

Our Pregnancy, My Choice: A Feminist Critique of *Nerea*

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Abstract

*The role of media in the fight for the rights of women across the globe is a major interest in contemporary scholarship. While Kenya as a country is making commendable steps towards lifting the status of women through legislation and education, gender equality remains elusive. Feminism has over the years sought to define and defend equal rights of women in social, economic and political spheres. One means to this end is to uncover ways in which dominance and oppression of women are often masked in aspects of our daily lives; through ideology passed down through generations in very subtle ways. This paper therefore uses critical discourse analysis to critique the portrayal of the woman in *Nerea*, a contemporary music video on abortion. The emphasis is on how patriarchal gender ideologies perpetuate oppressive stereotypical views on the place and role of women in society. This study therefore recommends that depictions of women in media and other social commentary be examined critically. It is often in very covert ways, some intended to achieve the contrary effect that the battle for gender equality is lost.*

Key words: Feminism, Ideology, Abortion, Kenya

1. Introduction

There have been shifts in the dynamics of gender power relations within the family in Kenya in the recent past according to Wamue–Ngare and Njoroge (2011). This shift has questioned the perpetuation and maintenance of male dominance over women. This reversal in gender roles has been occasioned by women having to take up hitherto male prescribed roles of provision and decision making as more and more women

being educated and moving into the country's workforce. Another core reason for this shift in roles in the country has been that men have abdicated their roles as husbands and fathers by abandoning their families. Drugs and alcohol addiction have been cited as key contributors to this dire situation. In mid 2015, amid protests from the public, especially women, Uhuru Kenyatta, Kenya's president gave a directive to members of parliament to "clean central Kenya of illicit brews" (Daily Nation).

In many Kenyan communities, children, legitimate or not, belonged to the father. In cases where a girl fell pregnant outside wedlock, she would be expected to give birth and nurse the child. Among the Abaluhya of western Kenya for example, should the father to be deny paternity, the paternal grandmother would send spies to visit the girls home when the child was born. The spies would find out if the child bore any likeness to the alleged father; in which case the girl would be asked to 'breastfeed the child for them' then take him/her 'home' when they were weaned. In the song *Nerea*, the persona asks that the child be taken to him, promising to nurture it until he/she achieves their destiny in life. The objective of this paper is to use feminist theory to critique the song *Nerea* and to specifically look at the representation of the persona Nerea. *Nerea* was released on Monday 20 April 2015 and in a matter of hours, it was clear that it was going to be popular in Africa but specifically in Kenya. The song was written by Sauti Sol and co-written by Amos and Josh while the 3 minutes and 30 seconds long music video was directed by Enos Olik of Bokeh Family (Capital Lifestyle, 2015; Gichuru, 2015). The song is addressed to Nerea, a pregnant girl whose age, marital or social status we do not know. It seeks to convince her not to have an abortion by rationalizing the situation and, appealing to shared cultural and religious beliefs. First, that God who 'brings' children would provide for the child and second, the child could succeed in life and become someone famous, like the various great personalities mentioned in the song.

Sauti Sol is an all male Kenyan afro pop band formed in Nairobi. It comprises of Bien-Aimé Baraza, Willis Chimano, Delvin Mudigi and Polycarp Otieno, who are all in their mid to late twenties. The four band members are all college educated a fact that many feel sets them apart from average bands (Muchai, 2014). Baraza and Chimano both have journalism degrees from the United States International University - Kenya and the University of Nairobi respectively. Mudigi studied banking and accountancy at Africa Nazarene University - Kenya while Otieno holds an actuarial science degree from the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology - Kenya.

Speaking to Otas (2013) the band explains that *Sauti* means "voice" in Swahili, and "*sol*" means "sun" in Spanish, which they say makes them "Voices of the Light." According to their website (Sauti-sol.com), the band has two albums to their name; *Mwanzo* (2008) and *Sol Filosofia* (2011). The band is in its final stages of producing their much anticipated album, *Live and Die in Afrika* scheduled for release in 2015. From its inception in 2005, the band set itself up for victory. The band has gone ahead to win many music awards and fans alike.

