of people in the community who had special skill, knowledge and talent of identifying herbs, roots and tree barks with curative and preventive properties to treat and prevent all manner of maladies.

Some even had the ability to make concoctions that could lure people into love and even to pacify animals to be able to work with man without harming him. MT 3, *How animals were domesticated*, explains that the wild animals were able to be a man’s property because of the potency of this art. So valued was this trade that it was passed down the family line to avoid extinction, besides being a source of livelihood. It is the present day medical advancement.

Indeed, when Muriiru desired to own wild animals as his property, he consulted a well-known herbalist who gave him the herbs and told him how to prepare them so that they could attract animals into his homestead. He was very sure that his trade was worth the trust because he had told Muriiru what to do which included building a large Nkanatha to accommodate as many animals as he desired, and what not to do. The animals trouped in twos, male and female, to the surprise of Muriiru. Had the woman heeded the instructions from the herbalists, the animals that went back to the forest would still be man's domesticated animals. The trade was a mandate from Thaa. He sought the help of a renowned medicine man known as Mbalanchu, who after performing several rituals and prayers to Thaa, prescribed to him some herbs.

It was a case of retributive justice in the story of the *Perceived Relatives (Gichiaro)*, MT 4, when the young men in the Gaaru were all burnt to ashes because they had killed Maruba and Kang'ira who had helped the pregnant mother to give birth. This was communicated by the diviners who had consulted the gods and the ancestors. They further advised that ritual cleansing was necessary and reparations should be made to the deities to avert further calamity. Religious piety was very vital especially in such a case and so, the due process of propitiation was followed with strict instructions ...to bring peace and harmony... The mythological perspective to this is that punishment is as a result of wrong deeds.

It is important to note that a relation (*Gichiaro*) had been formed between Maruba, Kang'ira and Mbulu, and the young men from Ruiga so any mistreatment from any side would warrant punitive repercussions. This is in reference to origin of *Perceived Relatives (Gichiaro)*, MT 4. This is in line with the fact that the Meru people believed in curses for any wrongdoing. The mole was cursed for disobedience and the men who perished in the inferno could not escape the curse that came as a result of doing wicked things to their perceived relatives (*Gichiaro*).

Religious leaders led people to war, and to worship, and they carried out mediation responsibilities both at individual, family, and clan and inter-clan levels. Religion was and is a very important aspect of their lives because it cemented the community together. In the stories *Family and Clan Naming Patterns*, MT 5, and *Perceived Relatives (Gichiaro)*, (MT 4), we see that the spiritual leaders led the Meru people out of slavery in Mbwaa to their present day homeland and helped to mediate for peace when the gods were angered by the young men who had killed their 'percieved' relatives. The elders in the story of *Red-Thigh Woman (Ngirani)*, MT 2, sought solutions to the problem of Ndiindi who had had a child with her father through a rigorous mediation and consultative process.

Myths were also meant to introduce people to the nature and practice of various religious and cultural institutions that existed in the Tigania community at family, clan and ethnic levels. Culture and religion is also seen in communication. Stories, proverbs, riddles, myths and legends are found in large numbers and have been handed down orally. Since myths of origin explain the origin of things they also explain the origin of some languages. Story telling is the most common recreation in many homes and all the participants enjoy these moments, not just for entertainment. Myths and folktales in general draw images from the environment and the prevailing situation, the terrain of the village, the trees and plants known to the teller and the audience. These two share a narrative tradition which Shueb calls 'conspiracy.' (Shueb 1975:35). These tales are a reflection of a people's culture because language is dependent on culture.

Among the Tigania people there were taboo words whose meaning may not be fully explained in English because they are more connotative than denotative. A community's culture is reflected and embedded in its language, and is a unifying factor besides communication. The language used in African myths is of essence.

Every community has a language it uses to express its culture, beliefs and values. The following words are used in the myths of origin and are essential in the understanding of the Tigania culture and religious beliefs and practices: Gichiaro, Ngirani, Mugaa O Ngaai, Muthega, Kurorwa, Thaa, Kinyinga, Mbwa and Njuri

Ncheke among many others. An interview with young boys and girls cited culture as a very important ingredient of quality life. They marveled at the the history of Tigania people especially how clan and family naming system came about. They young educated people felt that though they are well versed with western culture they know very little of their own. They felt culturally alienated and that few can sustain a meaningful discussion with the older folk because local vocabulary which the old generation normally use is unknown to them. They felt the need to engage young people more vigorously in story telling sessions as a forum to inculcate culture in their lives.

The history of a community is very long and since most communities had not invented writing for record keeping, most of the valuable information would have been lost but for repeated telling through oral tradition such as narratives. History is defined as “the study of man’s past chronological accounts and record of events in reaction to the environment”. (Kairu 2012). This definition does in part concur with our definition of etiological myths- that they are a mythical or traditional theory of evolution explains the origin of man. It is important to note that etiological myths are not stories independent of history but rather express history in colorful accounts that illustrate the major trends of an area.

Property in the Tigania community could be acquired through inheritance or through one’s hard work. However, some property was communally owned such

as land. A man's property in the Tigania community basically included livestock, land, children and wives. In the story of *How Animals Were Domesticated*, MT 3, the mythmaker explains how certain animals such as cows became a man's property while women had very meager resources such as grains. Hard work was encouraged and laziness castigated. The pregnant woman who was helped to deliver by the young men was coming from a neighboring community to do menial jobs to feed her family because there was famine. This is in the story *Perceived Relatives (Gichiaro)*, MT 4.

Kinship ties were highly valued traditionally and people believed they were universally related to each other in one way or another. Indeed, fate had a way of punishing those who went against this moral fiber. This is seen when a cloud of fire devoured the young men who had killed their near kin in the Gaaru in the same story *Perceived Relatives (Gichiaro)*, MT 4.

The making of this myth was purposely to underscore the necessity of kinship relations in the Tigania community and myths in general have the longest history. The Tigania people have a very rich heritage of what past generations of African peoples thought, did, experienced and passed on to their children. This heritage forms a long line which links African forefathers with their descendants who now feel proud of the same. Besides, its importance can be demonstrated by the fact that modern African writing (arts) is influenced a lot by oral literature (tradition).

4.1.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has critically assessed the relevance of myths of origin in the Tigania community. Myths play a very vital role in the traditional African society and in particular in the Tigania community. These myths are therefore relevant in the following areas:

- (i) Character formation and building,
- (ii) Education
- (iii) Culture and Religion

The oral tradition is perhaps the most important and the richest of African cultures. It acts as a valuable source of information about the African past and African philosophy. It helps us to learn about the nature of African society, its social organization, its belief and practices. Through the oral tradition we get to study the myths and rituals connected with institutions such as marriage, family, religion, initiation, etc. Oral literature is the embodiment of wisdom, cultures, history, beliefs and the overall world view of the various peoples. The Tigania people live in a community sharing a common ancestry, religion, culture, guided by common values and occupying one geographical location. Myths of origin are the depository of knowledge, skills, abilities and habits of thinking and doing things that this society has found useful to its survival and wellbeing. Indeed, myth narratives are a panacea to the cultural alienation and disintegration that is being witnessed in contemporary society.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary and conclusion

Myths of origin in the Tigania Community, is the subject of this study. We have established how myths of origin differ from other tales. However, in this final section of the study we recapitulate the major arguments advanced during the study and make recommendations for further research. In chapter one, we strove to map and provide a basis for the study, where we focused on the conceptualization of the study by establishing the background to the study, the purpose of the study and the rationale for the study. We also elaborated on the theoretical framework and mapped out the methodology of the study.

Chapter two focused on the major tenets inherent in myths of origin identified for the study. We were able to establish that there are salient characteristics that define myths of origin from the Tigania community. This enabled us to conclude that myths are cultural and are solution-oriented according to this community.

