BEYOND THROBBING DRUMS AND PIERCING FLUTES: *BUDIMA* ORAL PERFORMANCES AND THE CULTURAL RESILIENCE OF THE ZAMBEZI VALLEY TONGA

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Abstract

This article focuses on the Zambezi Valley Tonga's utilisation of budima to narrativise their search of unity, solidarity and cultural identity following dislocation. Budima is a musical ensemble for the Valley Tonga both in Zambia and Zimbabwe. Sadly, budima is slowly losing its place because young members have sided with eurocentrically gowned, Christian inspired modernity. The article explores social dynamics that give budima the cultural resilience amid vicious cultural forces. It analyses challenges encountered by relocated communities, adjustments they made and relationships they established with upland communities. Through the selected songs, the article demonstrates that there is more than throbbing drums and piercing flutes in budima performances. Using the Appraisal and Afrocentricity theories, the article engages the performance-centred approach to examine attitudes and beliefs that the Valley Tonga attach to the symbiotic relationship between the living and transitioned kin.

Keywords: *Budima,* Cultural Resilience, Appraisal, Afrocentricity, Zambezi Valley Tonga, Social Change, Relocation

Introduction

This article analyses *budima* oral performances of the Zambezi Valley Tonga, in the context of the encroachment of Western values during the colonial period and after, particularly, the impact of forced dislocation of these formerly riparian people. By focusing on three *budima* songs about a relocated Valley Tonga man, Sianchembe, the article interrogates the existential realities of the Valley Tonga in the aftermath of the relocation meant to pave way for the construction of the Kariba Dam in the 1950s. The objective is to appreciate the Valley Tonga's attempt to establish existential meaning in the context of their own intra-cultural tensions and the domineering Western cultural and religious onslaught against their territorial and cultural spaces. This is achieved through the analysis of Sianchembe's struggles to adaptation, using three songs, *'Sianchembe*,' '*Siambololo*' ('Kudu') and '*Pakamuna*' ('Witch's gun') in which Sianchembe is a protagonist. His adaptive strategies and struggles are conceptualised as a micro-representation of experiences and challenges the larger segment of the resettled Valley Tonga community faces in their new life. In the final analysis, this article turns out to be an exploration and appreciation of the artistic and intellectual ingenuity of a composing and performing community that employs drums, percussion, animal horns, dance and linguistic devices to communicate the biographical account of an individual in his attempt to secure existential meaning in the context of profound social change.

The study explores the social, economic and cultural dynamics that have enabled *budima* to live on this long in the life of the Valley Tonga people, to the extent of canonisation[1] despite the incompatibility with Christian beliefs, which youths have embraced and now denigrate the performance as closely associated with traditional funeral rites (Hofer, 2000). It is argued that it is through the *budima* performances that the Valley Tonga's cultural resilience is artistically articulated and celebrated and in the process, enabling them to celebrate and sustain their unique cultural identity, although seriously distorted by physical dislocation from the land where they have lived since the first millennium AD (Musonda, 2013; Chiinda, 2002).

Methodological and Theoretical Considerations

The study adopts a qualitative research methodological approach whose relevance lies in research, like the current one, that intends 'to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective, most often from the standpoint of the participant,' as observed by Hammarberg, Kirman and De Lacey (2016:499). Hammarberg et al., further elaborate that using various research techniques, qualitative research, *inter alia*, investigates 'beliefs, attitudes and concepts of normative behaviour' seeking to understand them from the knowledge and experience of participants and then make informed analyses and conclusions. Data was collected through ethnographic research techniques [2] that include in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and participatory observation during fieldwork conducted from 2017 to 2019. *Budima* performances analysed in this article are in Chief Mweemba's area on the Zambian side of the middle Zambezi Valley. The villages are grouped into two clusters. One cluster comprises the individual villages of Mwanakukalya (Chikamba), Machinga (Sulwegonde), Teenkania and Gamela (Pasa) as *Bamilonga*, while the other is made up of Bana Koongobe (Siamatimba), Siamatobo, Nang'amba, Mudodoli and Chimini (Mulungwa), as *Balwizi*. The terms *Balwizi* and *Bamilonga* denote people who lived on the banks of the Zambezi River and were resettled following the construction of the Kariba and the upland people who did not have to move, respectively. The three songs selected, *'Sianchembe*' '*Siambololo*' and '*Pakamuna*,' will form the basis of the analysis of the Valley Tonga's cultural resilience. The songs depict three different phases of the life of one individual, Sianchembe, in the context of his personal and his entire village's relocation at the time of the dam construction. For the purpose of this study, the phases are named as 'early days,' 'acclimatisation' and 'transitioning.' This song selection was done taking into account the songs' uniqueness, being the only *budima* songs that are biographical but mirroring the experiences of an entire cultural group.

The main analytical approach adopted for the *budima* performances is what Okpewho (1990:125) calls 'the performance-centred approach, which focuses not only on the physical scene

[1] In 2020, Budima was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity, under UNESCO, draft decision 8.b.12.

[2] Although perceived as a qualitative methodology for study of 'small societies' (Reeves et al., 2008; Naidoo, 2012), see Crowley-Henry (2009) and Sangasubana (2011) for reasons that make it a universal approach in the study of any given cultural element.

but also on other dynamics like the identity of the performers' and aims at enhancing performance interpretation. The lyrics of the songs studied are analysed as literary texts, exploring the figurative language used and interrogating it to reveal the meanings they embody.