In May 2015, Black Entertainment Television (BET) announced that Sauti Sol was one of the eight nominees to the Best International Act: Africa. Having been nominated for the Channel O Africa Music Video Awards, the UK's BEFFTA Awards and other awards, Sauti Sol definitely resonates with African music lovers. In 2014, Sauti Sol won the Best African Act in the MTV Europe Music Award (Oyugi, 2014 & Muchai, 2014), a much coveted award in Africa. In the same year they won the best video of the year award and the best artist of the year award during the Bingwa Music awards (BMA) (Bingwamusic.com). *Nishike*, one of their 2014 singles went ahead to be the most watched youtube music video in Kenya (African muzikmag.com). In the video, the four men oozed sex appeal and machismo by showing off their chiselled torsos and sexy dance moves endearing them even more to their female fans and raising the bar for male body image aspirations. In agreement, Muchai (2014) notes that another key attraction to this group is that "the boys have proved to be great performers, sending fans into frenzies and gaining the respect of

fellow artistes". Toledo and Pritchard (2015) say that with their *Lipala* dance, Sauti Sol "is on a mission to reclaim the country's dance floors and create their own national Gangnam Style hit. So they've taken a traditional dance and made it cool". It is at the height of this success that the band, featuring Amos and Josh released *Nerea*.

Amos and Josh met each other in 2010 and were singing together in various church choirs before being thrown into limelight through Tusker Project Fame (TPF). Tusker Project Fame is an East African reality-singing competition show sponsored by Tusker lager, a brand of East Africa Breweries Limited. During its sixth season, running from 6 October 2013 to 8 December 2013, Amos Muema, 30 and Joshua Simani, 25 entered as a duo to compete for the top prize of five million Kenyan Shillings and a recording contract (Kagire, 2013). They were the runners up in the competition after Hope Irakoze from Burundi took the top award. To date, the duo has produced two singles with *Nerea* being their third. The two singles are *Smile* and *Baadaye* featuring Rabbit King Kaka.

Just like Sauti Sol, Amos and Josh are both college educated. Amos is a graphic designer while Josh is a Bachelor of Commerce student at the University of Nairobi (Njuguna, 2013). In an interview with Mosongo (2015), Amos and Josh declare that they are born again Christians and that "we (they) are measured by the kind of content that we put out there. Yes, we are Christians; we are born again, meaning that our content will be supported by who we are and not necessarily by being placed in a box".

2. Theoretical Framework

Feminism is an ideology aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, and social rights for women. Any feminist critique of narrative must take into consideration its ideological dimension. Ideology has to do with consciousness; beliefs, notions and ideas that constitute the intellectual aspect of culture (van Dijk, 1998). Hence, ideologies are the basic underlying value systems held by members of a society, which govern their norms and determine the dynamics of relationships between members within the social space. Ideological concepts can therefore be understood as derived from and reflective of the interests of certain social positions for instance, gender. Due to the very close connection between ideology and social power, issues of distortion rationalization and legitimization then come into play. Thompson (1984) sees ideology as "linked to the process of sustaining asymmetrical relationships of power", that by disguising, distorting, rationalizing or legitimating these relationships, it assists in perpetuating and maintaining dominance and status quo.

Eagleton (1991) further characterizes ideology as a collection of "signifying practises that go to constitute human beings as social subjects, producing relations by which such subjects are connected to the dominant relations of production in society". In agreement, Hall (1996) writes explains that;

"By ideology I mean the mental frameworks — the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation — which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, figure out and render intelligible the way society works" (p.26).

The onus of the message being understood lies not only on the sender but also on the agreed ideology between the sender and the receiver. In gender relations, more often than not, ideology is constructed to serve the interests of the dominant gender at the expense of the 'weaker'. Research into gender across cultures shows that social behaviour and expectations are most times a consequence of enforced ideas imparted through socialization (Hussein, 2005; Onyango, 2006; Creighton & Yieke, 2006). Individuals are therefore expected to conform to the prescribed gender status quo. Men are seen as heads of homes and therefore leaders and breadwinners while women are relegated to the domestic sphere where their roles revolve around the childbirth, care of children, the man and the home.

This is in line with the fact that traditionally a woman's main destiny in life was to get married, and virginity, on the part of the woman, was highly valued; even essential (Onyango, 2006; Familusi, 2012). Having a child outside wedlock would therefore make a girl virtually unmarriageable. As Chimamanda Adichie (2013) rightly states

"... because I am female I am expected to aspire to marriage. I am expected to make my life choices always keeping in mind that marriage is the most important. Now marriage can be a source of joy and love and mutual support. But why do we teach girls to to marriage and we don't teach boys the same?"