In chapter three we explored how the mythmaker has used characterization and stylistic aspects in myths. The chapter endeavored to look at character and style in the construction of myths. Duties and responsibilities, stereotypes, vocation and conventions have extensively been incorporated in the myths of origin from the Tigania community. We have also endeavored to discuss the stylistic aspects inherent in the same myths and their implication in relation to myths of origin

from the Tigania community. Stylistic aspects such as symbolism, allusions and repetition were discussed.

Chapter four set out to discuss the relevance of myths of origin in the Tigania community from where the myths in this study are drawn. Here we discussed how myths are instrumental in character building and formation, education, and religion and culture.

Lastly chapter five gives the summary, findings, recommendations and conclusion of the study. All the three objectives of the study have been fulfilled and the research assumptions proved through field data collection and analysis.

5.2 Findings

The objectives of the study have been met through analysis of the selected myths of origin from the Tigania Community in Meru County using Functionalism Theory, Feminism and Stylistic Approach. Characterization and stylistic aspects such as symbolism, repetition and allusion have been used in this study. These have been effective in the analysis of myths of origin from the Tigania community. It has also been established in this study that myths of origin from the Tigania Community are instrumental in character formation and building. Myths of origin in this community are also a rich reservoir of knowledge even in the contemporary society.

In addition, myths of origin enhance religion and culture in this community. In general myths of origin have been found to be the bedrock of social cohesion, integration and stability in this particular community.

5.3 Recommendation for further study

This study was limited to six myths of origin from the Tigania community in Meru County where we discussed the tenets of mythology, characterization and style and relevance of myths of origin. We recommend further research on other myths of origin from the same community while examining the future of myths of origin especially in our contemporary society. We also recommend that a similar study be conducted with a comparative approach so as to shed light on how other narratives differ from etiological myths with a view to exploring how the oral literature in Kenya can be a panacea in confronting issues affecting communities in the 21st century.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Ngono Cia Kaumo Cia Kimeru

MT 1: Gikuu

Tene karaja antu batiakujaga. Batuura moyo Kenya na Kenya. Nirio Thaaia athuganirie arona ti untu bubwega muntu gutura na atigukua nikuithirwa agakara ta Thaaia nawe atukujaga. Kigita kau nirio onere in bubwirite muntu gukua indi ariuke. Aragita itua atiri 'ka nchue mutumwa uria ugaikia ntumwa kiri antu abeere atiri, Bugakuujaga indi bukariuka nyuma ya kagita' Aracuua mpuko, aramiira atiri 'ita kiri muntu umwire atiri agukujaga indi nyuma ya kagita akiariuka. Aramunenkera muthega jwa kumbithia muntu kiriuka athiria gukua. Aracoka arera mpuko atiri, ita na mpui na kukagita gintu kana muntu wa gutuma urungama njirene. Thaaia amwirire uu niuntu naiji atiri, muthega jukaga inya jwakara jutikinyite kiri muntu na yutimutethia kuriuka. Thaaia arauira mpuko kairi atiri riuua rikauma atikinyitie muthega juu.

Mpuko athikiira na etikiria kuthithia uu na ambiriria rugendo rwawe rwa gwikiria muntu muthega na ntumwa ati agakua indi akariuka niuntu bwa inya ya muthega. Njirene mpuko eethira mukwacia jwaumite njirene. Nawe neendete mono kuuria ikwacia, athugaania ni bwega kuruma, na o au ambaniria no kuinja ikwacia nikenda aaria. Niajukirie kaanja gakaraaja akiria ikwacia na o au riuu riauma atikumaka ati niaegi mataaro ni thaaia. Mpuko akurikana ati muthega jukaaga inya riuu riauma ona guti na gitumi gwita kiri muntu niuntu muthega jutina inya ya

kimuumbithia kuriuka. Rugendo rwawe rwathirira o au Thaa neeterere kwona kethirwa muntu agakua na kuriuka indi antu batwika bagakujaga na guti kuriuka. Aroona ni bwega gwita mpuko amuurie kethirwa ntumwa niyakinyirue kiri muntu kana ti u na mpuka niaciariri uria mantu jakari. Thaa aragwatwa ni muthuro jumunene mono na arauga kiruma kiri mpuko niumentu bwa ithukia riri. “kuuma naarua iji, ugwe mpuko utikariona riuu, ndiria ukona riuu ugakua. Nikio gitumi mpuko aturaga rungu rwa nthi akirijaga miiri, na antu nibakujaga. Ugutuura rungu rwa nthi ukirijaaga miiri” niarumirwe niuntu bwa kurega kwathika. (Rugono rwejani ni M’Rukunga wa M’Baithili).

MT 2: Muka Kiero Itune (Ngirani)

Ndene ya ituura ina karaaja mono, ni kwari na mukuru na mwekuru wawe. Igita rirakinya nawe mukuru uju araciara kaana ka kaari gakathongi mono mono nawe arageta Ndiidi. Ndiidi areta na mbere na muturiire jwawe na o ntuku o ntuku ithe wa ndiindi nionaga ndiindi no kuthongoma akuthongoma.

Ithe wa ndiindi niaririirie gutuma ndugu ya wendo na mwana wawe o na kinya kenthirwa mikaarii na muturiirene ya ameeru bwari mugiro mwana kumama na ithe Na ni ikariika riumba kuretara nja yonthe mantu yatibuuii Mukuru uju aretegera arona ng’ina wa ndidi agwita muundene kurima. Arathengera mwari wawe aremwira atiri ‘Nju aja, maama naani’ Ndiidi arageria kurega indi niuntu

bwa gukira ithe araga abwa kuthithia na baramaama. Nyuma ya kagiita gati thau Ndiindi araa umurito. Arakamata iu ria ithe!

Kiri mituriire ya ameru mwari utigure atetikiritue kugia na iu na nio Ndiidi akuomenyeka ari u murita Kiama kia aathurani ba mucii baerwa nteto uria iri, ati” Ndiindi Ni umurito” Ameeru batiagwetaga mwana uticiari na nio baugire atiri, “Ka twetere mwana aciarwe nirio tutegeere mantu ya Ndiidi” Indi kanyoni muntu nikaari kagukinyia nteto atiri “Ndiidi akamatitie iu ria ithe.

Nyuma ya mieri kenda Ndiidi araciara kaana ka kaari gakathongi mono nkuruki ya ngina. Riria akuru ba kiama boneere uthongi buu baragita igamba atiri “Ndiidi nagurwe ni ithe wa mwana kawe ithe muciaru” Ndiindi atiri na mugambo na uge bwawe batiacuirwe no kugitiirwa igaamba agiitirwe atiegi kanya ka kuuga no atia. Ndiindi aratwika mwekuru wa bairi wa ithe.

Akiama o bau ni boneere mutugo juu juri jumuthuku. Na nikenda jutigatambe bagiita igamba atiri aana ba aari bonthe ba rurujo rwa Ndiindi bagatua kuguragwa ni arume barina aka bangi kana muntu muruume ukwithitie muka wawe wa mbere. Batikarigurua bari ba mbere nikwithirwa muntu muruume uria ukagura aari baba ati na muka ungi wa mbere no gukua agakua. Indi aana ba tuiji ba Ndiidi gutibu baathirwe bo na nibaguranaga kiwithire.

Bareeta aari baaba “Ngirani” kana “Kiero Itune”. Uugi bwa akuru ba kiama bwari bwa gitumi na guti muntu wa guita kiutati nabu mono mono muntu muka.

Kwerikanire atiri neka akuru ba kiama bathithirie uu nikenda bagia na kaanya ka kuguura aari bathongi babethi ndiri ekuru bao baaga inya ya kubatumikira. Kinya naarua iji muthaka wa gaaru akenda gutuma ndugu ya wendo na ngirani atikumanya, mwari uju amuriingagiria igita ria gutigana utuku akagera kinyinya nyuma ta kigongwana kia kumuonokia tontu atiumba kumaira ati we ni ngirani. Arega kuthithia uu muthaka uju agacemania na nyamu ya kithaka imuthangikie utuku bonthe nkinya riu riume. Nawe akamenya mwari wa buuru yawe ni ngirani na atimuriungira kairi.