Appraisal and Afrocentricity are adopted as the conceptual frameworks for the study. The former was proposed by White (1998) in his study of the language of evaluation in the media in order to reveal the stances, ideological and other persuasions of the story writer. Appraisal theory perceives communication of ideas, attitudes, feelings or emotions, values and ideological positions as the principal motivation in any story (Martin & Rose, 2000). In his study of how popular songs narrativise the post-2000 period in Zimbabwe, Musiyiwa (2013) extended the appraisal theory to the effective analysis of the language of popular songs. It is this theoretical and lyrical evaluation approach that has been adopted in this study of *budima* songs. The systemic functional linguistics grounded theory is relevant to the study as it analyses every identifiable linguistic element in a text in order to explain what it embodies. Of the theory's three main semantic domains namely; *attitude, engagement,* and *graduation*, *attitude* is deployed since it consists of the main linguistic tools, *affect*, *judgement and appreciation*, that explain the nature of the feelings, sentiments, opinions, stances, and others being conveyed.

Afrocentricity helps the study conceptualise any African phenomena from the vantage point of African history and culture. According to Asante (1998:1), it is a 'radical critique of the Eurocentric ideology' in many fields including, *inter alia*, 'inter-cultural communication, rhetoric, philosophy, linguistics, psychology, education, anthropology and history.' With the colonial project geared to efface, denigrate, suffocate and destroy African history, identity and culture, Afrocentricity became the most relevant theory to demonstrate how, through *budima* art, Valley Tonga life was not only negatively transformed by colonial experience but more importantly, the African people's spirited response to its vagaries. It places the owners of the art at the centre whenever debating the social significance or value of the art and culture (Ani, 1980). The article contributes towards demonstrating 'the potential of African orature to capture reality from the vantage point of authentic selfhood' (Gambahaya and Muwati, 2010:322).

Who are the Valley Tonga?

Valley Tonga history dates back to the Early Iron Age period when the Bantu-speaking peoples migrated into eastern, central and southern African from west Africa between 300 BC and 300 AD. In the Zambezi Valley, these iron users first settled in the early years of the Christian era (Fagan, 1963: 160; Robertson and Bradley, 2000; Musonda, 2012, 2013; Chiinda, 2002). From then, Valley Tonga culture evolved and especially being influenced and shaped by the riparian environment, the people lived in. Much later, significant changes in the life of the Valley Tonga were to be engendered by colonial conquest in general and more profoundly by the construction of the Kariba Dam between 1955 and 1959.

The Nature of the *Budima* Performing Villages

Budima musical display has carved itself a niche in the culture of the Valley Tonga as their number one identifying and identity-making artistic tradition. To date, it is rare to find a study of the Valley Tonga, which does not mention *budima* performance in one way or the other. Also called with equal fondness as *buntibe* or *ngoma buntibe, budima is* a popular communal performance consisting of dance, drumming, horning and singing performed by teams organised according to village clusters.[3] These teams are referred to as *matanga* (singular, *itanga*). *Budima* comprises a retinue of seven *ngoma* (drums) and as many sets of twelve *nyeele* (calibrated animal horn flutes) that produce a synchronised melody providing a rhythm for a particular song. It was inscribed in 2020 on the representative list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity. *Budima* was originally performed at funerals of adult men and elderly women only. However, while still performed at nearly all funerals, today, *matanga* are now invited to perform at any ceremony or festival, be it for the Valley Tonga or not. Freeing the performance of *budima* from the confines of the funeral greatly contributed to the popularisation and the recognition of the Valley Tonga identity, and how it has been (negatively) shaped by relocation. Participation in *budima* is open to all present but male members of the *tanga* are known to play *nyeele* and *ngoma,* while female members mostly sing, dance and mime the message(s) in the song. The collective nature of the *budima* creative process, perfectly typifies African aesthetics, which p'Bitek (1986:35-36), with particular reference to *orak* or *moko* dance among the Acholi of Uganda, describes as having no audience 'because every individual is an artist.' Both 'the men and women … create new tunes, and of course, the rhythm. But all the tunes are part of the singing of the poetry.' Composing, rehearsing and performing these songs takes time. The fact that the songs have nothing to do with a funeral at which they are performed is of particular interest as it explains why the performance is multi-contextual and collective, thus, crucial for the Valley Tonga cultural identity-making and the sustenance of their oral performance.

In the context of the Zambezi resettlement programme, the cluster of villages referred to as *Balwizi* here were in the second phase of relocation, which took place in 1958. The first phase of movements included the villages of Ndeleza, Siameja (Jenga) and Sinankumbi (Ndola), among others. While *Balwizi* were resettled in the *lusaka* (uplands), they identified relatives among *Bamilonga* whom they found already living there. Much as they may not have known each other before relocation, it was easy for the two groups to establish kinship on the basis of *mikowa,* a clan system based on matrilineal family arrangements. However, despite this kind of easy blending the two groups had some linguistic, adaptive and economic divides among them (thin as they may have been) that needed harmonisation for a complete merge to occur. Characterised not by a vast valley but hilly terrain, with small arable patches along Maaze River and smaller rivulets that fed into it, the new landscape hit *Balwizi* hard in their food security mechanisms. However, living together many years after relocation, differences between *Balwizi* and *Bamilonga* have since faded significantly. In any case, *Bamilonga* (People of the small rivers – in the uplands) and *Balwizi*

[3] According to focus group discussions, participants revealed that villages with common historical backgrounds formed the village groupings for the purpose of reaching desired numbers of players in the performances.

