

**Picturebooks and the Grammar of Tanzanian National Identity:
Sociolinguistic Policy, Collective Transformations and Cultural Production**

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Abstract

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This thesis uses psychoanalytic theory to decipher the popularity and cultural relevance of locally produced Tanzanian picturebooks. I suggest that picturebooks in Tanzania are intricately linked with Tanzania's intimacy with Swahili linguistic culture, specifically Bantu Oral Folklore. Previous folklore scholarship argues that folklore performance aesthetics cannot be transmitted to the page. Such scholars have not considered picturebooks in their arguments. Picturebooks keenly utilize the relationship between text and image to produce a unique aesthetic experience. I propose that picturebook aesthetics can capture Bantu Oral folklore performance aesthetics in their text-image relationship. With the work of Christopher Bollas, who argues that aesthetic experience of an object is a function of unconscious existential memories of being transformed, the aesthetic moment of Tanzanian picturebooks can then be traced to a key socio-historical moment in Tanzania when Tanzania attempted to craft a new identity during Ujamaa with Swahili linguistic culture.

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Chapter one

Introduction

Modern Tanzania is a country often associated with its use of literacy as a nation building tool both economically and socially. After independence and unification in 1964, Tanzania's founding president Julius Nyerere implemented a socialist literacy campaign called Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) under the banner of the general socialist reforms called *Ujamaa*. ESR was a socialist educational experiment that sought to craft a Tanzanian national imaginary based on a familial village model and tribal pasts, with Swahili, the lingua franca of East Africa, as a national unifier (Mulenga, 2001). ESR is known as one of the most successful literacy campaigns in history, increasing national literacy rates from 20% to 79% in a twenty-year period.

Despite ESR's success, due to economic and political pressures Nyerere's government accepted IMF and World Bank readjustment policies that effectively ended ESR and all socialist endeavors (Mushi, 2009). Literacy rates fell to 67.8% by 1985 (UNESCO, 2013). This sharp drop raised questions about the role played by linguistic culture in national identity formation, the central socialist objective driving *Ujamaa* policies (Bjerk, 2010). The decline in literacy rates—defined as quantifiable mastery of the three R's, reading, writing, and arithmetic—revealed weaknesses in the assumption that the enhancement of literacy could spur educational development that improves the quality of life and also frame the formation of a national imaginary.

Harvey Graff succinctly coined the locution “Myth of Literacy” to argue against the assumption that literacy is a viable metric of qualitative development; instead he claims that literacy should be understood as a “historical variable and historically variable” (Graff, 2011, pg.125), which is to say that literacy should be understood in terms of cultural fluency. In

contradiction to the popular view that literacy is a catalyst for the production of imagined national communities (Anderson, 1983) scholars now postulate that literacy is molded by and a product of social interactions that transpire within specific social conditions (Street, 2001).

This new conceptualization of literacy as an index of social proficiency shaped by particular sociopolitical contexts opens a new vantage point from which to reconsider the sociolinguistic impact on Tanzanian society of Ujamaa efforts to premise national identity formation on the promotion of Swahili as a collective linguistic system. Jan Blommaert argues that Swahili is a potent tool for shaping Tanzanian collective identity even if its socialist aims were not actualized (Blommaert, 2014). Blommaert calls attention to the capacity of Swahili expression to recast a national imaginary separate from Ujamaa.

Drawing on Blommaert, this thesis conducts a case study of how Swahili linguistic culture operates to strengthen the pillars of Tanzanian national imaginary. Recent reports by teachers and NGO leaders of educational development (Aga Kkahn Foundation, 2018; N. Makange, Personal Conversation, September 8th, 2018; Walter, 2016) reveal that recent efforts by the government to push for incorporation of children's literature produced by local authors and artists into elementary curriculum have a qualitative impact on elementary students' development of national Tanzanian identity. Given the perspective that the oral origins of Swahili linguistic culture preclude its (accurate or adequate) manifestation or representation in book forms (Finnegan, 2012), we would expect that books would be less efficacious for efforts to reify Tanzanian national imaginary. What is it about picturebooks that make them effective vehicles for promoting Swahili and Tanzanian collective identity?

This thesis argues that picturebooks' capacity to foster Tanzanian collective identity is a function of the way in which meaning is generated by the interaction between two independent

communicative modes (image and text), akin to the way a live performance generates meaning with the visual and audible. More specifically, I argue that the aesthetic means by which picturebooks generate meaning bears traces of Bantu oral traditions that were integrated into Swahili linguistic-culture to foster a nascent Tanzanian identity.

I invoke the work of Objects Relations¹ by psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas (Bollas, 1987), who theorizes that human aesthetic experiences are catalyzed by pre-conscious memories of being transformed within a specific handling environment. Bollas asserts that patterns of a parent's care constitute an idiom, whose expression is experienced by infants in terms of the external and internal transformations they effect, be it from wet to dry, hungry to sated, distressed to soothed. Bollas also calls attention to how idioms of care are themselves shaped by local conditions, familial, cultural, political and historical. Bollas' theory allows me to see how the aesthetic experience catalyzed by locally produced picturebooks unconsciously recalls the historical-socio transformation of Tanzanian national imaginary by the *mélange* of written Swahili and Bantu oral cultural forms under Ujamaa. In other words, if elementary school children's engagement with picturebooks catalyzes and reifies national identity formation, it is because the picturebooks recapitulate an unconscious memory of Swahili linguistic culture's transformation upon independence as written forms of expression expanded the parameters of social interaction.

Scholars of Swahili literature who examine the link between Swahili children's literature consumption and collective Tanzanian identity formation processes observe a deep resonance between Swahili picturebooks and traditional oral folklore. For example, the incorporation of

¹ Object Relations theory is a psychoanalytic theory that psychic organization emerges from a subject's relation to others in the environment during childhood.

Swahili proverbs (*methali*²) into written literary expression (Ohly, 1985), not to mention folklore motifs and narrative schemata, such as a “story within a story,” and other forms of iteration (Khamis, 2005), are construed in terms of translations of oral performative techniques. These translations, enhanced by the frequency of idiophones and onomatopoeias in contemporary Swahili literature (Zúbková, 2009) suggest, according to Flavia Traore, a “process of rethinking the dialectic between ethnic traditions and national culture as manifested in the recovery and visibility of the oral traditions of not only Waswahili³ but also other Tanzanian ethnic groups” (Traore, 2010, p. 185).

I find this persuasive, but I argue that the means by which the oral tradition is recovered by picturebooks in and of themselves lies in the aesthetic resonance between the dialectic relationship between image and word that organizes their expression, and the evolution of Swahili linguistic culture when oral Bantu traditions of expression were absorbed into a nascent Tanzanian identity. This linguistic dialectic is reflected in the intrinsic hybridity of Swahili linguistic culture.

Early forms of written Swahili were in the Arabic script (*ajami*); the earliest Swahili *ajami* literature dealt with hagiographic and didactic issues in the form of poetry (Mazrui, 2007). As written Swahili spread and became incorporated into the semi-feudal warring inland states, the scope of its content expanded to include more Bantu folklore and oral traditions (Ohly, 1985). In this way Swahili literature was molded by its absorption of Bantu experiences.

A similar linguistic transformation transpired when Western missionaries introduced the Latin script in the 19th century. British colonial authorities in the 1930s began to standardize the

² In Swahili the word *methali* has no plural form.

³ The Swahili people.

written form, paving the way for *kiunguja*⁴ as the basis for regional publication, including pedagogical materials. Colonization introduced written foreign literature into Swahili, which further transformed the scope and thematic focus of Swahili linguistic culture (Park, 2008).

Upon independence, Swahili linguistic culture in Tanzania developed in clear nationalistic and socialist ways to make sense of the identity of a new nation. Under neo-liberal policies Tanzanian writers began to focus on realism to better convey the economic and political situation plaguing their nation. The most recent transformation of Swahili literature took place in the early 90's as the Tanzanian state continued to shed its socialist past. In efforts to regain a sense of identity, Swahili writers began to explore a new realism movement that relied on narrative techniques derived from traditional Bantu oral folklore (Mazrui, 2007). More recently, the trend to incorporate more Bantu oral folklore has taken the form of picturebooks (Traore, 2010).

The particular linguistic conditions that shaped the evolution of a national Swahili identity are tacitly invoked by the interaction between image and words that underlies picturebook aesthetics. The affective impact of picturebooks on children's cognitive development is a well-researched and documented topic (Roethler, 1998; Sipe, 1998). These studies are important precedents for investigating picturebooks as objects that elicit particular responses by subjects who engage with them; they view picturebooks as objects that facilitate transitions to new environments (Bosmajian, 2005). Underlying this perspective is the notion that picturebooks are cultural objects that help mediate children's social anxieties (Zuppari, 2016).

For generations, societal anxieties have been embodied in the narrative trope of the trickster. As a key figure of Bantu oral folklore, tricksters in Swahili literature have lived through

⁴ The Swahili dialect of Zanzibar.

centuries of collective unthought transformations. Trickster figures achieve this immortality through their whimsical natures, which are vehicles for narration that at once remember and in their recollection comes to terms with collective anxieties from unconscious transformations by their absurdity (Finnegan, 2012; Gates, 1988; Hynes and Doty, 1993). As figures of collective existential memory trickster figures present themselves as optics with which to analyze folkloric aesthetics, such as can be found in Tanzanian picturebooks. The existential and temporal path of the trickster is traceable with the work of Christopher Bollas.

Bollas' theory of transformational object seeking, and its relation to identity formation, situates the positive link between picturebooks and Tanzanian national identity formation within a deep-seated psychosocial and historical context. Picturebooks generate meaning in a way that is reminiscent of the collective adjustments made as oral Bantu linguistic culture incorporated written forms of expression, as is presented in the form of tricksters, during Ujamaa. Swahili picturebooks encapsulate the transformations experienced as Swahili linguistic culture developed. In essence, it is the process of absorption and transformation, that becomes a characteristic feature of the aesthetic.

The evidentiary basis of this argument will be drawn from three picturebooks written by celebrated Swahili literary writer William Mkufya. I chose Mkufya's work for three reasons. He is a highly regarded new realism novelist; his picturebooks and children's books have great commercial success; and I was able to interview him during my field research. With the analytical tools of picturebook scholarship I will analyze *Tumbiri na Mkia Wake*, *Mtu na Chui* and *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole* to outline how the relationship of text and image in these books unconsciously recall the collective transformation of Tanzanian national imaginary as an encapsulation of socio-linguistic metamorphoses. Specifically, I will use the character of

the trickster, as an embodiment of unconscious memory of transformation, to trace the socio-linguistic metamorphoses embedded in Mkufya's books to present how they recall Ujamaa's creation of Tanzanian imaginary as an example of how Tanzanian picturebooks support key pillars of Tanzanian identity. Before the analysis, I will give an overview of the literature on Swahili literature, Christopher Bollas, picturebooks and Swahili folklore to present clearly what will be drawn from Mkufya's three books.

Chapter two

A Review of the Literature

This thesis identifies the Tanzanian government's promotion of Swahili linguistic culture as a tool of national identity formation, and examines how the affective experience of the transformations catalyzed by this sociolinguistic policy is reflected in the production and consumption of contemporary Swahili picturebooks. To reflect the multidisciplinary nature of this study of locally made picturebooks as tools of national identity formation, this literature review will draw from diverse fields including African history, Swahili literature, psychology, cultural studies and picturebook scholarship. First, I will examine, by way of Swahili literature, how Tanzania's socialist project of Ujamaa utilized collective transformations of Swahili linguistic culture to construct a new Tanzanian identity. Next, I will introduce the work of Christopher Bollas to establish a structure within which to understand the connection between the popular consumption of picturebooks and their reported link to national identity formation processes. This will be followed by a discussion of picturebooks as objects of analysis and of the unique way Tanzanian picturebooks harbor Swahili oral folklore aesthetics to underscore the reasoning behind my selection of three books by W.E. Mkufya. Finally, I will outline the analytical tool with which I will proceed with to analyze the processes of transformation and their relation to symbolic representations of linguistic acts.

Ujamaa: How Swahili linguistic culture was used as a foundation for national imaginary

Swahili linguistic culture, as reflected in its literature, has always re-imagined collective identities. Therefore, it is vital to dissect the development of Swahili literature, and how its culture has transformed to understand how it functioned as tool of the Tanzanian state under

Ujamaa. Swahili is a product of Africa's triple heritage: the indigenous tradition, Islamic legacy, and the impact of western rule (Mazrui, 2007). These three heritages can be seen in the numerous transformations Swahili literature has undergone over different centuries. Swahili literature, "...was always and continues to be, closely related to the social, cultural and political changes which have taken place in East Africa coastal territory during the last thousand years" (Ohly, 1985, pg. 460). Writings in Swahili crystalized the beginnings of the language as a product of Arab-Bantu business and cultural exchange. This initial exchange can be seen in the numerous Arab words in Swahili today and the first literary pieces of Swahili that were written in Arabic script (*ajami*) around 1600. These *ajami* writings focused on the poetic form and were didactic and hagiographic and aimed at spreading Islamic and Swahili culture among East African islands and the coast, all the way to Oman⁵. The most famous of the writers in this form was a woman named Mwana Kupona in the 1800s whose texts subverted male hegemony (Mazuri, 2007). Kupona's popularity is a testament to the power of Swahili linguistic culture to seep through the centuries as numerous shops and cafes in East Africa today bear her name.

