

**Reconciling Pre-Colonial and Post-Independence Identities
in African: An Analysis of
Fred Ssebatta's Song "Ggwanga Mujje" ("Mobilization Drums")**

by

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ABSTRACT

The problem at hand is that even after Uganda gained independence, Buganda still maintains its ambitions, to preserve its pre-colonial status despite Uganda's dominant position over the kingdom. It is this situation that puts the Baganda into a dilemma as to which of the two entities the individual Muganda's identity should be defined. This article examines how a Luganda popular singer- Fred Ssebatta presents a view that it is possible to reconcile Bugandan and Ugandan nationalism so as to create a better identity which will enable the Baganda and other Ugandans to live in harmony as citizens of Uganda. The study applied an interpretive textual critical and analytical methodological approach to relate the message with the prevailing circumstances of the Baganda. In addition, the researcher held an interview with the singer to correlate his views with those expressed in the song. The study also employed the concept of counter-ideology as advanced by Macridis (1986), which is related to the theory of ideology propounded by Karl Marx (1932; 1959; 1990) and Louis Althusser (1989:239- 50). Macridis presents a view that ideology is oftentimes used as a tool of manipulation by those in power against their opponents, and therefore, there are always counter-ideologies that emerge to establish transformative change within the system so as to do away with perceived forms of oppression. The literature review comprised of information about the history of Buganda and Uganda, nationalism, the Luganda popular song and the theory of ideology. The justification for the study is that since there are many other African countries facing a similar situation like that of Uganda, the solutions suggested may also apply to them. The findings from the analysis of the song and interview is that reconciliation has already started. The conclusion is that Ssebatta is already influenced by the counter-ideology of republicanism and employs the media of popular song to urge the Baganda and all other Ugandans to embrace it so as to forge a new national identity bonding all Ugandans.

Keywords: Baganda, Identity, Nationalism and Popular song.

INTRODUCTION

The central focus of the relationship between the Kingdom of Buganda and the Republic of Uganda is the desire on the part of Buganda to recuperate its status as a full-fledged monarchy in

the face of the growing republican nationalism that brings together all the ethnic groups that form Uganda within common boundaries. The problem began in the transition from pre-colonial to post-colonial history, when the colonial rulers incorporated all ethnic groups in the region into common geographical boundaries (Kabwegyere 1974; Mayiga 2009; and Simba 1996).

At the core of the dilemma in question is the concept of identity and the way the Baganda, on the one hand, and Ugandans, on the other, apply it to their circumstances. Identity refers to the unique values that characterize an individual or a community and that, therefore, sets it apart in relation to other individuals or communities (Benveniste, 1991: 32-35). To put it differently, individuals and nations are unique because they are endowed with different backgrounds, histories, aspirations, and ideological orientations. In this case Buganda and Uganda have distinct historical and ideological backgrounds that form foundation for their disparities.

As it will be expounded on later in this article, the Kingdom of Buganda traces its origin to the fifth century AD, when it was known as Muwawa. The name “Buganda” replaced that of “Muwawa” in 1200 AD after the overthrow of King Bemba Musota the 36th king by King Kintu, who then came to be known as the founder of Buganda. It was from this time that Buganda began operating on leadership system based on monarchism. Since there was no any other competing ideology, monarchism remained the sole or dominant ideological orientation for all the Baganda and all the other communities that Buganda went on conquering.

Uganda, on the other hand, was established as a colony by the British Empire as a consequence of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 (Kabwegyere (1974: 24) and Nsoby (1998 :10)). Therefore, the formation of “Uganda Colony” by the British Empire, which later became a country with a republican ideology was a much later development hence making the republican ideology a counter-ideology to that of Bugandan monarchism.

From this point of view, therefore, the conflicts that characterize Buganda and Uganda have to do with the statuses they occupy as specific national identities. The Baganda define their identity as a community primarily through a clan system that serves to entrench the concept of Buganda as a monarchy. Bugandan social life revolves around the conceptualization of the Kabaka (or King) as the ultimate political authority and decision maker. The clans constitute a hierarchy or relationships that involve practically every Muganda in the service of the Kingdom under the leadership of the Kabaka (Mayiga, 2009). On the other hand, Ugandans define their identity

based on the concept of republicanism as understood within the context of Unitarianism and democratic rule. Ugandan social life revolves around collaboration between the Executive, the Legislature, and the Judiciary, within circumstances whereby the President is responsible for day-to-day management of the nation. It follows, therefore, that as long as the two communities remain irretrievably confined within their respective conceptualizations of their identity, they are bound to differ with each other on many fundamental issues.

As a measure to manage the identity dilemma, in 1900, the British colonial government signed an agreement with the Kabaka (King) of Buganda whereby Buganda would retain its status as a kingdom in exchange for its support of the colonial government's objective of extending its powers over all of East Africa (Mayiga 2009:20). The agreed upon arrangements seemed to work until 1962, when Uganda gained its independence from British colonial rule, and the Kabaka was appointed President of Uganda while doubling as the King of Buganda, whereas Dr. Apollo Milton Obote became the Prime Minister of Uganda. However, the situation became turbulent in 1966, when the two leaders fell out over political disagreements that laid the foundation for the problematic circumstances that characterize the relationship between the Kingdom and the Republic today.

The relationship between the Republic of Uganda and the Kingdom of Buganda is of particular interest to observers because the tension between the two political entities puts the citizens in an identity predicament. On the one hand, the aim of the Republic of Uganda is to bring all Ugandans together as a cohesive nation, as underscored by the Uganda National anthem, which states: "United free for liberty, / Together we'll always stand" (ll. 3-4). While on the other, Buganda would like to exist within Uganda as a semi-autonomous institution based on its traditional social, economic, and political structures. Fostering the unity of all Ugandans into one nation state, without allowing the Kingdom of Buganda its former pre-colonial status in the region, contravenes the interests of the Baganda and creates an identity dilemma.

Like most post-independence African countries, Uganda is made up of a multiplicity of ethnic groups that existed as independent nations in the pre-colonial era and that were grouped together rather haphazardly by the ruling colonial government to constitute the country as a "postcolonial nation-state." To the Baganda, the situation presents two forms of dilemmas. First, their identity,

as Baganda and their Bugandan nationalism are at stake. Some Baganda find themselves entangled between Bugandan nationalism and Ugandan nationalism. Secondly, the historical and cultural disparities that mark the ethnic groups as unique socio-cultural entities and differentiate them from one another appears to be a serious roadblock for them to come together as one nation of Uganda.

Realizing the gravity of the matter, the Luganda popular singers decided to employ the medium of song representing various perspectives to the situation at different epoch. One of such singers is Fred Ssebatta in his song *Ggwanga Mujje* (Mobilization Drums) produced in 1995 in which he advances the view that Ugandans should embrace a reconciliatory approach if they are to live together as one nation. He puts pressure on all Ugandans, including the Baganda, to unite behind their common identity as “Ugandans” for the sake of forging a strong and united country. He argues that it is possible for all Ugandans to appreciate good aspects from each culture to come up with one national culture representing all Ugandans.

The foregoing explanation about the relationship between the Kingdom of Buganda and the Republic of Uganda and the way it impacts on its citizens provide a viable need for singers like Ssebatta to sensitize the citizens for the post-independence dilemma of conflicting identity to be resolved.