For the past 50 or so years that feminism has been in existence, it has had a considerable effect on the media. "Feminism has also influenced the images, narratives, and genre forms produced in the media culture industry" (Watkins & Emerson, 2000). From Betty Frieden's *Feminine Mystique* (1963), feminist scholars have claimed that women in various fields are portrayed stereotypically by the media. Dyer (1993) describes a stereotype as a form of social construct that is mainly used as a way of referring to or talking about people that one does not understand or know. Past the first wave of feminism, Watkins and Emerson (2000) note that "gender role stereotyping in television and film normalized the dominant cultural values and customs that legitimate male domination of women", a shift that is being witnessed in Africa. Stereotypes are present in soap operas, advertising, music and other media fields. Barker (1997) found that the soap opera script depicts a stereotypically traditional world in which women are restricted to "the private world of interpersonal relationships but excluded from more assertive roles in the public domain". Perry (2003) speaks of the commoditization and objectification of women in hip hop music videos, something that is present in *Nerea*. *Nerea* is commoditized as in a song that is totally about her, we do not hear her voice even in one instance.

In a study done in the USA, Meehan (1983) found that women were portrayed as the imp, the good wife, the bitch, the victim, the decoy among other portrayals. Adding to this, Ingham (2007), notes that the ultimate life achievement of a woman is supposed to be getting married and giving birth to children because women are experts in the private setting. Researching on soap operas, Russell et al. (2005) just like Barker (1997) found that the soap opera script depicts a stereotypically traditional world in which women are restricted to "the private world of interpersonal relationships but excluded from more assertive roles in the public domain" (p. 620). This portrayal has been credited to the un-accessed voice of women in the media (Mills, 1995; Okonji, 2003; Ingham, 2007). Wood (1994) also attributes the portrayal to three reasons namely, under representation, stereotypical representation and "depictions between men and women emphasize traditional roles and normalize violence against women". "This under representation and negative depictions in media have broad societal effects" notes (Yi & Dearfield, 2012). In yet another study in the USA, it was found out that gender is misrepresented where women are shown as only 37 per cent of television characters, yet women make up more than half of the population (51 per cent). When films and television do depict female characters, they often reflect gender stereotypes (Yi & Dearfield, 2012). Male characters dominate television shows (63 per cent) while being less than half the population (49 per cent) (Folkerts et al. 1998). In addition, men in the media are represented speaking in their public or professional roles while the women are represented speaking in their private, personal roles. Often women are seen as mother, daughter and/or wife.

The script is the same in every genre of television, including music videos. Wood (2007) explains that a primary way that the media distort reality is in under-representing women. "Whether it is prime-time television, in which there are three times as many white men as women (Basow, 1992, p. 159), or children's programming, in which males outnumber females by two to one, or newscasts, in which women make up 16 per cent of newscasters and in which stories about men are included 10 times more often than ones about women ("Study Reports Sex Bias," 1989), media misrepresent actual proportions of men and women in the

population” (Wood, 2007). In 1995, women from 71 countries studied their news media for one day. Of the 15,500 stories analysed only 17 per cent of the world’s news subjects were women (MediaWatch, 1995). Five years later a second global monitoring project was launched and the results were amazingly similar with 18 per cent of news subjects being female (Spears et al., 2000). Decades later “defining and realizing a feminist approach to the study of media remains a sometimes painful venture for those who must ‘teach against the text’” (Rakow, 2001; Valdivia, 2001 and Eaton, 2001). The 2000 project revealed a striking absence of female voices in news items that concerned women in very specific ways. For instance,

“...stories that covered plans to establish a Family Court in Jamaica, the high abortion rate among teenagers in Scotland, women’s rights to seek divorce in Egypt, maternity plans in Northern Ireland, the punishment of women for marital infidelity in Turkey – these were just some of the cases where the exclusion of any women’s point of view seemed blatantly negligent. This tendency to ignore women or – at best – to speak about, rather than to or through women, demonstrates a very real and contemporary absence of women’s voices in the media, and the profound lack of attention paid by the media to the telling of women’s stories generally” (Gallagher, 2005, p. 25).