As Swahili ingrained itself deeper along the East African coast, Swahili poetry began to morph by the Bantu historical and political circumstances in the region that centered around the more secularized concerns of inland Bantu feudal-state warfare. This is seen in the incorporation of Bantu folklore and themes of private and public concerns in the works of the like of Muywaka wa Mwinyi Haji whose poetry still excites Swahili imagination today (Mazuri, 2007). At the debut of European colonization on the East African coast Swahili linguistic culture was already a well sharpened political tool and was wielded by the new colonizing powers.

⁵ In fact, for a time the Sultan of Oman moved the capital of his Sultanate to Zanzibar.

The colonizing powers of Germany and England helped to transform Swahili linguistic culture and its literature from an exclusively Swahili ethnic phenomenon to encompass a non-Swahili cultural universe and prepare it for its use under Ujamaa. When the mainland of Tanzania was colonized by the Germans Swahili was standardized, bureaucratized and Romanized. The Germans, and later the English, remodeled Swahili from a language of class and cultural divide by the ethnic Swahili into an administrative language that encompassed multi-ethnicities by their Romanization of Swahili script and translations of German and British literature for educational texts. These translated texts served as the foundation for the modern Swahili novel and helped to de-Islamize Swahili literature while integrating ecumenical traits. In this moment of Swahili multi-culturalization indigenous themes, motifs and narrative cues began to emerge more in Swahili literature as writers grappled with national identities in the wake of colonization (Park, 2008). This new Swahili culture set the stage for Nyerere's promotion of Ujamaa with Swahili linguistic culture.

Upon independence Julius Nyerere, the founding father of Tanzania, promoted the spread of literacy by way of Swahili linguistic culture. Nyerere sought to craft a new African socialist identity centered on family and village values with Swahili linguistic culture used as tool to spread this ideology across his new multi-cultural state. "Swahili was, thus, deliberately constructed, manufactured, and not 'just' as a language, but as an overdetermined emblem of national belonging and ideological rectitude" (Blommaert, 2014, pg. 4). To achieve this perceived new reality Nyerere's government coerced Tanzania's citizens to engage in collective farm life both mentally and physically. Some of the most famous cases of physical force to achieve Nyerere's goal are in the forced relocations of urban areas to preplanned villages (Scott, 1999). The main way Nyerere's government achieved the mental shift towards socialism in his

people was in his ESR literacy campaign that promoted standard ideas of Swahili linguistic culture. The ideals spread were of family-hood, righteousness and the multi-cultural nature of Tanzania (Mulenga, 2001), all points developed in Swahili linguistic culture from its birth in *ajami* writing to its spread inland when it incorporated Bantu oral culture. To make sense of this new national identity of village-family-hood constructed out of Swahili, Tanzania literature became more focused on realism even as oral heritage continued to exercise its influence, especially in matters of linguistic style. One such author was Gaberil Ruhumbika who blended didactic and oral tales (*ngano*) themes and narrative styles (Mazrui, 2007). This shift from “the European preoccupation with individual experience has been one of the most important and distinctive features in the assertion of a unique African aesthetic” (Ashcroft, 2002; Hart, 2009, pg. 124). Swahili linguistic culture, now established across the nation as a hybrid form of Bantu and Swahili traditions, provided Swahili writers with a unique literature with which to explore shared lived experiences, particularly the legacy of Ujamaa.

After Ujamaa’s end in the late 1970’s and 80’s, NGOs and neoliberal policies swept the nation and washed Swahili literature with a wave of realism that sought to critically analyze the impact of NGO and neoliberal development agendas by reflecting upon cultural values of the individual versus society imparted into Swahili literature by its inland spread and promotion under Ujamaa. Then, in the shadow of the leviathan of globalization Swahili writers looked inward in the 90’s to question what they perceived as fragmented selves with magical and bizarre writing styles to challenge realism. This New Realism movement utilized orality and innovative narrative techniques that have been sporadically used in Swahili literature since its Bantu integration to decipher the causes and effects of their socio-economic and cultural surroundings (Khamis, 2005).

The recent sharp turn in Swahili literature toward a new realism based more on the oral traditions of Swahili transgresses culturally accepted codes and represents the lasting legacy of Ujamaa's social engineering of Swahili linguistic culture. This new transgression that took place in the 90's blends oral folklore traditions with modern issues, such as in the unmasking of NGOs, or the desensitization of religion, issues and themes that cross borders in East Africa (Tchokothe, 2014). These transgressive traits of the New Realism movement are examples of the hybrid nature of Swahili by folklore cues such as rhythm, idiophones and onomatopoeias and themes and motifs of folklore as optics to view the past. While some scholars such as Alamin Mazrui see the hybrid nature of Swahili and the New Realism movement as transcending national identities, its deep connection to oral and Arab traditions actually strengthens national imaginaries (Zúbková, 2009). New Realism, therefore, represents the lasting legacy of Ujamaa's use of Swahili linguistic culture to form a new national identity by how it utilizes Swahili linguistic culture to reflect upon current and past issues. One of the most notable New Realism authors is W.E. Mkufya who unlike many New Realism writers, produces picturebooks (Traore, 2010).

Tanzanian picturebooks exhibit qualities that suggest a lasting legacy of Ujamaa's manipulation of Swahili linguistic culture. Flavia Traore comprehensively summarizes recent children's Swahili literature in Tanzania and argues that Tanzanian literature's experimentation with picturebooks strengthens Tanzanian identity in terms of cultural pluralism, one of the pillars of Ujamaa's identity policies. To demonstrate on her point, Traore points out key ways in which Tanzanian picturebooks use oral folklore narrative cues, such as in animal and trickster figures and ending books with *methali* (proverbs) (Traore, 2010). These Bantu originated folklore aesthetics were integrated into Swahili linguistic culture in the 1800's and deployed by Nyerere to construct a new Tanzanian identity during Ujamaa. Traore argues that these folklore traits are

indicative of contemporary culture changes in recognition of the heterogeneity of Tanzanian oral traditions—traditions crafted by Ujamaa. While Traore’s argument helps set up the premise of this thesis’ investigation that picturebooks harbor traits of Swahili linguistic culture promoted under Ujamaa, she has failed to connect picturebook folklore cues to the books’ images. Since picturebooks’ notoriety is situated in how image and text are used to produce an aesthetically appealing storytelling moment it is vital to decipher exactly how modern Tanzanian picturebooks use text and image together. To achieve this understanding of how picturebooks aesthetics, weaved together by text and image, can be objects of analysis to decode the collective identity impact of Ujamaa the psychoanalytical work of Christopher Bollas is needed.

Bollas: an existential tool

I draw on the work of Christopher Bollas as an analytical tool to establish a link between the sociohistorical moment of Ujamaa and the current appeal of Tanzanian picturebooks. Bollas’ theory and my argument revolve around the “traces” of the early relationships between “mother” and child, wherein “mother” may refer to the biological mother or any person, or environment that cares for and handles the child in infancy in a process of internal and external transformations. Bollas claims that an infant does not experience the “mother” as a separate object, but rather the child experiences a process wherein the infant’s subjectivity is crafted by transformations. Moments of transformation happens when the “mother” transforms the baby’s internal and external environment, such as from diaper change to hunger being transformed into fullness, fear into calmness. Since the “mother” is not separate to the infant these moments of transformation are internalized as “an experience of being rather than of mind” (Bollas, 1987, pg. 34). These transformations, or the “mother’s idiom of care”, build an infant’s psychosomatic needs and constructs the infant’s “mother” as a transformational object. As a child grows he or

she searches for experiences and objects that call forth the particular idioms of care of the “mother” as a transformational object. This never-ending search for future transformational moments weaves a particular rhythm of care that Bollas terms a “grammar” or “aesthetic” of being.

To Bollas, this process of transformations crafts a grammar of being that accounts for specific aesthetic experiences. We search for a moment, a feeling akin to *déjà-vu*, in which we are exposed to a thing, person, place or idea that is reminiscent of the “mother’s” handling aesthetic. In the midst of this aesthetic moment one is “reminded of something never cognitively apprehended but existentially known” (pg. 16). This moment presents a symmetry between a pre-verbal, pre-representational ego memory of the mother as a transformational process and an equivalent object in adult life. Bollas eloquently identifies such transformational object-seeking as “an endless memorial search for something in the future that resides in the past” (p. 40).

Bollas’s theory of aesthetic searches for past experiences is transmitted through the generations by each generation’s aesthetic search of objects that evoke their handling environment. In this way, each aesthetic search transforms the subsequent generation. One generation’s quest for evocative objects creates a particular grammar of being for the next generation. Thus, generational transformational objects are linked to one another to craft a multigenerational grammar of being that can influence national imaginaries. The particular grammar of being of Tanzania—Swahili collective identity—began with the *ajami* poetry in the 1600s and continued to transform as Swahili linguistic culture spread inland, was Romanized, bureaucratized and standardized under colonial powers, fostered upon independence to produce a socialist imaginary and then re-appropriated to reconsider Tanzanian identity post-socialism. As Traore permits, Tanzanian picturebooks’ aesthetics recall certain heterogeneous cultural legacies.

When Traore is put into conversation with Bollas, their combined work insinuates that Tanzanian picturebooks aesthetics can unconsciously recall socio-linguistic metamorphoses of Swahili linguistic culture.

Bollas' workable theory permits an investigation of three picturebooks by William Mkufya to look for the transformational qualities of their aesthetics. Currently, Swahili literature is experimenting with ways to convey these narrative cues and aesthetics in the written form, with the most recent version of this being Tanzanian picturebooks. Because picturebook aesthetics hold the potential to connect to a collective unconscious, they stand to be convenient optics with which to trace unthought collective identity, building memories by way of Bollas. Specifically, picturebooks' aesthetics hold a large unconscious dimension because their narratives are built out of the relationship of text and image. To explore the unconscious aspect of picturebooks in Tanzania, picturebook analysis practices will be reviewed with an overview of the folkloric narrative cues, already mentioned by Traore, that could ignite the existential memories within them.

A Dance of Words and Images: Picturebook aesthetics as folkloric

Picturebooks are unique aesthetic objects that have formative effects on identities by how they form text and illustration together to create impactful narratives. The term picturebook is used instead of comparable terms such as illustrated children's books because of the novel way that the images and texts in picturebooks work together to create an unique aesthetic experience (Cianciolo, 1970). Or in the words of Joseph Schwarcz, "It is in the picture storybook that the two means of expression and communication work together most intimately, to the point where the cooperation and competition of printed word and picture is so essential that one alone is unable to carry out the full intention of the work" (Schwarcz, 1991, pg.5). Picturebooks as they

are understood today are usually traced to Randolph Caldecott, a British illustrator and writer in the late 1800s who blended his two art forms into entertaining tales (Sipe, 2001). Shortly after Caldecott's success researchers and scholars began to study picturebooks. To this day, there is yet to be a consequential study of picturebooks and their impact on children in Tanzania. In order to fill this gap, this study will trace how the relationship of image and text in picturebooks produces narrative separately to establish the means in which my data will be analyzed.

The impact of an image on one's ability to formulate information starts at a young age. In a study of image based learning in the very young in a Tanzanian village, Walker et al. sought to understand how images conveyed information in an environment that traditionally lacks images. Walker et al found that even children as young as 15 months could draw information out of an image (Walker et al., 2012). This pivotal study of the effect of images on information correlates with studies of picturebooks as salient sources of information (Pike et al., 2009). In conversation with Pike and Walker it is vital to point out that an infant's pre-verbal recall of information out of an image in the context of Africa strengthens the potential impact African picturebooks can have on young African children. The information these images emit craft storytelling cues in multiple ways.

Images in picturebooks are an amalgamation of mixed media and design that develop and expand narrative. From the texture of the page, to the frame and perimeters of the images, to the book's very size and shape, picturebooks' images and physicality craft rhythms by their aesthetics. The specific traits of design, from color value to line comprise an artist's language and grammar to communicate meaning in a non-verbal manner (Sipe, 2001). These illustrative sequences help establish setting, character and plot (Fang, 1996). Arguably the most important, and under-realized, role of imagery in picturebooks to craft stories is in the design of the

background. Background, or landscape, can be categorized into four distinct styles; the horrific, portal, neglected and legible which all work to set a narrative tone for the picturebook (Roncken and Convery, 2016). Sipe and Roncken and Convery provide key insights into how to analyze the mixed media and design of picturebooks that is essential for this study.