(People of the big river), mean the same thing, referring to their riparian space (land along the Zambezi River), the two lived on. The names embody the Valley Tonga's special spatial identity both before and after dislocation. As Mashingaidze (2019/2020:1) points out, landscapes are important because they 'offer the physical template for imagining identities.' However, the two keep on reminding each other of their different sub-identities and 'queer' habits in jocular and satirical but not discriminatingly hostile ways.[4] Such is typical of African oral performances because the performances are by and large meant to remind community members of the moral dos and don'ts of their culture. p'Bitek (1986:39) states that the artist proclaims the laws of society expressing them:

> *...in the most indirect language: through metaphor and symbol, in image and fable. He sings and dances his laws. … The body movement, the painting, the sculptures are his law books. The drums, the flutes, the horns, the strumming and plucking on the strings of the musical instruments, are the proclamations of his decrees.*

In the context of colonial domination, Achebe (1998:45) theorises the responsibility of an artist as that of a teacher who educates his African audiences that 'their past – with all its imperfections – was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them.' Budima performers perfectly fit into that role, as through their rendition of the tensions between the *Balwizi* and the *Bamilonga*, they educate their audiences of the infamous historical episode of relocation and its products such as the creation of tribal hatred, food insecurity, cultural alienation and distortion, and the permanence of having to live in a new settlement despite its unsuitability to human existence.

The Funeral and Other Contexts of *Budima* Performances

We have pointed out earlier to the multi-contextual performance of *budima* of which one of them is funeral. Funerals are characterised by a wide range of oratorical performances such as mourning songs, praise poetry recitals, speeches, folktale narration, casual conversation, musical dramas as well as ritual dramas. It is for this reason that Okpewho (1979) coined the term 'oral performances' to underscore the fact that the deliverance of oral art in Africa is by and large a performance. The deliverance is not limited to only verbal articulation but is supported by and embellished with bodily movements and musical instruments. The whole funeral is effectively oral, while a smaller part is composed of various non-verbal elements which are, however, either executions of oral, instructions or are orally executed. This is the reality of phenomena in a society in, which orality is the basis of communication. Ong (2002:10-11) makes a distinction between what he refers to as 'primary orality' and 'secondary orality,' where the former refers to oral communication 'of a culture totally untouched by any knowledge of writing or print' and the latter to orality that is complemented by writing and print as in modern societies. Whereas chirography has made

[4] There are various songs for both budima and chilimba as well as popular sayings that reflect the age long variations.

significant inroads into Valley Tonga society since colonisation, oral performances in the villages still largely resemble those of the past in primary oral cultures.

Funeral oral performances can be divided into three main categories – the ritualistic, the casual and the artistic or creative. The ritualistic performances are of a 'religious' nature, involving libations and appeals for divine intervention in the successful conduct of funeral rites as well as transfer and reception of the spirit of the deceased into the ancestral milieu. The activities we regard 'casual' are conversational and include *kujuzya*, *kuumbulizya* (*kubata maoko* in Shona), *kwaana*, *kwiizya*/*kuyooma*, among others. *Budima*, which is the pennant of this article, falls in the 'artistic' category which is the musical. One feature in this category is the prominence of mourning songs commonly referred to as dirges, performed as *chinyaanya* or *kweengula*, and *chilimba*, among the Valley Tonga. *Kweengula* songs are also performed for *chinyaanya*. The only difference is that *kweengula* are solo performances by elderly women seated around a funeral fire, while *chinyaanya*, like *budima*, is a mass performance.

Whereas *chinyaanya* songs are composed by known individuals or can be attributed to families and are performed exclusively at funerals, *budima* and *chilimba* are also performed during festive occasions. Both *budima* and *chilimba* songs are composed as community projects rather than individual or personal compositions like those for *chinyaanya*. They have to appeal to community interests and standards. Also, while an individual member of the performing *tanga* might initiate the composition, the whole creative process regarding the particular song is ongoing and left up to members of the community to add on to the collection of ideas and motifs as they see fit. The song becomes the intellectual property of the performing *tanga*. Achebe (1998:48) emphasises communal artistic production and ownership in Africa of tradition with reference to the Igbo's *mbari* art, describing it as a kind of hall of artistic exhibition produced by selected artists to create artistic products under the strict instruction of 'no attempt to claim, and even sometimes go to great lengths to deny, personal ownership of what they have created.' Songs in this category are composed mainly as popular satire targeting wayward conduct by any member of the community. The popularity of the songs depends on sensitiveness of the subject matter as well as the sensationalisation of the composition. In addition, how the culprit in the wayward conduct responds to the song may determine the song's lifespan. For instance, if the culprit reacts frivolously, such would fuel the song's popularity because the criticised person would appear to be rejecting moral rehabilitation. All the three musical performances are inclusive performances. However, only songs for *budima* and *chilimba* are communal. Thus, songs for the two may have no bearing on the funeral but serve either or both of the dual functions of a creative composition – to entertain and/or to educate. This is not surprising because within the mournful atmosphere, a tinge of benevolent spirits prevails as evidenced through the *bujwanyina* (joking cousinship) practice. This aspect is common among the Valley Tonga both in Zambia and Zimbabwe. In both communities *chilimba* is dominated by the youth, while *chinyaanya* is by women of mixed ages, principally young adults and the older women. Men may render support of their women with *kugawula* – the panegyric poetry performance. The inclusive carnival atmosphere of the

performance highlights *budima*'s unifying role in the context of the challenges of relocation and its centrifugal tendencies.