This under-representation has also been attributed to the scarcity of women working in the media. Litcher, Litcher and Rothman (1986), note that only about five per cent of television writers, executives and producers are women. Female film and music directors are even rarer. Ironically, while two-thirds of journalism graduates in the US are women, only seven per cent of those work in the media industry. Some media analysts (Mills, 1988) believe that if more women had positions of authority at executive levels, media would offer more positive portrayals of women. In Australia, North (2009) noted that as of 2006, 20 of the 21 major metropolitan newspapers were edited by men. Where there were women working, most of them were expected to cover the ‘soft’ or ‘colour’ stories. Soft and colour stories are generally not important as political, business or policy stories. They mainly appear in the lifestyle section of papers or magazines and are popular with younger audiences. Australian television journalist Virginia Haussegger explains in her autobiography that she wanted ‘in’ on the ‘hard’ news and hence she made complaints to her senior editor. She explains:

The men on the program were being assigned all the best stories – the overseas trips and the war jobs – while the women were stuck with the ‘colour’ stories. I was told to shut up and pull my head in. So off I went on yet another soft story, only to return hours later to find a present in my office. It was a very large, long, thick black rubber penis, sitting upright on my desk (2005, p. 49).

Cornered with such a situation, the question was how she was to deal with it. North (2009) narrates that, “she walked into her boss’s office with the penis on her head and said, ‘well, look at this, I’ve got one too! So now do I get the overseas assignment?’ She got the overseas assignment – to Hawaii to cover the Supermodel of the World competition” (p. 745).

3. Methodology

This study used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyse *Nerea* as a visual text. CDA is an interdisciplinary tool that can be used to expose inequality and injustice. As an approach to Discourse Analysis, it seeks to unearth mechanisms of oppression veiled in aspects of our daily lives. Aspects of narrative such as linguistic and other semiotic features of text are seen as relating dialectically with social systems and structures. Discourse is one of the crucial social practises influenced by ideology (Fairclough, 1992). A form of social action that is always determined by values and social norms and conventions,

delimited and influenced by power structures and historical processes. Discourse is therefore socially constitutive, capable of giving rise to power imbalances through the transmission of ideology.

As users of language, our actions are never neutral, they are always politicized even when we are not aware of it because they carry the power of those who speak, be it the government, the church, editors in the newsroom as well as producers of the pop music culture we consume. This study used CDA and Thompsons (1984) model for the understanding of ideology to analyse the audio and visual aspects of 'Nerea' by Sauti Sol featuring Amos and Josh.

4. Discussion

The following section discusses both the lyrics and the video of the song *Nerea*

4.1 Modality

Modality is an expression of how an action is perceived by a speaker or writer. In Kiswahili, the verb is inflected to show how the action of a proposition is to take place in terms of necessity, possibility among others.

Nakuomba Nerea, usitoe mimba yangu we,

(I beseech you Nerea do not abort my baby)

In this first line of the song, the persona uses the word '*nakuomba*' (I beg you/ I beseech you) Nerea, in his plea to her not to have an abortion. In their choice of modality here, Nerea is brought out as already having made up her mind about the act, and the persona here has to turn to pleading and reasoning as his last resort in an effort to dissuade her.

The song constructs women as irrational, sadistic, and self-destructive. This view is articulated by Hussein (2005) and Schipper (1991) who found out that the woman is portrayed often as a threat even to herself especially when put in a position of decision making. The fact that the persona in Nerea has to plead with her not to do such a heartless cruel act on her own innocent baby, endangering her own life in the process, constructs the woman in this same chauvinistic and stereotypical way.

4.2 Euphemism

The use of euphemism is a common occurrence in narrative in Africa. Expressions that are deemed negative or offensive are made less so mainly by portraying them in a more positive light. According to Thompson (1984), euphemistic expressions are used in dissimulation, a process through which relations of domination are denied or obscured.

Line 1: *Nakuomba Nerea, usitoe mimba yangu we,*

Despite there being a Swahili term for the term abortion which is '*kuavya mimba*' (to abuse/destroy/spoil a pregnancy), the term '*kutoa mimba*' directly translated as 'to remove pregnancy' is used in the song. In so doing, the gravity of the process is somewhat diluted, making it sound like a simple harmless process whereby the foetus is simply 'taken out' of the womb. In reality however, abortion is a grisly life threatening process. Gutt Macher Institute in a research done in 2012, found out that only 9 per cent of the Kenyan population are pro abortion, and from the reasons given for seeking abortion, it is clear that women would only opt for it when they felt completely pushed to the wall. By euphemizing the term therefore, the persona is doing the opposite of what he intended to do; trivializing a procedure that results in the death of approximately 13,000 women and girls annually in Kenya according to World Health Organizations (WHO) 2008 estimates.