Ngirani gatigati ka icunci ina kana miiriga ya ameeru nibaijikeene ta aari bathongi mono na batiguragwa bari ekuru ba mbere na bararia batithithagia kigongwana kia gutethia nthaka cia buuru yao na kugurwa bari ekuuru ba mbere ibamenyekete kureta ikuu bia nthaka inyingi. Nthaka iria njume cienda mwari ngirani ka iguranaga ntuku inkai na kugura ngirani ta mwekeru wa bairi kama kwinga mwekuru wa mbere na kuguura ngirani. Athithia uu atikua. (rugono rwejani ni M'Rukunga wa M'Baithili)

MT 3: Kuriithia Nyamu

Tene kagiita mono nyamu cionthe ciari cia kithaka na guti nyamu cia ndithia cia karaga nja. Akui na kithaka na aria nyamu ciakaraa nikwari na nja ya mukuru wetagwa murriru na mwekuru wawe Ngaa. Ntuku imwe muriiru aragia guuru ya kuria nyama na arathugania monon uria ombikia kurijaga nyama o igita riria akwenda atigwita kithakene kuthoga. Niagererie njira cionthe cia kigwata nyamu cia kithaka araaga bwa kuthithia. Nyuma ja kagiita kaniini areta kiri mugaa waijikene mono wetagwa Mbalanchu. Mbalanchu niathithagia mantu ya kurigarani agitumagiira uume na umeenya njira ya mithega aegi inya ni Thaa (God).

Mugaa uju mniambirie kutihithi igongwana na maromba kiri Thaa nikenda omba gutethia Muriiru. Nyuma ya kagiita nionerue kiorio kia thina cia muriira. Aramwira atiiri “Thikiiria bwega, jukia mabura jaja ujeikiire mwakine oome ya nje yaku mwaka jaite eera na yathire buru, Muruki juu niyu yukomba gukuciiria nyamu cionthe cia kithaka ciiye gwaku” Aracoke aramwira atiri, ‘nthii wake nkanatha ineene ya kung’aniira nyamu cionthe iria ukwenda ciaaa ciaku’ iira mwekuru waku nawe atiiri buuria akoona akarugura muromo jwagwe kuuga no atia. Muriiru agwita nja areta mwekuru wawe aramua mataro jonthe ya Mbalanchu. Aramuwira atiri ‘ukuigua kana nchekerie uria ndakwira?’ Mwekuru amwira ‘ii niu ndikuigua’. O ndiria muthega jwekiirwe riko nyamu cionthe cia kithaka ciambia kwija nka na ndume cio mithemba yonthe na gutonya nkanathene ya Muriiru.

Ng'ombe, mbuuri, Ng'onde, Ntigiri, na ingi inyingi ciotonya na Mwekuru no akiri kii. Indi riria mbogo jakinyira na jegeria gutonya, mwekeru aramaka niuntu bwa ngoji uria ciari ineene, arone ni ugwati mono. Araurirue ati atiabwirite kuuga no atia arauga atiir, 'Kaai, Muriiru, kinya iji na ngoji ineene uju igatonya nkanathene?' Muriiru aticokie.

Mbogo iraugua uria Ngaa augiire araugia iratonya kithakene kairi na muthuro jumuinga. Nyamu iria itari igutonya nacion ikwona mbogo ikumatuka na gwita kithakene ciamithingata cionthe kithakene.

Muthenya jumwe ri, Muriiru areta kithakene kuthoga. Kuru nayo iri kithakene iciithite yategera yona uri muriira akuthithia mitego ja kurigarania na gutega nyamu ineene kinya Mpuuria. Kuru ara ciira atiiri.'Muriiru ni uumuume, arina inya. Ka ngutuma ochore nawe nikenda andithia kumania na nyamu ingi iria iri inya nkurikui jakwa'. Ireeta kiri muriira airamwira atiri ambe muchore waku ngukariirie nje nikenda nyamu ingi itikejje na maitha yangi yaria jomba kuija kuthukangia into biaku. Buu burakenia muriiru na kuru najo iraa nyamu ya nja na muchore wa muriira ikithithagia uria betikaniritie.

Mpaka najo iragia ioru kithakene ireja akui na nja ja muriiru. Iraciitha gataria. Ntuku imwe muriiru arama kithakene na nyama aumite kuthoga. Areta Ngaa nawe aretika na uraumagara kaja.

Muriiru arambiria kunenkeru mwekuru nyama nawe agitonyagie nyomba. Guti waragia na ungi no nyama cianenkanagirua na gutonyua nyomba. Mpaka irategera uria mwekuru agugita irarigara mono. Iraciuria atiiri. 'Ka muka uju ari umume atia gwe ugutunya mukuru nyama ciawe cionthe iria aumite kuthoga kithakene kirina ugwati, na mukuru guti u akuga'. Mpaka itaiji ati Ngaa ni wathikie ari nabu kiri mukuru wawe indi tu gutunywa mukuru agutunywa nyama.

Mpaka ireta inyiitie kiri mwekuru iramuuria uchore. Nawe aretikiiria indi aramiira atiri "nawe umburagire mbea cionthe iria ikwinyangia irio biakwa na ukarie aana bakwa riri ntiku" Juu jwatwika mubango jumothongi kiri bonthe. Uu niu nyamu iria ikaraga nja ciatwikire cianja. (Rugono rwejani ni Ciothirinja wa M'Imaana)

MT 4: Gichiaro

Igiita ria karaja mono kuragia na mpara ineene Tigania na muntu muka umwe kuuma kuu Tigania areta ituura ria akui guchua ngugi nikenda omba kuonera aana bawe biakuria. Riita ria muka ujua eetawa Nkimaa. Nkima naari umurito. Akurikia kurita ngugi jawe arajukia rugendo rwawe etiite nja. O ndi mwe rwakai rwa mwana ruramugwatira njirene atimenye athithie atia. Niuntu bwe mbati ya murungu nikwari na nthaka ithatu nacio ciaumite itura riria muka uju aumite kurimia. Mariitwa jao betagwa Kang'iira, Maruba na Mbulu.

Ruakai rikuingia mono Nkimaa ona ni bwega ete nthaka iu imutethie kinya kethirwa bwatiagirite gatigati ka eekuru ba Ameeru gutethia kugia mwana ni antu arume. Ngugi iji jaari ja eekuru baria bri na umeenyo. Arabeta na mugambo jwa mathithio nabo bareeja antu aaria amamite niuntu bwe rwakai. Na berenchere mono bamutethia na akuona batikwenda arabeere atiiri' Aana bakwa, bwarega gunteethia ni na mwana uria uticiari twinthe no gukua tugakua'. Baraigua kiao, baruatethia Ngaa kugia mwana, baramukamatira mwana na murigo juria ari naju bareete nawe mwanka nja bamutirithitie ta ngutu.

Ndiirie muruume wa Ngaa onere ageeni baa narigaririe mono aroria mwekuru wawe uria gukaari nawe mwekeuru niuntu bwa gukira antu batimenye uria gwakara areta mukuru nyomba ndene aramua rugono runthe. Mukuru arakeena mono nuintu bwa wega na umiiria bwa nthaka iji ithatu. Baragwatwa ugene na irio na bia kuria. Nyumene Mwene nja iji arauga atiri 'Babwi nandi kuuma naariua iji buri atanongina na atanoithe wa mwana uju bwa tethia ng'ina guciara. Bugetanaa ba Gichiaro.'

Kuma gataaria nikwari na nthaka ciategete mantu uria jaari nja iu, na ndiria nthaka iria ithatu igwita baba ibeyire na kwenda kumenya nibo bau. Batetikirie ndiria berirwe ndiunga iu iuria jaari an barauga 'baa ni akunyaniria bejiite kugita uthuka itura riri. Tukabathingata tuborage' Mukuru na mwekuru barerenchana ni kenda nthaka iji cia wendo bobwega itiuragwe indi kwa ni utheri.