Budima Performance Organisation and Function

As earlier stated, *budima* is an elaborate musical ensemble comprising a principal instrumental retinue of seven drums and multiple sets of *nyeele,* which Reynolds (1968:216) calls 'end blown flutes' each containing twelve pieces that produce different notes. The seven drums and twelve flutes all have specific names each. The drums are *gogogo, kaliliku, ntakuntanda, muntundu, chamujanja, mpininga* and *nyina*). *Nyeele* made out of antelope horns (impala, eland, bushbuck and such others) are ascribed names – *mukwele, mpindakati, nseenseku, sikalumbu, siamupa, ifuba diini, ifuba pati, simulumansikili, chinkongwe, siamwinkula, vuntilwa* and *mpaaku*. Other instruments include *nsaka* (rattles), *milangu* (hand bells), *zipyololo* and *mpemba* (varieties of whistles), as well as *myeembo* (trumpets/vuvuzelas). Indeed, in reference to the ubiquity of music and in every sphere of African life, Rodney's (1982) observation that 'Africa is a continent of drums and percussion' is succinctly accurate. Young men and those up to the mid-forties play the principal instruments (drums and *nyeele*), while women play *nsaka, mpemba* and *zipyololo,* and dance, while singing out lyrics of the songs. Elderly and other men play *milangu* and *myeembo,* while engaging in *kuzemba*. *Kuzemba* is a mock demonstration of close quarter battle skill in which spear wielding men carrying *ntobo* (shields) and *nkoli* (knobkerries) show off their hunting and fighting skills. A people's culture is largely shaped by the nature of the physical environment the people live in. Animal horn instruments in the performance mirror hunting, is one economic branch in the cultures of the savannah.

As a mass event, *budima* observes leadership at levels of distributing or retrieving *nyeele*, choice of song, when to start, pause or end performance, and control of movement or direction the performance should go to as there is no fixed arena. The leader who controls movement is usually a senior member of the *tanga,* who is an active participant in the performance. This is a person who is respected for his age, commitment to the cultural element, bravery, fighting skills and general sound frame of mind. Such a person is a recognised coordinator of the ensemble, since it is made up of several villages coming together. Since it is not a formal appointment, the role has no permanent holder. As such, there is always such a person at any given time. One such person for the Mwanakukalya *tanga* was one Malambo Siakuminwa (1918 – 1993) who the younger generations popularly called 'Control,' for his leadership abilities and the respect he commanded. As p'Bitek (1986: 41) observes, 'every human being is an artist,' but 'some are greater than others.' In a typical *budima* performance, skilled men play the main instruments, others, such as women and children sing the lyrics and dance along to the throbbing drums as the mob moves around the grounds of performance. Women, especially enrich percussions with their *nsaka* (rattles), which they play along with the rhythm of the drumbeats and song. At intervals, *nyeele* sets break off one set at a time from the main *tanga,* which pauses play. The break-off set of a particular level wanders off blowing their *nyeele* in rhythm. When it returns, the rest pick up the drumming, blowing of *nyeele* and singing. Then, *nyina* booms and the whole scenario becomes a thrill. Two drums are

known to regulate the tempo of performance – *muntundu* (lead) and *nyina* (bass). While the break-off set is on its turn, men play their *myeembo* (vuvuzela horns – *mweembo*, singular) and perform *kuzemba* (demonstration of combat skills with *nkoli*, *masumu* and *ntobo* – knobkerries, spears and shields, respectively).

At funerals, especially *Mapwayila*, the sound of *budima* elevates everyone's spirits to very high levels. It bonds them into one unified mass of sharing a common purpose: to send off a loved one to the next sphere, the metaphysical world. It is a colourful farewell treat for the deceased. It is no surprise, therefore, that observers like Colson (1971) see it as an attraction to all including immediate members of the bereaved family. The sound of the throbbing drums and piercing sounds of the flutes fill the air with the big drum, *nyina*, with booming echoes. It is the drum whose sound announces the death of a senior member of the community, whenever such occurs. Beyond all this is assurance that the new entrant into the world of the ancestors will play their new role effectively. Thus, *budima* is the carriage that takes the deceased dignitary's spirit to the spirit world, according to Valley Tonga beliefs. However, it is important to note here that performance of *budima* at funerals is more a matter of solidarity with the bereaved than anything else. The village in which the funeral occurred take it as an obligation, while neighbouring clusters also feel the same. The solidarity was further demonstrated by self-catering on the part of the *matanga* that participate. Each brought their own food – mealie meal, goat, chicken or even an ox. The hosts ensure that cooking facilities including water are available. In the context of the present setting, if the funeral was in a Mwanakukalya cluster village, the *bana Koongobe tanga* was expected as guest and vice versa.