Statement of the problem

This study argues that the relationship between the Kingdom of Buganda and the Republic of Uganda is of conflicts which are ideological in nature. It also observes that these conflicts can best be analyzed ideologically from the point of view of literature. In so far as literature is concerned, among the most important genres through which the ideological divide that separates the two political entities can be studied is the Luganda popular song. However, none of the scholarly works available on Bugandan oral literature has delved into the area. It is upon this view that the current study sought to fill this intellectual gap in the available literature by unearthing the knowledge contained in the song with specific regard to the ideological conflict that generally characterize the relationship between Buganda and Uganda.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to interrogate how the ideological conflicts are transformed into identity dilemma among the Ugandan communities and to find out the suggestions for reconciliation forwarded through music by Fred Ssebatta. It aimed at finding out the means through which the singer proposes to achieve reconciliation as a solution for the identity dilemma not only to the Baganda but also to involve the rest of all Ugandan ethnic groups or nationalities.

Research Question

The study seeks to answer the question: How does music mediate identity conflicts between the pre-colonial and the post-independence political structures in Uganda?

Significance of the study

The study of great significance because, by virtue of the fact that they are drawn from within the Luganda popular song, which is the literature of the communities concerned, they move the discussion beyond the findings of those who have looked at the problem from the point of view of the other social sciences who have failed to offer lasting solution. In general, the findings underscore the important role that the popular song has played as a medium through which the counter-ideology of republicanism is constructed and perpetuated within the kingdom of Buganda and the republic of Uganda.

Literature Review

The Luganda popular song, as a literary genre, is a subsection of Ugandan popular song which in turn falls under African oral literature. For the sake of this article, the literature review focuses directly on the Luganda popular song but it also reviews texts on the background information about the formation of Buganda and Uganda, the definitions of terms such as Nationalism, Nation, Nation-State, Colonial-State and information about the theory of ideology.

Historical records indicate that the Baganda belong to a broader Bantu community which inhabits the interlacustrine region along with other groups such as the Basoga and Banyankole of Uganda, the Bahaya and the Banyamwezi of Tanzania, and the Luhya and Nandi of Kenya, among others. The Baganda community occupied the region around the north-west of Lake Victoria, known in

the indigenous language as Nalubaale. The area is located in central Uganda, which is part of eastern Africa.

According to Nsobya (1998: 10), the Baganda were formerly known as *Abalasa Ngeye*, which, translated into English, reads: “Colobus Monkey Shooters.” The Balasa Ngeye Kingdom, according to the author, was at first known as Muwawa, which traced its history to the fifth century AD, when King Tonda, its founder, established his palace at Mawokota near Mbale. The name “Buganda” replaced that of “Muwawa” in 1200 AD after the overthrow of King Bemba Musota – who is said to have been the 36th king of *Balasa Ngeye* – by King Kintu –the founder of Buganda. Once Kintu brought peace back to the Kingdom, he renamed it Buganda to honour Ntege Nalusiri Buganda, a previous King celebrated for his exemplary leadership. As time went by, Buganda kingdom went on expanding through conquests to include parts of what is present day Northern part of Tanzania and Bunyoro. This suggests that individuals living in the conquered regions were also considered Baganda but with a particular form of citizenship. Examples to that effect are people of Kkooki and Bululi (Mayiga 2009). However, with the arrival of colonialism, Buganda’s borders were reduced, and the counties of Buyaga and Bugangaizi were returned to Bunyoro following a disputed referendum.

Before delving directly into the discussion, let us first consider the definition of “nationalism” and the closely related concepts of “nation,” “state,” “nation-state,” and “colonial state.” Key sources to this effect include Anderson (1991), Renan (1995), Brennan (1995), Williams (1983), Hoffman (1998), Vincent (1995) and Kabwegyere (1974). However, for purposes of this discussion, we shall concentrate on only Kabwegyere (1974) and Vincent (1995).

In his work entitled *The Politics of State Formation*, Kabwegyere (1974: 7), observes that the terms “nation” and “state” are related, although he defines them separately. He defines the terms “nation” and “state” independently and then combines the two to distinguish between two forms of states, i.e. “the nation-state” and “the colonial-state.” To him a “state” is a legal entity that has autonomy in the international system, while a “nation” consists of “a human group which identifies itself as such, [and] has cultural similarities and its own distinctive political system.” He elucidates that a nation-state is non-colonial because it precedes colonialism and comes into existence based on circumstances that emerge among the native peoples themselves. On the other hand, the colonial-state comes into existence within the context of the “colonial encounter,”

whereby native people are subjected to the overwhelming power of the Empire through social, economic, and political infrastructure that is designed to exploit their human and material resources for the exclusive benefit of the Empire. In other words, the nation-state and the colonial state are altogether different political entities because the factors that gave birth to them are different:

A distinction is made between a colonial and non-colonial State. A colonial State is an instrument of foreign domination. The ruling class has nothing in common with the ruled in terms of culture, or aspirations. The colonial State in the sense of jurisdiction unit is imposed by the imperial power... A non-colonial State (nation State) is as much an instrument of exploitation, but there are some important differences when it is compared with the colonial state... The important point is that (in a nation State) the ruling class and the exploited evolved from within the same society... have a common culture, a common history, and often a common religion. (Kabwegyere 1974:8-9).

Drawing from Kabwegyere's definitions of the terms, one would not be wrong to conclude that Buganda was both a "nation" and a "nation-state" at the advent of colonialism. As a nation, Buganda was made up of different communities, most importantly its clans (which share common geographical boundaries, value-system, and traditions). Similarly, Buganda was a "state" because it conceptualized itself as a "sovereign" entity in relation to other nations around the world, including the Republic of Uganda. It is for this reason that the Baganda invariably perceive themselves as a cohesive and independent entity in relation to the rest of the world, including Uganda.

As regards the concept "Nationalism", Vincent (1995: 239) in his book *Modern Political Ideologies*, defines it as "an ideology or form of behavior which makes national self-consciousness, ethnic or linguistic identity, into central pranks of a doctrine which seeks political expression." In other words, nationalism is a psychological phenomenon that serves to bind together as "citizens" individuals who co-exist within common geographical boundaries. However, nationalism, rather than being external to the citizens, operates from within their minds as a psychological driving force. Nationalism is the power that is responsible for the collective self-identification of particular groups of citizens as "nations." Moreover, nationalism invariably

manifests itself in terms of the collective love – or “patriotism” – on the part of the citizens for the country they belong to. Nationalism always expresses itself practically in terms of the social, economic, or political activities that the citizens engage in on the ground – which tend to revolve most notably around their support for their national policies and their defense of the nation in the face of challenges originating from beyond their borders.

The term "popular song" has been variously defined by different scholars but the most profound meaning is that by Barber (1997) in her book *Readings in African Popular Culture*, where she defines it as literature that manifests itself in the form of music that is presented in the indigenous language and that, therefore, focuses on the issues that are of concern to the speakers of the language themselves. Popular song is a significant oral form--and one that is of particular interest to scholars who are involved in evaluating the value-systems (that is, the ideological orientations) of individual performers or communities within prodigiously oral contexts of music. Music, as a genre and as a form, is “literary” in nature because it shares a great deal with poetry, notably in terms of its structural constitution (i.e. its form), but also because of its traditional social function. In music, as is the case with respect to poetry, the persona utilizes the medium of lines and stanzas and stylistic devices that, for the most part, appeal to the emotions of the listener, to transmit ideas about the prevailing circumstances. Music, like poetry, is communal because it typically occurs within daily cultural activities. Thus, music offers as much room as poetry through which the performer can interrogate prevailing issues with the intention of engendering progressive socio-cultural transformation (Howes 2005:1).