The musical cadence of picturebooks has been ignored in Swahili literature studies of Tanzanian picturebooks, which is an egregious error when considering Bollas' theory of aesthetic unconscious recall. Tanzanian picturebooks utilize more intricate aesthetic cues than previously acknowledged in scholarship. Based on Bollas' theory of the aesthetic experience, the more intricate the aesthetic, the more potential an aesthetic object has to recall unconscious memory. When Tanzanian picturebook aesthetics are paired with their textual narrative the true beauty of the picturebooks emerges.

It is between the text and image that the tale is told (Gallacher, 2011). The text can be presented in multiple ways, from standalone text boxes, to text superimposed on images, to the text being a part of the image itself. The text either works symmetrically, complementarily or contradictorily with the images. Frank Serafini argues that it is impossible for text and image to be perfectly symmetric and that most picturebooks are a combination of the three relations (Serafini, 2014). Serafini's concept of the three ways in which texts work with image are useful tools for this study's deep read of three Swahili picturebooks.

Serafini's text and image relationship works with Lawrence Sipe's conception how of image and text relation create recursive and reflexive reactions in readers. The relation between text and image can be analyzed in four main relations: metaphors, theoretical constructs, taxonomies and phenomenological approaches. Metaphors provide ways to view the relationship between text and image while theoretical constructs illuminate the "how" and "why".

Taxonomies simply describes the diverse ways images and texts relate while it is the phenomenological approach that asks what is going on inside the mind of the reader (Sipe, 2012) The phenomenological method of picturebook analysis centers around “arts that are based on *simultaneity* of perception (painting, sculpture) and arts that are based on time sequence of *successivity* of perception (music, literature)” (Sipe, 1998, pg. 99). Picturebooks act as art pieces that are based on simultaneity as well as successivity: “The verbal text drives us to read on in a linear way, where the illustrations seduce us into stopping to look.” (101). The pull between image and text produces an impulse to be recursive and reflexive (Sipe, 1998).

This recursive and reflexive moment calls children’s realities into question by the contrast of the picturebook’s aesthetic to the child’s environment (Martens et al., 2013). The way in which picturebook’s aesthetics are related to the surrounding environment is coined intertextuality. Intertextuality works by the way external influences (tools) interact with internal processes (signs) to produce cognitive change (Sipe, 1998). The moment of intertextuality of a child’s interaction with a picturebook is an instance of transmeditation, where meaning is constructed by image which reconstructs meaning of text and vice versa in a potentially endless process. The transmeditation moment is a Piagetian process of assimilating new information which changes cognitive structures (Sipe, 1998). This moment forever alters the identity of a child (Schwarcz, 1991).

According to cognitive development scholars the moment of change brought upon by a picturebook is monumental in children’s lives specially if the child can relate the aesthetics of the picturebook to their environment. Jacque Roethler proves just this in her study of African American children who read picturebooks with African American protagonist situated in their home city and finds they used the narrative of the stories in their own understandings of their

lives (Roethler, 1998). While it has been established that picturebooks foster cognitive change the relation of their aesthetics to traditional narrative styles of oral folktales potentially produces a deeper unconscious impact because of the way aesthetics connect to the unconscious.

Unconscious impacts of picturebooks on Tanzanian children have not been investigated. The popularity and reported cultural success of picturebooks by teachers and NGO leaders in Tanzania permits an inquiry that explains their reported success. Psychoanalytical theories lead us to look at products of culture and begin to understand why they might have the effect they do (Kegerreis, 2013). While psychoanalysts have called for theorists such as Freud and Jung in analyzing children's literature very few have done so with picturebooks (Bosmajian, 2005). Sam Zuppari is one of the few scholars to psychoanalyze a picturebook. Zuppari uses Freudian theories such as the infantile world and royal road to draw connections between character actions in picturebooks and potential unconscious connections children would make in reaction to such books. Zuppari theorizes that the aesthetics of picturebooks evoke children's unconscious anxieties in the same manner dreams do and work as transitional objects—bridges between the 'me' and 'not-me'. As transitional objects picturebooks help catalyze young children's identities (Zuppari, 2016). Zuppari expands the unconscious dimensions of picturebooks in his establishment of picturebooks as existential objects. Christopher Bollas' theory of unconscious recall by aesthetic is a logical step in the continuation of existential analyses of picturebooks.

While this chapter has already explained the way text and image work harmoniously together in picturebooks, their full existential potential cannot be understood until the sociocultural roots of their aesthetics are clarified. The aesthetics that Tanzanian picturebooks draw from are based in previous transformations of Swahili linguistic culture. The recent New Realism wave of Tanzanian literature picturebooks harbor Bantu oral folklore narrative cues

(Traore, 2010). Bantu oral folklore seeps into the collective unconscious by the existential nature of performativity and storytelling. This insinuates a path to existentially analyze Tanzanian picturebooks by their folklore traits.

Oral folklore fables, traditionally performed by an orator with audience participation, weave their morals, themes and aesthetics into a collective unconscious with their performativity (Finnegan, 2012). Oral folklore's performativity is largely ignored by picturebook and Swahili scholars with oral folklore researchers claiming oral folklore performance aesthetic is impossible to transmit to the page (Finnegan, 2012; Okpewho, 1992; Zúbková, 2009)⁶. Picturebooks stand as unique vessels to impart the aesthetics of oral folklore because of the hybrid way in which picturebooks weave text and image together to craft unique narratives. Furthermore, because of the existential nature of performative storytelling, picturebooks as embodiments of both narrative and performative cues of oral folklore are imbued with unconscious traits to recall collective unthought memories of transformations.

Tanzanian picturebooks' unique interplay of text and image enact the aesthetic of oral performance and therein lies their power to connect to unconscious notions of being and shape identity formation. Oral folklore performativity range from the performers' gestures, mimicry, dress and accoutrements, as they change with movement or dance to musical cues. These oral traditions of storytelling represent a stage, or point of transformation, within the historical consciousness of East Africa (Finnegan, 2012). These transformations happen because memories are drawn forth from collective anamneses and recreated to make sense of the current time (Vansina, 1985). To Hannah Arendt, one of the leading philosophers of the 20th century,

⁶ While Finnegan, Okpewho and Zúbková may believe that African oral folkloric traits cannot be transmitted, authors such as Chinua Achebe, among others, have tried.

storytelling is the subjective in-between of private and public interests. Arendt saw the public sphere, or society as conceived today, immersed out of the downfall of the private realm where family dynamics were the center point of realities. This shift of realms is seen in the private and public negotiations of self that take place in acts of storytelling (Arendt, 1998). Michael Jackson's ethnographic analysis of storytelling is an expansion of Arendt's conceptions of storytelling as a positioning of the private and public self. Michael Jackson sees storytelling as a crucial re-empowerment of the private realm and as part of a participation with the divine that is heard in the stories—we are of the same realm of the heroes (Jackson, 2002). This philosophical angle to storytelling permits a connection between private and public realities during folklore performances.

Jan Vansina echoes Jackson's existential view of storytelling in her work on oral folklore; "Much can be learned about the past from oral sources that are not concerned with the past and hence testify despite themselves. Indeed, that characteristic makes them reliable precisely because they are unconscious contributions" (Vansina, 1985, p. 28). An example of how oral traditions reconstruct society, history and national imaginaries is in *taarab* performances. Kelly Askew shows that *taarab* performances in Tanzania utilized traditional oral folklore to renegotiate society and nation in the wake of impounding neo-liberal policies and Ujamaa's failed promises of unity and prosperity (Askew, 2002). What is interesting about Askew's work is how modern Tanzanians utilize a specific narrative of being created out of Ujamaa's usage of Swahili linguistic culture to question their realities. Such a moment of reflection helps situate this study's look at picturebooks as windows—built out of Ujamaa's usage of Swahili linguistic culture—to peer into the national self. With the importance of the performativity of folklore storytelling established the characters, themes and motifs these

performances bring into existence will be visited in order to establish the rubric of analysis for my data set.

As noted, current Tanzanian picturebooks utilize key traits of oral folklore narrative cues. In *A Survey of Tanzanian Oral Traditions* M.M. Mulokozi maps out key characteristics of oral literature practices in Tanzania. Amongst the vast lists Mulokozi accumulates there are key traits that stand out across the continent that are relevant to this study, such as major motifs of animals acting in human ways and magic that promote themes of trickery, the hunt, and return (Finnegan, 2012; Hynes and Doty, 1993; Okpewho, 1992; Vansina, 2018). These motifs and themes are used for different social functions, from praise poetry, to theatre, to tales told by female heads of households to children around the hearth (Mulokozi, 1999). The themes and motifs highlighted by Mulokozi are so prevalent across African oral literature that they are found in a collection of transcribed oral folklore tales from the 1960s. The presence of these traits in transcribed folklores supports the cultural significance of similar themes prevalent in Mkufya's books.

In *African myths and legends* Kathleen Arnott presents various folktales without commentary that represent Swahili linguistic culture found in current Tanzanian picturebooks. Three pieces in *African myths and legends* stand out because of their origins as Swahili fables and their similar themes and motifs to oral literature traditions in East Africa and in W.E. Mkufya's books; "Tortoise and the Lizard", "The Monkey's Heart", and "Snake Magic." The first similarity one sees from the titles alone is animals and magic. In each case animals partake in the age-old theme of artifice. In "Tortoise and the Lizard" a tortoise wiles a lizard to lose half his body as retribution for when the lizard took half of the tortoise's shell. "The Monkey's Heart" tells of how a monkey, tricked to enter the mouth of a shark, chicanes the shark to escape its deadly embrace. "Snake Magic" presents the idea of transformation and the importance of

sincerity and loyalty with a woman who marries a prince, is exiled, then saved, then re-crowned as a princess, all by the help of a snake (Arnott, 1963).

All three stories devolve on themes and motifs that promote on righteousness, language and kin. It is in this way that morals are passed on in digestible human-like animal characters (Finnegan, 2012, pg. 337). The morals are common, from the importance of being good as with the princess who saves the snake, to the importance of intelligence as when a monkey outsmarts a shark. The morals communicated in these folktales are in response to particular social situations that produced a need for such a message. Thusly these animal stories embody all the virtues and follies of society as drawn by society itself, albeit unconsciously, through animal characters (Finnegan, 2012). Folklore narrative cues in Tanzanian picturebooks permit an investigation into their existential underpinnings because of the way animal characters in Swahili folklore unconsciously comment on historical moments. This backdrop sets up this study's analysis of Mkufya's picturebooks as unconscious recollections of Ujamaa's transformation of Swahili linguistic culture. The most appropriate method with which to decipher the recollections imbued in Mkufya's books is by the folklore narrative found in his work. Of the folkloric cues in Mkufya's books, the trickster is a well versed guide to lead us through the unthought.

Swahili linguistic culture, as evident in its literature, has been transformed throughout the centuries and recently under Ujamaa to craft a new Tanzanian identity. The lasting legacy of Ujamaa's nation building by way of forced mental and physical adherence to a Swahilified version of village life based on family-hood and multicultural acceptance can be seen in New Realism literature. Just as New Realism authors, such as Mkufya, implicated Ujamaa's manipulation of Swahili linguistic culture to shape national identity, so too do Mkufya's picturebooks implicitly evoke an existential collective memory of same sociohistorical

circumstances. Furthermore, the unique aesthetic effect produced by patterns woven between text and image, which bear clear traces of oral storytelling techniques, and thereby reflects on Tanzanian collective identity formation. That is, the interaction between text and image in a picturebook replicates the way Swahili linguistic culture shaped collective identity formation throughout the centuries. As the most common folklore narrative trait in Tanzanian picturebooks, animal characters provide a window into a method of deciphering the unthought laid within the pages of picturebooks because their whimsical nature permits societal critique of collective memories. The most popular animal characters are usually tricksters. The trickster in particular stands as the best optic to demonstrate the link between the picturebook content and collective transformation under Ujamaa policies. It is for this reason that this study will focus on Mkufya's tricksters to unfold the existential potential of his work.

Chapter three

Methodology

Tucked behind a mountain on the Adamawa plateau of Cameroon during my Peace Corps service during which I worked with local educators to strengthen literacy practices, I found myself one day creating a picturebook for the children who attended the school where I worked. My story about a nearby mountain written in the three local languages of the region garnered such an elated reaction from the village children that it promoted me to explore similar pedagogical phenomena in East Africa, which led to my research on NGOs that produced locally made picturebooks. I discovered that the Tanzanian government promotes NGOs like Room to Read, which seeks to expand the production of Swahili picturebooks and their integration into elementary school curricula (Room to Read, 2018; UNESCO, 2013). Relying on a network methodology approach I reached out to various NGO leaders, educators, publishers and writers in Tanzania, whose intimate involvement with picturebook integration into curriculums made them valuable first-hand observers of the pedagogical and social effects of picturebooks. Casual interviews conducted with NGO leaders and educators during my field research in August 2017, strengthened my claim that Swahili picturebooks are culturally impactful objects that shape national identity formation processes.