Babathingata na boraaga bairi bao indi umwe Maruba aramatuka aronoka cialela. Nthaka iria ikurikia kuthithia uthuku buu cietire ciatonya Gaarune jao teka guti u bathithitie. Nyuma ya mithenya imikai untu bwa kumakania ibwakarikire ndene ya Gaaru iria bakaraga. Rukiri maindukira lalanta ya mwanki ironekana iguru ta itu riumite nde rea nthaka iria cioragirwa ciaumite rirarungama iguru ria Gaaru iria jaairi na nthaka mburaani, na kaaju karaaria karauga atiri ‘wontho uri nkia kana ari na muka agurite akuui naume’ Nthaka cionthe iria ciari Gaarune iu irathirua ni mwanki na jurachoka naria jwaumite. Ni gutua thiri niuntu bwa kuthiria uthuku muntu wa ndugu. Na au ni kaumo ka Gichiaro kiri miiriga mwanya mwanya ya Ameeru. (Rugono rwaajanirwa ni M’Tarichia wa M’Arrwi).

MT 5: Mariitwa Ya Nja Na Ya Miiriga

Kwirikanaaa atiri Ameeru tene karaja batuura guntu gwetagwa Mbwaa, na bonthe bari na aciari bamwe mukura aitawa Mukunga na mwekuru wawe Mbuya na Mukunga baraciara aana ba biiji bairi wa mbere aretwa Miruara na wa bairi aretwaa Mutabui. Aana baa ibakaraa bakithuranaa muno na kurua Nawe Mbuya neendete Mutabui mono nawe Mukunga neendete wa mbere uria wetawa miruara mono. O au mariita jaragia ja cioithe na ciong’ina kuringana na mwana uria muciaru endete. Kiri ameru mwana wa mbere aciaragwa ruteere rwa ba ithe nawe etagwa cioithe na wa bairi rutere rwa ba ng’ina nawe ageetwa ciong’ina Nau Mbwaa amiiru bakari ta nthumba cia Nguu Ntune na ibathangikagua mono ni antu baba ageeni.

Amiiru amwe na kuinjirua ni Nguu Ntune ibetire na mbere na kuingia mwanka Nguu Ntune ona bakareta thina na barege watho bwawe. Aratua kuuraga twana twa tuiji turia twaciaragwa nau Mbwaa. Nyumene Ameeru baromba Thair abatethia kuuma njarene cia Nguu Ntune. Mwekuru umwe niaciarire kaana ga kaiji na arakaithaagikira kooragwa ni nguu ntune nako kareetwo Mwithe. No nyuma ya igita Ameeru ibeteire kaana kau Koome Njue.

Koome Njue naari na uume bwa muciarwa na niathuganirie uria omba gutethia Ameeru kuuma ukombone bwa Nguu Ntune. Itagaria ria mbere riria ajukirie niati eetire kiri Mugaa O Ngai na barabanga uria bageeta kiri Muthinjiri wa Thair nikenda abeera uria bakathithia. Bagwita nibaretere ruteto ati 'ntuku imwe Ameeru bakauma Mbwaa' Bubu ibwaere antu wirigiri indi amwe na wirigiro niabamenyithirie ati kuuma kwa njarene cia Nguu Ntune kukethirwa kuri na mantu jamarito jakuthia.

Mbere Mugaa O Ngai aberire bathinje nyamu iti na kirema na nkiriku. Buu ibathithirie na Mburi iratwika ititheri, barageria ndegwa najo iraregerwa. Muthiene buru barerwa barore muntu uria ukethirwa ari umweru ta bamba. Kurora muntu kwari untu butaitikirikite kiri Ameeru na baroona ati kurekua kwao kutiumbika.

Nyuma ya igiita riikai kuragia na muthaka umwe utaari mucienda areciejana nikenda arorwa athera Antu bombe kurekua baume Mbwaa. Muthaka uju etagwa Gaita. Mbangi babaingi baraumira barauga atir,'Gaita aremwa kuthera kuguciejana kurorwa ni kenda antu betu bauma ukombone' Nabo betagwa Muthetu, Kiuna na Nthanju. Kiri Ameeru kuri na mwiriga jwitagwa Gaita baria bari ba rurijo rwa nchamba iri itikiiraa na cia wendo bubunene mono.

Kinya kethira Gaita niarorerwe na aratheira, Nguu Ntune neetire na mbere kuinnyiria Amiiru na kubera bathithia mantu yatikumbika. Mbere arabera atiri,'Ndirienda buthithi kiratu kung'uanene na kiina bue nthi na iguru' Koome Njue na Mugaa O Ngai barathinja mburi bararuta mukoro barathithia naju kiratu giki. Bwa jairi arabera atiri' chuueni ndegwa iria yumba kurekia ntuku injeru ta chokaa' Bara mathira ndegwa na chokaa najo irarikia ntaka injeru. Nguu Ntune araigua bubui mono arona Ameeru bena uume bubuingi na bageeta. Arathugania kairia arabeera bachuue tharike inyingi iria ikombe gwitaita ta muuro jwa ruuji. 'Tuthiinjene nyamu inyingi mono mono mwanka tharike itaite to muuro jwa ruji' Koome Njue arera ntu. Tekka buu biting'ani Nguu Ntune arebera muthia atiri 'Nthithirieni gitumo gikiraja kiumba gukinya matune riu nkaburekia bwite' Naiji buu butiumbikika.

Koome Njue arera nguu Ntune ati buu bukajukia igita na kuri into akenda ta makara yathithitue no nchiuri cia antu. Kaagita kau ibabangire uria bakamatuka kuringana na ikundi mwanya mwanya. Ba mbere kumatuka bari

- a. Antu bakuru na nyamu inkuru
- b. Ekuru babanake na twana tuniini
- c. Antu babethi na nyamu iria njanake
- d. Laing'o kana nthaka

Ikundi bibi bionthe biari biite magiita mwanya mwanya Amiiru bartoroka kuringana na mubango jwao. Kagiita kau nthaka ciakairia ntaka ya ng'ombe na Nguu Ntune ona togi inyingi igurua akathugania ni itumo rikuthithua ni amiiru. Nairiraiiria kwano itumo rumba gukinya matuni rikinyite nthi. Aramariira atimenye antu ibetire Kenya. Nthaka bakumenya ikundi bionthe biri kuraja kuria Nguu Ntune atikinya barakia mwanki jwa ntaka jumuingi nabo baragwatagwata antu bao. Nguu Ntune riria ejiire kwona gitumo nyuma ya togi kithira ni kirigara arigarire.” Amiiru bagwita’ arariinga mikenke arauga.

Baria betiire na mugundu betagwa mwiriga jwa Njiru, baria batikiraga, baria betire gutunei rukiiri betagwa mwiriga jwa Ntune, na baria betire muthenya riua riri iguru ni iguaa, nabo betagwa Njeru. Na uu niu miiriga ya amiiru iegiri mariitw. (Rugono rwaajanirwe ni M’Tarichia wa M’Arrwi).

Myth 6: Mbura na Ngorogoro

Igita ria karraja nikwari na mukuru na mwekuru wawe. Nyuma ya kagiita kaniini ni batharimirwe na aan bathatu. Aana baa bobathatu baari ba biiji na nja iu itaari na kaana ga kaari. Maritwa ja aana baa jaari Riuwa, Mweri na Njota. Nja iji yari na urumwe mono na aana baa nibendene mon mono. Bathithagia mantu yonnthe bari na urumwe ta kuria irio, gucetha and kuthamba.