4.3 Pronouns and possession

The persona in the same line lays claim to the pregnancy by referring to it using the possessive '*mimba yangu*' (my pregnancy) as opposed to '*mimba yetu*' (our pregnancy). While it is a no-brainer that pregnancy is a result of a sexual act between a male and female, with each contributing an equal number of chromosomes, it is implied here that the man is the owner of the child. Almost as if it was deposited whole into the woman whose work was then to incubate it (or not) to term. The underlying ideology here is typical of patriarchal societies where it was believed that children belonged to the father, along with property and possessions including the woman herself (Familusi, 2012). Therefore then, it seems to a foregone assumption that it is up to the man to decide the fate of the child.

4.4 The use of wise sayings

A Zimbabwean saying goes "One who applies proverbs gets what he wants". In the African context, proverbs and sayings are powerful resources that confirm a society's norms and values. They are associated with authority of wisdom and their validity is rarely questioned, Schipper (1991). By using a well known proverb in a new speech situation, a speaker is able to appeal to the listener's beliefs and commonly shared cultural norms. The second line of the song is a Swahili saying.

Mungu akileta mtoto, analeta sahani yake,

(When God brings a baby, He brings his/her plate as well)

It is not surprising therefore that sayings are commonly used in the rationalization and legitimation of gender ideology. While this saying appeals to Nerea's faith and beliefs, it is still a documented fact that there are still around 250,000 homeless children in Kenya who survive on one meal a day Street Children Nairobi Report (2002). These are serious concerns for every parent and parents to be and should not be trivialized as seen here. Also worth noting is the assumption that food is the only need a child has, and also minimizing the role of the mother in the growth and nurture of a child.

By using the saying also, the man tactfully removes himself from the equation, thus shifting blame for the situation Nerea is in. She is obviously in a precarious situation, probably facing the possibility of dropping out of school or being chased away from home, let alone the stigma of becoming a single mother seeing as there is no mention of marriage or provision for her anywhere.

4.5 Repetition of line 1, 2 and 3

The most common and intended effect of repetition is that of drawing attention to a proposition, making it more visible. There is repetition of the first two lines of the song six times. The most overt effect of this is that it reinforces the message of the speaker, drawing and holding the attention of the target audience.

4.6 Aspirations

Male dominance in Africa has made many people aspire to get male children as opposed to girls. In the African traditional society, when a girl was born, the midwives would ululate four times as compared to five times for the boys (Lyimo-Mbowe, 2015). Lyimo-Mbowe continues to explain that in patrilineage societies like the Chagga of Tanzania, "to give birth to a baby boy is an action of ensuring the future of the concerned ethnic group". In this same regard, *Nerea* seems to propagate the same ideology (that men are better than girls) as the table below shows. The following table represents the personalities mentioned in the song and the roles that are ascribed to them.

Table 1.1 Aspirations

	PERSONALITY	GENDER	ROLE
1	Obama (Barack Obama)	Male	President of USA
2	Lupita (Lupita Nyong'o)	Female	Oscar award winner
3	Wanyama (Victor Wanyama)	Male	Footballer UEFA Champions league
4	Kenyatta (Jomo Kenyatta)	Male	First president of Kenya
5	Maathai (Wangari Maathai)	Female	Nobel peace laureate for environmental conservation
6	Makeba (Miriam Makeba)	Female	Musician
7	Nyerere (Julius Nyerere)	Male	President of Tanzania
8	Mandela (Nelson Mandela)	Male	President of South Africa
9	Kagame (Reuben Kagame)	Male	President of Rwanda
10	Jaramogi (Jaramogi Odinga)	Male	Political leader
11	Tom Mboya	Male	Political leader
12	Rudisha (David Rudisha)	Male	Athlete - 800M world champion
13	Angel	-	
14	Sauti Sol	4 Men	Musicians
15	Amos and Josh	2 Men	Musicians

Source: Research Data (2015)

The above table shows the great personalities that Nerea's child may grow up to be if not aborted. Of interest is the fact that the majority of these are men. 15 men are mentioned whereas only three women are mentioned; a ratio of five men to one woman as reflected in table 1.2. In the African traditional society, men were more valued than their women counterparts (Oduyoye, 2001; Olabode, 2009; Familusi, 2012) and it is unfortunate that even in today's world the same notion exists.