Budima Song Trilogy and Memorialisation of Dislocation

As argued in this article, beyond the throbbing drums and beneath the lyrics of *budima* songs, there is a tragic narrative of the Valley Tonga's experiences after relocation to the uplands. Therefore, *budima* oral performances are in a sense a cultural memorialisation of the historical and unfortunate incident of the Valley Tonga's permanent displacement. As pointed out earlier, the narrative is being told through the life endeavours of Samuel (*Samuyele*) Sianchembe Chikumbwi who stood out stoically as an independent individual in the new area of post-Kariba Dam resettlement until his demise nearly four decades later. Indeed, Martin and Rose (2008:67) identify the purpose of a narrative as the illustration of how protagonists confront challenges in their lives in order to resolve them. Unfortunately, in spite of Sianchembe's relentless courage and determination, he fails to overcome the challenges of dislocation as depicted in all the three songs, especially in the last two, 'Siambololo' and 'Pakamuka', which are basically lamentations of the tragedy of relocation. The main themes of the dislocation narrative in the three songs include intra-tribal conflicts, disruption of Valley Tonga economic way of life, disintegration of Valley Tonga religious and cultural beliefs, existential entrapment and environmental alienation.

The first song, whose events are set in the 1950s when the displacement was taking place, is merely referred to as 'Sianchembe.' The song is weaved around a ferocious catch in one of his snares, a leopard. When he went to inspect his traps, the leopard, still with snare wire around it

pounced on him causing terrible injury. The commotion attracted people to his rescue, but they, too, got a share of the cat's wrath before they finally managed to disable it. This provided an excellent theme for *Bamilonga* to poke fun at the whole *Balwizi* community. The nature of mockery included dullness, ignorance, naivety, overzealousness, and even desecration of the sacred Kamalumbu grove.

Sianchembe

Yee, Sianchembe	Yee Sianchembe
Wakwiitanga musise mulavu alakwe	He treated it like *musise* instead of the lion it is also!
Yee Sianchembe	Yee Sianchembe
Nzilangalanga banaKoogobe	These people of Koongobe are daft
Aisa bali mwizi?	Do they know it?
Nkondo kuli Kamalumbu yoobana	There is trouble at Kamalumbu, children
Tamubwene kweenda ba Dyaabbu	Can't you see, even Dyaabbu is walking there
Kuli Kamalumbu, Sianchembe	At Kamalumbu, Sianchembe
Kateensi Dinkayi	Had it not been for Dinkayi
Wali kunoofwa a Cheni	Even Cheni could have died

The second song '*Siambololo*,' sees Sianchembe relocate his game traps to a much 'safer' and further away place, Kamitondo, a school which had been constructed near Kamalumbu grove. Kamitondo and Kamalumbu are rivulets that pour into Zimu and Maaze, respectively. This song is set years later in the mid-1970s, while the first incident, the leopard encounter, occurred in the latter half of 1959. In the current scenario, one of Sianchembe's traps caught *muzilawa/siambololo* (kudu). Unfortunately, his brother-in-law got to the traps earlier and appropriated the catch. As he was going to inspect his traps, Samuyele met the thieves, but never suspected that what they were carrying on their donkeys was actually his own catch. When he got to the scene, reality of the theft dawned on him. He followed them and when he confronted them, they beat him up. In the song, he is complaining about the theft and the beating he suffered, and wonders where he would go to since his own relatives have resorted to harassing him. However, there is a persona switch between Sianchembe's voice and that of *Bamilonga*, which is heard expressing shock at the lawlessness of *Balwizi* who do not only steal but also beat up those they steal from:

Siambololo

Takw'uubba omuno tubamilonga	No one steals, among us, of the uplands
Tuyowa boma	We respect the law
Yee, nubana ba Siapepe	Yee, you Siapepe's children
Njowambayi, bama?	Where will I present my grievance to, oh mother!
Kuli Kamitondo	At Kamitondo
Imunyama wangu	My catch!
Bina Gwadu ulaseka muciz'aangu	Gwadu's mother, my sister is laughing

Nansya ninzi camukonda	Wonder what she finds amusing
Simabbekule zifulo nzyabaalumi	Simabbekule, knives are for men
Siambolol'aangu	My siambololo
Koonse kweenda nkwacaalumi	Even her step is that of men
Imunyama waangu!	Oh, my catch!
Yee, nubana baSiapepe	Yee, you Siapepe's children
Njookkalayi bama?	Where else will I relocate to, mother?