Ntuku imwe irakinya na Riuwa na Mweri baragita igamba ati bathambanagie o muntu igita riawe na ungi igita riawe. Buu ibetikaniritie na Mweri niwe wari athambue ni Riuwa ari wa mbere. Bakurikia kuthambania Mweri aramba gucitega aracitega mwiri junthe na aroona ati ataari akuthambua athera bwega ni mutanoithe Riuwa. No atiateetere kana anunguna o nkinya kethira marucha ya ruko iyonekanaga mwiri jwawe.

Igiita rigukinya ria Mweri kuthambia Riuwa arajukia gikiri na aramukiira, aramukiira na inya inyingi mono nkinya riuwa araigua mirimo na rwakai ruruingi kinya kethira niatherere mono. Igita o riu ikwagiire na mateta Mweri akiugaa ati we atiathambitue athera bwega na we Riuwa akiugaa niathambirue na rwakai na murimo jumuingi mono. Mateta yareta na mbere gatigati ka aana baa bobairi nkinya baraa ni kurua bakarua.

Bothe nibaari ni inya ing'anene igita riria baruujaga na gitiwe woombire ungi nduene yao. Kagiita kau mwana uria muniini Nyota no gutega ategete uria atanongina bakuurana. Atega oonaa ati Riuwa ni we wari na magitia indi ti Mweri. Kuuma au atuma uchore na Mweri na bariikari amwe igita rionthe indi mutanongina Riuwa aumira nigutoroka amutorokaa tonto atiari na uchore nawe ni kwithirua niamukiraa mono.

Nyuma ya kagiita gakai ndwaa iji niyaumiire kairi na kagiita kaa jethirwa inenei mono. Kwagia no guchamburana na mateta na kiborocho kia lalanta ya ndua on anti baria baari kuraja ibaigua ndua iu ya aana baa. Baria baigagua kurua kuu ni antu bari nthiguru na maganduja jau ya ndua iu ni yo yetagwa ngorogoro. Nayo mbura iria juraga nthiguru ni methori jaria aana baa baitaga bakirua niuntu bwa rwakai na murimo jwa mpuurwa. Nikio twoona Riuwa muthenya niuntu aana bau bangi nibamatukire bamutigira iguuru wenka ta mucii jwawe. Utuku nabuao tukona Mweri na Nyota niuntu nabo nibaigirue ugwaa bwa gukaara amwe na Riuwa niu bakarage bonka iguru utuku niuntu nibaiganagua. Utuku nabu ni ruko ruria rwaritirwe indiria Mweri athambagua ni Riuwa na gutigwa na marucaruca. Muthenja naju ni weru bew kuthere kwa Riuwa niuntu niathererue ni Mweri indiria amuthambagia. Na uu ni u Mbura na ngorogoro ciejjire nthiguru. (Rugono rwejanirwe ni M'Larama M'Akuciana).

Appendix II: Translation of Tigania Myths of Origin

MT 1: Origin of Death

Long time ago, people never used to die. They used to live forever. God {Thaai} thought to himself, “This is not good since if man does not die he will be like me who is immortal.” So he decided that mankind ought to die but resurrect. He decided to have a messenger who would take this message to the people. So he called Mole and told him his desire. “Go to man”, He began, “Tell him that he will be dying but resurrecting. Give him these medicinal herbs to him as protection against dying without resurrecting’ Thaai gave the mole the message and some medicinal herbs to take to man which would guard him against perishing. “Go, talk to nobody, and do not delay.” The condition he gave to the Mole was that he should not delay on his way because the medicine would lose its potency once the sun rose before it was delivered. Mole agreed to this condition and he set on his way to the land of mankind with the noble task together with the message and the medicine.

Mole walked and walked and walked. After walking for several kilometers, the sun got hotter and hotter and he became exceedingly hungry and weary. He sat down for a rest near a farm. He peeped through the farm and saw some sweet potato plants. Mole liked sweet potatoes so much. He thought that it would be a good idea to dig out some and eat. He dug out some and ate. He dug another and ate, then another. This was in total disregard of the instructions.

Before long, the sun rose! He remembered what Thaaï had told him, “Go, talk to nobody and don’t delay,” This was because the medicine would lose its power once the sun rose before it was delivered. Mole after seeing that the sun had risen, decided to end the mission.

After several years Thaaï waited to see the fulfillment of his wish among mankind. He expected to see man dying but resurrecting. It was not to be because man died and never resurrected. He waited and waited but still people continued to die without anybody resurrecting. He decided to summon Mole to find out whether the message had reached mankind. He called Mole and asked “Why are people not dying?” Mole explained his part of the story. “As I was going, I took a rest near a farm where there were some sweet patotoe plants. It was very hot and having felt felt hungry, I dug out some sweet potatoes and began to eat. I continued to eat and all of a sudden I realized that the sun had already risen. Then I terminated the mission you had given me because as you had told me the medicine would be of no use once the sun rose before it was delivered to mankind.

Thaaï was wrought. “From today henceforth you shall never see the sun,” he said. And he pronounced a curse upon Mole for this misdeed. “You shall always live underground and under the cover of darkness, eating roots, and the moment the

sun will set on you, you shall surely die. And because of your disobedience, man shall continue to die without resurrecting.”

And that is why Mole lives under the ground eating roots. He does not see the sun. Sometimes he comes out from under the ground but retreats immediately the sun begins to rise. He was cursed for disobedience. It is the reason also why mankind all over the world dies. (Story narrated by M'Rukunga wa M'Baithili)

MT 2: Red-thigh Woman (Ngirani)

A long time ago in a certain village, a father sired a very beautiful baby girl. He and his wife decided to name the baby girl Ndiindi. Ndiindi was very beautiful and as she grew up, the father took notice of her beauty and desired her.

One day, while Ndiindi's mother had gone to the farm, the father called Ndiindi in his *gaaru* and slept with her in total disregard of social norms that forbade fathers from sleeping with their daughters. This was regarded a taboo that could even cause punishment. The entire family could even be wiped out by mysterious calamities. After several months, people began to notice that Ndiindi was heavy with child.

In the Tigania community such happenings were always reported to the council of elders to resolve the matter. This unfortunate incident was reported to one of the

elders. The council of elders popularly known as *Njuri Ncheke* were the custodians of cultural values. “Ndiindi is pregnant!” He was told. Immediately the council of elders convened an impromptu meeting to deliberate on the issue. They sat down for a discussion. The one who got the information first began, “I have been informed that Ndiindi, Kaula’s daughter is pregnant.” “Ndiindi is pregnant! Ndiindi is pregnant!” they asked in unison. This was unbelievable. It was unacceptable for an uncircumcised girl (Mukenye) in this community to conceive because at this stage she was expected not to be married because she is still considered a child. After a long solemn moment of discussion, the agenda was postponed so that they could wait for the outcome of the union; that is, to wait until the child was born. This is because in the Meru community it was a taboo to talk about an unborn child for it was believed that it could cause something bad to happen to that child.

After nine months, Ndiindi gave birth to a very very beautiful baby girl. Indeed, more beautiful than the mother. The elders held a long discussion about the paternity of the child. After a lengthy discussion by the council of elders about the issue, it was discovered that Kaula, Ndiindi’s father was the biological father of the unborn child! It was a difficult decision to make but they had to settle the matter once and for all. They unanimously agreed that the Kaula had to marry Ndiindi, his daughter. This was decided in line with cultural practices that every girl must be married.

This was unprecedented although in some parts of Meru there were more punitive measures regarding such incidents where by the girl who would be pregnant while still un married would be tied to a tree in the forest to die there or be mauled by wild animals. Equally dangerous was to administer fatal herbs to abort the unborn child.

Ndiindi became her fathers' second wife. To discourage this unbecoming behavior, the elders also deliberated and came to the conclusion of the matter: All daughters from this illegitimate union shall never secure marriage by young men but would always be married as second wives or by old men who had divorced or lost their first wives. Such a girl would be referred to as 'Ngirani' or 'Kiero Gitune' (the red-thigh woman). Ndiindi became the first casualty of a punishment that would span decades later. The decision of the elders was never discussed further, least of all by children or women, no matter the case. They had laid the matter to rest.