In this chapter I will lay out the strategies I will use to support my claim that Tanzanian picturebooks foster national identity formation by virtue of the way they evoke a collective existential memory. My central focus will be on three critically and popularly acclaimed Swahili picturebooks written by the internationally renowned Tanzanian fiction writer William Mkufya, who graciously agreed to allow me to interview him.

I met William Mkufya on a cloudy September day at the Dar es Salaam YMCA. When Mkufya agreed to meet with me I only knew that he was a writer, I did not know of his literary fame as a New Realism novelist, nor was I aware that he is a highly successful children's book author. In fact Mkufya's literary opus is a pillar of post-independence Swahili literature (Mazrui, 2007; Tchokothe, 2014; Traore, 2010). In hindsight, it is clear that my interview with Mkufya would have benefited from a deeper grasp of his status in Tanzanian society, as an artist whose linguistic material was shaped by Ujamaa policies even as it reflected and refracted it in the literary form. Nonetheless, Mkufya's responses to my questions tactically anticipate the aesthetic parameters that I observe in his picturebooks.

Mkufya emphasized his epistemological understanding of imagery which, "make[s] the child get the concept". In addition, he implies that imagery, particularly that of animals, has the capacity to impart visual knowledge that reflects on Tanzanian identity, hence, illustrations must be "oriented to the Tanzanians," because children "are wanting to learn by seeing", and that these images can impart, "Tanzanian culture, but also the modern ideas, modern policies" (W. Mkufya, Personal Conversation, September 9th, 2017). Mkufya's reflections on the cognitive purposes and national importance of illustrations in his books corroborate with the regnant perspective of scholarship on the shaping potential of picturebooks on cognitive and social development, which assumes that the degree with which picturebooks portray local lived conditions in culturally sensitive ways, is linked to the degree of impact they will have on childhood development processes (Roethler, 1998; Sipe, 1998).

Mkufya's foci on imagery, especially that of animals, and the transmission of important cultural norms evokes the context of oral storytelling, an endemic feature of Swahili linguistic culture (Arnott, 1963; Finnegan, 2012; Vansina, 1985). The thesis argues that this salient trait of

Mkufya's style accounts for the impact of national identity formation generated by Swahili picturebooks. That is, Mkufya's reliance on narrative and linguistic strategies associated with traditional oral folklore, such as animal protagonists and tricksters (Khamis, 2005; Zúbková, 2009), underscores how he construes Swahili as essential for national identity formation.

Mkufya's stature as a shaper of Swahili literary expression makes his picturebooks apt objects for the investigation of the complex relationship between Tanzanian national identity formation processes and the transgenerational impact of sociolinguistic policy. The three books of William Mkufya analyzed in this study were picked for various reasons from a collection of books Mkufya presented to me during our interview. I chose *Mtu na Chui* (Man and Leopard) because it was accompanied by an English version and the imagery of the Man in it conjured inquisitive paths at the possibility of him representing something militaristic, or colonial, about Tanzania's identity. *Mbuzi Wagonvi na Kondoo Wapole* (Quarrelsome Goats and Peaceful Sheep) was chosen because Mkufya read the story to me in person and translated it and discussed its main theme with me. More specifically, the theme of tolerance that Mkufya emphasized to me suggested a deep resonance with a collective identity by how it resonated with conversations I have had across the continent with Africans pleading for tolerance in their societies. Lastly, *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* (The Monkey and his Tail) was chosen because its illustrations of a skin shifting monkey echoed stories of witchcraft and trickery often repeated to me that have accompanied my experiences on the continent. Another determining factor for the selection of these three books was their similar illustration styles.

All three picturebooks analyzed here with the exception of *Mbuzi Wagonvi na Kondoo Wapole* have the same illustrator. Each book is laid out in the same manner and utilize images and background designs that would be familiar to East African readers, a design feature that

Mkufya and Roethler find imperative in conveying the books' themes (1998). Importantly, each book has a list of *methali* (proverbs) at the end. To keep in line with picturebook scholarship I analyzed Mkufya's books based on their relationships of text and image. I followed analytical strategies of Zhilhui Fang (1996), Jacque Roetheler (1998), Joseph Schwarcz (1991), Lawrence Sipe (1998, 2001, 2012), Sam Zuppari (2016), Paul Roncken and Ian Convery (2016). Of the vital work of these scholars Sipe, Zuppari, Roncken and Convery were the most influential in my understanding how text and image work together by text placement and landscape designs to impact narrative tone. In this way, this study draws a connection between picturebook aesthetics and oral folklore performance.

Because Mkufya's books' relationship between text and image invoke oral narrative cues the most appropriate way to decipher the picturebooks is through oral folklore narrative traits. According to Christopher Bollas, the appeal of an objects' aesthetics is linked to how it unconsciously recalls a precognitive transformation. Therefore, the appeal of the folklore aesthetics in Mkufya's books can be drawn to how their existentially recall how oral folklore was used to transform collective identity. The central oral folklore narrative aesthetic most prominent in the three books analyzed is the trickster. *Mtu na Chui* and *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* both employ two versions of the African trickster, developed through the centuries in oral folklore, that wields their skill of language to bamboozle. *Mtu na Chui's* trickster takes the most classic East African hoaxer form, the hare, and thusly provides a rich source for interpretation. *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake's* trickster is in the form of a monkey, a familiar chicaner across the continent. Furthermore, both tricksters carry the narration to fruition by their actions and words which warrants them as important characters to investigate. *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole* does not have a trickster character, but still utilizes familiar animals and settings to an Eastern African

readership and produces a theme suggestive of the impact of the lasting legacy of Tanzania's usage of Swahili linguistic culture which are represented in the tricksters of *Mtu na Chui* and *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake*.

In line with Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s innovative work of the signifying monkey in African American oral arts (Gates Jr, 2014) this study uses the trope of the trickster in two of Mkufya's books to trace the existential memories of collective transformations in Swahili linguistic culture. Trickster characters can be seen as symbolic representations of transformations of linguistic acts in how they themselves use language to transform and thusly act as insightful existential tools. The most common form the trickster takes in Sub-Saharan oral folklore is in the form of the monkey or hare (Okpewho, 1992). These hoaxers are birthed at times of societal change to encapsulate collective anxieties and utilize mnemonic devices peculiar to their mother linguistic culture to paint themselves in the extreme (Finnegan, 2012; Gates, 1988; Hynes and Doty, 1993). Characterized whimsically in their animal form these charlatans act as vehicles for narration to tame the collective unease that begot them and thus act as symbols of collective transformation in their absurdity (Finnegan, 2012; Gates, 1988; Hynes and Doty, 1993). Because of the way in which trickster tropes swim through unthought time to remerge in collective unconsciousness at moments of societal change they serve as powerful tools with which to analyze collective existential transformations of imaginaries. Through the works of Christopher Bollas, who argues that the aesthetic experience of an object is a function of unconscious existential memories of being transformed, we are able to draw a connection between chicaner aesthetics and a specific collective transformation of Tanzanian identity. Cues informed by the particular relationship of narrative text and image between the language of these hoaxers are central to my argument that Tanzanian picturebooks, such as Mkufya's, are popular because of how they recall unconscious

memories of the deployment of Swahili linguistic culture by the Tanzanian government. In this way I existentially analyzed *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* and *Mtu na Chui* for how they use image and text to elevate the narrative woven by their trickster characters.

To support my findings of the aesthetics produced of text and image and the narrative carried by charlatans I closely read each books' *methali* and utilized *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole* to identify key Tanzanian national identity traits that echo Ujamaa influenced Swahili linguistic culture. *Methali* work idiomatically and are a part of every East African child's befuddlement with their parents' disciplinary words that have been passed down for generations. Because of their everyday use⁷ and ancient quality *methali* work as key cultural clues to the unconscious memories carried within Mkufya's books. Furthermore, similar to how "Tortoise and the Lizard" and "The Monkey's Heart", use a trickster character to present ideas of fidelity and intelligence that is supported in the journey plot of "Snake Magic" in *African myths and legends*, *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole* plays a vital supporting role in this study by how it clearly highlights key traits of Tanzanian identity produced out of Ujamaa's wielding of Swahili linguistic culture commented upon by the other books' wile stories.

This approach described with the optic of the trickster adds to the repertoire of tools available with which to analyze picturebooks. While picturebook scholars have delved into the unconscious they have not done so with Bollas. With Bollas as a guide, cultural objects' relationship of collective identity formation processes may be uncovered and linked to specific historical and socio-cultural moments. Such an approach expands the parameters with which to measure collective impacts of nation building programs.

⁷ *Methali* are even center points of fashion and can be found on *kanga*, a wrap cloth every woman owns.

This ethnographic methodology does hold some limitations. The major one is my own positioning as a white male American exploring Tanzanian cultural objects. While my positioning as an outsider might prevent me from recognizing some subtle cultural and language cues it does permit me to recognize traits of unconscious memories that might be overlooked by Tanzanians. In addition, this study would have profited greatly from an expanded interview cohort that included Swahili people's reactions to Mkufya's three books so as to gauge potential unconscious memory recall. Because of these limitations this ethnographic approach has relied heavily on picturebooks analysis and comparative literature strategies that only permit a surface level psychoanalytical analysis.

Chapter four

Trickery and Existential Memories of Transformation

The failure of Ujamaa to provide an African socialist alternative to the neoliberal world order left Tanzanians grappling with their new Swahili based identity brought by the social policy. In the following analysis, I will demonstrate how two trickster characters in William Mkufya's picturebooks, a monkey and a hare, embody the Tanzanian government's earnest attempts to catalyze the Tanzanian identity formation processes through the nationalization of Swahili linguistic culture. The monkey's deceitful language tricks his clan into transforming him into a human with promises of wealth, just as Ujamaa's promotion of Swahili linguistic culture pledged a successful African socialist nation. The hare, also by way of chicanery, rallies a leopard, as a metaphor for the Tanzanian people, to attack Man, which I interpret as an embodiment of colonialism's legacy, only to fail, just as the Ujamaa government failed to overcome the entrenched militarized and bureaucratized nature of colonialism in Tanzania. Armed with Christopher Bollas' notion that aesthetic experience of an object is a function of unconscious existential memories of being transformed, the following analysis construes the whimsical character of the trickster as the symbolic equivalent of the collective existential memories of transformations informed by the *mélange* of nationalism and Swahili linguistic culture.

The trickster trope is an apt lens for viewing Tanzania's conception of itself. Across Africa, the trope of the trickster dances between linguistic boundaries that normally distinguish between the mythic and real, the divine and the obscene, by way of language to reminisce and reconcile societal realities and memories in order to strengthen collective unconsciousness. The trickster's capacity to transverse linguistic boundaries is the source of its figurative status in

Mkufya's picturebooks as emblems of Tanzanian national imaginary. Drawing from the work of Ruth Finnegan, Robert Pelton, Christopher Vecsey, William Hynes and William Doty (Finnegan, 2012; Hynes and Doty, 1993), I approach the trickster as a symbol that conveys and mediates unconscious societal anxieties, though I narrow my focus specifically to examine the trope's relationship to existential transformations wrought by the handling of Swahili linguistic culture under Ujamaa policies.

The numerous societal transformations that the trickster trope in Swahili linguistic culture embodies unconsciously survives in different incarnations through time and space by its didactic functions in stories (Gates, 1988). The root of the tricksters' didacticism can be traced with the tools of Christopher Bollas. With the guidance of Bollas we can situate the specific sociocultural moment that the tricksters embody in their whimsical words and actions by matching their chicaneries with key historical moments. Bollas' theory of existential memories of transformation permits understanding Mkufya's flimflammers as unconscious recollections of Swahili linguistic cultural transformations under Ujamaa. Mkufya's books center on tricksters' manipulation of language to hoodwink others. In understanding the tricksters as embodiments of collective transformation, and Mkufya as a New Realism writer focused on reconfiguring Tanzania's Ujamaa past, these tricksters' actions help locate the existential underpinning of Mkufya's books in the collective Tanzanian experience of being misled by the Tanzanian state with Swahili linguistic culture.

The tricksters in *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* and *Mtu na Chui* both bare traces of collective transformations catalyzed by Ujamaa policies premised on the nationalization of Swahili linguistic culture, albeit in distinctly unique forms. Mwanaheri, the monkey trickster in *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* tricks not only his own simian clan, but humans as well, to his eventual demise.

While in *Mtu na Chui*, a hare strings along a leopard, hoodwinking it to attack Man and lose. In both instances language is used to gull subjects into actions that ultimately are self-detrimental. In *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* the trickster receives his just rewards while in *Mtu na Chui* the hare's manipulative artifice goes unpunished.