In the third song, Sianchembe has transitioned and like in all other instances, death among the Valley Tonga is not without the hand of a witch or wizard. Similarly, the cause of the death is 'well known' such that through the song, the suspect is being admonished. Pakamuna is believed to be a wizard's killing gun and the song is popularly referred to as *Pakamuna*. The anonymous persona laments at the death of such a resourceful and handy person whose speed when carrying out errands is compared to that of the hyena. The voice wonders why the wizard did not take his own sister, Demba, an invalid, instead of bewitching a useful person. In the song, all the good things about Sianchembe are relived portraying him as a man of the people during his days on the living side of the life continuum:

Pakamuna

Inche ngwan'aakamuunina?	Oh, please, who caused this on him?
Pakamuna, yee, yee, yee	*Pakamuna* – the witch's gun yee, yee, yee
Iwe, nuwa mpepe zyamatwi	Hey, you with long ears
Pakamuna kaka	*Pakamuna,* please
Walaaluno lwasuntwe	He had the speed of the hyena
Pakamuna, kaka	*Pakamuna,* please
Ulaamulimuunzi ooyo Demba *mbaboobo*?	What job can that Demba do in her state?
Ooo Sianchembe	Ooo, Sianchembe
Pakamuna, kaka	*Pakamuna,* please
Yabuka nkondo mukalya	War has broken out at the Palace
Pakamuna kaka	*Pakamuna,* please
Tuzembe Mweembe	Let's dance the war dance, Mweembe
Pakamuna kaka	*Pakamuna,* please

Life in Displacement as Reflected in the Songs

The construction of the Kariba Dam started in 1955 as a federal project of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Such a massive project had catastrophic ecological consequences. The spatial displacement deeply affected the once riparian Valley Tonga. Mashingaidze (2019/2020:6) notes that the relocation:

> *Contradicted the colonial administrators' high modernist rhetoric of progress and development that linked the dislocation with improvement of livelihoods and exposures to amenities of modernity such as schools, hospitals and agricultural extension services*

> *in the new locales. The relocations were haphazard and hasty because highly technical reconfigurations of spatial usage and science-based planning … did not inform the … Tonga's settlements and livelihood opportunities in the lusaka.*

One of the latent consequences of dislocation was the promotion of tribal and inter-tribal conflicts. This is seen in the song 'Sianchembe' in which the *Bamilonga* ridicule the *Balwizi* as being dull. The line *Nzilangalanga banaKoongobe (These people of Koongobe are daft*), expresses this negative evaluation. From the appraisal perspective, the statement is in the semantic domain of (negative) *attitude* defined as meanings by which texts attach an inter-subjective assessment to specific participants and processes by references to either emotional responses or to systems of socio-culturally determined systems of values (Musiyiwa, 2013:12). That the entire *Balwizi* community is lampooned for the errors of one of theirs is typical of colonialist labelling of Africans often derided as backward, savage and primitive. The phrase *banaKoongobe* (people of Koongobe) constitutes a linguistic resource for negative *judgement*. Musiyiwa (2013:12) states that as a tenet of the appraisal theory, *judgement* is explained as the meaning, which denotes approval or non-approval of human conduct by reference to the moral and cultural norms of society. Through Sianchembe's failure to properly handle the leopard caught in his trap, *Balwizi*'s conduct comes under negative scrutiny – they are a clumsy and foolish lot who *Wakwiita anga musise mulavu alakwe* (He thought it was a fish when it is, in fact, as bad as a lion.). The line condemns *Balwizi* as people with poor judgement. They cannot fathom the danger that a leopard pauses and think that confronting the dangerous cat is as harmless as catching fish in the Zambezi River. On the surface, *Bamilonga*'s satirical attacks against *Balwizi* may be taken as the usual inter-tribal and inter-ethnic hostility common between and among people of different ethnic, regional and linguistic backgrounds so common in Africa and beyond. However, the colonial context in which attacks against their fellow ethnic members by *Bamilonga* take place, should also be interrogated in order to unearth the context's contribution to worsening intra-tribal interaction and solidarity. While the two names *Bamilonga* and *Balwizi* share the same meaning (the riparian people) as pointed out earlier, the physical dislocation of the latter to the uplands created a division between the two resulting in sub-identities constructed on the basis of the dislocation. With particular reference to Shona sub-groups, Ranger (1986) has argued that the nature of tribalism taking place in the colonial period was a creation of the colonial regime's divide and rule tactics. The physical spaces they occupied did not carry cultural identities separating them from the main broader Shona identity but merely denote the geographical locations they lived in. *Bamilonga*'s scornful attitudes towards *Balwizi* seem to suggest tribal hostility and would never promote solidarity but more hatred and the widening of the divide between them. What is obvious here is that the arrival of *Balwizi* in the *Bamilonga* territory is a permanent reality and no longer transitory and cannot be soothed by hospitality practices inherent in the whole Tonga culture.

The songs '*Sianchembe*' and '*Siambololo*' deal with the theme of the disruption of the economic way of life and the erosion of moral values among the Valley Tonga. The eviction of indigenous people from the ancestral lands and relocation elsewhere directly interferes with their economic way of life. People's way of life comes from their daily interaction with their immediate