This decision was believed to have been a ploy by old men to secure the love and marriage of beautiful girls after their wives had grown old. However, they laid down a procedure to be followed in case a young man got attracted to a 'Ngirani'. Should a young man fall in love with a red-thigh woman, she would escort him at night and on parting she was expected to throw a burning 'kinyinga' (burning piece of firewood) in front of the man on his way home.

This symbolic act was meant to save the life of this young man. The girl could not explain in words her fateful nature to would-be suitors. It was believed that should she fail to perform this ceremony the young man would never reach his home that night but later in the day. He would be waylaid by a ferocious animal that would torment him throughout the night until day break but the animal would never kill him. If the girl performed this ceremony the young man would know that the girl was a 'Ngirani' and not meant to be married by a young man and so he would never return to her.

Even today, 'Ngirani' are believed to exist in this community. They are described as extra ordinarily beautiful and are normally married as second wives by old men. Young men who intend to marry are always warned, "Beware of the beauty of the red-thigh woman." They have resigned to their fate. Some red-thigh women do not perform the saving ceremony. Also some young men become stubborn enough to return to woo these women further and marry them as first wives. Their beauty is quite bewitching. Some young men have insisted on marrying them disregarding the risks of this situation, and many have died. Yet, some young men become wise and marry another girl as first wife for just a short time to save their lives, then either divorce her or marry a 'ngirani' as a second wife.

If this happens the young husband will not die because the ‘ngirani’ is not a first wife. And that is how the red-thigh woman phenomenon in the Tigania community is believed to have come about. (Story narrated by M’Rukunga wa M’Baithili).

MT 3: How Animals were domesticated

A Long, long, time ago, all animals used to live in the forest and there were no domestic animals. There was a forest where the animals lived and near that forest was a homestead belonging to a couple, Muriiru, the husband and Ngaa, the wife. One day, Muriiru looked at the animals in the forest and wondered, “What can I do to get these animals to be mine”? This desire to tame wild animals nagged him for some time. He thought and thought over the same issue.

Finally, he decided to seek the help of medicinemen. In Tigania community medicinemen were known to have magical powers to do anything and to solve every problem. Muriiru walked a very long distance to seek the intervention of a reknown medicineman called Mbalanchu who lived far away from this village. When he reached there he met Mbalanchu in his homestead. After being warmly welcome he explained the nature of his mission. Medicinemen do not immediately operate on the problems of their clients because there are procedures to be followed and offerings to be given to them so that their magical power can be released. This is traditionally called ‘kurora mbuu’. So the medicineman told him to return the following day.

After performing some religious prayers and rituals to seek the help of Thaa, (God) he told Muriiru that ‘Mbuu Ikuthera’ that is to mean, your problem is soluble. He immediately prescribed to Muriiru some herbs, roots and tree barks. He also gave him clear instructions on how he would prepare the concoctions for effect. “Burn them, burn them, burn them on an open fire and the smell of this medicine will attract all the wild animals to your homestead.” ‘They will come all of them male and female’, Mbalanchu instructed. However, before preparing the concoction, Muriiru was also instructed to warn his wife to keep quiet no matter what she saw or heard in the whole arrangement. She was not to comment on anything “Have you heard or, should I repeat?” the medicineman asked Muriiru severally. “I have heard,” Muriiru answered. The medicineman also told him to build a big ‘nkanatha’ or cow shed to accommodate as many animals as he desired.

Armed with all that, Muriiru left for his home with the medicine (muthega) and did as he was instructed. He even warned his wife not to speak a word. Immediately the herbs were burnt, the animals trooped from the forest in pairs, male and female of different species, and the man directed them into his cow shed which he had build. These were cows, goats, sheep, donkeys, etc. Before long the buffalo with its long curled horns appeared. All this time Ngaa the wife kept mum, but on seeing the unusually long horns of the buffalo she started complaining and murmuring.

“My husband,” she asked, ‘Will this animal with such horns also go in?’ She feared that the buffalo would harm her family members once allowed into the homestead. The husband never responded. Unfortunately, the buffalo together with the other animals that had not entered man’s cowshed heard the complaints of the wife. They became very angry. Immediately, the buffalo together with the other animals that had not entered retreated. They ran and disappeared into the forest and became wild animals.

One day, the dog, while at the edge of the forest next to man’s homestead, observed how man would make a trap and kill many animals for food. The hunter could even kill a huge animal like an elephant. He thought to himself, “If I become a friend of man he will protect me from stronger animals like elephants because he has the ability to kill them.” Then the dog approached man for friendship promising him that he would also be of use to him, “I will guard you, your homestead and your property against thieves and other intruders.” Said the dog to man. Man was thrilled by this. Soon the dog also became a domestic animal, helping the man to hunt, protecting his homestead and his other property which included other animals as was the agreement.

The cat was another animal that had returned to the forest. While in the forest the cat felt lonely and insecure. He approached man’s homestead. While hiding near a fence, he observed something that made him admire Muriiru’s wife.

Muriiru had come home with a large game. He called the wife from the house and she immediately came out. She carried all the pieces of meat into the house as she was being given by the husband piece by piece. Both husband and wife understood each other perfectly well so there was not much talking. The cat marvelled at the wife's unique ability to defraud the husband of all the hard-earned game without the man raising a finger at her. At least the cat understood things that way. What the cat did not know was that the wife was carrying out her husband's instructions in total submission and that she was not stealing or defrauding the husband. Just like the dog, the cat approached the wife for friendship because it had admired the wife. To this the wife agreed but on condition that the cat would kill all the rats that were destroying her grains and keep children company while she would be away. This was a wonderful plan and it worked well for both of them.

The cat joined other animals in Muriiru's homestead. And that is how animals were domesticated. (Story narrated by Ciothirinja wa M'Imaana).

MT 4: Perceived Relatives (Gichiaro)

Once upon a time there was famine in Tigania and a woman, the wife of Mbirithi went to a neighbouring community to do manual work for pay so as to feed her children. Her name was Kaumi. At this time, she was heavy with child.

She walked several kilometers to a neighbouring place called Ruiga and a certain family engaged her for a day and in return she was given food stuffs.

After working on the farm the whole day she took a rest before setting on her journey back home. She had barely walked for a few kilometers before towards her home before pangs of labour pains began. She sat down under a tree along the path and started to travail. Incidentally three young men from the village where she had been working the whole day happened to be passing by. They were Maruba, Kang'ira and Mbulu.

When she saw them she thought to herself, "At least they will help me." She beckoned them to come. They came to her but when she told them what was happening and they saw her condition, they were hesitant. She was older than them and midwifery was a preserve of specially trained women in the community.

After beseeching them for long, they agreed to help her with the delivery. In fact, she told them, "If you don't help, I and the unborn child will die." They helped her deliver. She gave birth to a healthy baby girl. They carried the infant and the luggage and together with the now weak mother trudged on until they reached the woman's home several kilometers from where they were. From a distance, the husband saw them and cupped his hand on his forehead to have a clear view of the strangers accompanying the wife.

The husband did not inquire much about the matter because it was evident especially with the child who was roughly wrapped up in the hands of one of the young men. The woman, afraid of giving details in the open called the husband inside and in low tone narrated what had happened and how the young men had successfully and carefully done the job.

“How did it happen?” He inquired. “The pain caught up with me after I had walked for some kilometers from where I was working,” she said. “Sudently, I saw three men walk past me and since the pain had really intensified I decided to call upon the young men who were passing by to assist me with the delivery”, continued the the woman. The man, who was now very grateful, called the young men inside. They had waited outside all this time. They were served food and porridge and the man took time to generously thank them pouring praise to them for going out of their way in helping ‘their mother’ in dire need “This is now your brother”. He told them, pointing to infant who was now safe in the hands of his mother’s hands. None should ever do anything evil to the other, and that your community and ours have now become one”. He told them. As a result, a relationship had been born for they had now become ‘brothers’ of the new born baby or ‘perceived relatives’ that is relatives not by blood or marriage ties but through acculturation.