Proceeding from the general definitions, we can now focus on specific concepts such as Bugandan Nationalism and Ugandan Nationalism. To begin with, on the one hand, Bugandan nationalism refers to the tendencies that create a feeling that the Kingdom of Buganda should maintain the social, economic, and political structures that preceded the colonial encounter between the British Empire and the people who inhabit present-day “Uganda.” The concept refers to the tendencies of privileging Bugandan values vis-a-vis the values of the other communities that constitute Uganda. On the other hand, Ugandan nationalism refers to the tradition on the part of observers of treating Uganda as a unified political unit, one that is informed by a single political ideology, and that overlooks constituent nationalisms, such as

Bugandan nationalism. Ideally, these two perspectives are diametrically opposed to each other. As we are going to observe in next discussion of the song “*Ggwanga Mujje*” (Mobilization Drums) Ssebatta urges the Baganda and the rest of Ugandans to forego nationalism based on their separate ethnic background to Ugandan nationalism based on the republican ideology.

Kabwegyere (1974: 24) and Nsoby (1998 :10) observe that Uganda was established as a colony by the British Empire as a consequence of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, whereas Buganda had already been in existence since 1200 AD. Therefore, from the point of view of the Baganda, the establishment of “Uganda Colony” by the British Empire was quite devastating. According to Kabwegyere (1974:49), the Baganda were a developed group, one that stood out as a reference by which other groups compared themselves. Hence it was a kind of pride for one to associate oneself with Buganda. Kabwegyere also cites Twaddle (1969:196), who calls Buganda “an ostentatious reference group with which the indigenous people of the region could compare themselves.” This statement means that any person who wanted to show others that he was of a high social status would refer to himself as a Muganda.

The inclusion of Buganda in the colony put pressure on the Kingdom to abandon its heritage, and the Baganda for that matter to lose their identity, which went against their hopes and aspirations to a considerable extent. It followed, therefore, that, as Uganda developed as an integral nation into the twentieth century, the Baganda became increasingly disgruntled about the circumstances within which they found themselves. Their discontentment with the prevailing conditions reached a climactic stage in 1939, when their own National Anthem, which contravened the ideological orientation of the emerging Ugandan nation, was composed by the Rev. Polycarp Kakooza. The title of the Anthem is “*Ekitiibwa kya Buganda*,” which, when translated into English, reads: “Buganda’s Honour.” It follows, therefore, that the Anthem was conceptualized and composed primarily as a protest song. The Baganda felt demeaned or otherwise devalued by being contained within the boundaries of Uganda as an inferior partner. The aim of the Anthem was to provoke the citizens of Buganda to reclaim their honour as a people and as a nation. Moreover, the Anthem aspired to caution the inhabitants of Uganda at large against interference in the internal affairs of Buganda on their part.

Theoretical Framework

This study relies on the theory of ideology developed by Karl Marx (1959: 247) and modified by Louis Althusser (1989:239-250) to analyze Ssebatta's songs under consideration. The theory is appropriate for the study because it provides the interpretive categories and criteria required to analyze the frames of reference of the composers under critique and the role of the selected text in the representation of the problematic relationship between the Kingdom of Buganda and the Republic of Uganda. Ssebatta and his targeted audiences, identify themselves as "Baganda" or as "Ugandans" based on the *ideological* orientations that inform their frames of references and determine the practices they engage in on the ground on a day-to-day basis.

In his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Louis Althusser (1989: 239-250) re-reads orthodox Marxism and Lacanian psychoanalysis based on the interpretive criteria of post-structuralism such that he develops a theory that explains ideology "in general" terms. In *The German Ideology*, Marx (1959: 247) relates the experiences that communities engage in on the ground to the point of view from which they conceptualize and relate with their circumstances. The concrete existence of a community and its psychological background are two sides of the same coin. The system of ideas that inform the collective worldview of the community (i.e. its ideology) arises directly from the material experiences of the community to the extent that they are mediated through its history. The result is the evolution of a consciousness that serves as the binding force that unites the community as a whole under the same umbrella and that, therefore, differentiates it from all other communities in terms of identity.

It follows, therefore, that the root cause of the perennial conflicts that characterize relations between the Kingdom of Buganda and the Republic of Uganda is the way the Baganda, on the one hand, and Ugandans, on the other, construct their respective identities and relate with one another in that respect. The Luganda Popular song plays a crucial function in this connection. The performers of the song are subjects who perceive their identity from the monarchist ideological background as opposed to the "others" whose identity is informed by the republican ideological orientation. The two communities invariably situate themselves ideologically and linguistically as "Baganda" and "Ugandans" respectively and actualize their identities in that respect on the ground through the practices they engage in on a day-to-day basis. With respect to Ssebatta as a musician under critique in the study, and the song concerned function as mediums through which they actualize the ideological orientation. The conflicts that characterize the situation represented arise from the contradictions caused by the clash between the monarchist

ideology that informs the worldview of the Baganda, on the one hand, and, on the other, the republican ideology that informs the worldview of Ugandans.

In this respect, it is important to note that ideology provides the yardstick by which individuals who are “conservative,” on the one hand, and those who are “revolutionary,” on the other are generally conceptualized and differentiated. The key factor here is that ideology – to use Lacan’s term – consists of the “imaginary” relationship that the individual in question establishes with the prevailing relations of production. From the Marxist point of view, relations of production are determined by the dominant class – i.e. the class that monopolizes political power and that therefore determines the distribution of resources in the society. The implication is that imaginary relationship between an individual and the prevailing relations of production invariably reflect the position the individual occupies in relation to the prevailing center of power. This explains the contradictions that oftentimes characterize society in regard to prevailing power relations. On the one hand, the individual who imagines himself to be close to the center of power in his world will tend to associate himself psychologically with the ruling class and will, therefore, be defensive of the status quo. On the other hand, the individual who imagines himself to be operating from the fringes of society will associate himself with the oppressed and will invariably evolve a revolutionary attitude toward the status quo. It is this situation that leads to the development of a counter-ideology.

In view of the fact that ideology can be used as a tool of manipulation by those in power against their opponents, there are always counter ideologies, whose aim is to establish transformative change within the system so as to do away with perceived form of oppression. Macridis (1986: 2), in *Contemporary Political Ideologies, Movements and Regimes*, observes that counter-ideologies constitute the primary channels through which societies negotiate change:

Various groups within the same political community may, and often do, at given times and under given conditions challenge the prevailing ideology. They develop a counter ideology. They advocate change rather than order. They criticize and reject the existing social and economic arrangements. The counter ideology moves people into action to bring about changes in their way of life and modify the existing political, social and economical relations. (Macridis 1986: 2)

In the case of Ssebatta and some Baganda who are not from the royal clan, they find themselves too far away from the center of power which propagates Bugandan monarchism and therefore can easily be compelled to support the alternative ideology of Ugandan republicanism as a counter-ideology. Monarchism, as an ideology, constitutes the primary system of ideas that informs the worldview of the Baganda and that actualizes itself on the ground in terms of the practices that they engage in on a day-to-day basis. In this respect, “monarchism,” as understood within the context of the prevailing problematic relationship between the Baganda and their circumstances, implies a form of leadership in which social, economic, and political power is vested in the Kabaka, the King of Buganda, whose claim to power is hereditary and who exercises political authority on behalf of the community as a whole.