Scholarly definitions of tricksters in folklore narratives consider the trickster's actions in stories to be representative of unconscious recollections of previous transformations and reconciliation with collective anxieties brought from such metamorphoses (Finnegan, 2012; Hynes and Doty, 1993). It is easy to assume that since the hare's actions, as representative of a collective transformations and the anxiety that came with, are unpunished that the fears existentially imbued within the hare character is not reconciled, unlike the repercussion of the monkey's chicanery. In actuality, the very presence of a trickster character can be read as an unconscious memory and acceptance of anxieties brought forth by previous transformations and his use of words as memory for how language was used to transform Tanzanian culture. This reconciliation is achieved by the very absurdity of the trickster and their actions, or words (Finnegan, 2012). It is the whimsical actions and words of the tricksters, not the consequences of their undertakings, that shatters realities and permits reconstruction of new actualities (Finnegan, 2012; Gates, 1988; Hynes and Doty, 1993). In fact, in presenting two forms of a trickster, one that is punished for his trickery, and one that is not, their representations of an unconscious anamnesis of chicanery is strengthened.

No matter how the tricksters' narratives progress their very chicanery by way of language are unthought memories of collective transformations. The existential investigative tools of Bollas permits a connection between the tricksters, picturebooks and national identity. Bollas theorizes that an aesthetic object, such as Mkufya's books, hold appeal by how they

unconsciously recall a previous moment. The moment being recalled, the use of language by the Tanzanian government to promote a Ujamaa based identity, can be found within the tricksters' actions and language since tricksters are conceived as embodiments of past collective unconscious transformations. Therefore, an analysis of the what the tricksters say and do in Mkufya's books will illuminate the memories they represent and situate the popular consumption of picturebooks in Tanzania being connected to how they recall Tanzanian identity formation during Ujamaa.

In order to demonstrate recalled memories of Swahili linguistic culture transformation during Ujamaa I will proceed with exactly how the aesthetics of *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* and *Mtu na Chui* utilize performance and narrative cues of Bantu oral folklore that have been incorporated into Swahili linguistic culture over the centuries to create an impactful aesthetic moment. Bollas defines aesthetic experience in terms of a rapprochement between object and subject that transpires when the object's content and form resonates with a subject's existential memories of internal and external transformations. Mkufya's picturebooks act as sites of existential memory by how their performance aesthetics are crafted out of text and image relations. This link to oral linguistic culture accounts for the perlocutionary effect of the tricksters' linguistic machinations. To support my findings that the tricksters in Mkufya's picturebooks embody the unconscious memory of Tanzanian identity transformation by way of Swahili linguistic culture I will then proceed to analyze the aesthetics and narrative of *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole* in search for unthought aesthetics of a Tanzanian national identity transformed by the taming of a national memory of the government's alteration of Swahili linguistic culture. The identity traits that are unconsciously prevalent in *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole* revolve around tolerance, a national identity trait reportedly prevalent in modern

young Tanzanian children (N. Makange and W.E. Mkufya, Personal Conversation, September 8th, 2017).

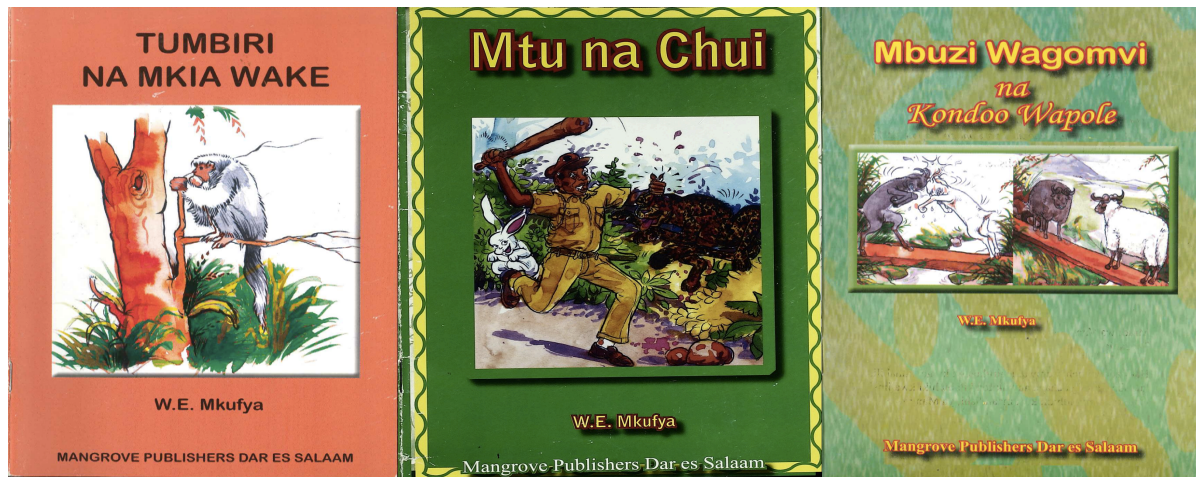


Figure 4.1: The Covers of the three William Mkufya’s books under discussion

Aesthetic Grammar of Trickery

The tricksters of Mkufya’s stories, the monkey and the hare, are conjured from the picturebooks’ aesthetics mimicry of Bantu oral folklore performativity, which accounts for the perlocutionary impact of their machinations. In *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* (The Vervet Monkey and his Tail) and *Mtu na Chui* (Man and Leopard) rotations of text and image build a sing-song quality to the physical book similar to live performances. The rhythm generated by the consistent rotation of landscape designs mimics the alternating cadence of an orator of oral folklore performance, who shifts both body and linguistic tones to produce an aesthetic effect for the audience, what scholars have referred to as *tonality* (Okepewho, 1992). The *tonality* and cadence produced out of alternating text and image is strengthened by red textual visual cues. The presence of the red text in key moments strengthens the narrative by providing a visual marker and fosters a performative angle to the story akin to *call-and-response* styles of oral literature. *Call-and-response* is one of the key performative techniques of a story telling in oral folklore because of

how it not only provides repetition, but audience participation. In *Mtu na Chui* the red text is also onomatopoeic with “GUUUMM!” and “KWAAA!”.



Figure 4.2: Rotating images and uses of red text

Mtu na Chui's rotation of text and image buttresses an important aspect of the hare. The hare tells the leopard that he cannot beat Man⁸ and stalls the leopard from attacking a progression of various humans (child, old man, pregnant woman, sick man and a drunk) with mocking reminders for the leopard to show his strength in his battle with man; “*Nakwambia ukipambana na Mtu, wewe ndiye utatimua mbio!*” (Wait for Man, he will beat you until you run away!). The

⁸ The word for man, “*mtu*”, is capitalized in the story, and in the English version is translated into italicized “*Superman*”. Since I do not agree with the translation into “*Superman*” I opt to instead use “*Man*” for the purposes of this study.

repetitive, though alternating, presentation of similar, but different ideas, is a trademark of picturebooks⁹. In each arrangement of the humans that come from the road the text is positioned above the human on the road. At first the leopard asks “*Mtu huyo hapo. Sema! Nianze kumvamia?*” (This human here. Tell me. Should I pounce on him?), then proceeds to ask “*Mtu huyo hapo. Unasemaje?*” (This human here. What do you say?). The subsequent questions prepare the audience for the illustration to come. On the next page, a framed image of the human is presented with the hare’s explanation as to why the leopard should not attack. The flow of text, image, image, text is an example of the effect of *page turn*. *Page turn* helps to draw the eye up and down, and across the gutter of the book, just as the eye would move with the movement of a performance as the performance moves rhythmically.

The long list of characters first appears to be a digression from the story. The storytelling technique of ostensibly digressing from the story is often in oral literature traditions and is aptly called *digression* (Okpewho, 1992). Digression comments on relevant issues. The issues commented upon in the presentation of the various people are the woes of illness and drunkenness. There is slight respect afforded to the pregnant woman and old man by stating she is tired and he is old so they must be respected (i.e., not fought). The coupling of these seemingly independent ideas is yet another oral literature technique called *parallelism*.

⁹ For example: *Good Night Moon*.

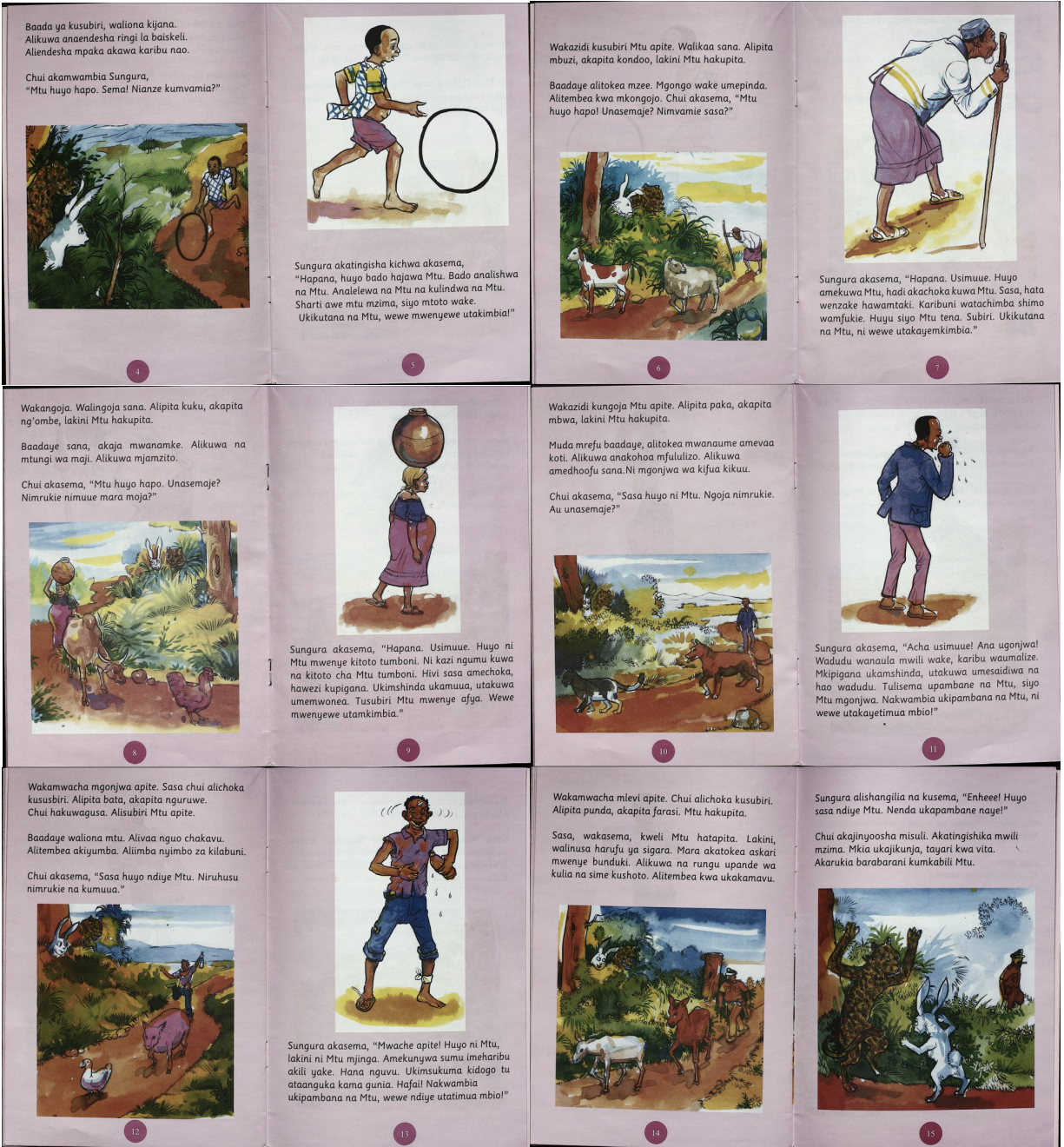


Figure 4.3: *Utani* and the progression of different humans.

The jovial, though deceptive manner, in which the hare taunts the leopard is a unique trait of Swahili folklore narrative called *utani*. *Utani* is unique to Swahili folklore and arose out of the integration of Swahili and Bantu traditions that centered around the feudal warring states of the mainland before German colonialism. *Utani* is a joking relationship between two warriors as

they build each other's energy and motivation up for battle (Okpewho, 1992). In *Mtu na Chui utani* not only alludes to Bantu folklore integration but helps build the chicanery of the hare. From the hare's and leopard's dialogue at the beginning of the story their competitive, warrior to warrior (*utani*), relationship is clear. At first the leopard boasts of his strength while the rabbit humbly remarks about his own speed. Then the leopard calls the rabbit a coward and declares that he is not afraid of Man. At this point the rabbit shifts the *utani* from outward expressions of strength to more subtle, guiled bantering by his prolonging of the leopard's attack by convincing him not to attack various humans. The continuous inflating of the leopard's strength by prolonging his attack not only is a passive *utani* but makes the leopard's moment of loss to Man all the more impactful and highlights the chicanery of the hare.