From a distance there were some young men who were watching what was happening in this homestead and thought that those strange visitors were spies coming to spy on their community with evil intent. When the visitors were released, these other men came and demanded to know, who these men were, where they had come from and what they wanted. Mbirithi explained everything about the visit and how they had helped the wife to give birth but they were not satisfied with the explanation. They vowed to follow the ‘spies’ and kill them but the husband and wife vehemently pleaded with them not to harm the visitors because they were innocent and besides, what they had done to this family had already forged a relationship that was culturally very significant to both communities. Kaumi knew that if they were harmed, something bad would happen especially now that they had become members of this community.

These men did not heed to this. They sneaked, followed those three men and killed two of them but fortunately one of them, Maruba escaped unhurt. He reached home and reported what had happened. “We were walking along the path and a woman heavy with child pleaded with us to assist with delivery because she was experiencing labour pains”. Maruba explained the danger she was in and how they helped her with the delivery and took her to her home. He also reported how when they were coming back home some three young men followed then and a fight ensued. “They were fully armed and so they were able to kill my two brothers but I managed to run away.” He murmured amidst sobs.

In the Tigania community, young men lived in ‘gaaru’ which is a special house for men age set. A ‘gaaru’ could accommodate up to fifteen young men of the same age set. Very early in the morning, the following day, as the young men in the gaaru were preparing to wake up, something strange happened. A cloud of fire was seen coming from the direction of Ruiga, where Kaumi had been working the previous day. It travelled at supersonic speed and descended on the gaaru where the rouge men were. A voice was heard from the direction of the gaaru, “If you are an orphan, or have just got married, come out immediately”

This was quite astonishing. All the young men in the gaaru were seized with fear and trembling. In a twinkling of an eye the entire gaaru together with its occupations were reduced to ashes. “Wuui, wuui wuui,” sounds of wailing, crying and lamentation rent the air. The cloud of fire returned to where it had come from. The entire community generously mourned their dead, the death of young men being such a huge blow to the community.

Elders sat to discuss what had happened and what may have caused such a calamity. They conversed in low hushed voices. “Let us inquire from seers, perhaps Thaaai is annoyed with us,” They concluded. They consulted widely and the seers revealed that they had angered Thaaai and the ancestors. The council of elders came together to deliberate on how to propitiate the divine world. This was revenge for the evil done against a ‘perceived relative’.

It is a taboo to shed a kinsman's blood. The due process was followed with careful instructions from the seers and diviners to bring peace and harmony between the entire community and the spiritual world. They offered prayers, sacrifices and libations.

Meru people began being very careful about how they ought to relate with some communities whom they perceived as 'brothers' or 'relatives'. They believe that if anybody did something undesirable to the other, something terrible will happen to the offending party. And that is how 'Gichiaro' or Perceived Relatives' came about. (Story narrated by M'Tarichia wa M'Arrwi)

MT 5: Family and Clan Naming Patterns

Many, many years ago the Meru people lived in an island called Mbwaa along the coast where they were enslaved. Here they had a common parentage. Their father was called Mukunga and the mother was called Nkamani. With the passage of time, Nkamani and Mukunga bore two male children. The first was called Meneng'a and the second was called Mutabui.

As they grew up, the two siblings began to be in constant conflict with each other. As a result of this the father supported with the first born, Meneng'a while the mother was allied to the second born Mutabui. This brought about Cioithe and Ciong'ina meaning 'of the father' and 'of the mother consecutively.

From this the Meru began naming their children in that pattern, the first born is named after the paternal grand father or the paternal grandmother depending on the sex of the child, and the second is named after the mother's side in the same order. From there the rivalry died out.

While in *Mbwaa*, the Meru were working as slaves of a red-skinned people called 'Nguu Ntune' whom they believed were Arabs. Nguu Ntune mistreated them. However, the Meru began to increase in number and consequently started being unruly and their master had to devise a way of taming this increase. He decided to kill all the male children who were being born to the Meru women.

After so much suffering the Meru turned to their God (Thaai) and ancestors for prayers so as to obtain freedom from slavery. They went to seek information from a seer who told them since a Mukuri (savior) would be born who would deliver them from their slave drivers. After a few years Nkamani gave birth to yet another baby boy but this time she decided to hide him for some time in fear of the Nguu Ntune. His name was Mwithe which translated in kimeru means 'hidden.' However, Mwithe grew to be very a brave, strong and wise young man. He would later be renamed Koome Njue meaning 'wise,' because he was an extremely intelligent young man.

As time went on and as people continued to suffer, Koome Njue could not hold it any longer as people were looking up to him to deliver them. After all he was the promised deliverer. He sought advice from Mugaa O Ngaai or the seer who also consulted Thaaai about the matter. After several consultations from the diviners and seers, Koome Njue came with good news. They would be free one day. They were overjoyed by this. He gave them a lot of hope although he cautioned them. “Though you will be free”, he said, “There will be several challenges to this freedom”. He told them that first they had to sacrifice a lamb without blemish to know how successful their plea would be. They sacrificed a lamb but unfortunately the lamb did not give the desired results. They sacrificed another. It was also blemished. They felt disheartened. Koome Njue and Mugaa O Ngaai still went back to seek Thaaai over the same matter.

They were saddened by what they were told to offer- a human sacrifice, a blameless young man as a sacrificial lamb who would open the way for their freedom. Human sacrifice was a ritual that was very uncommon among the Meru and so they were not quite willing to communicate this to the people. “Who will be willing to be sacrificed?” they kept asking themselves. However, since the need for their freedom was paramount they told others what they had been told.

To their total dismay there was a young man who offered to be sacrificed if only it would set his people free from slavery. When the question came, a man called

Gaita said, "I am the one who will be sacrificed." Indeed, other young men lined up just in case Gaita failed to fulfill the sacrificial requirements. Those others were Muthetu, Kiuna, and Nthanju. However, Gaita was pure and so he was accepted. That was a show of great courage and selflessness. In Tigania today there is a clan called Gaita. This clan is highly respected for they display courage and love for their people just like Gaita.

Despite this sacrifice, Nguu Ntune was still reluctant to release the Meru but instead gave conditions that seemed impossible to fulfill. However, they had the confidence of the word of Thaaai and especially because of sacrificing a human being. One, Nguu Ntune demanded that the Meru make a shoe that had fur on both the upper and lower side (sole). Through the help of their leader Koome Njue they sacrificed a goat and made a shoe using 'mukoro.' The second condition was that they should provide a bull that was capable of shitting chalk. They fed a bull with milk and soda ash. The bull actually excreted chalk-like dung. Thirdly, they were told to provide enough blood that could flow like a river! Meru people slaughtered many, many animals, mixed this blood with several barrels of water and actually blood flowed.

Finally, Nguu Ntune, having realized that the Meru were very determined to leave, gave the last condition that he thought was impossible. "Provide a spear long enough to touch the sky from the earth," he said. "Then you can go."

Koome Njue thought hard. He knew that that was impossible yet he was convinced they would go because every time he visited Nguu Ntune he would be chewing a certain herb which was believed to 'confuse' their master. This 'magic' herb was given to him by a very famous medicineman. Indeed, this herb worked because each time he visited Nguu Ntune the condition would appear better than the previous one. He planned how they would escape in groups even before being granted freedom. The arrangement was that old people and old animals would escape first, then young mothers and children, youth and young animals, and finally the last group would be the warriors. This arrangement ensured that should Nguu Ntune discover that they had escaped and decide to follow them, the first, second and third cohorts will have reached their destination. Koome Njue went and told Nguu Ntune that he needed time and some provisions to meet this last requirement. These requirements included charcoal made of human hair among other things, and that they would need enough time to prepare this charcoal. But since Nguu Ntune knew that it would be impossible to make such a spear, he allowed them the time they needed.