environment. Hunting and fishing were especially important branches of the Valley Tonga economy. Sianchembe was a regular hunter and before relocation, was also a fisherman. Thus, hunting is central in the two songs. Subjecting such a determined hunter to ridicule after relocation symbolises the uneconomically rewarding new life in the uplands. The animals from which *budima nyeele* are made out of, have ironically been replaced by the leopard that he ends up catching, symbolising the new colonial authorities who considered themselves invincible and brutally treated Africans as they sought to continue with their economic way of life. Thus, the *siluwe/sianemba* (leorpard) in the song is a linguistic resource for negative *appreciation* – an Appraisal semantic domain, which refers to the evaluation of non-human beings such as animals as well as objects employing principles of aesthetics or other social value systems (White, 2009). Sianchembe's decision to move to a new hunting area after the humiliating leopard incident is not helpful either because in the song '*Siambololo*', his kudu catch is stolen, again, ironically by his brother-in-law and his own sister. The fact that Sianchenbe is further humiliated by his own brother-in-law shows the deplorable extent of intra-tribal conflicts that now pits close relatives against each other. It is unheard of and an infringement of taboo for a man to beat his wife's brother. Thus, the stealing and beating incidents in the song activate negative evaluation of the *judgement* type against Sianchembe's sister and brother-in-law. It smacks of the demise of African kinship and respect under colonialism. Africans lost respect for each other as they were forced to only respect the white man. The statement, *Takw'uubba omuno tubalonga, tuyowa* BOMA (No one steals among us of the uplands, we respect the law) is an expression of shock at the behaviour of Sianchembe's sister and her husband and, therefore, a value of *affect. Bamilonga* are surprised why *Balwizi*, Sianchembe's close relatives for that matter, have abandoned their *buntunyina* (Ubuntu) philosophy that underscores humanness and mutual interaction. The rhetorical question, *Njowambayi, bama?* (Where will I present my grievance to, oh mother?), is a resource for *affect,* expressing the demise of *buntunyina*-based traditional Valley Tonga justice. Unfortunately, there are only three *Balwizi* elders left, Dinkayi, Dyaabbu and Siapepe, the last of whom is ironically Sianchembe's brother-in-law's father. It can thus, be argued that Valley Tonga dislocation had a negative impact on Valley Tonga *buntunyina/*moral values. With only a few elders left, moral degeneration will worsen as the few remaining elders, the moral guardians, are not numerically equipped to remind the younger generation about the importance of African moral values.

The fact that Sianchembe's sister is involved in the stealing of his snared kudu is another shock for him. Simabbekule even goes to hold a knife to skin the animal! The *affective* negative evaluation of his sister, 'Simabbekule *zifulo nzyabaalumi!*' (Simabbekule, knives are for men!), is also a resource for negative *judgement* because a woman is usurping the role of a man. Hunting and skinning of animals was a man's role in African tradition. But now, in the desolate and amenities scarce uplands, gender roles are melting, women are being masculinised, they steal trapped game and use weapons such as hunting knives. Besides violation of kinship taboos, we also see the infringement of environmental taboos. The Kamalumbu grove is sacred and stands as the only oasis of life in the desolate uplands. That Sianchembe goes to set his animal snares in the grove is a violation of a taboo. Environmental taboos are found in virtually all African cultures

and are meant to regulate the human-ecology relationship to ensure that humans live at peace with their environment, which sustains them economically and spiritually. Taboo infringement has consequences. Sianchembe's attack by the leopard can be taken as such punishment. His ridicule by *Bamilonga* becomes justified from that angle. If this source water dries up, it exacerbates the desolation, leading to the lack of more and more amenities. As a figure of speech, the Kamalumbu grove is deployed to illustrate the sharp contrast between the vast and perennial waters of the Zambezi River the Valley Tonga used for their life sustenance and the small grove without enough water for the forcibly resettled people. Clearly, very little if any concern was shown by the designers of the project for human-animal conflict that would emerge in the resettlement areas as a result of limited natural resources like water. As Ndlovu (2016:5) points out, 'the feasibility study carried out by the World Bank in 1956 virtually excluded mention of the social impacts on the people of the river.' Whereas water was abundant along the Zambezi River, this was not the case in the uplands. Very few places in the uplands had water all year round and such were the commons for both humans and animals.

In the song 'Sianchembe' the statement '*Nkodo kuli* Kamalumbu…' (There is trouble at Kamalumbu…) is a negative evaluation of Sianchembe's behaviour. It constitutes negative judgement because he has violated an important taboo. The word '*nkondo*' (trouble) activates negative *appreciation*; Sianchembe is a troublemaker according to *Bamilonga*'s view. It was not normal for the senile elders to visit hunting grounds as we find *Balwizi* elders do in the song *Sianchembe*. The satirical statement '*Tamubwene kweenda ba Dyaabbu*' (Can't you see? Even Dyaabbu is walking there!), activates linguistic resources for negative judgement on the part of *Balwizi* elders. However, such are the new existential realities in the new settlements. The *Balwizi*'s behaviour evaluated as negative against African value systems is taking place against the backdrop of severely diminished resources in the uplands, especially food. Thus, cultural taboos, customs and norms are being violated, not willingly, but because of the prevailing circumstantial forces.

The song *Pakamuna* (The witch's gun), laments the existential entrapment and environmental alienation of the Valley Tonga, which culminates in their physical and cultural death. The tragic demise of Sianchembe in spite of his spirited fight to achieve existential meaning in a desolate environment being lamented by *Bamilonga* in this song, signifies the insurmountability of the new environments' predicaments. Thus, the word '*pakamuna*' (the witch's gun) can be taken as a metaphor for the arid areas of dislocation and a metaphorical resource for negative *appreciation*. They are a death trap like a witch's *pakamuna*. Far from being areas the Valley Tonga 'would find the upland air bracing after centuries of breathing the swampy vapours of the Gwembe Valley' (Mashingaidze, 2019/2020:6), as one Eurocentric *Time Magazine* journalist claimed, these were areas of both physical and cultural entrapment and consequently death. From another angle, *pakamuna* is a resource for negative *judgement* when one takes the witch as a metaphor for the Europeans. The colonisers' greediness for fertile land and scenic environments in Africa is well documented[5] and marks arguably the main and most emotive

[5] See Ranger (1999).

conflict between the indigenous people and the invaders. They alienated the Zambezi Valley from the riparian Tonga to create a waterscape for their economic and leisure benefits. While some commentators on the construction of the dam acknowledge its negative impact to wildlife, they trivialised its impact on the Tonga people. They acknowledged the dam as 'an atrocity against nature' but 'which was morally resolved when the Zambezi Valley healed itself into a new natural landscape of leisure and refreshment from industrial technology,' (Mashingaidze, 2019/2020:8). Meanwhile, the Tonga and their river based religion around the benevolent Nyaminyami River God are dismissed. In his novel, *The Shadow of the Dam* (1961), David Howarth constructs the Valley Tonga were as a backward people whose survival partly depended on the capriciousness and kindness of their mythical water deity, *Nyaminyami* snake. JoAnn Mcgregor attacks the revered legendary snake as non-existent but a mere 'creation of the imagination by successive generations of Europeans, which is now peddled through the tourist and heritage industries along the Zambezi River,' (Mashingaidze, 2019/2020:8).

The contrast between Sianchembe's good deeds and the witch's *pakamuna* exposes European writers' lies about bringing civilisation to Africa. The angry rebuke '*Iwe, nuwampepezyamatwi*!' (Hey, you with long ears!), constitute negative *appreciation* against *pakamuna* (the metaphorical European colonisation). The resource '*Walaaluno lwasuntwe*,' (He had the speed of a hyena) is a value for positive judgement on Sianchembe's actions, which contrasts those of the Europeans. It appears the death of Sianchembe, the symbol of Valley Tonga resilience in the adverse conditions of the uplands, has greatly incensed his fellow tribal men and women mourning his demise to the extent of simulating the war dance. '*Tuzembe Mwembe*!' (Let's dance the war dance, Mweembe!) is thus, a resource for positive *affect*, a mobilisation communicative technique to rally the Valley Tonga. But whom do the Valley Tonga want to fight? Composed in 1994, thirty years after Zambia's independence, the song laments the continued dislocative conditions they still experience. This means that the new government of Kenneth Kaunda and indeed successive governments did nothing to address the plight of the displaced Valley Tonga. The value '*Yabuka nkondo mukalya*' (War has broken out at the Palace), activates negative judgement against the new government that took over from erstwhile colonial masters. It has inherited the Europeans' habit of a relentless war whose aim is the Valley Tonga's permanent restriction to the desolate uplands.

However, despite the apparent negative insinuations on the intelligence of *Balwizi*, we see *Bamilonga* acknowledging the power of sticking together demonstrated by the former when they mobilised to rescue one of their own, Sianchembe, who was in trouble. The unity exhibited by *Balwizi* in times of crises is epitomised in the proverb '*zyaluminwa zyayanzana*' (When attacked, they [zebra] stick together); a brand of unity in which age is no restriction as contained in the line '*Tamukubwene kweenda ba Dyaabbu*!' (Can you not see, even Dyaabbu has joined!). The line is a value for positive *judgement* against the communal spirit that traditionally has informed African societies. The solidarity exhibited by the Valley Tonga in the past during times of crises is what the *budima* performers, call for, now. The bickering that threatens to tear *Balwizi* and *Bamilonga*

apart is typical of the Ubuntu philosophy, which Khomba (2011:129) aptly captures when he observes that:

> *In a hostile environment, it is only through such community solidarity that hunger, isolation, deprivation, poverty and any emerging challenges can be survived, because of the community's brotherly and sisterly concern, cooperation, care, and sharing.*

It is unity and solidarity that the Valley Tonga need to fight the trepidation of dislocation than ridiculing and lampooning each other. If more Sianchembes can be created among them, perhaps the challenges of forced relocation can be mitigated. Thus, as Muwati (2015:23) states, the songs demonstrate the 'Tonga people's manipulation of orality as an avenue for building and regenerating group image, self-esteem and collective identity' long battered by alienation from once a riverine environment.

Conclusion

This article analysed *budima* oral performances in an attempt to establish how the Valley Tonga appropriate the popular performance to chronicle their historical experiences in the context of displacement engendered by the construction of the Kariba Dam in the 1950s. It was shown that although initially *budima* was a funeral performance, with the advent of colonialism and precipitation of social change, the oral performance has since assumed multi-contextual performance. The community performance joined by both men and women and composed of dance, song and instrumentation aesthetically, *budima* is quite a scintillating art form which today functions to construct Valley Tonga identity, solidarity and a vehicle for the storage and articulation of their historical experiences. The analysis of a trilogy of *budima* songs about the life experiences of Sianchembe, a relocated *walwizi*, revealed that the protagonist's experiences mirror the new but tragic life of relocation the Valley Tonga experienced due to dam construction, characterised by tribal hatred, scarcities in the desolate uplands and cultural denigration. It was argued that *budima* is appropriated to enact the Valley Tonga's stoical submission to the new colonial and postcolonial order, which they clearly understand is not of their own making but an imposition from external (and internal) forces of domination.

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