Double-page spreads in both books function as bookends to the development of the monkey and hare's shenanigans. In *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* the trickster, Mwanaheri, after convincing his fellow monkeys to give him the skin of a man in order to become human and provide them the fruits of the forest, achieves his transformation with a *double-page spread* on pages 8 and 9. This moment is essential in his trickery of his clan because it echoes the magical quality of a trickster to go beyond the reality of the physical world—to transform from monkey to man by using a human's skin and detaching Mwanaheri's monkey tail. In between the two *double-page spreads* of *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* a specific grammar style of Swahili, the aspect marker *ka*, is used. *Ka* is for continuous activities and provides a rhythm and speed to the story that a narrator would normally control by their voice and body. The actions that *ka* strings together and the repetitive sound of it produces narrative inertia when paired with the rotating placement of images in relation to the text. This energy is culminated after Mwanaheri changes his name to Heri, rejects his clan and sales hunting rights to fellow men, only to be captured by

his clan and fulfill the ominous warning of a witch doctor by reattaching Mwanaheri's tail and morphing him back into a human. This moment is presented with a *double-page spread* on pages 16 and 17 and supported by red text, “*Mwanaheri si Heri, Heri hana mkia!/Mwanaheri si Heri, amekuwa Heri akasahau*” (Mwanaheri is not Heri, Heri has a tail. Mwanaheri is not Heri, Heri has forgotten who he is). These folklore narrative cues addressed by picturebook aesthetics situates and underscores the trickster monkey and hare in *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* and *Mtu na Chui*.

The aesthetics of Mkufya's picturebooks replicate oral folklore performances. The work of Christopher Bollas demonstrates that object aesthetics can recall unthought memories. Unconscious memories are brought forth when the aesthetics of objects resemble mother environments. By resembling the performativity of folklore that has been folded into Swahili linguistic culture for centuries, Mkufya's picturebooks hold the existential potential to recall collective memories. The unthought collective memories interlayered within Mkufya's picturebooks are discoverable with the optic of the trickster. Therefore it is vital to analyze the words and actions of Mkufya's tricksters, the hare and monkey.



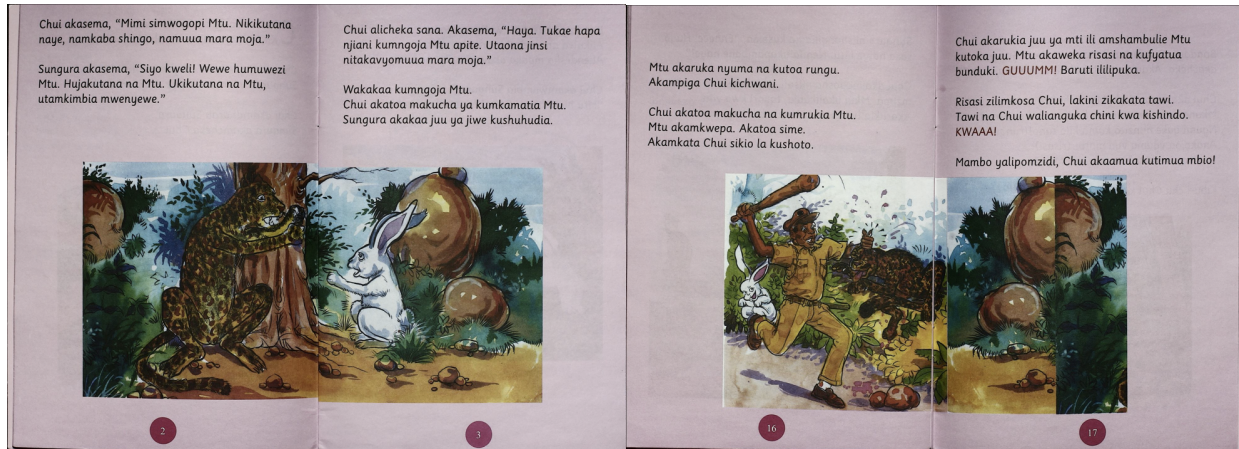


Figure 4.4: Double page spreads

Mwanaheri as a Existential Collective Memory of Ujamaa's Failed Socialist Promise

The trickster character of the monkey and hare are animalistic embodiments of an unconscious recollection and reconciliation of how the Tanzanian government relied upon Swahili linguistic culture to craft a national imaginary that hinged on the success of Tanzania as an African socialist nation. These tricksters, built by narrative cues from picturebook aesthetics, represent centuries of existential transformations. One generation's quest for evocative objects, as represented in the trickster, creates a particular grammar of being for the next generation. Thus, generational transformational objects are linked to one another to craft a multigenerational grammar of being that can influence national imaginaries. Therefore, in a Bollasian manner, these trickster characters embody the key sociohistorical moment of transformation by Swahili linguistic culture under and after Ujamaa. The monkey and hare fulfill their trickster roles in how they use language to chicanery.

Mwanaheri, the trickster in *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* centers his deceit on his linguistic prowess to convince his clan to help him change with riches as their reward, just as the Ujamaa government promised the moral and cultural riches of African socialism if the Tanzanian people helped to transform their nation. The story begins with Mwanaheri teaching himself the language

of man and then using this skill as evidence for why his clan should robe him in the skin of man to transform him into a human. Once a human Mwanaheri claims he will give the fruits of the forest to his clan. The Swahili word used for the monkeys Mwanaheri talks to, *ndugu*, translates into comrade. The Tanzanian state, like Mwanaheri, promised that if the people helped it transform into a socialist nation it would provide the riches of the land to them. The people of Tanzania, as imagined comrades, sacrificed physical comforts and ways of life to provide this dream, which can be seen in the “*Tumbiri wakamchuna kwa kucha na meno yao*” (The monkeys skinned the man with their own nails). In emphasizing the monkeys’ use of ‘their own nails’ the narrative suggests a recollection of the personal toil the average Tanzanian partook in their attempts to make Nyerere’s vision of the nature of African collectivism work.

Once human, Mwanaheri finds he still has a tail. Mwanaheri’s comrades shower him in chants; “*Mwanaheri! Mwanaheri! / Umekuwa mtu, lakini asili yako tumbiri. / Mwanaheri Mwanaheri! / Umekuwa mtu, usisahau, una mkia!*” (Mwanaheri! Mwanaheri! You are a man, but you are a monkey. Mwanaheri! Mwanaheri! You are a man, don’t forget you have a tail!). Once his tail is detached by a witch doctor that warns him that if he does not uphold his promise his tail will be reattached and he will morph back into a monkey, Mwanaheri leaves for the world of man.



Figure 4.5 Mwanaheri convincing and deceiving his clan to his demise.

Mwanaheri wields the power of language to transform again, from Mwanaheri to Heri, a recollection and reconciliation of unthought memories of Tanzania's name change under Ujamaa and its perceived abandonment for neo-liberal development policies. The deep existential scar left by Ujamaa's failure and IMF and World Bank policies is seen in how New Realism literature often focuses on reconciling these moments with transgressive whimsicalities (Tchokothe, 2014). Mkufya's trickster story of Mwanaheri is another embodiment of this New Realism unconscious reflection. Mwanaheri means "son of goodness", in the elimination of "*Mwana*" (son of) the present Heri abandons his past and attempts to present himself as "*Heri*" (goodness). The name change itself is a clear illude that holds particular force in Swahili linguistic culture because of the importance one's family plays in social identity and the nature of the Swahili language itself and how it fostered Tanzanian nationhood. The land that is now Tanzania went through a name change when it formed: upon independence what is now mainland Tanzania was called Tanganyika and did not take the name Tanzania until a union was formed with Zanzibar and its surrounding islands. This new notion of Tanzania was promoted across the country with a standardized Swahili based off of the Zanzibari dialect. As a human Heri, instead of helping his clan, sells hunting rights to humans which entails predation of elephants and a monkey clan of similar colors to Mwanaheri's original clan. This moment of skullduggery can be understood as an unconscious collective reckoning with how the Tanzanian government promoted an image of the country rooted in a perceived African collective past—Mwanaheri's clan collectively skinning a man for him—only to disregard it—Mwanaheri banning his clan from his new kingdom—for IMF and World Bank projects to the detriment of its own people—Mwanaheri/Heri selling hunting rights.

Heri's transformation back into Mwanaheri is done amongst another barrage of language. When captured Mwanaheri's comrades shout "*Mwanaheri si Heri, Heri hana mkia!*" (Mwanaheri not Heri, Heri has a tail.) The importance of this moment is made clear by a *double-page spread*. The language that reminds Mwanaheri who he is once he is transformed into a man and back into a monkey is powerful. Just as Mwanaheri used language to trick his way through species and power, his comrades use language as well to mock Mwanaheri, just as he mocked them and the humans, and tame him.

Mwanaheri's chicanery is so familiar because the trickster, like any transformational object, has been built in subsequent transformations Swahili linguistic culture over the centuries. Swahili linguistic culture transformed as it made its way inland blending themes of *ajami* poetry focused on hagiographic and didactic messages with Bantu oral folklore. The family values Mwanaheri appears to uphold then abandon, only to be brought back, allude to the first major transformation of Swahili when it was written in *ajami*. The morals and themes most written about in *ajami* are represented in Mwanaheri's character. Besides religious themes *ajami*'s main theme was that of the family. Mwanaheri's journey away from and return to his family clearly resonates with these first *ajami* poetic themes. The initial themes promoted by *ajami* poetry were transformed with each subsequent Swahili sociolinguistic transformation from its spread inland. Swahili society and culture, as it spread further along the coast and into the interior shifted to focus on individual concerns and political intrigue that characterized the semi-feudal systems of the mainland (Mazrui, 2007). Such a conflict of inner self, ambition, and the public is seen in Mwanaheri's quest and ultimate failure at acquiring power. Mwanaheri attempted to change himself in both form and name, from monkey to man, from Mwanaheri to Heri.

Mwanaheri's trickery as representative of not only Ujamaa's failure but Swahili linguistic cultural transformations in its inland spread are echoed in *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake's methali*. Mwanaheri's initial confidence, a trait most tricksters have, is commented on with the last *methali*: “*Akili nyingi huondoa maarifa*” (A lot of intelligence removes knowledge). This *methali*, passed down and transformed through the centuries, is an apt remark towards the presumed intelligence of the Tanzanian government as it sought its socialist dream. The clear warning at egotism within this *methali* helps to trace its roots to societal concerns of rampant individualism during the feudal state period of Swahili's spread. The first *methali* also comments on Ujamaa's promise and particularly the importance one's 'word' has had throughout the centuries in Swahili linguistic culture: “*Ahadi ni deni*” (Promise is debt). Finally, the middle *methali* somberly reflects on the consequences of ones actions: “*Mkataa kwao mtumwa*” (Your final decision enslaves you). The power in these *methali*, just like the power of the trickster Mwanaheri, lie in language.



Figure 4.6: Mwanaheri to Heri back to Mwanaheri

Mwanaheri's sly language and transformation to mislead his own clan and humans cements him as a trickster trope. Mwanaheri's linguistic stratagem reminisces and reconciles how the Tanzanian government transformed Tanzanian national imaginary with Swahili

linguistic culture. The Tanzanian government promised an African socialist future with Swahili if Tanzania helped them transform themselves, just as Mwanaheri told his clan to help him transform into a human with a lingering promise. Once transformed Tanzania gave in to neo-liberal policies, just as Heri sold off hunting rights. Heri's return to Mwanaheri can be seen in the Swahili linguistic culture in the 90s when Swahili oral literature remerged in *taarab* performances as New Realism, where authors such as William Mkufya, used more folkloric narrative cues to re-imagine Tanzanian values. The newly imagined values crafted by *taarab* and New Realism writers, values of acceptance, family and the importance of Swahili demonstrate the collective acceptance of the memory of Ujamaa's failure in their resemblance to the Swahili linguistic culture promoted by Nyerere's government. In Mwanaheri's whimsical actions and words he works as a vehicle for existential recollection of how Ujamaa failed, but still instilled, transformed Swahili linguistic culture in Tanzania. Because aesthetic moments transform individuals in their existential recollection of mother environments, Mwanaheri's farce holds the potential to transform young children's national identities. The transformed national identity that Mwanaheri and the hare help craft will be seen in *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole*.

The Hare as a Collective Unthought Memory for how Ujamaa Tried to Conquer the Remains of Colonialism with Swahili Linguistic Culture

Although the hare in *Mtu na Chui* does not face repercussions for his skullduggery as Mwanaheri does in *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake*, his chicanery still is a collective unconscious reminiscence and placation of how Swahili linguistic culture has crafted Tanzanian national imaginaries. As noted, I conceive of the trickster figure and its actions as an unconscious embodiment of societal transformations that reaffirm key collective values. In this way, a trickster can still be an unthought manifestation of societal metamorphoses even if the trickster

itself does not change in a narrative. The way in which the hare in *Mtu na Chui* wields language to rally and trick a leopard to attack an overly powerful man is evocative of how Swahili linguistic culture tried to conquer the lingering remnants of colonialism in Tanzanian culture.