This study based its analysis on counter-ideology tenet of the neo-Marxist theory which states that there can be counter-ideologies within the same political community that serves to destabilize the dominant ideology in order to foster change. The tenet implies that it is not guaranteed that everyone in the community will support the dominant ideology at any given moment of time and that those who are dissatisfied with the status quo will most likely seek to advance their interests through alternative ideological perspectives. The tenet was useful to the study because it assisted in identifying the symbols of republicanism –which within the context of the Kingdom of Buganda, functions as the primary counter-ideology to Bugandan monarchism. Ssebatta’s reasons for proposing reconciliatory measures is to get rid of the historical identity dilemma.

The Luganda Popular Song

As regards the specific literature review about the Luganda popular song, I would like to start by focusing on Anita Desire Asaasira’s (2010) dissertation “Pearl of Africa Music (PAM) Awards: Political Construction of Popular Music in Uganda,” where her observation is that scholars are not yet in agreement as to what, ultimately, constitutes “popular music.” The reason is that observers tend to define the term “popular” in relation to music differently depending on who decides what is “popular” and the interpretive categories and criteria that are deployed at the moment of critique. Her conclusions were presented within the context of critical examinations of the activities of the Pearl of Africa Music Awards,” a private Ugandan association that

organizes annual music competitions during which the best musicians are awarded with prizes. The determinants of which music is to be regarded as popular include, among other factors, the opinions of the corporate bodies that create music competitions and give awards, the cooperate bodies that sponsor individual singers, and the media outlets that convey the music to audiences or make appraising comments in relation to their choices. She invariably considers most of the definitions of popular music that have been advanced by different scholars and finds them wanting. This current study benefited from Asaasira's work because of the way the scholar widens the conceptual framework within which to study popular music.

The perception of popular music as "contextual" and "multifarious" is important to the current study of the Luganda popular song because it provides room for critical examinations of the wide-ranging ideological perspectives that are involved in the interpretation of the music. Popular music is music that advances the interests of the Buganda nation, based on monarchism, whereas music that contradicts the interests of the Kingdom is based on the counter-ideology, which in this case is republicanism.

Similarly, Asaasira's broad definition of popular music provides the context within which the current study interrogates the conflicts that characterize the relationship between Bugandan monarchism and Ugandan republicanism as represented in the Luganda popular song. In the course of its development as a post-colonial state, Uganda steadily evolved a national identity, that has created schisms between, on the one hand, the Baganda (who continue to remain loyal to Bugandan monarchism), and, on the other, those who would like Uganda to function as a unitary nation under republicanism. The study closely examines these evolving differences from an ideological perspective as represented in the Luganda popular song.

One of the earliest works on Luganda popular song is that of Joseph Kyagambidwa (1956), *African Music from the Source of the Nile*. The study evaluates a variety of songs based on the musicology approach but he does not draw attention to a single performer in relation to any one particular song and the central focus of the work is music rather than literary studies. It does not focus on the ideological conflicts between Buganda and Uganda as this study aims at.

Another scholar Nanyonga-Tamusuza (1995), in her Master of Arts (Lit) degree thesis "Comparative Study of the Traditional, Secular, and Sacred Music of the Baganda People," also deals with Luganda popular song from the point of view of musicology. She is concerned with

the role of musical elements such as melodies and melodic devices, rhythms, scale, tonality, harmonic structure, polyphony and homophony, in the production of music. In other words, the study is limited to the sound elements of the songs she studied. She, however, sheds a great deal of light on the history of the Luganda popular song, which provides the foundation from which the current study develops its critical analysis of the Luganda song under consideration.

Nkonge (2003), in his Master of Arts (Lit) degree thesis “Tradition and Creativity in Ssebadduka’s Oral Performances,” studied the songs of Christopher Ssebadduka, whom he considers to be one of the first lone Baganda guitar players of the type of Luganda music code-named *Kadongo kamu*. The researcher represents Ssebadduka’s songs as among the earliest Luganda popular songs ever performed. In so doing, he identifies, among many other aspects of Ssebadduka’s music, the element of code-mixing (which he terms “word-borrowing,” “word-adaptation,” or “code-switching”) as well as the words borrowed from other languages and used in the Luganda popular song by the singer in a variety of songs. Among the words analyzed, for example, are the word “sorry,” which the singer derives from the English Language and adopts to the Luganda language as *soore* and the phrase *haya bbasi*, which he borrows from the Kiswahili language and uses in the Luganda language context to mean “let it be.”

Similarly, Nkonge (2003: 14) summarizes the characteristics of the *Kadongo-Kamu* (the one-man guitar genre) in so far as they manifested themselves during the period in which it was introduced into Bugandan culture (i.e. the 1920s to the 1950s) into five major categories. To begin with, the performance relied on only one guitar. Secondly, the soloist was the composer, the singer, and the dancer. Third, the performance was invariably presented in the Luganda language. Fourth, the words of the song rhymed with the tune of the instruments throughout the song. And finally, the song always focused on issues that were within the Baganda community.

In addition, Nkonge (2003:74) observes that the form of the presentations of the Luganda Popular Song has been changing due to advancements in technology. The recording facilities of music have been improving steadily, and each step-in technological improvement has brought with it an effect on the song product, in terms of quality, length, use of instruments, and utilization of the para-linguistic elements. Nkonge’s study is different from the current one because it does not focus on the conflicts though it emphasizes the nature of the Luganda popular song.

Yet another researcher Kiguli (2004), in “Oral Poetry and Popular Song in Post-Apartheid South Africa and Post-Civil War Uganda: A Comparative Study of Contemporary Performance,” focuses on songs from three communities as follows: one from South Africa, namely the *Kwazulu* of Natal and two from Uganda, namely the *Kiganda* and the *Kinyankore*. It is important to point out that the fact that she includes Kiganda songs in the study renders it relevant to the current study because the study also considers the Luganda popular song as an object of critique. Accordingly, Kiguli observe that, the Luganda popular song has always played a central role in Buganda culture throughout the history of the Baganda people. Specifically, the genre has always functioned as a medium of communication among the Baganda people from generation to generation and a reservoir of knowledge about Bugandan culture. These observations are fundamental to this study because they emphasize the relationship between the Luganda popular song and the Baganda as a community. The current study builds on the foundation she establishes in her study, especially the argument that the popular song has been consistently changing in line with the changing circumstances, to move the discussion forward within the context of critical examinations of the development of the counter-ideology of republicanism.

Brian Mali (2004) undertakes an investigation on the role of the media in promoting performers in the music industry in order to popularize them to their audiences as widely as possible. His findings draw attention to the relationship between the media and the music industry in Uganda as well as provide insight into how the media politically constructs what is “popular” in Ugandan music. Mali’s (2004) study is about popular music in Uganda but not particularly about the Luganda popular song. The current study acknowledges the observations that the author makes about the media and the music industry and builds upon it to move the discussions forward. However, the study focuses the role of ideology in the conceptualization of the oral text under examination as its primary object of critique, rather than the relationship between the music industry and the media.

Bennet (2000), in “Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and the Press,” focusses on the construction of popular music in Uganda in terms of globalization and localization. He underscores the role of the ongoing technological advancement, especially the media, in bringing together people from different regions of the world within the context of the so-called “global

village.” At the core of the phenomenon is communication. Technology has made it possible for people to share ideas, become exposed to ideas from different places, and influence or be influenced by ideas originating from beyond their borders in unprecedented ways. Bennet (2000) addresses the relationship between music and change of identity. From his study, it is realized that at the core of the Luganda popular song is the desire on the part of the performers either to advance the interests of Bugandan monarchism or to challenge them on behalf of the Republic of Uganda. Bennet’s study gives foundation to the current study in general terms but it does not focus on an in-depth analysis of a specific singer and a particular song on the theme of counter-ideology as is the case for this study.

Joseph Isabirye (2008)’s Master’s thesis, “Relationship between Text and Context of *Federo* Songs in Uganda,” focusses on what he terms “federal songs” in the Luganda language with particular emphasis on the relationship that brings together text and context. Within the context of Uganda, the term “federo” is conceptualized in terms of the relationship that was historically established between the Republic of Uganda and the Kingdom of Buganda by the British colonial government.

It is within this context that Isabirye (2008) analyses the Luganda “federo” songs in the thesis. The songs are “federo” in the sense that they function primarily as mediums through which the performers champion the ideological agenda of recuperating Buganda’s erstwhile monarchical constitution within the context of a federal relationship with the Republic of Uganda.

In conclusion, the literature review about the conflicts and the approaches employed to mediate them so far, indicates that songs have not been utilized to study and seek for an everlasting solution. It was realized that scholars who have so far undertaken research on the Luganda popular song are interested specifically in seven aspects of the Luganda popular song as follows: 1) the elements of music that characterize the genre (Kyagambidwa (1956)); 2) the relationship between the changes that music undergoes over time and the circumstances that inform the changes (Nanyonga-Tamusuza (1995)); 3) the use of words in music within in particular contexts (Nkonge (2003)); 4) the historical background of music from different African contexts, namely Buganda, Ankole, and Kwazulu (Kiguli 2004)); 5) the relationship between the media and music (Mali (2004)); 6) the hybridization of popular music (Bennet (2000)); and 7) the role of the music industry in determining the conceptualization of what is considered “popular” music (Asaasira

(2010)). The current study builds on the foundation established by reviewed scholars to extend discussions of the Luganda popular song beyond their findings in those respects. Specifically, the study focuses on how Fred Ssebatta champions the counter-ideology of republicanism through his song *Ggwanga Mujje*. The study foregrounds the ideological forces that inform the conflicts that underlie relations between the Kingdom of Buganda and the Republic of Uganda as represented in the Luganda popular song. These factor make this study different from all those review and for that matter a very vital contribution to the existing knowledge.

Methodology

This section explains research design, the research instruments, the data, the data sources, the way the data was collected and analyzed.

Research Design

The study relied heavily descriptive design as advanced by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999:160), in *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. The aim is to “determine and report on the way things are by describing such things as behaviors, attitudes, values, and characteristics.” The idea is important because it underscores the central focus of the current study. The point to note here is that the behavior, values, attitudes, and characters of the members of the two communities are closely related to their ideological background.

Data Sources

The song was accessed through YouTube by searching the name of Ssebatta as the performer and the title of the song *Ggwanga Mujje* as follows: either by searching directly “Lord Fred Ssebatta’s Ggwanga Mujje audio” or by searching

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg68qTMLoL8&list=RDhg68qTMLoL8&start_radio=1 The song is provided in the audio original Luganda language. The second source of data is the singer himself who was interviewed in his office at Kibuye, Kampala. Finally, some information was gathered through reading material from libraries such as the Makerere University Library – that were stocked with a wide range of publications on Luganda music, including the Luganda popular song.

Analytical Approach

The main data for the study consisted of information derived from the performer of the song and the song text. To collect the data, the researcher relied on various types of research instruments: interviews; audio-visual recordings; observation; translation; transcription; categorization; and coding. To begin with, conducting interview was based on guidelines as presented by Franz Boas (1943, ctd. in Spradley (1979:18), who observes in part: “If a researcher’s purpose is to understand the thoughts of a people, the whole analysis [. . .] must be based upon their concepts, not ours [as researchers].” As such, the only way for the researcher to access Ssebatta’s views about his song and the conflicts between the Kingdom of Buganda and the Republic of Uganda was to interview him. The study employed specifically formal interviews that were unstructured in nature. However, the researcher had a list of themes that guided the interviewing process. He asked open-ended questions that encouraged the informant to give detailed explanations. In most respects, the open-ended questions led to follow-up questions.

The researcher carefully listened to the performance of the song with the aim of capturing the messages that would be missed when examining it only at the level of a written text of the song. For example, the messages delivered through the musical instruments and the tone variations of the soloists were noted through careful listening of the recorded performance. The song was transcribed in the original Luganda language, subsequent to which it was translated into English for purposes of critical examination and interpretation.

Data analysis went through five major steps and focused on the song and the responses from the performer. These steps included critically listening to the audio song, transcribing the songs, translating the song, identifying symbols of both Bugandan monarchism and the Ugandan republicanism counter-ideology, and critically analyzing the thematic concerns and stylistic approaches of the textual contents of the song. The analysis was guided by the theory of ideology as outlined by Marx and Althusser as outlined in the section on “Theoretical Framework”. In part, the theory of ideology regards the music industry, and the media as some of the ideological state apparatuses that are central to the production of knowledge because they provide the context within which individuals, as “subjects,” originate and disseminate knowledge that is ideologically determined.

Finally, the researcher subjected the information from the interview with Ssebatta to thorough analysis. This interrogation of the comments of the singer helped in explaining whether or not the

songs were representative of the views of the Baganda community as a whole in so far as monarchism, Bugandan nationalism, and Ugandan nationalism were concerned. In addition, the critical evaluations of the views of Ssebatta helped in ascertaining the influence of Ugandan republicanism on the construction of the frames of references of the singer and, therefore, on the thematic concerns and stylistic approaches of the song under study.

Limitations

This study has about two limitations. First of all, there are many Luganda popular singers such that relying on the views expressed by only one does not make a viable sample. Secondly, Ssebatta as a singer has produced more than two hundred songs and dealing with only one song and an interview may not give us enough information about his ideological transformation from Bugandan monarchism to Ugandan republicanism. However, the selected singer and choice of the song were deemed sufficient because through the song, Ssebatta addressed the identity issue and suggested ways of resolving it.

Before delving into how Ssebatta presents his argument that there is need for all Ugandans to forge one national culture from all the existing ones so as to have one national identity, there is need provide an overview of his background both as a Muganda and as well as a popular singer.

Fred Ssebatta's Background

The researcher interviewed Ssebatta in his office in Kibuye, a suburb of Kampala, on 1st January 2011, during which he learned a great deal about him as a Luganda Popular Singer. He oftentimes uses the Bugandan idiom “*Gw’embuga Guta Atatuuse*” to refer to himself, instead of his name. The phrase translated into English would mean “A case in the palace becomes dangerous for the one who fails to go there” (Kibuuka, 2001 :126). The idiom is traditionally used among the Baganda to refer to complications or uncertainties that oftentimes involve the relationship between the King and his subjects. In most cases, whenever the King invites a subject to the palace, the expectation on the part of the subject is that he or she will receive good tidings from the King. However, this is not necessarily always the case. There are times when the King may invite a subject to the palace because the King’s intention is to admonish the subject for some shortcomings. Therefore, to say that “a case in the palace becomes dangerous for the one who fails to go there” is to imply that when one is given responsibility over

something by the King during a visit to the palace, one must go there whether one likes it or not because it is only the King who can determine one's fate whatever the prevailing circumstances. The idea behind the conviction in that respect is that the Kabaka wields the powers of both retribution and mercy as per Bugandan Monarchist ideological orientation. Therefore, if one is asked to report to the palace for a bad reason, it only becomes dangerous when one fails to go to the palace in response to the King's summons, because a subject who responds to the summon and pleads for mercy can receive forgiveness from the King. Related to the foregoing idea is another idiom that generally serves to accomplish the same objective in relations between the King and the subjects among the Baganda. The idiom reads as follows: "Bampise embuga tekiraga buganzi" ("Being invited to the palace does not imply being loved by the King") (Kibuuka, 2001 :117).

From this point of view, it is not difficult to see why Sebbatta sometimes chooses to use the idiom to refer to himself instead of his actual name. Through the idiom, he identifies himself not just as a Muganda but also, and most importantly, as a Muganda who is always obedient to the Kabaka. Initially he is a monarchist because as Mayiga (2009: 34) observes, that it is precisely by showing reverence to the Kabaka that one becomes a true "Muganda." The Kabaka embodies the values of monarchism in the sense that he represents the ancestral background and political and administrative structures of the Kingdom of Buganda in all their manifestations.

From the information that the researchers collected from Sebbatta about his childhood and upbringing, his first compositions of songs and performances evolved his monarchist ideological orientation from consistent interactions with his fellow Baganda within the context of the Kingdom. He was born in Singo, a region of Buganda that is located forty-five kilometers away from Kampala, the capital city of Uganda and the epicenter of Bugandan culture, along Kiboga Road. Moreover, he has lived all his life in Buganda. Therefore, the basis of his commitment to the idea of a Buganda that is rooted in a monarchist system of government and that relates with the Republic of Uganda through a federal system of government is unquestionable. In the course of his upbringing in Buganda, he underwent processes of socialization that eventually coalesced into a worldview that is informed primarily by Bugandan value-systems. While Sebbatta uses his music to address issues that are "universal" in the sense that they are of interest to all human beings, perhaps the most important songs he has sung and performed are those that foreground

the problematic relationship that exists between the Kingdom of Buganda and the Republic of Uganda.

In an interview with the researchers in 2011, Ssebatta recalled that he produced his first song, a love song entitled “Sam Wange” (“My Sam”), in 1981 and that since then he had performed and recorded over two hundred songs in the Luganda language. Equally importantly, at the time of interview, he was the Director of Matendo Band, which was one of the most popular musical groups that operated from Kampala at the time. It was while he was working with the group that he won the award for the “All Africa Composers competition” held in Europe in 1997, for which the Kabaka honoured him in the ceremony held at Nakivubo Stadium. The title of the award-winning song was “Baana Bange” (“My Children”), and its focus was on parenting.

A general review of Ssebatta’s songs shows that, as a composer and performer, in the beginning he related with his audience, for the most part, as a champion of Bugandan monarchism. As time went by, however, most probably due to the influence of the counter-ideology of republicanism, he changed his stance and this is the case in the song *Ggwanga Mujje* (Mobilization Drums) under the current discussion. In this song, Ssebatta puts pressure on all Ugandans, including the Baganda, to unite behind their common identity as “Ugandans” for the sake of forging a strong and united country.

Discussion

In the song “*Ggwanga Mujje*” (“Mobilization Drums”), Ssebatta underscores the need for Ugandans across the board to unite in spite of their different ethnicities and nationalities to which they belong because, according to him, tribal bigotry is the primary reason why post-independence Uganda is underdeveloped. In this respect, he proposes strategies that the citizens of Uganda can employ to overcome the retrogressive forces that have always countered the quest for unity in the Republic thereby hindering the country’s progress. In general, he insists as follows: that Ugandans must forgive one another and forget their pre-colonial and post-independence wrangles; that they should identify the social, economic, and cultural values and practices that are common to them and utilize them as the basis for their national unity; that the nationalities should always accept constructive criticism originating from among them; that the tribes and communities that collectively make up Uganda should make a point of exchanging knowledge about their respective cultural values; that

the communities should promote intermarriages among them so as to reduce tribalism; and that every tribe or community should always remember to give back to other tribes or communities in exchange for whatever positive contribution it has received from them.

To begin with, the opinion that all Ugandans must forgive one another and forget their pre-colonial and post-independence wrangles is paramount because in the course of expanding frontiers in the early days of state formation, a lot of havoc took place sometimes involving loss of lives. As Mayiga (2009: 12-13) observes, in the book *King on the Throne*, during the pre-colonial period, African kingdoms used to expand their territorial hegemonies primarily by conquering and subjugating weak neighboring tribes. For example, the Kingdom of Buganda expanded southwards by annexing the territory of Kooki, eastwards by annexing a territory from Busoga, and north-westwards by annexing territory of Buyaga and Bugangaizi from Bunyoro Kitara. Similarly, Kabwegyere (1974: 21-32), in *The Politics of State Formation: The Nature and Effects of Colonialism*, observes that pre-colonial Bunyoro annexed Mubende to the east and parts of Acholi to the north. By the same token, the Toro Kingdom came into existence after breaking away from the Kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara and expanded eastwards by annexing Busongola to the extreme south-westwards, especially by conquering the Bakonjo on the hillside of Rwenzori.

Such conflicts did not end with the colonial encounter between Britain and Uganda. On the contrary, they persisted in the colonial and the post-independence period of the country. For example, Mayiga (2009: 12) recalls that during the period of colonialism the Bugandan counties of Buyaga and Bungangaizi – which Buganda had previously annexed from Bunyoro – sought to return to the Kingdom of Bunyoro, resulting in a long conflict between Bunyoro and Buganda that ended only when their demands were met through a referendum during the reign of President Milton Obote 1.

Bearing in mind that kind of history, Ssebatta calls upon all Ugandans to accept that there were mistakes committed in the past but still they should forgive each other and come together as one nation. He sings as follows:

Oba ensobi zaaliwo tetugaana naye ebyo twandibirese
Ne twegatta wamu mu kuzuula amayisa agatufaananya.
Nze bwe nkukoona ku muzeegwo gw'okola leka gifuula mpalana

If there were mistakes, we accept, but we should stop such things.

Let us come together in finding out what unites us.

If I point at your bad habit, don't turn it into enmity. (ll. 75-77)

The above excerpt seeks to convince Ugandans to unite as a people irrespective of the prevailing circumstances. The argument is that Ugandans should not allow the adversarial pre-colonial inter-tribal conflicts to adversely affect them because Uganda as a unified nation-state was not a factor during the time they were taking place. Ssebatta advises present-day Ugandans to abandon the historical conflicts and forgive one another because their memories of such past conflicts, together with spirit of tribalism that they bring with them, will not favour the kind of unity that they need in order for them to evolve as a unified nation. Renan (1995:11-12) points out that doing away with certain aspects of the past, especially those that are retrogressive, is a crucial prerequisite for nation-building. To put it differently, in many respects, nations are formed by uniting different groups of people into a single, unified entity. From Ssebatta's point of view, therefore, it is plausible that the different tribes and communities that constitute Uganda can forge a union of one community through re-conceptualizing their historical past and forging a way forward within the context of a unified identity.

In the same passage, Ssebatta suggests that in order for Uganda to achieve unity, the tribes and communities that collectively constitute it should identify aspects of their cultures that are common to all of them and use them as a foundation from which to build up a single nation: "Let us come together in finding out what unites us." (*Ne twegatta wamu mu kuzuula amayisa agatufaananya.*) (l. 76). To put it differently, every Ugandan tribe is in possession of cultural values that are of importance to the development of Uganda as a nation, and Ugandans should identify them and incorporate them into a single, dominant, national cultural fabric.

Still in the same passage, Ssebatta proposes that Ugandans should willingly accept positive criticisms directed at them from tribes to which they do not belong, stating: "If I point at your bad habit, don't turn it into enmity" (*Nze bwe nkukoona ku muzeegwo gw'okola leka gifuula mpalana*) (l. 77). According to the singer, therefore, Ugandan citizens who are quick to respond negatively to criticisms originating from members of tribes to which they do not belong

whenever their weaknesses are pointed out are a danger to Ugandan unity. The reason, according to him, is that there is no single group of people in the world that is perfect in all aspects of life.

To illustrate the dangers that tribalism poses to Ugandan unity, Ssebatta imagines a scenario in which a Muganda persona is confronted with Ugandan citizens who belong to other tribes who, according to him, subscribe to cultural values that differ from Buganda culture in certain ways. The foreigners would like to co-exist with the Baganda harmoniously and every time the Baganda criticize them based on their “alien” background, they are outraged because they consider the criticism annoying:

*Bwe nkugamba onyize funa akatambaala akakuyambako.
Abalala bwava emmanju tanaaba na ngaloze akwata ddigobe,
Kw’osa n’abampembe abatambala ngoye nebw’omwekubako.
Ky’enva nsanyukira abakoppa empisa ne beyooyoota
Bangi bewasirizza n’abakazi abaganda olw’endabika ye.
Naye kye twemulugunya, Okwinyi ka nsabe otutangaazeemu,
Lwaki ffe bwe twagala okuwasaako ewaabwe tebatuganya.
Nze ndaba n’obugya mu mawanga gaffe wano bwandiwedde
Ggwe ate bwandivuddewa nga mwannyoko Omuganda y’amwettise.*

When I tell you to sneeze, get a handkerchief to assist you.
There are those who when they come out of a toilet,
Don’t wash hands but straight go for food.
And there are others who can’t dress
However much you convince them.
That’s why I like those who copied good habits
And improved on their ways.
Many have even married Baganda women
Because of their good looks.
But our complaint which we would like Okwinyi to clarify is:
Why do they reject us when we try to marry their daughters!
I think that the jealous among our nationalities would be eliminated

For, how can one discriminate against a Muganda
When one's sister is married to them! (ll. 78-92)

In the first three lines, the Muganda persona identifies three forms of behaviors associated with non-Baganda Ugandans that, from his point of view, are unacceptable to the Baganda. They include removing mucus from the nose with bare hands, eating food without washing hands even when the individual concerned has just emerged from the toilet, or showing up in public while naked (ll. 78-83). More often than not, according to the persona, such misbehavior circumstances lead the Baganda to look down upon the tribes in question on the grounds that they are “uncivilized.” Equally important, the problem is that Baganda oftentimes find themselves in conflict with such individuals whenever the “culprits respond to complaints from the Baganda about their objectionable behavior in a manner that creates rivalry between the Baganda and others.

However, a close examination of the passage shows that the persona does not necessarily seek to endanger the relationship between the Baganda and such tribes. On the contrary, his aim is to contribute to the establishment of an environment within which all Ugandans will resolve their differences and establish a cultural foundation that accommodates them all. Ssebatta is one of those Ugandans who is beginning to come to terms with the possibility that Bugandan monarchism may not be sustainable beyond a certain threshold and that perhaps the time has come for the Baganda to reconcile with the rest of Ugandans for the sake of fostering a united Uganda. In this case he is influenced by the counter ideology of Uganda republicanism which promotes Ugandan nationalism and Ugandan identity above Bugandan nationalism which is advanced by Bugandan monarchism as the initial ideological orientation for the Baganda. Macridis (1986), in his book *Contemporary Political Ideologies, Movements and Regimes*, observes that counter ideologies constitute the primary channels through which societies negotiate change:

Various groups within the same political community may, and often do, at given times and under given conditions challenge the prevailing ideology. They develop a counter-ideology. They advocate change rather than order. They criticize and reject the existing social and economic arrangements. The counter-ideology moves

people into action to bring about changes in their way of life and modify the existing political, social and economic relations. (Macridis 1986: 2)

In the case of Buganda whose ideological foundation is monarchism, republicanism comes as a counter ideology which influences some Baganda, among whom is Ssebatta, who as we see in the song, advocating for change in favour of republicanism.

Accordingly, the persona advises Ugandan tribes to consider incorporating the cultural practices of other tribes that are deemed to be better than their own into their own value-systems and traditions. He observes, for instance: “That’s why I like those who copied good habits / And improved on their ways.” (“*Ky’enva nsanyukira abakoppa empisa ne beyooyoota*”) (ll. 83-84). In other words, there are some Ugandan tribes that have already begun to appreciate the positive attributes of other tribes and have begun to emulate them to their advantage. From his point of view, Ugandans are beginning to establish the foundation from which they can build a united Uganda under republican rule. However, the evolution toward a unified Ugandan identity remains incomplete, and there is need to redouble the efforts toward the eventuality.

Furthermore, Ssebatta argues that intermarriages among the tribes constitute one of the means by which Ugandans can evolve a united nation. In the same passage, for example, the persona observes that: “Many have even married Baganda women because of their good looks.” (“*Bangi bewasirizza n’abakazi abaganda olw’endabika ye.*”) (l. 86). The object of critique consists of intermarriages among the tribes, specifically between the Baganda and the other Ugandan tribes. He speaks in the past tense, implying that he is referring to occurrences that have already taken place. In the preceding line, as noted above, he indicates that one of the ways by which Ugandans can “improve on their ways” and consequently achieve national unity is by “copying [the] good habits” of other tribes (ll. 83-84). In the context of the passage, therefore, it is because of the fact that Ugandan tribes have begun to emulate one another’s positive cultural attributes that they have begun to practice intermarriages.