Table 1.2 Percentage and ration of men to women

	Gender	Number	Percentage	Ratio
1	Men	15	83	5
2	Women	3	17	1
	Total	18	100	6

Source: Research Data (2015)

The video shows images of personalities like Nelson Mandela, Tom Mboya, Lupita Nyong'o, Miriam Makeba among others, in the background. Additionally, in the foreground, we are shown children who are imitating the roles that the personalities play. Wanyama is shown in a soccer jersey exercising. The representation of Rudisha is the same as he is shown running. The young Jomo Kenyatta, is wearing a black suit and a white shirt. On his back is a African print cloth draped across his back and he is holding a fly whisk Jomo Kenyatta's symbol of power. In one instance, he waves it as if to a gathering of people the way Jomo Kenyatta used to do it. The other presidents (former and current) are all shown dressed formally and doing something. In fact, their hand gestures show power. Nelson Mandela has his 'Amadhla' sign of a fist thrown in the air. The opposite is true of the representation of the few women in the video.

In one shot, we are shown the younger Lupita Nyong'o dressed in the gown that she adorned to the Oscar award ceremony in 2014. The problem is that the dress is ill fitting and on such a girl, The young girl is holding her dress as if she is about to cutesy or is in a fashion show. The younger Miriam Makeba and

Wangari Maathai are both shown in the common stereotypical way. They are smiling - a stereotype that has been used to show that for women, it is the smile that gets them anywhere. Wangari Maathai younger version is seen holding one hand akimbo a stance that in the African traditional society, is associated with quarrelsome women. It is well documented (Maathai, 2003; 2006) that Maathai was at loggerheads with many people most notably, the former president Daniel Moi of Kenya. As if that is not enough, her stance is weakened by her smile and her shrugging of her shoulders suggesting that she is shy - yet she was the first African woman recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Miriam Makeba was a Grammy award winning singer and a civil rights activist (Miller, Vandone & McBrewster, 2011).

4.7 Video

Videos are very powerful tools of communication. The director decides what to give prominence to based on the intended meaning. As the video starts, we see Sauti Sol band members seated on a white podium in two rows. They are all dressed in white - head to toe. The room too, is largely white with a bit of black to provide contrast. Their name, Sauti Sol, appears on screen. The shot fades out and in the next shot, we see Amos and Josh all dressed in white seated on the same podium as their name appears on screen. In these two shots, all six men wear pensive expressions and, all clasp their hands in front of themselves.

There is use of symbolism expressed by the brilliant white outfits the men in the video wear.

The colour white is traditionally associated with both peace or purity. In the case of *Nerea*, it can only imply purity and the innocence that comes with it. Additionally the colour white is associated with Christian weddings that are also referred to as white weddings. Among Christians, purity and the preservation of oneself for sex within marriage is a core principle. According to the Kenya 2012 International Religious Freedom report, about 80 per cent of the Kenyan population is Christian. Even the Muslim faith does not advocate for sex outside of marriage and they comprise about 10 per cent of the Kenyan population. In essence, the pro life debate in Kenya is largely driven by religious faiths. Whereas this statistics are true, the abortion statistics remain high.

Sitting on an elevated platform speaks of patriarchal rule, where men dominate women. In this context, the six men are speaking down at *Nerea*. From the stance they have assumed, it is reasonable to conclude that they believe they are in a better position morally compared to *Nerea* and as such can subscribe to her what she should or should not do. Another instance of this 'on high' attitude comes towards the end of the video. In minute 3'03" and 3'20", the musicians refer to the *malaika* (angel) and at those instances, they point up, towards heaven. The message communicated here is not clear or rather, it could be interpreted that the child born could be a good person just like an angel- like them perhaps- seeing as they are all spotless in white.