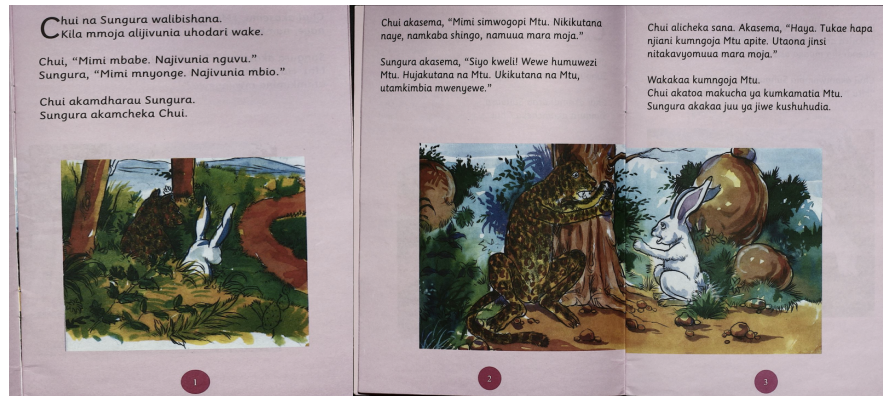


Figure 4.7: The hare's chicanery

The hare's deceit lies in his language. The hare's con begins with a challenge, or a bet. The hare tells the leopard that he bets the leopard cannot beat man in a manner reminiscent of *utani*. This egging on can be seen as a memory of how the Ujamaa government pushed the Tanzanian people, by way of Swahili linguistic culture, to try to beat the looming leviathan of its colonial history (the Man). Ujamaa's push for Tanzanians to adhere to Swahili linguistic culture can be seen in Nyerere's numerous calls for change centered on family values; "Modern African socialism can draw from its traditional heritage the recognition of "society" as an extension of the basic family unit" (Nyerere, 1971, pg. 7). Nyerere often talked about the failure of the Western sense of either capitalism, communism or socialism to capture the heart of the African mind (Nyerere, 1971). Such a rejection of Western norms of nationhood developed out of the collective memory of colonization.

The Man as a collective memory of colonialization can be seen in multiple ways. Visually the Man saunters down the road in a military uniform with a club on his hip. In the text

he also has a gun¹⁰. This militarized physicality in the form of a black soldier sews deeper existential meaning when it is kept in mind how the German and British relied upon native inhabitants as loyal soldiers and bureaucrats. Colonial powers implanted a blueprint of power structure in their militarization of local leaders and government that affect African governments and cultures to this day.¹¹ This strong Western influence, centered on power grabbing individualism, was exactly what Nyerere sought to overcome in his instillation of African socialist values with Swahili linguistic culture.



Figure 4.8: The Man.

The influence of the constant injection of Swahili language and culture is evident in Mkufya’s own conception of the ties of language and culture to national prowess. In response to a question about the importance of local culture Mkufya told me: “You cannot teach a foreign culture to the children.” This idea is backed by Mkufya’s reasoning as to why local picturebooks are not popular in places like the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

That’s because they don’t have a local language. I mean there are no writers in most countries that write in the local languages, except for the East African countries, because

¹⁰ For a conversation about the impact of printing errors such as this in Swahili literature see the works of Remi Tchokothe

¹¹ See Achielle Mbembe.

Swahili has established itself and you can have many books in that. For example, in the Congo, they face a problem because Swahili is not popular and the local languages are not, are distributed sparsely, so you cannot have a possible publication that can sell a whole lot. So it's very important. (W.E. Mkufya, Personal Conversation, September 8th, 2017).

Mkufya's focus on the importance of a local language and the influence of Swahili echo some of the key features of Tanzanian identity under Ujamaa as made by Nyerere's transformation of Swahili sociolinguistics.

The influence of language and culture, as seen in Mkufya's own words, can also be seen in the progression of the different humans the hare implores the leopard not to attack. Each human represents key aspects of the Tanzanian nation that Ujamaa sought to help, from easing the woes of the elderly and of women, to providing an education for the youth and provide health services for the sick, and preventing societal problems of alcoholism, problems which would all be remedied by an African socialist return to a new Swahili ideal of the village and family. The Swahilified village utopia Nyerere promoted was one that has been constructed out of previous transformations of Swahili language and culture. This progression of alterations is evident in the story's *utami* and Bantu folklore characters, such as the hare as a trickster. Importunately, the hare manipulates language to attack Man, just as the Swahili government reimagined the legacy of colonialism with Swahili.

The hare's crafty language is impactful in how it recalls the earliest transformations of Swahili socio-linguistics in *Ajami* poetry. *Ajami* literature was strongly inspired by and emerged out of Islamic teachings. This unconscious hagiographic memory can be seen in how the hare dissuades the leopard from attacking the child, pregnant woman, and old man by referencing

societal norms. Furthermore, unconscious memories of Swahili sociolinguistics from the 1600s are evident in how the hare describes the drunk man: “*Mwache apite! Huyo ni Mtu, lakini ni Mtu mjinga. Amekunywa sumu imharibu akili yake. Hana nguvu.*” (Let him go! He is a man, but a stupid man. He has taken too much beer. It has made him mad and weak). The hare’s clearly negative description of the drunk man is an unconscious recognition of Islam’s influence at the earliest stages of Swahili writing. As noted, the hare acts as an embodiment of collective unconscious changes. Given that Mkufya is a well-known atheist (Tchokothe, 2014) and negative traits of alcohol conception, often associated with Islam, made its way into the hare’s chicanery insinuates a collective unconscious memory of Islam’s influence during *ajami* poetry and Swahili’s spread inland. The power of language to convince and recall unconscious memories is expanded in how the story’s *methali* linguistically and culturally recall Bantu integration into Swahili language and culture.

The hare’s trickster nature as a memory of Bantu integration into Swahili sociolinguistics and Swahili linguistic culture in Ujamaa promotion is seen in the book’s *methali*. *Mtu na Chui* shares a key theme with Mkufya’s other works, that of the *Kiburi ni majuto* (Arrogance is remorseful) *methali*, that is echoed in various incarnations in each of his works. *Mtu na Chui* though presents certain key *methali* that help strengthen its unconscious tie to Bantu folklore integration into Swahili traditions and eventually collective Tanzanian imaginary. The second and third *methali* in *Mtu na Chui* are animal centered idioms that imply the intrinsic nature of fear: “*Kungru mwoga hukimiza ubawa wake*” (The fearful crow is chased by his wings) and “*Mbawala mwoga hukimiza upembe wake*” (The fearful bushbuck¹² is chased by his horns). These two *methali* squarely center the narrative in Bantu’s integration into Swahili by their

¹² A Bushbuck is an antelope widespread in Sub-Saharan Africa.

animal allusions and are further supported by the fourth *methali*: “*Kwa shujaa kulienda kilio, kwamwoga julienda kicheko*” (By the hero’s cry he laughs at his fear). The focus on the idea of a hero is a reflection of how Bantu folklore mirrored the warring feudal states of inland Tanzania and can also be seen as a harboring of Tanzanian society as it pressed for independence. The last *methali* can be seen as Tanzanian societies’ reckoning with Ujamaa legacies at failing to overcome the cultural and economic shards of colonialism: “*Asiyekubali kushindwa si mshindani*” (He who does not accept to be conquered is not a competitor). This is to say, he who does not believe they can be conquered is not a true fighter, because it is fear that makes one a fighter.

The hare’s guileful language is filled with allusions to Bantu folklore and *ajami* poetry which imbues his language with existential power. While some trickster characters help collective unconsciousness quail angst in how they are subdued in narration, like the shark and lizard in *African Myths and Legends* other trickster characters reconcile unthought collective memories merely in their usage as a vehicle of recollection. Mwanaheri works as a trickster in the first regard while the hare works in the second. The hare embodies the unconscious memory and acceptance of Ujamaa’s failure to completely beat the infestation of colonialism’s legacy with an African socialism centered on the Swahili language and village life by his whimsicalities. The memories existentially brought forth in the form of Mwanaheri and the hare were transformed in their reminiscence. Each subsequent transformation is continuously built off of, just how Swahili was built off its transformations with *ajami* to Bantu integration to Ujamaa. The transformations initiated by the unconscious anamneses of the tricksters in *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* and *Mtu na Chui* help catalyze and reify national imaginaries. Traits of this supported national identity are seen in Mkufya’s book *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole*.

Peaceful Sheep as Representative of Ujamaa's Lasting Impact on Identity

Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole (Quarrelsome Goats and Understanding Sheep), contrary to Mkufya's *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* and *Mtu na Chui* does not have a trickster trope to unconsciously remember and come to terms with transformed Swahili linguistic culture under Ujamaa, but instead reveals the success and impact of Swahili in forming a Tanzanian identity. Swahili's success in forming a Tanzanian identity can be seen in *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole*'s central theme of tolerance. The aesthetics of *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole* recall folklore narrative cues and previous transformations of Swahili socio-linguistic, as seen in the monkey and hare tricksters, to build a message of tolerance that is a backbone of Tanzanian identity.

Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole's aesthetics helps to recall Swahili's hagiographic roots in *ajami* poetry, Swahili's spread inland and transformation as a national language of Tanzania. This unconscious memory is brought forth by how *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole* narrative focuses on the themes of acceptance, tolerance and the comradeship in relation to its images. Specifically, *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole* alternates image and text with *repetition* to build a performance aesthetic.

In addition to rotating placement of text as above or below an image on pages 4-7 the image and text change from left to right. On page 4 the image precedes the correlating text, while on page 6 it is reversed, and the text precedes the image. The alteration of the textboxes and images in *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole* provides a unique rhythmic cadence to the narrative that artfully utilizes the physicality of the book to draw the reader's eye up then down and left and right to match the beat of the repetitive text just as an oral performer would move in rhythm to the story. The aesthetics of performance recalls the integration of performance into

Swahili sociolinguistic, as reflected with *taarab* performances and New Realist writers attempts to incorporate performance cues in their writing. One of the main ways realist writers, such as Mkufya, utilize performance cues is in repetition (Mazuri, 2007).

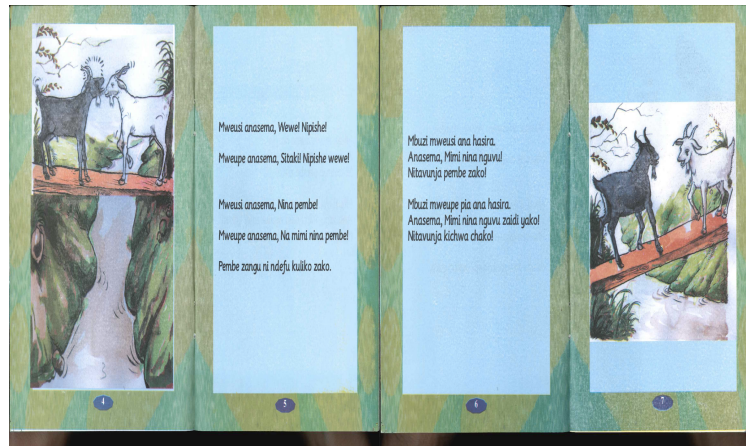


Figure 4.9: Pages 4-7: Reversal of text and image placement.

The text itself gives a cadence of oral literature and performance by its repetition. As with various picturebooks certain key words and images are repeated throughout the narrative. The obvious ones are *mbuzi* (goat), *kondoo* (sheep), *mweusi* (black) and *mweupe* (white) as the narration proceeds through two black and white goats battling each other on a bridge until they both fall off and two sheep, black and white as well, that let each other pass. In the first half of the book the repeated use of *mbuzi*, *mweusi* and *mweupe* smartly utilizes the grammar structure of Swahili. In Swahili, adjectives are conjugated based on noun class. Animals are in a class where each noun, and subsequent adjective, starts with a ‘m’ sound. Therefore, the relation of *mbuzi* with the colors of *mweusi* and *mweupe* produces a familiar beat for Swahili speakers. *Kondoo* has a particular resonance because in Swahili, a doubled vowel elongates and deepens that vowel sound, which when repeated produces a harmonic sensation.

These words are often followed by repetitive verbs, such as on page five with the verb *anasema* (said), on page eight and nine with the verb *piga* (hit) used in various conjugations to

describe how the goats rammed each other off the bridge. The verb *piga* is particularly powerful for the narrative because of how it foreshadows the goat’s fall. On page 8 the tense of *piga*, *wakipigana*, helps make the sentence “*Wakipigana wataanguka mtoni*” (if they hit one another they will fall into the river). Then on page nine *piga* is repeated as the goats bash their heads with the performative *onomatopoeias* of “Poww” and “Pwaa” to raise the tension before the goats’ fall. *Onomatopoeia* is a key trait in oral literature performance and one of the main ways New Realism writers have incorporated Bantu performance aesthetics (Okpewho, 1992). The fall into the river and being dirtied is key for the narration and theme. The focus on cleanliness is highly relevant for Tanzanians. Cleanliness is deeply cultural for Tanzanians who see cleanliness as a sign of a hard worker who respects not only themselves, but others by the time and care taken to remain clean in environments—think dusty village roads—that are routinely messy.

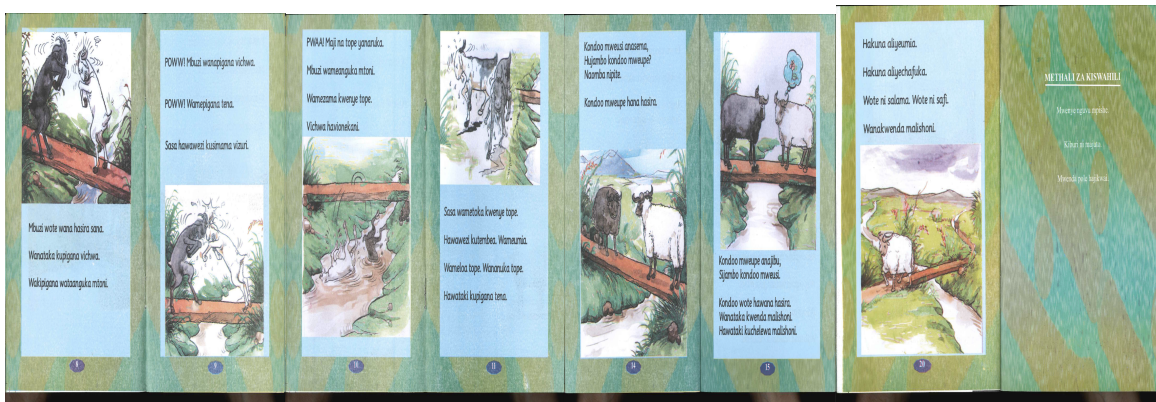


Figure 4.10: The goats falling in the river while the sheep peacefully cross.

The performance birthed from the relationship between text and image highlights how the sheep’s tolerance of each other benefited them both and reflects previous collective existential transformations. *Ajami*’s initial transformation of Swahili sociolinguistics based on the hagiographic issue of tolerance transformed with the integration of Bantu folklore into Swahili as it spread inland from the coast. Swahili’s spread inland reflected the social and political issues of

the new Swahili speakers, that of warring states and misled individualism. This collective memory is brought forth by *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole*, specifically with its first *methali*: “*Kiburi ni majuto*” (Pride/Arrogance is remorseful). As with the strength *methali*, the images of the narrative support this message of remorseful arrogance. The remorse *methali* is rooted in a collective memory of the sociolinguistic transformation of Swahili from hagiographic issues to more political ones by way of Bantu folklore based on the warring feudal states of inland Tanzania. Swahili sociolinguistic move from religious to didactic continued through the colonial period until Swahili transformed again in the period of Ujamaa as seen in the tricksters in *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* and *Mtu na Chui*.

Swahili sociolinguistic transformation during Ujamaa was based on the previous metamorphoses of Swahili by *ajami* writings and Bantu incorporation. In his nation-building effort Nyerere coordinated the largest transformations of Swahili sociolinguistics to construct a new Tanzanian identity. The Tanzanian identity under Ujamaa focused on comradeship, of the nation moving forward together. This collective memory can be unconsciously traced in the images of *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole* and its last *methali*: “*Mwena pole hajikwai*” (He who goes slow does not stumble). This moral can be seen directly in Nyerere’s speech about Self-Reliance¹³: “If we use these resources in a spirit of self-reliance as the basis for development, then we shall make progress slowly but surely” (Nyerere, 1968, pg. 415). These relations of images with *methali* not only unconsciously recall key transformative moments of Swahili sociolinguistics but helps to build *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole*’s main theme of tolerance, which is a reflection of the lasting impact of Swahili linguistic culture on Tanzanian

¹³ Self-Reliance was Nyerere’s political and cultural campaign during Ujamaa to instill a character of self-reliance in the Tanzanian people.

identity. The unconscious memories of comradeship, tolerance and the nation help explain picturebook appeal to young readers. In connecting to existential collective memories picturebooks act as objects of transformation for younger readers and in transforming they reify their grammar of being, or collective identity. This strengthening of collective identity helps explain NGO leaders and teachers' reports of picturebooks helping young children develop notions of tolerance and family-hood and illuminate the source of their popularity.

Tanzanian Picturebooks as Unthought Collective Memories

Locally produced picturebooks help foster the construction of national imaginaries because the relationship between image and words unconsciously recalls collective existential memories of transformations of Tanzanian identity by socio-linguistic metamorphoses of Swahili language and culture, and thusly catalyze and reify. Unconscious memories of Tanzanian identity are traceable through Bollas' work, which calls attention to how idioms of care are shaped by transformations which are unconsciously recalled in aesthetic experiences. Specific existential memories of how the Tanzanian government used Swahili linguistic culture to their advantage can be found in William Mkufya's books in the form of the trickster. I conceive that the trickster figure, as an embodiment of unconscious societal transformations, represents an aesthetic of transformation via Swahili linguistic culture, and thus an apt tool with which to analyze the existential memories imbued in Mkufya's books.

In *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* Mwanaheri, a trickster in the form of a monkey, deceitfully wields language to chicanery his clan to transform him to a human by wearing human skin and detaching his tail with promises of wealth, just as Ujamaa promoted Swahili linguistic culture to pledge a successful African socialist nation. Nyerere, the founding father of Tanzania, promoted an imagined identity of Tanzania based on traditional family structures with the Zanzibari dialect

of Swahili as the unifying factor for the vast, ethnically diverse, new country. The impact of this focus on Swahili linguistic culture can be seen in William Mkufya's reasoning that other African countries have been falling behind and not publishing because of their lack of a unifying language and local culture. Instead of the wealth promised, the Tanzanian government left its citizens behind in their acceptance of neo-liberal policies. This collective memory is seen in how Mwanaheri, instead of giving his clan the riches he promised, changes his name to Heri and sells hunting rights to humans. Frustrated, Mwanaheri's clan captures him and reattaches his tail to turn him back into Mwanaheri. This capture of the trickster is an existential memory of how Swahili linguistic culture grappled with Ujamaa's failed promises in the 1990's with *taarab* performances and New Realism literature. The capture of the trickster character of Mwanaheri is not the only way trickster figures are unconsciously presented in Mkufya's work.

William Mkufya's *Mtu na Chui* follows the artifice of a hare that rallies a leopard to attack and lose to a Man. The hare's skullduggery represents how Swahili linguistic culture was transformed in how the Tanzanian government wielded it to marshal the Tanzanian people to overcome the legacies of colonialism and fail. In *Mtu na Chui* the hare, as an unconscious embodiment of the Tanzanian state, flimflammers the leopard, the Tanzanian people, to pounce on the Man, the figure of the remnants of colonialism left in Tanzania. Nyerere and his government promised their people that their African way of socialism would beat the Western norms of governance based on the "exploitation of man by man" and the "inevitable conflict between man and man" (Nyerere, 1971, pg.7). In this manner, Tanzania overlooked the people it wanted to help—the procession of humans the hare convinces the leopard to not attack while they wait for the Man to walk by. Unlike in *Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake* the trickster hare is not overcome. While it may seem that since the hare is not beaten, what he unconsciously represents

would therefore not be subdued, when in fact the very usage of a trickster, according to Ruth Finnegan, demonstrates an existential tranquility with the unconscious societal issue the trickster represents. This is to say, the usage of the hare as a representation of the way the Tanzanian government attempted to coerce its people with Swahili linguistic culture indicates a collective move towards a peace-of-mind with the unthought collective memories of transformation by the absurd nature of the hare.

These unconscious anamneses represented in the trickster characters of Mwanaheri and the hare build upon one another and transform collective identity. Evidence of this transformation is seen in the theme of tolerance in *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole*, in which two goats ram each other on a bridge to their own muddy downfall while two sheep stuck on a bridge decide to let each other pass to the enjoyment of their respective grazing plains. While Ujamaa itself did not survive history, its legacy of Swahili linguistic culture did survive. Jan Blommaert investigated the lasting impact of Ujamaa promotion of Swahili and found that currently Swahili language and culture have penetrated the everyday for most Tanzanians (Blommaert, 2014), as evident in the Tanzanian theme of tolerance present in *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole*. This transformation is made by collective aesthetic moments.

The innovative work of Christopher Bollas permits an existential excavation of three picturebooks by William Mkufya. Bollas' theory that aesthetic objects unconsciously recall past transformations led to picturebook analyses to decipher how Mkufya's books utilize the relation between image and text and existentially remember past transformations in Swahili linguistic culture by how image and text produce aesthetics of performativity found in oral folklore.

Tumbiri Na Mkia Wake and *Mtu na Chui*'s usages of trickster characters permitted an analysis of what unthought collective memories are potentially connected to by how tricksters embody

unconscious societal transformations. The memories ignited by the trickster characters and the transformed creation of self out of such a recall is supported by how Mkufya's third book, *Mbuzi Wagomvi na Kondoo Wapole*, exhibits tolerance as a lasting transformation of Swahili linguistic culture. According to Bollas, in existentially recalling these collective transformations Mkufya's books themselves transform readers unconsciously and become a part of each person's individual and collective grammar of being, which helps to explain their wide appeal. In drawing a link between picturebooks, collective identity, and unconscious transformations this analysis holds the potential to expand studies of picturebooks, African literature and the ways in which societies and identities are existentially constructed.

Chapter four

Concluding thoughts

The failure of ESR to implant a lasting practice of literacy and economic development initially raises the question of what literacy imparts to society. Reconceived as cultural fluency, literacy studies have focused on the ethnographic contexts of literacy practices. In Tanzania the ethnographic contexts of literacy studies, such as this, are situated in the shadow of the social engineering of Julius Nyerere. In a quest to realize a true African self, Nyerere promoted African socialism with Swahili linguistic culture as a tool for unification. Transformed through the generations Swahili linguistic culture is a unique hybrid of Bantu-Arab history. The promotion of a village family ideal society based off of Swahili existentially impacted Tanzanians for generations, as can be seen in the contemporary New Realism literature movement that draws upon Bantu folklore traits to recast reality. As part of the New Realism movement picturebooks' growth in popularity warrant an investigation into how they fit into this complicated ethnographic web. As unique aesthetic objects Tanzanian picturebooks conjure up centuries of Swahili cultural linguistic transformations. Led through time by the trickster figure, Mkuhya's picturebooks can be seen as existential memories of Tanzania's transformation under Nyerere. In conjuring these memories picturebooks themselves act as transformational objects, reifying Tanzanian national imaginary in young children. In demonstrating the existential might of picturebooks and the unconscious multigenerational impact of language policies, this study illustrates the importance of expanding the scope of our understanding of how language reifies collective identity aesthetics.

This study demonstrates that picturebooks in Tanzania potentially recall generational memories, widening the scope of the study of literacy, picturebooks, African and power studies.

In conversation with Mkufya I asked him where his inspiration for his books came from:

Well the stories are created actually. But also the children can give you ideas. If you are writing for children you must like children. You must live with them. Must know what they are interested in and the stories they tell themselves and the games they play. Their frustrations and their interests and what entertains them. If you know that you can know the idea a child would like what type of story a child would like to listen to.

Given that scholars now postulate that literacy is molded by and a product of social interactions that transpire within specific social conditions, Mkufya's comments that his stories arise out of the social conditions of children insinuates that stories, and the power sharing process of storytelling and identity creation, are more in the realm of children than previously realized.

Children are as much powerbrokers in society and realities as adults. In an ethnographic study of folktales in the Grassfields of Cameroon, Nicolas Argenti found that Oku children, instead of adults, were the tellers and keepers of folklore. The folktales told represent the children's creative way of grappling with their world. (Argenti, 2010). The realities reified by children in their retelling of folktales, or requests for stories as in Mkufya's case, demonstrates a reflection "on the morals of former generations while also critiquing the social complexities of their immediate environments" (Jirata, 2011, pg. 269). Mkufya's stories created in response to children's requests, and thus their realities, demonstrates the existential might of collective memory to permeate even young minds, and also the malleable nature of power for the source of storytelling, and thus identity negotiation—in an Arendtian and Jacksonian sense—to be in the hands of children. Children present a version of reality that writers like Mkufya then catalyze and

reify—realities are being made by children and adults alike. In addition to the conversation of storytelling affect in Africa, this study can facilitate future scholarship on the relationship between children, collective identity and language policies.

Reality as a communal space of power and memory permits future studies of collective unthought and societies to focus on the people that make up collective groups instead of the leaders that claim to be representations of them. Past studies of Nyerere's social engineering of Tanzania have fallen short in explaining its successes and failures because they focused too much on Nyerere as an individual and not on the creators and maintainers of societal memories and realities. Blommaert and Askew demonstrate how Tanzanian culture is created and maintained by individual Tanzanians, a finding which aligns with literacy studies' recent refocus on people as creators of their own literacies, and thusly their own societal positionings. In exploring Tanzanian picturebooks as an example of how Tanzanian identity is crafted and maintained this study has demonstrated that collective memories are passed down unconsciously through storytelling aesthetics. Led by the trickster Mkufya's three books were revealed to be unconscious memories of Ujamaa's impact on Tanzanian society. As embodiments of societal memories, tricksters help to carry reminiscences. As sources and tellers of stories as well, children, in a sense, act as real-life tricksters, carrying and whimsically altering collective memories in artful imagination.

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