The warriors started burning cow dung while the groups were disappearing in groups as arranged earlier. This burning was producing so much black smoke that went up the sky. Nguu Ntune kept thinking and waiting to see how the spear would be made. He would occasionally look outside and see black smoking ascending to the sky and think, 'what an exercise in futility'.

Long after the last group of the Meru people had gone the cow dung was still burning. When the smoke finally died out, Nguu Ntune came to see the long spear that his slaves had made. He was shocked. His slaves had all long gone. “Surely, they have gone!” He mourned having lost his labourers.

Along side the escape arrangement some people left before dawn, while it was still dark, others at dawn and the last left at day light. Those who left while it was dark are called Njiru. They are the most courageous clan among the Tigania people, people who do not fear darkness. They walked at night. Those who left at dawn are called Ntune clan and finally the most cowardly are those who left at day light. They are called Njeru. These are always teased because they are perceived as cowards. And that is how family and clan naming pattern is believed to have come about in the Tigania community. (Story narrated by M’Tarichia wa M’Arrwi).

MT 6: Rain and Thunderstorms

A long time ago, there lived a husband and wife. They were blessed with three boys. This family did not have a girl child. The names of the sons were Sun, Moon and Stars. It was a close knit family and these children used to do everything together – eating, playing and bathing. One day, Sun and Moon decided to bathe each other in turns. Moon was bathed by Sun first.

During the process of bathing, Moon felt that he had not been cleaned well by Sun during his turn but he decided not complain. However, some dirty marks could be seen all over his body. When it was Moon's turn to bathe Sun, he did it with such gusto that Sun was left sparkling clean although but he felt a lot of pain due to the hard scrubbing.

As result there ensued a quarrel between the two brothers because one was claiming that he felt pain while the other complained that he was not yet clean. The quarrel was so fierce that they began fighting. The two brothers were so strong that none could overpower the other. All this time, Stars was just watching the fight and noticed that Sun was not very friendly like Moon. The relationship between Stars and his brother Moon was very cordial and were therefore close to one another. This also brought tension between Stars and his brother Sun and would always disappear with the appearance of this elder brother Sun.

Sun and Moon were in constant battle and after many days the battle between the two brothers got so hot that as they fought they caused a lot of commotion. This commotion could be heard by people on earth. This commotion that was very loud was called thunderstorms. The many tears that both Sun and Moon shed as they cried is called rain. Moon is normally seen at night with Stars because the two brothers are friendly, while Sun is normally seen alone during the day because this elder brother is not friendly to his siblings.

The night is as a result of the dark marks of Moon because Sun did not clean him well. The day is the brightness of the Sun because he was bathed clean. And that is how rain and thunderstorms came about. (Story narrated by M'Larama M'Akuchiana).

Appendix III: Glossary of Terms

Gichiaro- ‘percieved’ relative or people related not by blood but by cultural inculcation.

Ngirani- Girls believed to be ill-fated and usually married as second wives to prevent the death of the first husbands.

Njeru- A clan in Meru who were believed to have escaped from Mbwaa in the day light.

Njiru-The Meru clan who migrated to their present day at night.

Ntune-The group of Meru who left Mbwaa at dawn.

Nkanatha-Animal shed among the Meru.

Cioithe-Child named after the father’s side (usually the first born).

Ciong’ina-Child named after the mother’s side (usually second born).

Thai-Meru name for God.

Mugaa O Ngai-Seer or medium among the Meru people.

Nguu Ntune- Red-skinned people believed to be Arabs who enslaved Meru people in Mbwaa.

Muthega-Traditional medicine, both preventive and curative.

Kinyinga-A piece of wood that is taken from the fire while still burning.

Gaaru-Special hut for men and young boys.

Kurora Mbuu- A ceremony performed by by a medicineman to see whether the problem is workable.

Appendix IV: Interview Schedule with key informants

A) YOUTH (BOYS AND GIRLS)

- a. Which is the main medium of transmitting informal education in the Tigania community?_____
- b. Who are the main story tellers in your village?_____
- c. Who is the main audience of story- telling and why?_____
- d. What is your understanding of aetiological myths?_____
- e. Which types of characters are common in aetiological myths?_____
- f. Of what use are these stories to the audience?_____
- g. Are those stories told even today? If yes by who and to who and when? If no, why?_____
- h. Has western education changed the story telling scenario in any way? If yes, how?_____

i. If you were to tell these stories today what language would you use and why?_____

j. Comment on how educated people view traditional stories of origin._____

B) OLD MEN AND WOMEN

a. What are myths?_____

b. when were stories told and why?_____

c. what type of roles are assigned to boys/men and girls/women in myths?_____

d. Why is this so?_____

e. What kind of topics are mainly addressed in myths?_____

f. If we could translate the narratives into English would they bring the same meaning? If no explain._____

g. Do you believe that these stories are actually true? If yes, explain_____

h. Give a general comment about the myths of origin from the Tigania community

Appendix V: Research Authorization



**THE PRESIDENCY
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND COORDINATION OF NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT**

Telegrams:
Telephone:
Email: ccmeru@yahoo.com
Fax:

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
MERU COUNTY
P.O. BOX 703-60200
MERU.

When replying please quote
Ref: *ED.12/3 VOL.III/22*

Date: 20th July 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

PRISCILA MWAMUKUI RUKUNGA

This is to inform you that **Priscila Mwamukui Rukunga** of **Kenyatta University** has reported to this office as directed by Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation and will be carrying out Research on **"Myths of origin and their cultural implications in Tigania Community of Meru County"**.

Since authority has been granted by the said Commission, and the above named student has reported to this office, she can embark on her research project for the period ending **19th July, 2019**.

Kindly accord her any necessary assistance she may require.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
MERU COUNTY
P. O. Box 703-60200, MERU

W. K. Katonon
For: County Commissioner
MERU



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education

Telegrams: "ELIMU" Meru
EMAIL: cdemerucounty@gmail.com
When Replying please quote

County Director Of Education
Meru County
P.O. Box 61
MERU

Ref: MRU/C/EDU/111/196

8th August, 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION - PRISCILA MWAMUKUI RUKUNGA

Reference is made to letter Ref: NACOSTI/P/18/18940/23367 dated 19th July, 2018.

Authority is hereby granted to Priscila Mwamukui Rukunga to carry out research on "Myths of origin and their cultural implications in Tigania Community of Meru County", for the period ending 19th July, 2019.

Kindly accord her the necessary assistance.

NKONGE J.E
For: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
MERU

Appendix VI: NACOSTI Research Permit

CONDITIONS

1. The License is valid for the proposed research, research site specified period.
2. Both the Licence and any rights thereunder are non-transferable.
3. Upon request of the Commission, the Licensee shall submit a progress report.
4. The Licensee shall report to the County Director of Education and County Governor in the area of research before commencement of the research.
5. Excavation, filming and collection of specimens are subject to further permissions from relevant Government agencies.
6. This Licence does not give authority to transfer research materials.
7. The Licensee shall submit two (2) hard copies and upload a soft copy of their final report.
8. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of this Licence including its cancellation without prior notice.



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**National Commission for Science,
Technology and Innovation**

**RESEARCH CLEARANCE
PERMIT**

Serial No.A 19566

CONDITIONS: see back page

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MS. PRISCILA MWAMUKUI RUKUNGA
OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 0-60300
ISIOLO, has been permitted to conduct
research in Isiolo County

on the topic: MYTHS OF ORIGIN AND
THEIR CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS IN
TIGANIA COMMUNITY OF MERU COUNTY

for the period ending:
19th July,2019

Applicant's
Signature

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/18/18940/23367
Date Of Issue : 19th July,2018
Fee Received :Ksh 1000



SmmmmBw
Director General
**National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation**