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Music and the Regulatory Regimes of Gender and Sexuality in Tanzania

Imani Sanga

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This article examines the involvement of music in shaping people's gendered behavior in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Using Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and the associated concepts of gender normalization and regulatory regimes of gender, the article analyzes how selected songs play a role in regulating individuals' gendered behavior and disciplining individuals who disrupt societal gender norms. It argues that composers of these songs employ accumulated gender norms from their societies. It also illustrates how the rhetoric and practice of building and maintaining national culture participate in regulating gendered and sexual aspects of musical performance in contemporary Tanzania.

Introduction

In this article, I use Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity to examine the role of music in shaping and reshaping people's gendered behavior in Tanzania. I discuss ways through which music participates in regulating individuals' gendered behavior and in disciplining those who disrupt or do not conform to societal gender norms. In other words, I show how the songs act as technologies (in a Foucauldian sense of the term) of gender normalization. In the discussion, I point out that individual composers of the selected songs employ accumulated gender norms from their societies. Hence, the songs in question carry with them traces of the social order they express, reproduce, or try to transform. To the extent that the regulation of gender norms usually takes place in the name of promoting national culture, I draw examples from Laura Edmondson's recent book *Performance and Politics in Tanzania: The Nation on Stage* and from a newspaper article to discuss the intersection between gender/sexuality, cultural nationalism, and musical performance in contemporary Tanzania. Finally, I focus on selected songs and analyze their role in the process of gender normalization and in the constitution of gendered subjects.

In what follows, I begin by outlining Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and defining the associated concepts of gender normalization and regulatory regimes

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of gender that I use in this article. To the extent that Butler's theory of gender performativity questions the naturalization and the immutable character of gender and sexual norms, I use it in this article to interrogate, debunk, probe, lay bare, or demystify[1] various ways through which gender is culturally and historically constructed and maintained in relation to musical performances in Tanzania and in relation to the lyrics of selected songs. As a deconstructive tool, the theory of gender performativity is used to disclose the unnaturalness of norms that are mistakenly taken to be natural. It is used to reveal historical, socio-cultural, and institutional construction of gender norms that are mistakenly taken to be permanent, essential, and natural.

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Theorizing Gender Performativity

In her book *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler begins with a number of epigraphic quotes from established (French) feminist scholars to demonstrate the socio-cultural and historical construction of both gender and sexuality. She quotes Simone de Beauvoir saying, "One is not born a woman, but becomes one"; Julia Kristeva saying, "Strictly speaking, 'women' cannot be said to exist"; and Luce Irigaray saying, "Woman does not have a sex" (1). Building on these remarks Butler radically challenges an established view in feminist theory and practice that there is a distinction between sex and gender and that this distinction is founded on the fact that sex is a biological (or a natural) given while gender is a cultural construct. In arguing that sex (as is the case with gender) is historically and culturally constructed, she calls us to consider a number of questions.

> And what is "sex" anyway? Is it natural, anatomical, chromosomal, and how is a feminist critic to assess the scientific discourses which purport to establish such "facts" for us? Does sex have a history? Does each sex have a different history, or histories? Is there a history of how the duality of sex was established, a genealogy that might expose the binary options as a variable construction? Are there ostensibly natural facts of sex discursively produced by various scientific discourses in the service of other political and social interests? (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 9)

To these questions, Butler suggests a general answer: "If the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called 'sex' is culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all" (ibid. 9–10).

To say that sex is not a natural given but a cultural and historical construct is not to deny those natural, anatomical, and chromosomal distinctions between what we call female bodies and male bodies. Instead, it is to emphasize the fact that the concepts of sex, femaleness, or maleness as we use them are not and have never been empty shells. We think, pronounce, and hear them with echoes of already culturally and historically inscribed gendered meanings. As Keith Negus, referring to Butler's work, writes: "Sex is not simply a neutral biological category nor a straightforward natural activity. Sex is

an idea that is used to explain, categorize and understand our bodies; as such 'sex' is as culturally constructed as 'gender'" (Negus 123). Hence, sex "was always already gender" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 9).

Having established the fact that sex, like gender, is culturally and historically constructed, Butler discusses ways through which this cultural and historical construction of gender and sex takes place. She points out that the construction and sustenance of gender and sex takes place through repeated gendered performative acts (Butler, *Bodies that Matter* 225). These performative acts, which may be in the form of speech or bodily actions, are used to establish certain gender and sexual behaviors as normal and natural givens. Through these performative acts members of a particular society are made to conform to these norms. In her new preface to *Gender Trouble*, Butler writes: "The view that gender is performative sought to show that what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body" (xv). Let us note the importance of repetition in this formulation. When performed repeatedly, these acts (in the form of speech or bodily actions) become agents of gender normalization. To use Butler's words: "Performativity is thus not a singular 'act,' for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conversions of which it is a repetition" (*Bodies that Matter* 12). Because of this repetition and the concealment of the conversions repeated, people mistakenly take these norms to be natural and immutable.

Usually, the establishment and sustenance of gender norms is carried out through what Butler (in a Foucauldian language[2]) calls "regulatory and disciplinary regimes" of gender (*Undoing Gender* 40–43). By regulatory regimes of gender, Butler refers to mechanisms of shaping individuals' gendered behaviors in accordance with accepted norms of a particular socio-cultural group. The concept "regulation" carries with it echoes of both repetition and control. That is to say, the concept "regulation" refers to both making something regular or normal (i.e. repetition) and compelling someone to conform to certain behaviors (i.e. control). It is useful to draw a distinction between two forms of control or mechanisms of making individuals conform to particular societal gender norms.

The first form of control involves direct coercion. Subjects are compelled to adhere to certain norms by being directly told by other people (e.g. parents, teachers, administrators, religious leaders). Sometimes, the subjects are punished or threatened with punishment if they do not adhere to these norms. The punishment that is announced may be one that is executed by these other people, governmental instruments of law, God, or any supernatural being. Gloria Anzaldúa uses the concept of "cultural tyranny" to refer to these mechanisms through which subjects are made to conform to gender norms and describes how this cultural tyranny operates:

> Culture forms our beliefs. We perceive the version of reality that it communicates. Dominant paradigms, predefined concepts that exist as unquestionable,

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> unchallengeable, are transmitted to us through culture. Culture is made up by those in power—men. Males make the rules and laws; women transmit them. How many times have I heard mothers and mothers-in-law tell their sons to beat their wives for not obeying them, for being *hociconas* (big mouths), for being *callejeras* (going to visit and gossip with neighbors), for expecting their husbands to help with the rearing of children and the housework, for wanting to be something other than housewives? (Anzaldúa 38)

According to the Mexican culture that Anzaldúa writes about, being a housewife is unquestionably taken to be a woman's role and a destiny for women. Women are made to conform to this norm, "rule," or "law" by force (beating). Force is used to discourage and get rid of "deviance" from this norm. Repeated recounting of the rule, law, and disciplinary mechanisms (such as beating) play a significant role in gender normalization. To use Foucault's terminology, both physical force and citing and reciting of rules in Anzaldúa's passage quoted above are "technologies" of power through which the regulation of gender norms takes place. Anzaldúa's phrase "[h]ow many times have I heard mothers and mothers in law tell their sons" (38) serves to underscore the role of repetition in constructing and sustaining gender norms. As Middleton writes, "repetition is the mode of subject construction itself. The 'original' (the subject) is produced in the process of its repetition, and we continually perform out (cite, quote, mime) the markers of gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, class and generation, sustaining subjectivity through '*regularized and constrained repetition of norms*'" (Middleton 137–38; italicized text qtd from Butler *Bodies that Matter* 95).

Likewise, Hélène Cixous poetically writes about the way culture regulates the behaviors of its gendered subjects (especially girls) and the way it gets rid of deviant behaviors such as speaking out or writing. In her essay "Coming to Writing," she begins with a little poem entitled "A Girl is Being Killed." In the poem someone complains about a girl who has been allowed to speak out, to write, or "to fly," in short, to behave in a way that seems to be culturally inappropriate for a girl. At the end of the poem the person asks:

> Who is the Superuncle who hasn't prevented a girl from flying, flight of the thief, who has not bound her, not bandaged the feet of his little darling, so that they might be exquisitely petite, who hasn't mummified her into prettiness? (Cixous 226–27)

Speaking out, writing, and "flying" are considered to be deviant characteristics for a girl. According to the accepted gender value system, a girl has to be petite and pretty. A "Superuncle" in this poem can be taken to refer to a sum of social mechanisms, technologies, or regulatory regimes of gender, which ensure that members of a given society do not break with accepted gendered value systems.

The second form of control operates in such a way that the subject adheres to certain gender norms not by being directly coerced by other people. Quite the contrary, with this form of control one conforms to certain norms because one desires to be recognized as a worthy and normal person by other people (e.g. parents, relatives, friends, teachers, and religious leaders). The Lacanian concept of *objet petit a*,

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may help to clarify this desire of the subject to be recognized by other people or the desire to exist, when existence is conferred from outside the subject. In Lacanian psychoanalysis *a*, the first letter of the French word *autre* for the other, designates a little other as opposed to the big Other. While the big Other "represents a radical and irreducible alterity" (Evans 125), the small other, or *objet petit a* represents the other which is not really another at all. As Slavoj Žižek writes, it represents "something in me more than myself on account of which I perceive [and structure] myself as worthy of the Other's desires" (9). For a gendered subject *objet petit a*, in this sense, is inaugurated within the subject itself when the subject tries to respond to its own question: "What do others want from me?" In responding to this question, the subject loses its autonomy and is constituted as a gendered subject in accordance with the supposed desires of the Other.

To underscore this intersubjective character of gender normalization, Butler argues that "one does not 'do' one's gender alone. One is always 'doing' with or for another, even if the other is only imaginary" and, hence, "the terms that make up one's own gender are, from the start, outside oneself, beyond oneself in a sociality that has no single author" (Butler, *Undoing Gender* 1). The desire of the subject to be recognized or accepted by the Other makes the subject vulnerable to gender and sexual norms that are not of his/her own making. Butler describes this form of subjection in *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*:

> How is it that the subject is the kind of being who can be exploited, who is, by virtue of its own formation, vulnerable to subjugation? Bound to seek recognition of its own existence in categories, terms, and names that are not of its own making, the subject seeks the sign of its own existence outside itself, in discourse that is at once dominant and indifferent. Social categories signify subordination and existence at once. In other words, within subjection the price of existence is subordination . . . . Subjection exploits the desire for existence, where existence is always conferred from elsewhere; it marks a primary vulnerability to the Other in order to be. (Butler, *Psychic Life of Power* 20–21)

For a subject to be able to escape this vulnerability to norms coming from the Other, outside the subject, i.e. norms fashioned by other people, Butler proposes that the subject should overcome his/her own desire for recognition particularly when this recognition which is conferred by other people makes the subject vulnerable to subjugation. She writes:

> There are advantages to remaining less than intelligible, if intelligibility is understood as that which is produced as a consequence of recognition according to prevailing social norms . . . . Indeed, if my options are loathsome, if I have no desire to be recognized within a certain set of norms, then it follows that my sense of survival depends upon escaping the clutch of these norms by which recognition is conferred . . . . Indeed, the capacity to develop a critical relation to these norms presupposes a distance from them, even as there is a desire for norms that might let one live. The critical relation depends as well on a capacity, invariably collective, to articulate an alternative, minority version of sustaining norms or ideals that enable me to act. (Butler, *Undoing Gender* 3)

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Whether the constitution of the gendered subject takes place through direct coercion or through the subject's own desire to be recognized by the Other, this constitution always takes place within a given socio-cultural context and this context shapes the nature of the constitution process. By social context I refer to a sum of religious beliefs, and cultural practices as well as economic and political processes. In the section that follows, I describe how the regulation of gender norms takes places within the social context of contemporary Tanzania.

Regulatory Regimes of Gender and Sexuality in Social Context

For a long time, many societies (including Tanzanian society) have been organized so that men occupy a public domain while women occupy a private domain. So, too, men have been the main owners of family property such as land and cattle (Ngaiza and Koda). In education, male students are normally considered to be academically stronger and more creative than female students. Consequently, as Mary Mboya points out, one finds fewer female students in science and engineering subjects than male students. The reason is that, and this is another stereotype, these subjects are considered to be more difficult and require stronger mental ability than humanities and social science subjects. These views are reinforced by both Christian and Islamic religious beliefs (the two religions with a big number of followers in Tanzania) that regard women to be weaker beings relative to men.

It should be borne in mind that these gender stereotypes and their related gendered practices have not always gone uncontested. The life histories of selected women in Tanzania presented in *The Unsung Heroines* (Ngaiza and Koda), for example, show how these ordinary women resist, counteract, or/and cope with various gendered mentalities and practices to which they have been subjected. In recent years, the traditional views that associate women with the private domain and men with the public domain are also being challenged by the fact that there are a growing number of women entering the (public) labor market. Efforts by NGOs (non-governmental organizations) such as TGNP (Tanzania Gender Network Program), TAWLA (Tanzania Women Lawyers Association), and HAKI ELIMU (an organization concerned with promoting educational rights), to name a few, have also contributed to attitudinal change concerning gender roles and rights in Tanzania. These NGOs challenge gender norms that maintain asymmetrical gender relations, advocate women's right to own property (including land), and advocate the increase of female students' enrollment into higher education institutions (see Mukangara and Koda).

Music as a system of cultural representation plays a role in constructing and maintaining or in challenging and bringing to an end various gender norms. On the one hand, musical performances are used to construct and reinforce gender norms and stereotypes (Ntarangwi). Penina Mlama, Laura Fair, and Tadasu Tsuruta, for example, discuss how young children are taught various gender norms of their societies, including marital relations, reproduction health, and gendered parental roles, through musical performances during traditional puberty rites. In these

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performances young girls are taught to observe established gender norms of their societies. On the other hand, sometimes musicians challenge some established gender norms in the lyrics of their songs and through musical performance practices which explore and show the possibilities for alternative gender norms. At other times, musicians challenge established gender norms by acting against prevailing gender stereotypes and cross given gender categories (Perullo, "Hooligans and Heroes"; Sanga, "Gender in Church Music").

As pointed out earlier, usually the regulation of gender and sexual norms in Tanzania has been done in the name of promoting national culture. Hence, it is imperative to provide a general picture of some efforts made by the Tanzanian government to create and promote national culture since the early 1960s when Tanzania (then Tanganyika) obtained its independence from British colonial rule.

Efforts to promote national culture in Tanzania have mostly involved purposive adoption and preservation of indigenous cultural elements from different ethnic groups in the country. In 1962, for example, the first president of Tanzania, *Mwalimu*[3] Julius K. Nyerere, formed a Ministry of National Culture and Youth in order to ensure the "recovery, promotion, and development of the national culture" (Askew 171). In his inaugural speech Nyerere pointed out that the task of this ministry was to help Tanzanians to regain pride in their national culture. For a country with more than 120 ethnic groups, each having some distinctive cultural practices and beliefs (including language or language dialects), to create a national culture through the adoption of elements from indigenous cultures means to create a mosaic national culture that includes selected elements from these different cultures. Nyerere made this fact clear in his speech: "I want it [the Ministry of National Culture and Youth] to seek the best of traditions and customs of all the tribes and make them part of our national culture" (Nyerere qtd in Askew 171). The national cultural troupe which was created by this ministry, for example, conducted research and learned performance traditions from various ethnic groups in Tanzania. The performance traditions learned from one ethnic group, for example, were then included in the troupes' performances singly or in conjunction with other traditions learned from other different ethnic groups. Scholars of contemporary music of Tanzania have theorized these efforts by using concepts such as "cultural revolution" (Askew), "performance of disaffection" (Barz, *Performing Religion*, "Soundscapes"), and "cultural nationalism" (Edmondson, *Performance and Politics*).

To illustrate how these efforts of creating and promoting national culture have participated in the regulation of gendered and sexual behaviors of musicians and in shaping some aspects of musical performances, I examine two pieces of writing: Laura Edmondson's book *Performance and Politics in Tanzania* and a newspaper article titled "*Lady Jaydee, Ray C Kufungiwa Kupiga Muziki*" ("Lady Jaydee and Ray C to be Prohibited to Perform Music"). These two cases have been selected not only because they provide detailed accounts of how the rhetoric and praxis of promoting national culture participate in regulating gendered and sexual norms but also because these accounts themselves contribute in regulating these norms. Both accounts conceal their

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role in regulating gender and sexual norms by pretending merely to report what is done or said by the government. Against the notion of representation in which language (or a piece of writing, in our case) stands for reality outside the language itself, and apropos of Nicholas Cook's notion of what may be called a "constructivist view" (74–78), I highlight the gender performativity (in Butler's sense) of these accounts and show how these accounts not only report or represent reality (what is being done or said by the government) but also participate in the construction of gender and sex.

In her book *Performance and Politics in Tanzania*, Edmondson examines how theatrical and musical performances shape and are shaped by the politics of nation building in contemporary Tanzania. She construes the process of nation building in Tanzania as a dynamic process of collaboration and contestation between the state's version of a nation (and national culture) and various alternative versions or counter-versions of the nation that are constructed by individual performers and groups. The second section of this book, titled "Sexing the Nation," is most relevant for our present discussion. In this section, Edmondson examines the relation between musical performances, the creation of national culture, and the politics of gender and sexuality. An earlier version of this account appeared in Edmondson's article "National Erotica: The Politics of 'Traditional' Dance in Tanzania." Three ways through which the government has been trying to regulate hip-swaying dance movements (*kukata viuno*) in musical performances can be identified in Edmondson's account.

First, since issues related to sexuality are taken to be private matters that require secrecy (in speech and action), public performance of these dance movements, movements which are associated with sexual intercourse, is seen to be against national cultural "codes" that the government tries to establish, promote, and defend (Edmondson, *Performance and Politics* 72). Edmondson cites studies by Amandina Lihamba, Siri Lange, and Elias Songoyi and explains that the government discouraged dance styles that were considered hooliganistic in nature and those which were seen to corrupt social values especially for the upbringing of children. Nudity, vigorous hip movements, and fornication are mentioned as examples of aspects seen to be unsuitable for the stage (Edmondson, *Performance and Politics* 72).

Second, in some cases the dance movements are eschewed because they are considered to be tropes of backwardness or primitiveness and hence working against the "modern" national culture promoted by the government (ibid. 71). It is imperative to note a paradox of nationalism with regard to the modernity/tradition dichotomy in a post-colony (Sanga, "Music and Nationalism" 58–59; Turino 216). On the one hand, the creation of a national culture needs to vitalize traditional cultural elements from different ethnic groups, elements that are used as markers of national identity. These tropes of identity help to highlight the uniqueness of a nation by differentiating it from other nations. On the other hand, however, the creation of modern national culture in a multicultural country such as Tanzania has involved selection of elements to be included in a wide national culture. In other words, only

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those elements that are seen to be relevant and advantageous are selected and incorporated into the new national culture. In Nyerere's speech quoted earlier, he said he wanted the newly formed Ministry of National Culture and Youth to seek "the best" of traditions and customs of all the ethnic groups in the country and make them part of national culture. Considering this way of forming national culture as an "invention of tradition," it is useful to recall Edward Said, who observes that "[t]he invention of tradition is a method for using collective memory selectively by manipulating certain bits of the national past, suppressing others, elevating still others in an entirely functional way" (Said 179). This process of selecting "the best" traditions and customs is at the same time a process of exclusion of those elements (including some dance movements) perceived to be irrelevant or disadvantageous. In this case, government institutions such as the Ministry of National Culture and Youth or the national cultural troupe formed by this ministry are authorized to play the regulatory role of judging the relevance or irrelevance of cultural aspects from different ethnic groups. They also play a gate-keeping role by either admitting particular cultural elements into, or excluding them from, the new national culture they are trying to create.

Third, some of the dance movements that involve vigorous hip rotation are eschewed or discouraged on grounds that they are foreign to Tanzania. For example, the Ngoni origin of *Achimenengule* style, claimed by the performers, is questioned because the style seems to borrow dance movements from Congolese *soukous* or *ndombolo* music, movements that also involve vigorous hip rotation (Edmondson, *Performance and Politics* 60–61). Describing the performance of two songs employing *Achimenengule* dance style by a famous cultural troupe in Dar es Salaam, TOT (Tanzania One Theatre), Edmondson writes:

> At one point in both songs, three of the younger female performers, dressed in gaudy halter tops and miniskirts, entered to dance in a highly sexual Congolese style of *ndombolo*, a version of wildly popular *soukous*. Through their movements, the Congolese connotations of the new Tanzanian style became even more pronounced. When they re-entered for the second song, the female dancers lined up in front of three male singers, who acted out their sexual arousal by thrusting their hips into the women's buttocks. The three women then entered into the audience and selected a male spectator for whom they gyrated their hips . . . . This pattern remained basically the same for the remaining performances of TOT that I saw until my departure two months later, as *achimenengule* had become a permanent part of its repertory. (Edmondson, *Performance and Politics* 60)

The influence of Congolese popular music in Tanzania has a long history, at least as far back as the late 1940s (Kubik). Since the 1970s this influence has increased mainly due to the increased rate of migration of Congolese musicians to Tanzania and their day-to-day involvement in live music performances in different parts of Tanzania (Perullo "Rhumba"). The broadcasting of this music by more and more radio and television stations since the 1990s has contributed to the growing influence of Congolese music in Tanzania. However, this influence has not blurred the identity of Congolese music

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or some elements of it in Tanzania. It may also be argued that because of the proliferation of Congolese music in Tanzania in recent years many people in Tanzania are becoming more sensitive to elements related to Congolese *soukuos* or *ndombolo*. This explains why dance movements that involve vigorous hip rotation in the same way as in *soukous* and *ndombolo* led people to reject musicians' claims that *achimenengule* style is rooted in the Tanzanian Ngoni traditional music and dance.

In all these cases, Edmondson clearly and boldly shows that the government's efforts to shape Tanzanian national culture with its choice of what is appropriate and inappropriate for "modern" national culture has always been in dialogue with performers' alternative national culture or cultural elements tactically incorporated into their performances. In other words, Edmondson's account tells us the story of contestation against centralized norms and their totalitarian effects in the process of nation building. It tells us the story of the liberating effect of cultural "dialogism," to borrow and re-contexualize Bakhtin's concept. It tells us the story of successful (though unfinished) efforts of ordinary musicians to juxtapose their versions of national culture to the official one and hence create a national culture that is characterized by multiple musical and dance styles adopted from multiple sources within and outside Tanzania. With this idea of cultural dialogism, it is useful to note that Edmondson ends her book by describing what she calls the "cosmo nation" or a "cosmopolitan version of nationhood," in which musicians draw elements from a diversity of music traditions such as Congolese *soukous* and rap music and incorporate them into the new mosaic national culture (*Performance and Politics* 135–40).

However, Edmondson's language makes her account participate performatively in the process of regulating gendered and sexual norms in relation to musical performances. She repeatedly describes these hip-swaying or pelvic-rotation dance movements (*kukata viuno*) as "sexual explicit," "sexually inviting," or "erotic" (ibid. 72, 65, 13). These descriptions make the association between the dances and sexuality seem self-evident, inevitable, and unquestionable. I posit that the association would not necessarily be perceived had she decided to describe these pelvic-rotation dance movements in sexually neutral ways. Likewise, the author's gaze is also reproving: a caption to a photograph of dancers refers to "one of the more notorious moments of TOT's *lizombe*" (ibid. 71). She also describes her own gaze as "discomfited" (ibid. 65). These phrasings create a negative attitude toward the dance movements (see Sanga "Review"). In short, while on the one hand her account is in many ways liberating, as it celebrates musicians' power to subvert the centralized government's form of national culture and to invent an alternative and a more dialogic national culture, on the other hand the account also derogates these undertakings. Hence, as a performative act, this account participates in making these undertakings seem inappropriate and unwelcome to the new Tanzanian national culture.

A second account is from a newspaper article about two female musicians in Tanzania: Lady JayDee (Judith Wambura) and Ray C (Rehema Chalamila). It illustrates how the government tries to regulate the styles of dress of musicians in

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Tanzania in the name of maintaining national culture. The article, "*Lady Jaydee, Ray C Kufungiwa Kupiga Muziki*" ("Lady Jaydee and Ray C to be Prohibited to Perform Music"), was published in the 8–11 November 2004 issue of *Ijumaa*, an independent weekly newspaper in Dar es Salaam. *Ijumaa* is one of the popular newspapers in Tanzania that focuses mainly on scandals about famous people ("stars") such as politicians, musicians, actors, and footballers. These scandalous accounts are normally presented through written stories, photographs, and cartoons. In one of Lady JayDee's songs titled "*Rafiki wa Mashaka*" ("Untrustworthy Friend"), a friend who backbites about her and gossips about the bad side of her life is described as behaving like the *Ijumaa* newspaper. And this is a critique not only of the untrustworthy friend but also of this newspaper as an untrustworthy friend for a music "star" such as Lady JayDee. Like other popular newspapers of this kind, *Ijumaa* circulates widely, mainly in urban centers throughout Tanzania.

This newspaper asserts that the two female musicians are going to be prohibited from performing music because their style of dress during stage performances is socially unacceptable. It declares that this prohibition has been announced by Tanzania's National Arts Council (*Baraza la Sanaa la Taifa*, or BASATA) in order to maintain Tanzanian culture and traditions. It describes the prohibited style of dress as "half naked" (*Ijumaa* 2). It also provides the name of the government official who announced the prohibition during a meeting of musicians of *Bongo Fleva* (Tanzanian popular music) and BASATA officials held at Diamond Jubilee Hall in Dar es Salaam. The newspaper article ends with a declaration: "This newspaper supports this statement from the government which orders the artists to stop immediately this habit of putting on strange dresses since we believe that the goodness (*uzuri*) and skills are in their art works" (*Ijumaa* 2, my translation from Kiswahili). In this article, the "half naked" style of dress is not described in detail. It does not state which parts of one's body must be covered in order not to be "half naked." Let us note the gendered aspect of this rhetoric of "half naked" dressing. For example, most often in Tanzania when a woman puts on a miniskirt or a blouse that does not cover the whole of her stomach she is considered to be "half naked." This concept is not used when a man, for example, puts on only shorts or takes off his shirt during rap and hip-hop music performance (which is normally the case).

In this case both the government (represented by BASATA) and the newspaper *Ijumaa* play a role in regulating gendered and sexual behavior. They pronounce what kinds of dress are acceptable and which are not acceptable. The government's role in this case is obvious and the newspaper article clearly says that the prohibition was announced by the government. The article puts it as if it only reports what has been pronounced by the government. Hence, it conceals its own performative role in regulating musicians' gendered and sexual norms. To be sure, the article performs this role in several ways. First, the article cites, recites, and supports the norm: thou shalt not perform while half naked. Second, it does the actual selection of what dressing behavior is considered "half naked" and hence not acceptable. None of the statements by the government official quoted in the newspaper mentions names of specific

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musicians as examples of musicians who dress "half naked." The selection of two female musicians as exemplifying "half naked" dressing is made by the article itself. So, too, on the last page of this issue, there are two photographs: Ray C performing on stage and Lady Jaydee at a party (*Ijumaa* 12). These photographs are selected by this newspaper to exemplify specifically and visually the "half naked" dressing. Third, it also punishes the selected musicians for not conforming to what it takes to be normal styles of dress by declaring their dress as "half naked" and prohibited, and by publishing their photographs on the front and back pages of the newspaper with this negative message. Fourth, the article announces a punishment for anyone who disobeys the norm and so it compels musicians to adhere to the norm. These observations serve to underscore Butler's point that the normative force of performativity, that is, the power of performativity to establish what qualifies as normal, "works not only through reiteration but through exclusion as well" (*Bodies that Matter* 188).

Regulatory Regimes of Gender and Sexuality in Selected Songs

Three songs are discussed in this section. The discussion focuses on the way these songs play a role in gender normalization through the following operations. First, they establish a distinction between male and female roles and behaviors. Second, through repetition, i.e. citing and reciting this distinction, the songs make one perceive this distinction as natural, essential, and permanent. Third, the songs compel people to conform to these norms by either punishing those who do not adhere to the norms or by praising those who adhere to the norms. The songs call upon people in society to laugh at and ridicule those who do not observe the norms. Thus, upon hearing these songs a person who does not abide by societal gender norms feels as if s/he is laughed at, ridiculed, or rebuked. The three songs discussed below are Lady JayDee's "*Wanaume kama Mabinti*" ("Men who are Like Girls"), Bushoke's "*Mume Bwege*" ("Stupid Husband"), and Rose Muhando's "*Akina Mama*" ("Women").

"Wanaume kama Mabinti" *by Lady JayDee*

Judith Wambura, famously known as Lady JD or Lady JayDee (as her name appears on her albums), is one of the most popular musicians in Tanzania. By the time of writing this article, Lady JayDee had released four albums: *Machozi* (Tears), *Binti* (Young Woman), *Moto* (Fire), and *Shukrani* (Gratitude). There are a number of songs in these albums that deal with woman-man relations and address various gender issues that arise in these relations, among other topics.

The song "*Wanaume kama Mabinti*" (Men who are Like Girls) from her album *Binti* discourages men who depend on their girlfriends for food, drinks, and financial needs. It also discourages men who "gossip" since gossiping is considered to be a female behavior. As Mwenda Ntarangwi (53–54) points out, the song thus questions the masculinity of men with such behaviors.

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An underlying assumption behind these claims is that men are the owners of property and women are the ones who depend on men for their financial needs. The song takes this norm to be universal and eternal. It asks "where else have you ever heard of this behavior?" Then the song serves a function of a regulatory and disciplinary apparatus. It shows that these men are abnormal and hence it discourages their behaviors. The song punishes men with such behaviors by pathologizing their behaviors. It also ridicules them by likening their behaviors to that of a man named Hassan (a name for males and it seems to stand for a man in this song) attending a kitchen party (an exclusively female activity in preparation for a wedding in many cultures in Tanzania). The song also asks people in society to ridicule these men by giving them (or putting on them) dresses commonly used by women: gowns, miniskirts, and *vitopu* (singular *kitopu*, a short blouse that leaves the bottom part of the belly exposed).

It should be noted that in many songs such as "*Usiusemee Moyo*" (Don't Speak for Someone Else's Mind), "*Mshika Mbili*" (A Person of Two Ways) and "*Binti*" (Young Woman) Lady JayDee criticizes men who mistreat women and those who are not faithful to their women lovers or spouses. She also challenges women to get education and employment in the formal sector and hence she subverts the gendered private/public dichotomy in which women are associated with the private domain and men with the public domain. However, the song "*Wanaume Kama Mabinti*" demonstrates that, in spite of one being critical of gender inequalities, there are some gender norms that seem to be so natural, essential, and immutable that one needs to defend them against transgressors.

"Mume Bwege" *by Bushoke*

In this song a husband complains that his wife mistreats him. He raises two charges against his wife. First, he says that his wife is having sexual affairs with other men. The song and its video presentation highlight this charge by showing that both the man and the woman are blacks while their two children are of different colors (races): an Arab daughter and a Chinese son. Thus the song makes it seem obvious that the wife is involved in extramarital sexual relations with Arab and Chinese men, and that this is unfair treatment to her husband. Although the title of the song calls this man *bwege* (stupid) because he accepts being treated unfairly by his wife, in the chorus the man asks the audience to be sympathetic with him. It asks them to imagine themselves in his position: "What would you do if you were in this situation?"

Then the man raises a second charge that the wife forces him to do household chores such as dish washing, cleaning the house, cooking, and washing clothes. In addition, the man says that, when his wife goes out to the night club, she tells him to remain home and look after the house. All of these roles, "according to the explanation and culture," to borrow a phrase from Gayatri Spivak (30), are normally considered to be women's roles. Having established the norm of fidelity to one's marriage as a universal moral rule, and having charged the woman with breaking this

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rule, the song also charges her with forcing the man to perform roles that are taken to be women's roles in the private domain and herself occupying the public domain. Since most people, listeners to the song in particular, are made sympathetic with the man concerning the first case (the case about marital dishonesty), the song tactfully makes it sound as if these are similar cases. It makes it seem as if a woman who breaks that "universal rule concerning marriage fidelity," universal to the extent that the song declares it so and to the extent that it is common in many cultures, is bound to be disrespectful to her husband and to cross gender roles.

It seems to me that both the husband and the wife share a view that each person in a married couple has to be faithful to the other in that they should not engage in extra-marital sexual affairs. In other words, both of them hold to be indisputable that sexual relations outside a marriage are a transgression, an offense. Thus when it happens it is kept a secret. In order to conceal her involvement in extra-marital sexual affairs, the wife tells her husband that these children have inherited their skin colors from their grandparents. However, I want to underscore the fact that no matter how much we desire and value this norm and no matter how much we can defend it with moral claims, this view is a cultural and historical construct. It is a norm which is sustained, enshrined, and elevated to a universal and natural status through repetitive performative acts, or "song acts", to borrow a concept from Gary Tomlinson (104), such as the performance of this song and the repeated performances on radio, television, and internet (the song is accessible on Youtube.com).

"Akina Mama" *by Rose Muhando*

Rose Muhando is a famous singer of *Muziki wa Injili* (Gospel music) in Tanzania. She has been a choir teacher and a lead singer of the Chimuli Anglican Church choir in Dodoma, Central Tanzania. In recent years, Rose Muhando has been performing regularly in concerts of *Muziki wa Injili* held in various concert halls and churches throughout Tanzania. Her songs are also broadcast frequently on various radio and television stations in Tanzania. Many of her songs also can be accessed at Youtube.com. In 2004 she released her own album of *Muziki wa Injili* titled *Uwe Macho* (Be Watchful). "*Akina Mama*" ("Women") is one of the songs on this album. The album was released in three forms: audio cassette, CD, and video.

The song "*Akina Mama*" begins by recounting the biblical story of Abigail and her husband Nabal (see 1 Samuel 25: 1–44). To contextualize our discussion, I quote a few verses of this biblical story.

> Then David moved down into the Desert of Maon. A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. . . . His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings. (1 Samuel 25: 1–3, New International Version)

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When David sent his servants to greet Nabal and ask for food from him, Nabal did not give them food. He said to David's servants, "Who is this David? . . . Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?" (1 Samuel 25: 10–11). So David decided to go with his army and fight Nabal. Abigail heard how her husband treated David's servants and decided to reconcile with David by sending him food. She also asked for forgiveness on behalf of her husband.

The song says Nabal acted foolishly by despising King David such that the King decided to kill him. The song praises Abigail for acting wisely and bravely for going to meet David and ask him to forgive her husband since, she says, Nabal (her husband) behaved as he did because of his foolishness. So she was able to rescue her husband (and perhaps the whole of their family) from being killed by David and his army.

Then the song interprets this story and suggests its application in today's life. It says that God has created something new in the world. To be sure, the new thing created by God is not a material thing but a new "order" or arrangement of gender roles. In this new order, the song says, it is wives who will protect their husbands. The new order thus reverses the traditional norm and practice in many cultures where men are the ones who are expected to protect their wives and children. The song goes on to blame women in today's world for not behaving like Abigail, that is, for failing to protect and rescue their husbands from sins. It says, instead of protecting their husbands, today's women back-bite about them. They tell other people, especially other women, that their husbands are drunkards, rapists, adulterers, drug addicts, etc. It also says, instead of respecting their husbands, these women despise them. Then it advises women to change their behavior and behave like Abigail.

Let us note a few issues related to the construction and regulation of gender in this song. First, God is portrayed as the first one to disrupt traditional gender norms by bringing into the world a "new thing" or a new order of things in which women and not men become protectors of their spouses. Thus the song highlights the transgression of traditional gender norms in this biblical account and attributes the authorship of this transgression to God.

Second, close to the end of the song the singer shouts: "*Hata siku moja kichwa hakiwezi kuwa mkia*" (The head will never become a tail) as a way of rebuking today's women who demand equality with their husbands. The metaphor of head and tail needs a comment here. The song draws this metaphor partly from the Bible, which pronounces husbands as heads of their wives and tells wives to be submissive to their husbands (Ephesians 5: 22–23; 1 Peter 3: 1–7; Colossians 2: 18–19; these and other similar verses are regularly read during church wedding services). However, the metaphor of a tail as an opposite of the head is creatively introduced by the composer of this song. This binary opposition between the head and the tail makes it seem as if the gender roles and positions assigned to husbands and wives are as natural and biological as the head and the tail in an animal. This naturalization makes it unthinkable and impossible for a wife to have equal or more authority in a family relative to that of a husband, just as it is unthinkable and impossible for a tail of a

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biological animal to become a head. In addition, to tell women who demand equality with their husbands that "the head will never become a tail" is to get the wrong impression that their demand for equality is a demand for dominance or that they want to have more power relative to that of their husbands.

Finally, there is a paradox in this song. The creation of a "new thing", a new order of things, which the song highlights in the biblical story and supports at the beginning of the song, is not what the song as a whole eventually advocates. To be sure, the biblical Abigail left her husband and went to the king to ask for forgiveness because of what she judged to be the foolishness of her husband. She went to the king for public and political matters as a spokesperson of the family. She also went to the king without the consent of her husband. In other words, she did not only act against traditional norms in which the public domain is for men, but also she did not submit herself to her husband's authority. The paradox here is that, on the one hand, the song urges today's women to behave like Abigail while, on the other hand, it urges them to be submissive and respectful to their husbands, a character which is in opposition with Abigail's character. It seems to me that the norm of women being submissive and respectful to their husbands is regarded by the singer to be so essential that even when she encounters a case of its transgression (and she encounters it from the authority she accepts without question, the Bible), she defends the norm by suppressing the message in the case of a subversive woman.

Conclusion

I began this article by drawing from Butler's argument that gender and sexual norms are cultural and historical constructs. The construction of these norms is made possible through "performative acts" in a form of bodily actions or speech. I have argued that in Tanzania the government's rhetoric and praxis of creating and maintaining national culture as well as the repetition of the government's declarations, regulations, or orders in newspapers and in books are examples of the performative acts through which the regulation of gender and sexual norms and the constitution of gendered and sexual subjects are made possible. To further exemplify how performative acts work to constitute gendered subjects three songs have been analyzed. The analysis illustrates how the songs in question draw a binary distinction between female and male roles and behaviors. Then the songs make this distinction and the associated gender norms seem natural, essential, and immutable through repetition (i.e. citing and reciting the distinction and gender norms). Finally, the songs oblige people to adhere to the distinction and the norms by announcing or executing punishment to those who do not adhere to societal gender norms.

However, far from proposing a complete erasure of all societal gender norms and far from envisioning and advocating a norm-free society, the foregoing discussion suggests that adherence (or non-adherence) to societal gender norms should be on the basis of one's free choice made by considering the benefits this adherence (or non-adherence) brings to an individual and to other people (men and women) at a given

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period in time. Similarly, the decision to establish, maintain, or change particular gender norms for a particular community of people should also be made on the basis of reason and by considering the benefits these norms will have to individual members of a community and the community at large during a certain period of time. To attain this freedom and to escape from the tyranny of gender norms there is a need to follow Butler's lead and unveil myths that posit gender norms as natural, essential, and immutable. There is a need to lay bare, interrogate, debunk, probe, and demystify the performative acts that construct and sustain these myths. There is a need to regard gender norms as partial, provisional, and always open to revision.

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Notes

[1] Here I am evoking concepts that Agawu (xv) uses in defining the term "critique" as a strategy in postcolonial theory and practice.

[2] Butler refers to Foucault's concept of the technology of power and the various forms of subjection discussed in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* and *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, *An Introduction*.

[3] *Mwalimu* is a Kiswahili word for teacher. Before he became a leader of TANU, the political party through which Tanganyika obtained its independence, Nyerere was a secondary school teacher. He continued to be addressed as *Mwalimu* throughout his life.

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