The phrase “*their* good looks” can be understood in two ways. To begin with, the persona could be referring to Baganda women in general. He could be implying that it is because of the cultural background of Buganda women that they are attractive to men from other tribes and that

intermarriage among the Baganda and other tribes have begun to take place. Secondly, he could be referring to non-Baganda who, according to him, have copied the supposed “good habits” of the Bugandan tribe. In this case, the implication of the statement could be non-Baganda men have been learning a great deal from Bugandan culture and, as a result, have improved to the level of Bugandan civilization thereby making it possible for Baganda women to accept them as husbands. The argument provides the foundation from which the persona proposes other advantages that he believes could be derived from intermarriages among the tribes:

*Nze ndaba n’obugya mu mawanga gaffe wano bwandiwedde,
Ggwe ate bwandivuddewa nga mwannyoko Omuganda y’amwettise.*

I think that the jealous among our nationalities would be eliminated,
For, how can one discriminate against a Muganda
When one’s sister is married to them!” (ll. 90-92).

According to the persona, inter-marriage among the tribes would act as a means of cementing Ugandan national unity perhaps more effectively than any other factor. By marrying beyond their tribes, the communities would establish relationships among themselves that would be based on blood. This would help reduce inter-tribal conflicts because no individual would want to fight a relative even if the relative belonged to another tribe. The point to be noted here is that the persona’s attitude toward intermarriage between the Baganda and other Ugandan tribes is positive rather than negative. Ssebatta’s aim is to encourage rather than to discourage the evolution of relationships based on blood among all Ugandan communities, including the Baganda. As stated above, his songs capture a stage in the historical development of Uganda at which the Baganda are beginning to relinquish ties to Bugandan monarchism because of the overwhelming reality of Ugandan republicanism as a counter-ideology.

From the point of view of the persona, however, in order for intermarriage among Ugandan tribes to succeed in contributing to Ugandan national unity, the relationships established through marriage must never be one-sided. On the contrary, the tribes must agree to marry from one another across the board. The persona remarks: “But our complaint which we would like

Okwinyi to clarify is; / Why do they reject us when we try to marry their daughters!” (“*Naye kye twemulugunya, Okwinyi ka nsabe otutangaazeemu, / Lwaki ffe bwe twagala okuwasaako ewaabwe tebatuganya!*”) (ll. 88-89). His concern is that while the Baganda have accepted to intermarry with other Ugandan tribes, there are tribes in Uganda that have not been reciprocating the gesture as required. The name “Okwinyi” (l. 88) is not Bugandan. Similarly, the word “they” (l. 89) refers to the tribe to which “Okwinyi” supposedly belongs. Therefore, when the persona identifies “Okwinyi” as the person who should clarify why “they” have been rejecting Baganda men, he implies that although the Baganda have been allowing men from other tribes to marry their daughters, the same has not been necessarily the case with some of the non-Baganda tribes. In other words, in so far as inter-marriage among the tribes is concerned, there exist roadblocks related to relations among the tribes that inhibit a smooth transition to Ugandan national unity. To Ssebatta, who is an advocate of republicanism, the problem is dire because it will delay the entrenchment of republican rule in societies like Buganda that are still holding onto pre-colonial systems of government that are incompatible with post-independence Uganda.

In an interview that the researcher had with Ssebatta in January 2011, the singer indicated clearly that he prefers Ugandan republican rule to Bugandan monarchism in spite of the fact that he was a Muganda. His argument was that although most Baganda were still attached to monarchical rule in Buganda, there was no doubt that there would come a time when Ugandan republicanism would overwhelm monarchism in Buganda:

Nze bulijo embeera zange zagala nnyo amawanga okuba nti gategeregana. Kati bwendabawo obukuubagano obwo, kwekukozesa amagezi gange, obukuubagano nembusa munyimba buli omu nga muwa amagezi okutabagana ne munne.... Nebwetunaaba tetugase buwangwa, ne bwetunagaana, kyo kigya kwekola kyoka. Kubanga kati tulina olulimi ol'ekibuga, ate netuba n'enimi ez'abantu bomukyalo. Ab'omukibuga bakozeza olulimi olugatta amawanga goona, ate nga ab'ekyalo bayina olugatta egwanga erimu. Kyetaga olulimi oluvudde mu nnimi eza wano naye nga singa Oluswayiri oluvudde ebunayira.

It is my belief that there should always be mutual understanding between tribes and nationalities. So, when I realized that there were misunderstandings, I decided

to use my creativity through music to advise all people to understand each other [. . .] Even if we don't unite our culture, even if we don't want it to happen, it will eventually happen by itself. For instance, now we have urban language distinct from rural ones. The urban language unites all tribes and nationalities while the rural ones are for each specific group. We need a language evolving from our native languages but not like Kiswahili from abroad. (Ssebatta, personal interview Jan 2011)

He draws from his own personal experience to generalize about why all Ugandans must unite within the context of Ugandan nationalism. He values music, specifically the Luganda popular song, because of the opportunity it affords him to mobilize Ugandans to obliterate the tribal boundaries that have always divided them. From his point of view, the union among the tribes within the context of republicanism is inevitable ("it will eventually happen by itself") because the unfolding social, economic, and political circumstances will, as a matter of course, compel Ugandans to abandon their differences whether they like it or not. As an example, he draws attention to the linguistic transformation that Ugandans are undergoing as a result of the ongoing evolution of urbanization across the country. Ugandan cities are like magnets that are attracting multitudes of people from all over the country and bringing them within the same contexts irrespective of their tribal backgrounds. Therefore, a hybrid language is emerging, one that includes all the tribes within similar cultural circumstances, resulting in a single overarching language and cultural configuration.

Conclusion

The observation is that the conflict between the Kingdom of Buganda and the Republic of has existed for a long time resulting into a dilemma on the part of the Baganda in regard to Bugandan identity and nationalism, on the one hand, and Ugandan identity and nationalism, on the other. Ssebatta presents a view that it is possible to reconcile Bugandan and Ugandan nationalism and create a better identity for the Baganda and other Ugandans to live in harmony as citizens of Uganda. His hope is that eventually a new Ugandan culture will evolve from all the traditional customs of Ugandans because he thinks that it is the best in the modern world trends. Moreover, despite the persistent resistance by the Baganda, Ugandan republicanism has proved to be overwhelmingly strong. The conclusion is that The findings from the analysis of the song and

interview is that reconciliation process has already started and that Ssebatta is already influenced by the counter-ideology of republicanism and employs the media of popular song to urge the Baganda and all other Ugandans to embrace it so as to forge a new national identity bonding all Ugandans.

Secondly, as earlier stated in this study, the situation dealt with in this study is not limited to Uganda alone but there are a number of other countries in Africa faced with the same. This study, therefore is a great contribution to African studies in general and the suggestions forwarded by Ssebatta can also apply to other African countries. As it was observed in this study, the theory of ideology regards the music industry, and the media as some of the ideological state apparatuses that are central to the production of knowledge because they provide the context within which individuals, as “subjects,” originate and disseminate knowledge that is ideologically determined.

This argument is vital to policy makers such that they must make follow ups of information derived from studies like this one if they are to make policies that are responsive to the needs of the people represented by the songs.

Recommendation for further research

As already pointed out, this study relied on one singer and only one song. In order to strengthen the outcomes, the study recommends that further research be carried out about the ideological conflicts and how they can be understood and resolved using the approach of the popular song.

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