In the whole song, not once do we hear the voice of *Nerea*. Does she want to have an abortion? If so, why? How did she get pregnant? Was it a planned pregnancy? Was she raped? What is *Nerea's* state of mind? What is her position in life? Her aspirations in life? Other than her being pregnant, we know nothing else of her. In this song, she is denied agency. The men, all six of them, sit up high and want to give her instructions. Line 1 of the song, pleads with her not to abort but the Line 2 seems to cancel any pleading as it says "*Mungu akileta mtoto, analeta sahani yake*" (when God gives a baby, he provides for it). Here the pleading in Line 1 turns to rationalising using religious beliefs. If the persona was such a devoted Christian, *Nerea* would not be pregnant in the first place and this amounts to patronising.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research conducted it is reasonable to conclude that the portrayal of women in this century is still negative and stereotypical. Women are still considered as less valuable and less powerful compared to men. The woman remains the villain in situations where pre- or extramarital sex results in unplanned

pregnancies. It is also clear that it should ideally be the aspiration of every pregnant woman to give birth to a baby boy as males were portrayed as more valuable and useful members in society. This portrayal continues to de-emphasize the position of women in society and squarely positions them in the less powerful positions like the arts, music and movies whereas men are positioned as revolutionaries and leaders in politics and policy formulation. The continued propagation of this stereotype, especially in popular culture, is detrimental to the nations progress of any nation seeking gender equity by changing attitudes and ideology that consider women and inferior to men. It is a paramount that such depictions be discouraged.

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Appendix 1

1	Nakuomba Nerea, usitoe mimba yangu we,	I beseech you Nerea do not abort my baby
2	Mungu akileta mtoto, analeta sahani yake,	When God gives a baby, He provides
3	Mlete nitamlea, usitoe mimba yangu we,	Bring him I will raise him up, do not abort my baby
4	Mungu akileta mtoto, analeta sahani yake	When God gives a baby, He provides
5	Huenda akawa Obama, atawale Amerika,	He might be Obama the ruler of America
6	Huenda akawa Lupita, Oscar nazo akashinda,	She might be Lupita and win an Oscar
7	Huenda akawa Wanyama, acheze soka Uingereza,	He might be Wanyama and play soccer in Europe
8	Huenda akawa Kenyatta, mwanzilishi wa taifa,	He might be Kenyatta, founder of the nation
9	Nakuomba Nerea, usitoe mimba yangu we,	I plead with you Nerea do not abort my baby
10	Mungu akileta mtoto, analeta sahani yake,	When God gives a baby, He provides
11	Mlete nitamlea, usitoe mimba yangu we,	Bring him I will raise him up, do not abort my baby
12	Mungu akileta mtoto, analeta sahani yake	When God gives a baby, He provides environment
13	Huenda akawa Maathai, ailinde mazingira,	She might be Maathai, protector of the
14	Huenda akawa Makeba, nyimbo nzuri akatunga,	She might be Makeba produce good songs
15	Huenda akawa Nyerere, aongoze Tanzania,	He might be Nyerere, leader of Tanzania
16	Huenda akawa Mandela, mkombozi wa Africa,	He might be Mandela, Africa's liberator
17	Nakuomba Nerea, usitoe mimba yangu we,	I plead with you Nerea do not abort my baby
18	Mungu akileta mtoto, analeta sahani yake,	When God gives a baby, He provides
19	Mlete nitamlea, usitoe mimba yangu we,	Bring him I will raise him up, do not abort my baby
20	Mungu akileta mtoto, analeta sahani yake,	When God gives a baby, He provides
21	Nakuomba Nerea, Nerea, Nerea,	I beseech you Nerea, Nerea, Nerea
22	Usitoe mimba yangu,	Don't abort my baby
23	Nerea, Nerea, Nerea	Nerea, Nerea, Nerea
24	Usitoe mimba yangu,	Don't abort my baby
25	Huenda akawa Kagame (atawale)	He might be Kagame (ruler)
26	Jaramogi Odinga (tuungane)	Jaramogi Odinga (we unite)
27	Huenda akawa Tom Mboya	He might be Tom Mboya
28	Huenda akawa Rudisha,	He might be Rudisha
29	Huenda akawa Malaika, Mungu ametupatia,	He might be a God given angel
30	Huenda akawa Sauti Sol,	He might be Sauti Sol
31	Huenda akawa Amos and Josh...	He might be Amos and Josh
32	Huenda akawa...	He might be ...
33	Huenda Akawa Malaika, Mungu Ametupatia	He might be a God given angel